

Special Interest Articles:

- Winter Poisoning
- RHD Journey
- Population Trends
- Night Counts
- Poison Licensing
- Suppliers/Useful Contacts

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Considering a Winter Poison?

With the winter rabbit control season looming, now is the time to start thinking about areas that need serious control. This may be an area identified through Council monitoring or elsewhere on your property.

Winter poisoning can be targeted at the worst areas of rabbits to knock them right down and allow targeted follow-up shooting/patch-poisoning to mop up any remainders.

The most crucial factor in any poison job is timing. Conditions need to be at a stage where the rabbits are looking for alternative food sources. The simplest way to test this is laying some

pre-feed bait and monitoring bait acceptance.

Usually, the best acceptance will be in the depth of winter or after a prolonged period of cold.

Some may question the expense, labour and time involved in doing a poison job. However, when rabbits reach a level where shooting is simply holding numbers where they are, the long-term benefits of a knock-down cannot be overlooked. Holding medium to high rabbit numbers is like set-stocking that block permanently. 10-12 rabbits = 1 ewe.

Toxin Options

The two main toxins in use for rabbit control are Pindone and 1080. Both of these toxins require specific licences to purchase and use. These requirements are explained later in the newsletter.

The most widely available product in Marlborough is currently Pindone cereal pellets. These pellets can be sourced directly from the manufacturer Pest Management Services or through rural supply stores.

A 1080 cereal pellet is registered for use on rabbits. However, Pindone is commonly preferred due to the faster return time for the block and less risk to dogs.

Carrot is the most favourable bait where either Pindone or 1080 is

applied in a liquid solution to the bait. As carrot bait needs to be mechanically cut to specific criteria, a cutter and screener (e.g. Reliance) is required to prepare bait.

Carrot bait is limited to winter use as it is more steadfast to moisture and is prone to shriveling when used in summer. Unfortunately carrot bait is expensive to source in Marlborough as it is no longer grown within the region.

The uses of pellet baits require precise timing of application as they can be rendered unpalatable where moisture is added to the mix. Applying pellets with little other fresh green pick around is one of the most crucial factors in bait take.

The Marlborough Rabbit



RHD Story

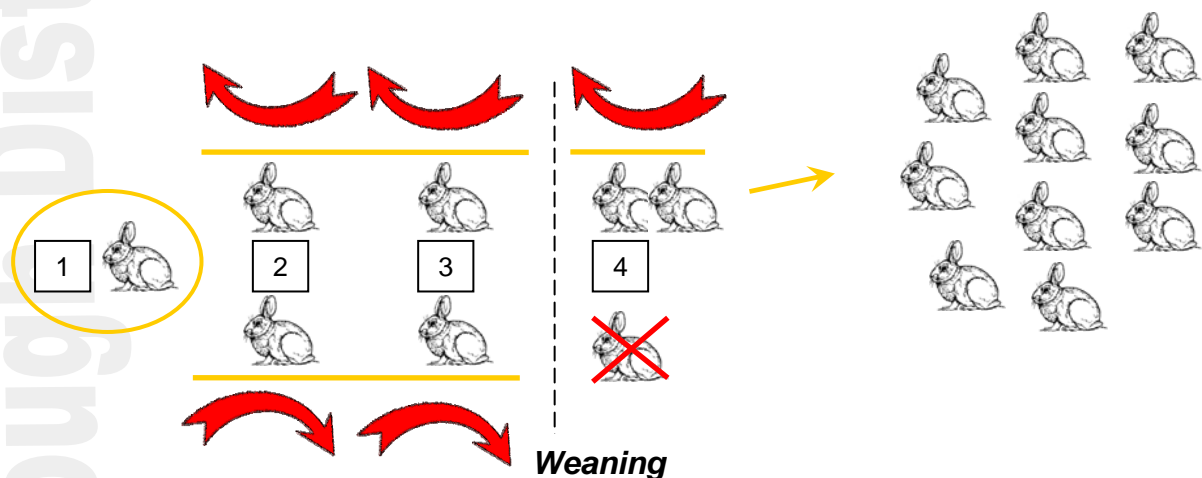
The first thought of many when large numbers of rabbits are talked about quite often involves “the virus will take care of them”. Unfortunately, this is no longer the case. What is being observed across Marlborough is a real patchwork of areas where through landholder vigilance and RHD persistence, rabbits have never really recovered post-RHD introduction.

