



# Climate Change – the heat is on? Edinburgh June 2008

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Profitability. Sustainability. Competitiveness.

# Biodiversity and dairy farming in New Zealand

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## Where were we?

- European Settlement
  - 1840-1980
- Wholesale land clearance
  - Rapid development of agriculture
  - Loss of Habitat
  - Introduction of animals/plants
- Short history



# Where are we?

- In New Zealand, agriculture uses 39 percent of total land area
  - Natural cover >50%
  - Forestry 7.3%
  - Dairy 5.3 percent of total (1.4 million hectares)
  - Urban <1%
- Introduced animals and plants turned nuisance
- Public sensitivity high



# Key issues for Dairy in NZ

- Dairy boom?
  - Record returns for dairy farmers
  - Costs, including land, have risen sharply
- Sustainability
  - Balancing a thriving dairy sector with
    - Nutrient loss
    - Climate change
    - Habitat loss
- Regulation
  - No subsidies
  - Stringent resource management restrictions

# Biodiversity and NZ Dairy



- Factors affecting biodiversity :
  - Expansion of dairy footprint will slow due to lack of suitable land/water
  - Pasture-based, low intensity farming
  - Movement of marginal farmed land into bush and native forest over the past 20 years

# Biodiversity and NZ Dairy



- Factors affecting biodiversity contd:
  - Introduced pests
    - Challenge to native wildlife which is mainly birds
    - Vector reservoir for TB, especially possums, mustelids
  - Emissions trading effects
- Low level of awareness at industry level

# Spending

- Farmer levy funding for DairyNZ
  - \$NZ22.4m spent on sustainability, including biodiversity
- Partnerships such as the Clean Streams Accord contributing to biodiversity objectives
- Public/private partnerships source R&D money for sustainability research
- Sustainable Farming Fund



# Conclusions

- Subsidy removal has had positive impact on biodiversity by allowing marginal land to return to native forest cover
- Controlling introduced pests to manage TB has delivered substantial wins for biodiversity
- Government/industry/farmer partnerships in R&D and on-farm guidelines for water quality have lead to positive biodiversity impacts
- Must avoid heavy-handed regulation with industry initiatives





Thankyou....



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