

5.11 Cotton thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*)

Why is it a threat?

Cotton thistle is native to Europe, western and central Asia. It arrived in New Zealand during the 1880s. Cotton thistle is an erect annual or biennial thistle growing up to 2 metres tall (typically 1-1.2 metres). The main dispersal method is by seeds attaching to animal coats. Seeds hairs are not adequate for wind dispersal, but can be transported by strong winds. It invades and colonises pasture. If left uncontrolled it will form dense infestations and displace preferred pasture species and impede access to stock. It is a competitive weed in improved pasture and favours soils with high levels of nitrogen. Cotton thistle is prevalent in Canterbury and Otago. Cotton thistle has the potential to be a significant farmland weed throughout Marlborough.



There are three known areas with infestations in Marlborough. Two of these are small in nature near the Wairau Bar and Waihopai Valley respectively. The third occurs over a larger area in the Upper Awatere Valley. Ongoing management will ensure infestations do not both escalate and spread to other areas.

Objective

Over the duration of the RPMP, control cotton thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) in the Marlborough district to less than or equal to baseline levels* to minimise adverse effects on economic wellbeing, the environment and enjoyment of the natural environment.

*A baseline level assessment will be made either prior to or immediately after the RPMP commences.

Intermediate Outcome:

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive Containment	Sustained Control	Site-led
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Principle measures to achieve the objective

1) Council Inspection and Service Delivery

Inspection by Council may include staff or contractors:

- Delivering a service to manage cotton thistle in liaison with the occupier.
- Visiting properties or doing surveys to determine whether pests are present.
- Monitoring effectiveness of control.
- Carry out control using administrative powers of the Biosecurity Act 1993, if necessary.

2) Requirement to Act

Land owners and/or occupiers or other persons may be required to act where rules or statutory obligations dictate:

- The presence of pests is to be reported.
- Pests are not to be spread (propagated, sold or distributed).

3) Advocacy and Education

Council may:

- a) Provide general purpose education, advice, awareness and publicity activities to land owners and/or occupiers and the public about pests and pathways (and control of them).
- b) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers to control pests.
- c) Promote industry requirements and best practice to contractors and land owners and/or occupiers.
- d) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers and other persons to report any pests they find.
- e) Facilitate or commission research.

Rules

Rule 5.11.2.1

Occupiers are required to notify Council of any new infestation of cotton thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*) on land that they occupy within 5 working days of the initial observation.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Note: Current distribution data is able to be viewed online via Council's Smart Maps service.

Explanation of the rule:

The purpose of this rule is in accordance with section 73(5)(a) to assist Council with surveillance. Requiring occupiers to notify Council of new sites and plants on their properties, in addition to Council's own surveillance, will assist Council in achieving the objective of the programme. New infestations will be able to be controlled and incorporated into the programme.

Notifying the Council of the presence of the specified pest will enable the Council to:

- Update its records.
- Map new sites of this pest.
- Carry out control work before they spread.
- Determine whether new control regimes should be considered.
- Provide advice and information to occupiers where appropriate.

Council as the management agency will administer the rule.