In other areas however, the rabbit RHD war has moved down a path where resistance has built within the population and numbers have boomed once again. This has commonly been in areas of highest

rabbit proneness. This has been the Upper Awatere Valley as well as some hot spots in lower Marlborough, including the Avon Valley, Wairau Valley foothills near the Wye and Coastal Ward. A clear sign of some immune rabbits is the stunting of the ears. These rabbits have contracted the virus and it affects circulation to the extremities. If the rabbit survives, the ears can get stunted. The only certainty with large rabbit numbers is that the use of a toxin can bring numbers down. They then can be maintained at a manageable level with persistent shooting.

“... the virus...affects circulation to the extremities”

RHD > Immunity Cycle



1. Immune Doe – survived from last year.
2. Kittens cannot be infected by RHD virus for the first 6 weeks. This is due to the physiology of the kittens not being open to infection at such a young age.
3. After 6 weeks, the kittens are protected by antibodies in the doe's milk. If challenged by the virus during this time, some young develop immunity for life while others do not.

4. Post-weaning, those that developed immunity are protected and breed while those that did not are susceptible when epidemics arrive. The reasoning behind why some develop immunity while others do not, is poorly understood. The passing on of genetic resistance is also a factor that can lead to young, immune rabbits, however this process is also poorly understood.

Population Trends

Over the last 2-3 years, there have been clear geographical areas where rabbits have built back to problem numbers.

These areas are:

- Awatere Valley (approximately Jordan up-stream)
- Medway Valley
- Avon Valley (east of river)
- Coastal Ward
- Wairau Valley (southern foothills, Wye River downstream)

Within each of these areas, some landholders have taken the build up seriously and numbers have been brought back down. The best results have been where adjoining landholders take on the problem across a larger area reducing the cross-fence issues of re-infestation.

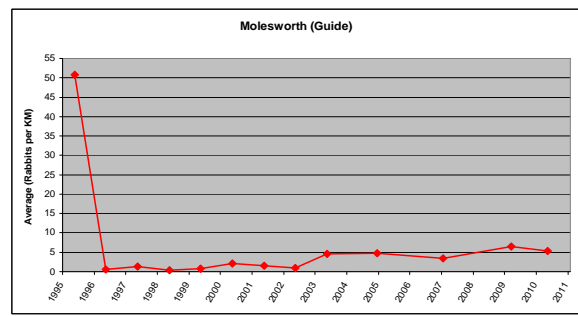
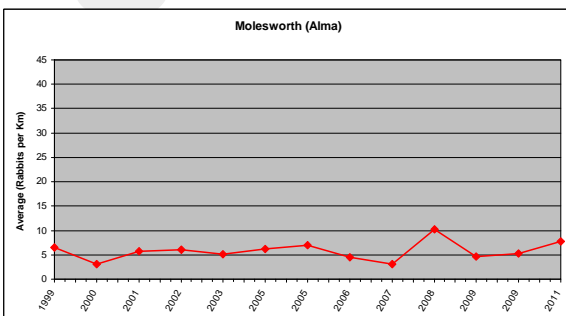
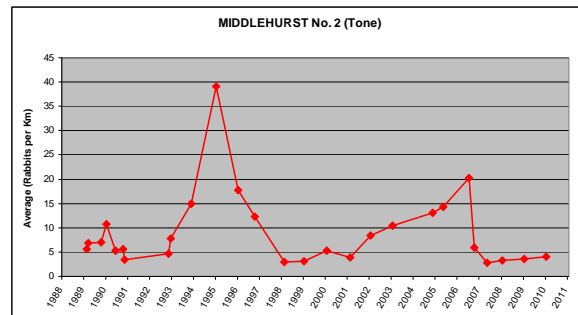
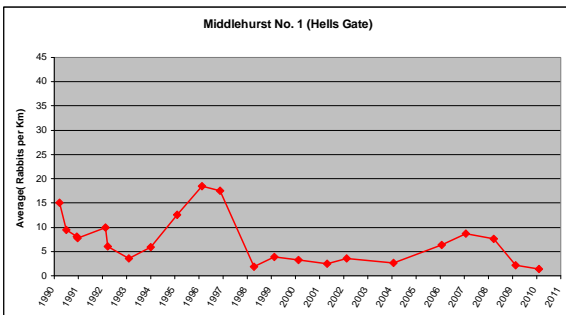


