

5.20 Nassella tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*)

Why is it a threat?

Nassella tussock is a perennial tussock that originates from South America. It can grow up to 70 centimetres high and a mature plant can produce up to 120,000 seeds. These seeds have the potential to spread 10 kilometres in strong winds. The seed has the ability to remain viable in the soil for many years. Nassella tussock is well adapted to invade and smother other grassland species and is largely unpalatable to livestock. It will also compete with native species. If left unmanaged, due to the prolific nature of seed set, it will form large unpalatable monocultures and spread rapidly to un-infested areas in Marlborough.



In terms of distribution, nassella tussock is the most widespread of the pests managed under a RPMP programme. Infested areas are predominantly in the drier hill country of South Marlborough although isolated infestations also occur through in the Okaramio-Kaituna area and as far afield as the eastern side of Cape Soucis.

5.20.1 Objective

Over the duration of the RPMP, control nassella tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) in the Marlborough district to a population trend that is level or reducing to minimise adverse effects on economic wellbeing, the environment and enjoyment of the natural environment.

Intermediate Outcome:

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

1) Requirement to Act

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

- a) Pests are to be destroyed.
- b) The presence of pests is to be reported.
- c) Pests are not to be spread (high risk activities, propagated, sold or distributed).

2) Council Inspection

Inspection by Council may include staff or contractors:

- a) Carrying out inspections to ensure occupiers are meeting obligations.
- b) Visiting properties or doing surveys to determine whether pests are present.
- c) Monitoring effectiveness of control.
- d) Carry out control using administrative powers of the Biosecurity Act 1993, if necessary.

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.

5.20.2 Rules

Rule 5.20.2.1

Occupiers shall destroy all nassella tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) plants, on land that they occupy, each year before they produce seed, unless a management plan* approved by Council is in place.

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

*A management plan for the purposes of Rule 5.20.2.1 is an agreed plan between the occupier and Council that outlines how nassella tussock will be managed on the land they occupy and will contain administration provisions relating to the maintenance of the RPMP.

Management plans will be dynamic and also available to the occupier for reference at any time via the online Property File system.

Rule 5.20.2.2

Occupiers are required to notify Council of any new infestation of nassella tussock (*Nassella trichotoma*) 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 Rule 5.20.2.1 is in accordance with section 73(5)(h) in that all occupiers with an infestation of nassella tussock are being required to take specified actions to prevent the pest increase to levels affecting productivity or neighbouring properties.

The purpose of Rule 5.20.2.2 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 these rules.