

Before the Hearings Panel appointed by the Otago Regional Council

**UNDER** The Resource Management Act 1991 (**RMA**)

**AND**

**IN THE MATTER OF** The Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement

**SUBMITTER** AgResearch Limited

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**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE TO BE TABLED  
BY GRAEME MATHIESON ON BEHALF OF  
AGRESEARCH LIMITED (SUBMITTER 00208)**

23 NOVEMBER 2022

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 My full name is Graeme John Mathieson.
- 1.2 I have been engaged by AgResearch Limited (**AgResearch**) to provide planning evidence in respect of its primary and further submissions in relation to the Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (**PORPS**) (Submitter 00208). I prepared AgResearch's submission and further submission in relation to the PORPS.

## **2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

- 2.1 I hold a Masters of Regional and Resource Planning degree from the University of Otago, which I obtained in 1992. I am a Senior Consultant at Mitchell Daysh Limited, an environmental consultancy. I am a member of the Resource Management Law Association of New Zealand.
- 2.2 I have been employed as a planner and resource management professional for the past 30 years. I have provided resource management and planning advice to AgResearch in respect of its operations throughout the country (including within the Otago Region) since 1996.

## **3. CODE OF CONDUCT**

- 3.1 While this is not a hearing before the Environment Court, I confirm that I have read, and agree to comply with, the Environment Court's Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Environment Court of New Zealand Practice Note 2014). This evidence I am presenting has been prepared in accordance with the Code and is within my area of my expertise, except where I state that I am relying on the evidence of another person. To the best of my knowledge, I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions I express.

## **4. SCOPE OF EVIDENCE**

- 4.1 In preparing this statement of evidence I confirm that I have read the relevant S42A Reports (and supplementary evidence) on the non-freshwater planning sections of the PORPS. This evidence records general agreement

with the analysis, conclusions and relevant recommended amendments to the PORPS as they relate to AgResearch's submissions.

- 4.2 The key components of AgResearch's submissions relate to *Chapter 15 : UFD – Urban Form and Development* and *Chapter 9 : LF – Land and Freshwater*. AgResearch's submissions primarily seek that “*rural research activities*”<sup>1</sup> are adequately provided for as essential and appropriate activities within rural areas (including within areas of “*highly productive land*”), and are not constrained by reverse sensitivity effects arising from the establishment of incompatible activities (e.g. urban expansion, rural lifestyle development and “*sensitive activities*”). My evidence provides comment on the relevant S42A Report recommendations and analysis in relation to these key matters.

## 5. ABOUT AGRESEARCH

- 5.1 AgResearch is a Crown Research Institute (**CRI**) with four Research Campuses and 9 Research Farms, employing approximately 750 staff nationwide. Formerly known as the New Zealand Pastoral Agriculture Research Institute Limited, it was created as a CRI in 1992 out of the research arm of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the agriculture section of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.
- 5.2 Within the Otago Region, AgResearch owns and operates the Invermay Research Centre (“Invermay”) located on Puddle Alley, on the eastern outskirts of Mosgiel. Invermay consists of a 25ha Research Campus and two nearby research farms. The primary research farm is located adjacent to the Campus and is approximately 510 hectares. A second smaller (50 hectare) research farm is located approximately 400m north of the main research farm, with access from Silverstream Valley Road. Research at Invermay has an emphasis on animal molecular biology (particularly genomics), deer, sheep, land management, biocontrol and biosecurity.

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<sup>1</sup> AgResearch sought the following definition for “*Rural research activities*”:

*“Land, buildings and facilities used for research and development associated with primary production activities, including (but not limited to) buildings and structures housing animals, field trials, education facilities, conference facilities, laboratories, pilot plants for research purposes, staff and administrative offices and facilities, visitor facilities, field days, and any ancillary activities and accessory buildings.”.*

5.3 AgResearch’s facilities within the Otago Region represent a significant capital investment in research infrastructure and the research undertaken is of regional and national significance to the agricultural sector. AgResearch’s research facilities and activities are a significant physical resource within rural areas that should be appropriately recognised, provided for and protected in the PORPS.

## **6. CHAPTER 15 : UFD – URBAN FORM AND DEVELOPMENT – PROVISION FOR RURAL RESEARCH**

6.1 In terms of AgResearch’s submissions in relation to *Chapter 15 : UFD – Urban Form and Development*, AgResearch sought a number of changes to the policy framework to ensure:

- (a) “*Rural research activities*” are clearly provided for as an essential and appropriate activity within rural areas (including within areas of “*highly productive land*”); and
- (b) Existing and future “*rural research activities*” are not constrained by reverse sensitivity effects arising from the establishment of nearby incompatible activities (e.g. urban expansion, rural lifestyle development and “sensitive activities”).