Coastal cliff area - Ward

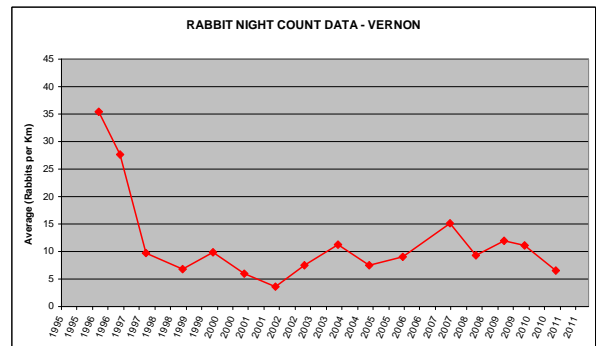
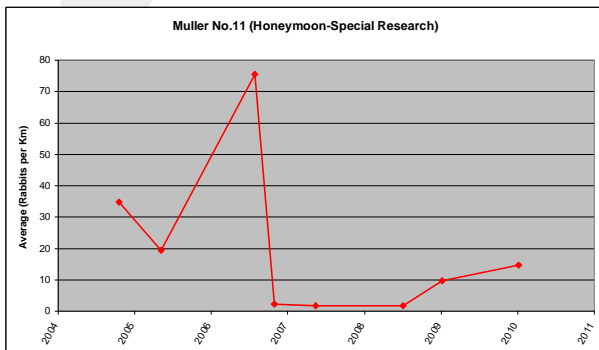
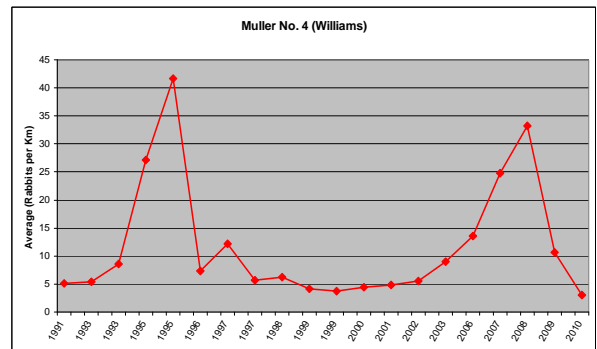
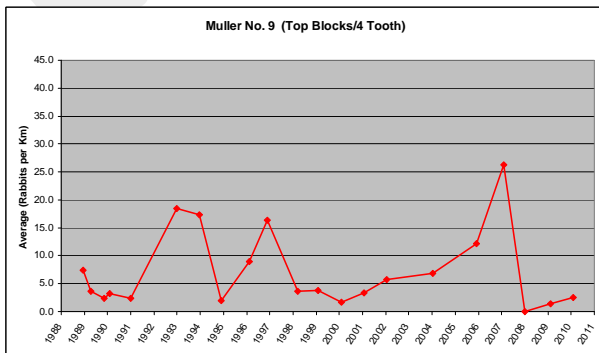
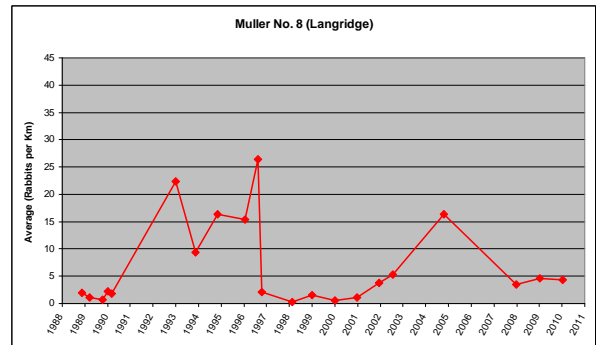
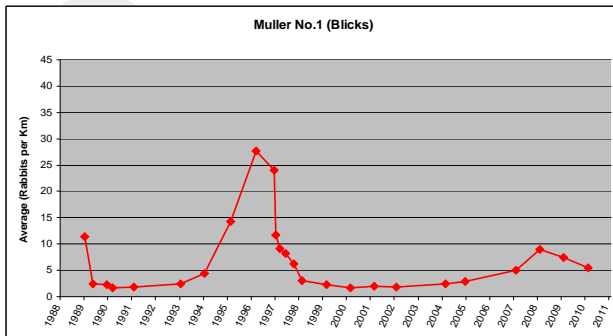
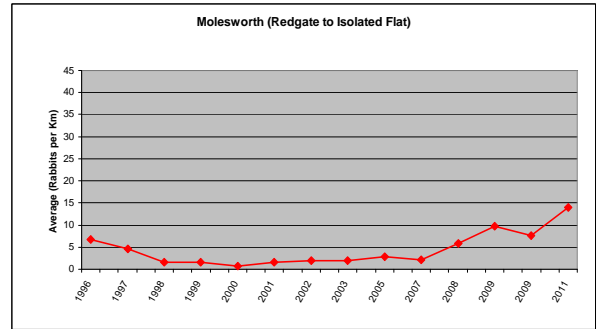
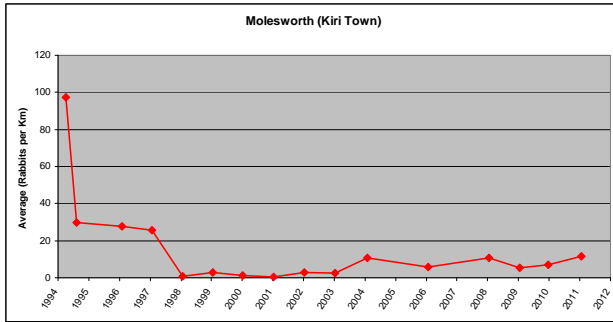
Night Counts

