

Productivity Commission Submission

Farming the land is the soul of our nation. The recent trend to utilizing five-fold amounts of nitrogen in topdressing is largely the cause of the sudden degradation of our soils, rivers and lakes. Nitrogen runoff is creating large dead zones in the sea the largest due to intensive cotton and maize farming along the Mississippi River. The destructive impact of topdressing in all forms of farming worldwide is the most significant factor in the warming of the oceans.

Both Polar Regions are warming rapidly causing huge amounts of loss of ice and snow. The effects are snowballing. Large sea-level rises are imminent and our cities are vulnerable to any sea-level rise.

What we are dealing with here is the loss of benign conditions to live in and farm in. Farmers benefit from converting back to organic principles of farming.

In his book recently published 'Growing a Revolution' David Montgomery demonstrates the value of organic techniques that create greater productivity at less cost. In addition these organic ways create soil depth and fertility, protect rivers and lakes and the greater environment. Putting aside topdressing with nitrogen has so many benefits. Innovating the best ways from that action to maximize yield, provides farmers leeway to design their own future.

In the near future as weather events become more severe getting produce around the world will become more hazardous. There is a strong case for some diversification especially to health giving products like olives, soybeans and nuts.

Redesigning the way we farm to deal with climate change and to protect our water can only be constructive.

In the 2013 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, over sixty agricultural scientists were brought together to formulate a farming strategy to best meet climate change. Overwhelmingly

they recommended that current chemical-based farming should be put aside and new researched organic-based farming methods be adopted.

It is my view that countries around the world are not doing anywhere near enough to stop rampant global warming. In New Zealand our fight to tackle climate change hasn't even started.

If farming throughout the country switched to organic methods it will be a signal to other nations that we are up for the fight. Also organic products are likely to gain premium prices from our trading partners.