

Green Party Agriculture Policy – Key Points

Jeanette Fitzsimons, Co-leader, Hawke's Bay A&P Show, 24 October 2008

The New Zealand economy is largely sustained by our agricultural exports. The Green Party will support farmers to access premium markets that demand sustainable production, and to develop greater resilience to the risks of oil dependence and climate change. Prosperous farming needs strong rural communities with good social services.

Fair trade

- restrict the sale of land to NZ citizens or residents living here at least half the year
- introduce mandatory country of origin labeling for single-ingredient foods so consumers can choose to support local producers
- not support preferential trade deals that undermine NZ production

Sustainable production and environmental stewardship

- aim for a target to 15% of production to be certified organic or in conversion by 2015
- support OANZ and OFNZ until they are large enough to be self-sustaining with a levy
- provide advisory, mentoring and research support to organics
- develop a strategy to reduce pesticide use by 50% within 5 years, and make unconsented agrichemical trespass illegal
- make Landcorp a model of sustainable farming
- keep GE crops, animals and micro-organisms out of our farms and food, and market NZ products as GE Free
- require resource consents for conversion and intensification to ensure there are conditions to protect water quality
- phase out battery hens, sow crates except short term for farrowing, and cruel practices such as debeaking and mulesing

Climate change

- use 1990 as the base year for emissions obligations under the ETS – this would exempt sheep and beef farming unless their emissions rise above 1990 levels, and more fairly reflects NZ's Kyoto obligation
- research ways of increasing soil carbon (such as biochar and increased humus) and work to have these recognised as abatement strategies under Kyoto
- increase research into low input, low impact farming methods such as lower stocking rates for dairying, which can be just as profitable as they reduce fertilizer, supplementary feed and animal health costs

Biosecurity

- mandate a precautionary approach aimed at lowest practical risk in managing introduced organisms
- use a small levy on vessels, passengers and freight to help fund improved biosecurity protection to protect our primary sectors and natural heritage

Strengthening rural communities

- ensure health, education and communications services (such as broadband) are available in rural communities
- support the development of sustainable biofuel production that is complementary to food production rather than competing with it, and particularly using waste products, to address rising oil prices