



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

18-E-0216/DOC- 5493595

12 June 2018



Dear Ms 

Thank you for your Official Information Act request to the Department of Conservation, dated 12 May 2018. You requested the following:

*"...a breakdown of costing for aerial poisoning compared to the use of Goodnature traps and other alternatives for pest control."*

- 1) "... please could you advise for each of 1080 and brodifacoum poison drops:
  - a) The product cost per kg of 1080 baits available in NZ*
  - b) The product cost of Pestoff 20R brodifacoum baits in NZ*
  - c) Pre-feed costs per hectare for the feed*
  - d) helicopter hire cost per helicopter per hour*
  - e) Helicopter relocation costs*
  - f) DOC personnel costs*
  - g) contractor costs required for health and safety, collecting carcasses, protecting water sources etc*
  - h) costs of consulting with affected communities- including staff time, travel etc*
  - i) pre-poison monitoring costs per hectare to obtain data of what it to be killed*
  - j) post poison monitoring costs*
  - k) analysis costs/ time per hour to assess monitoring data*
  - l) regulatory costs, including costs to prepare approvals from EPA, Ministry of Health etc**

- m) and charges imposed by MoH for approvals for aerial poisoning*
- n) site signage and security costs (please break this down so far as possible to include costs of security personnel, contracts etc) including*
- o) storage costs for poison prior to drops*
- p) transport costs for poison*
- q) contingencies*
- r) any other costs*

The Department does not hold information on costs in the format you have requested. Responding to your request in this specific format will require significant time to create the information by undertaking analysis of financial records over several years. However, we do hold up-to-date information regarding average cost of aerial 1080 operations, in a format similar to that requested. I believe this addresses the fundamental basis of your request, in allowing a cost comparison between different pest control methods.

Attachment A provides average costs estimates for various elements of aerial 1080 operations, including bait costs, planning, consultation, bait storage and transport, security, signage, consents and regulatory costs. These operational estimates are calculated from average costs from previous Battle for our Birds programmes.

The department does not hold any information that could allow comparison of Goodnature traps to aerial 1080 and brodifacoum operations. No trials have been conducted to control rats with Goodnature traps at the large, landscape scale of 1080 operations such as Battle for our Birds. For example, to achieve the desired reductions in rat density requires one trap to be placed within the home range of every rat. In high density areas this means a 100 x 25-meter grid spacing between traps is required. Applying this scale of trapping to large areas of the conservation estate is impractical, if not impossible. To protect an area the size of that protected by our 2016 Battle for our Birds programme would require over 3 million traps spread over some of New Zealand's harshest terrain.

In a beech mast, which create rat plagues, there is an urgent need to cover vast areas simultaneously. Aerial 1080 is the only tool that can achieve rapid suppression during such rat plague events. No ground control method comes anywhere close. The self-resetting, or any traps could never be deployed in time to suppress a plague of rats. Even if it were feasible, with vast numbers of highly trained competent people involved, cutting the tracks to put the traps at a spacing of 25x100 meters, deployment and servicing of traps would probably take many months, just to do the same job 1080 does in a single day. In just one day, aerial 1080 can knock down rats to very low levels over as much as 20 000 hectares of forest.

DOC is dedicated and passionate about improving our methods of conserving New Zealand's wildlife. We are working with our partners and the community to develop new traps, new lures and new methodologies. Self-resetting traps have an important role to play in suppressing rat populations and preventing reinvasion. Their value in keeping rat numbers down and even eradicating pests on very small islands cannot be underestimated. In December 2013 Goodnature A24 traps for rats

were deployed over 64 hectare Native Island and eradicated the rats over about 2 months. In combination with evolving technologies in pest monitoring, these traps will be invaluable in achieving New Zealand's Predator Free goal.

The Department is also supporting experimental trials to reduce trap densities. However, even at lower experimental densities trapping is unlikely to replace other methods. In areas that are large, remote, distant and or dangerous 1080 remains an excellent and important conservation tool and is a key part of protecting New Zealand's threatened wildlife.

*2) Please also provide information about the budgeted (sic) regarding actual costs of each of the 1080 and brodifacoum drops carried out by DOC in the last three years."*

The Department does not hold the information on costs in the format you have requested – to collate this data would require substantial new work. However, I can provide similar information about the costs of aerial 1080 and brodifacoum operations in a different format.

Attachment 2 provides available data on actual costs for 55 aerial pest control operations (52 1080, 3 brodifacoum) in 2014, 2016 and 2017.

As you will be aware, the government is continuing to invest in research to alternatives to 1080 as part of the vision for a predator-free New Zealand. However, it is likely that 1080 will continue to play an important role and is currently our most effective tool for controlling pests. There is now a significant body of scientific research supporting the use of this conservation tool for halting biodiversity declines.

You are entitled to seek an investigation and review of my decision by writing to an Ombudsman as provided by section 28(3) of the Official Information Act.

Please note that this letter (with your personal details removed) and enclosed documents will be published on the Department's website.

Yours sincerely



Hilary Aikman  
Director National Operations