

Submission from Elbury Holdings

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Westcoast farms – Leah Frieling

Rural production zone –

Far North has many diverse townships/ communities and housing in rural locations need to allow or flexibility to meet financial needs as it is too expensive to do a new build now due to the building requirements, building codes, low property values/ land values compared to cities.

Incomes and living costs are so different from the city areas. Places like Kerikeri / coastal towns is for the affluent, rural areas are the affordable areas and a lot is Māori owned land or undeveloped land that we need to encourage people to come too. Not scare them away by having such large areas that are in the plan. We don't have the urban and rural divide that cities have. Lots of people want to live in the countryside, in a rural environment and small communities. This is reflected in our 41 small towns and villages in the far north.

Northland has large amounts of land not used in the rural areas. Rural communities are important, they create a hub around a community hall/ school.

It is important to have these small rural communities for the social, cultural and wellbeing of the rural people who do join and support each other.

This District plan should continue to support this.

This zone needs to be reviewed.

Smaller blocks within the rural production are important and keep rural communities. I.e. A retiring farmer does not want an area of land to keep and maintain but still wants to live in their forever home .

They should be allowed to have a small block say 2000sq mtrs (that will ensure the effluent field is contained within the site).

In the far north area and around Kaitiaki this zone already has commercial businesses , schools, playcentre, small house lots and are serviced by sewage, town water and footpaths.

Farms also require staff housing, the larger the farm the more staff required especially in these times.

In the rural area housing is very difficult to find so it is important to provide it. Dairy farms 500-700 cows require 5-6 staff – 6 houses plus the owners.

Stocking rates for these larger dairy or beef farm is 2 per ha with supplements and grazing off part of the season.

Stocking rates for small farms – all grass 1 cow per ha all year around with no supplement.

Northland has a lot of heavy soils and sometimes they cannot handle any stock in the winter months.

Suggested Viable size for rural production of 100 area (40ha) farms are not viable- they would need to be owner operated with supporting income and all the expenses and compliance to operate make these size blocks unattractive.

Allow for multiple houses on a farm -1 per 4 ha is more realistic like the current district plan , as a restricted discretionary title. 2ha as a discretionary rule for multiple houses. KEEP THIS RULE.

The cost to build is too prohibitive and allowing multiple houses per title is a cost effective and efficient use of land to ensure communities thrive.

The cost to maintain a block of land over and above you house area is a paddock is unappealing, unproductive and too expensive to maintain

20ha require farm plans that show paddocks numbered, hazards waterways (drains) etc , Nutrient plans, grazing and fert applications.

Then there is the animal side, requiring animal health and Nait registration of each animal, ear tags, and animal health plan. Cert from vets to administer medicine, drenches etc, Keeping animals healthy, supplementing fed in the winter months etc

Then the farm management of maintenance of cleaning drains when within FNDC drainage districts, bylaws to follow, fencing of waterways to keep stock out of waterways.

Then there is the weed control required for noxious weeds ie gorse, ragwort, devil ground sill, alligator weed which is spreading rapidly in the north. Having a grow safe cert to purchase sprays.

Management of all weeds is crucial to keep a clean green image for NZ.

All of these requirements are a big headache for people that just want to bit of rural life and they are made to follow these rules, the same as neighbouring large farms and they are not very good at it.

Allow them to have the smaller blocks of 2000 sq mtrs, 4000 sq mtr max. Much easier to manage

Productive sizes for horticulture varies depending on the intensity.

At present 60 ha avocado orchards are unviable. Fruit not being picked. Left to rot on the trees. I know I have one.

Farms often have more than one title from accumulated land as it is necessary to grow larger to stay economic .