6.2 The S42A Report considers “*rural research activities*” fall within the ambit of the National Planning Standards (NPS) definitions for “*primary production*”<sup>2</sup> and/or “*rural industry*”<sup>3</sup> (n.b. the S42A Report recommends including the NPS definition for “*rural industry*” within the PORPS for greater certainty). Consistent with AgResearch’s submissions, the S42A Report recommends various amendments to the policy framework that better recognise and provide for these activities within rural areas (and protect them from potential reverse sensitivity effects).

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<sup>2</sup> The NPS definition for “*primary production*” is:

- a) any aquaculture, agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, mining, quarrying or forestry activities; and
- b) includes initial processing, as an ancillary activity, of commodities that result from the listed activities in a);
- c) includes any land and buildings used for the production of the commodities from a) and used for the initial processing of the commodities in b); but
- d) excludes further processing of those commodities into a different product.

<sup>3</sup> The NPS definition for “*rural industry*” is:

“An industry or business undertaken in a rural environment that directly supports, services, or is dependent on primary production.”

6.3 I agree with the S42A Report assessment that the range of AgResearch's activities fall within the ambit of the National Planning Standards definitions for "primary production" and/or "rural industry", so accept there does not necessarily need to be specific provision for "rural research activities" at the RPS level. I have reviewed the recommended changes to the policy framework in *Chapter 15 : UFD – Urban Form and Development*, and consider they adequately address the concerns raised by AgResearch.

## **7. CHAPTER 9 : LF – LAND AND FRESHWATER AND CHAPTER 15 : UFD – URBAN FORM AND DEVELOPMENT – HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE LAND**

7.1 AgResearch sought amendments to the policy framework in *Chapter 9 : LF - Land and Freshwater* (and *Chapter 15 : UFD – Urban Form and Development*) to ensure "rural research activities" are not restricted from locating on "highly productive land". The ability to utilise "highly productive land" for research purposes is critical because of the commercial application and economic benefits for the national pastoral, agri-food and agri-technology sector.

7.2 The S42A Report second supplementary evidence relating primarily to "Chapter 9 : LF - Land and Freshwater" includes new recommendations in relation to the policy framework for "highly productive land" following the recent introduction of the National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (**NPS-HPL**). Consistent with the policy direction of the NPS-HPL, the supplementary evidence recommends a suite of amendments that generally require that within rural areas, "land-based primary production"<sup>4</sup> is prioritised on "highly productive land". The supplementary evidence takes the position that any exceptions to this prioritisation need to be determined via Clause 3.9 of the NPSHPL (and relevant provisions in District Plans as they are updated to give effect to the NPS-HPL).

7.3 AgResearch's Invermay Campus is within a site-specific *Major Facility (Invermay and Hercus) Zone* in the *Proposed Dunedin City District Plan (Appeals Version)* ("District Plan") so will not be classified as "highly productive land" under the NPS-HPL (as the facility is not within a Rural Zone).

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<sup>4</sup> The NPS-HPL defines "land based primary production" as;

"Production, from agricultural, pastoral, horticultural, or forestry activities, that is reliant on the soil resource of the land".

The adjacent Research Farms are located in the Rural Taieri Plains Zone but are specifically identified as “*Invermay Farm*” as the District Plan includes site specific rules providing for rural research. The flatter areas of the Research Farms are expected to be mapped as “*highly productive land*” so will be affected by the NPS-HPL<sup>5</sup>. However, it is accepted the recommended changes to the PORPS are appropriate given the new national policy direction of the NPS-HPL.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 AgResearch’s submission seeks to ensure that their rural research facilities and activities within the Otago Region are adequately recognised, provided for and protected in the PORPS. The key relevant S42A Report recommended amendments (and associated analysis) better achieve this outcome so are generally supported.

**Graeme Mathieson**

**23 November 2022**

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<sup>5</sup> According to the online New Zealand Land Resource Inventory Land Use Capability Maps 2021 (<https://lris.scinfo.org.nz/layer/48076-nzlr-land-use-capability-2021/>), the flattest areas of the Invermay Research Farm are classified eLUC 1w 2.