As part of historical, annual trend monitoring, rabbit night counts are carried out on set routes. The majority of these routes we established over 10 years ago so a good story of trends has been developed. Of the 12 routes, 11 are through Muller, Middlehurst and Molesworth Stations, with one through Vernon Station/Dashwood area.

Look for the effect of RHD (1997), the rate of potential increase, and excellent recent poison efforts by the landholders.



The Marlborough Rabbit



Poison Licensing

The likes of Pindone and 1080 poisons require a person to be suitably licensed to purchase, store, use and dispose of such poisons. There are two main scenarios with licences:

1. A Controlled Substance Licence (CSL) to broadcast Pindone pellets only.
2. A CSL to cover most vertebrate toxic agents (1080, Pindone, Cyanide, DRC1339).

The difference between these is if applying for a CSL for Pindone only, the licence is issued by ACVM not ERMA even though you apply through ERMA.

Note: An Approved Handler Certificate will also be required for 1080 and Pindone liquid concentrates.

If applying for either of these scenarios, contact must be made to a Test Certifier. A Test Certifier is a person that has been approved by ERMA to assess applicants. The

Certifier will usually charge for their service. They can be found on the ERMA website:

<http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/search-databases/Pages/testcertifiers-search.aspx>

An application form and an application guide can be downloaded from the ERMA website:

<http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/hazardoussubstances/certifications/csl/Pages/apply-csl.aspx>

Test Certifiers serving Marlborough:

- CanTrain NZ Limited (Geoff Allinson)
Phone: 027 493 3034 or Mobile: 027 675 1929
Email: geoff.allinson@xtra.co.nz
- AsureQuality (David Harman)
Phone: 03 545 7772 or Mobile: 021 752 179
Email: harmand@asurequality.com

Suppliers/Useful Contacts

Poison Products

Pest Management Services

Phone: 03 348 9293

Fax: 03 348 9291

www.nopests.co.nz

Enquire through your rural supply store

Service Providers

Tasman Pest Control

Contact: Bruce Waddell

PO Box 17
Brightwater
Nelson 7051

Phone: 03 542 4347

Mobile: 027 212 3849

Service Providers

Excell

PO Box 171
Kaikoura 7340

Phone: 03 319 5084

Fax: 03 319 5839

Mobile: 021 687125

bsmith@excellcorp.co.nz

Feral Animal Services

Contact: Nick Latter

63 Gibsons Road
RD 3
Blenheim 7273

Phone: 03 572 7353

Mobile: 021 0263 1283

feral.a.s@farmside.co.nz

Service Providers

Andrew Withers

Mt Riley Road
RD 1
Havelock 7178

Phone: 03 572 9565

Mobile: 021 270 2849

valleypestcontrol@paradise.net.nz

Amuri Rabbit Control

Contact: Jason Hawker

226 Pahau Downs Road
Culverden 7392

Phone: 03 315 8369

Mobile: 027 542 2888

www.amurirabbit.vpweb.co.nz

Council gives no warranty as to the accuracy, completeness or currency of the Service Providers listed. Nor does it make any statement on the competence or other technical attributes of the listed parties. Council recommends that persons wishing to avail themselves of the services of any one of the listed operators undertake their own enquiry as to the suitability of that party.