

BEFORE THE HEARING PANEL OF SOUTHLAND REGIONAL COUNCIL

In the matter of sections 88 to 115 of the Resource Management Act 1991

And

In the matter Applications for resource consents by:

T J AND J A DRISCOLL

Applicants

EVIDENCE OF TIM AND JOCELYN DRISCOLL

20 January 2010

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1. My name is Timothy (Tim) Driscoll, and myself and my wife Jocelyn Driscoll are the trustees of the T & J Driscoll Family Trust. We are the applicants on behalf of the trust in relation to the proposal to use land for farming purposes (expanded dairying), to discharge effluent to land from 680 cows, and to take groundwater for stock and shed water purposes.
2. My family has been farming in Southland since 1905 and I'm the 4th Generation to farm this land. 145 hectares is the home property, 29 hectares was added in 2012, 36 hectares was added in 2014 and the last 14 hectares was added in 2017. I am a born and bred Southlander and apart from 3 years studying at Lincoln University and one year overseas have always lived in Southland.
3. My parents John and Carol Driscoll (J & C Driscoll Family Trust) live on the property and own ½ of the 145 ha block and the 36 ha block. The T & J Driscoll Family Trust lease this land off the J & C Driscoll Family Trust. The remaining land is owned by the T & J Driscoll Family Trust.
4. My wife Jocelyn is a Physiotherapist and is currently involved in cancer rehabilitation care part time and is a member of the Southland District Health Board Community Health Council. We are very committed to the area and community we live in and are on the Board of Trustees and PTA for the local school and are also involved in local squash and soccer clubs.
5. I am also Chair of the Southern Dairy Development Trust which is part of the Southern Dairy Hub, am an inaugural member of our local catchment group, and am an alumni member of the dairy leaders advisory group. Most recently I have been appointed by the Ministry of Primary Industries to the Winter Grazing Action Group designed to implement the recommendations of the Winter Grazing Taskforce Group.
6. The farm was converted to dairy in 2012, prior to that I worked 10 years as a Rural Professional which included 6 years as an Agribusiness Manager for Westpac and time as a farm consultant and fertiliser sales.
7. I have been running the family farm since 2012. My parents were sheep farmers and due to economics and family succession we decided to convert to the property to dairy. This has enabled the property to create an income for our 2 families as well as our 3 staff. We are not a corporate or syndicate farm and our family business is our pride and joy and we certainly want to leave the farm in a better state for the next generation. Our staff also benefit from the family business through extra attention to detail and time spent with them.
8. We have four young boys, aged 2 - 7 which drives our desire to farm in a sustainable manner that we hope can also provide opportunities for them in the future.

9. Good environmental management is very important to us. We always aim to employ best practice throughout our operations. We view this as being essential to the role we play in our community.
10. We employ professional consultants to guide us on farm improvement and Completed an Environment Southland Farm Environment Plan in 2016. We have had no compliance issues since the conversion of the property, and often have visitors on farm comment on the tidy nature and presentation of our property.

Existing Operation

11. Our existing dairy platform encompasses 210 hectares of flat to very gently sloping land. We already have an existing resource consent which enables us to milk 599 cows. Our original conversion was consented in 2012.
12. The existing infrastructure on our farm is built and maintained to a high standard. We utilise a 50-bail rotary dairy shed. Our effluent storage pond was built with excess capacity to provide greater management flexibility in terms of the management and application of effluent. The pond is a 90-day synthetic lined storage pond. At the time we constructed this pond, we made the decision to proceed with a synthetic lined as to future proof future requirements. The pond also has a simple leak detection system in place.
13. We typically try to operate a simple farm system, which enables us to utilise all of the feed which we can grow, we do however graze off all young stock and winter 75 – 100 cows on farm.
14. Good Management Practice (GMP) is the cornerstone to how we operate on our property. Practice such as back fencing on the paddocks is something that we have done for many years. We also only apply Nitrogen fertiliser when the conditions and the soil temperatures are adequate. There are other things that we are also doing such as sowing plantain in our pasture mixes which is not currently recognised in Overseer as reducing N leaching. We endeavour to be at the forefront of new technologies and are always exploring new ways to be better environmentally and sustainably.
15. Within our existing farming operation, we currently employ three people, who are an integral part of our farming business and the Winton community.

Background to Application

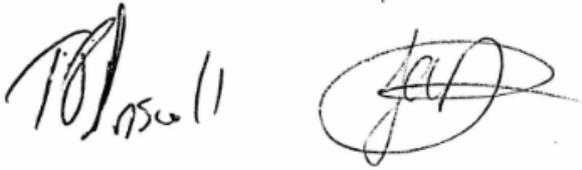
16. In 2017 we purchased the "East Block" from Mr and Mrs Norman. This property adjoins the eastern boundary of our existing dairy platform and provided what we saw as an opportunity to expand our existing operations in a manner which will result in an overall reduction in Nitrogen and Phosphate losses. We purchased 13.9 hectares of which is all completely flat with no open drains surrounding it.
17. Prior to our purchase of this block, the property was used as a sheep grazing block.
18. Since purchase of the property we have re-grassed the property entirely, installed a new water system, installed a new access lane linking the rest of the property, we have wintered some R2's on the property, cut the block for baleage and run some calves on the block before they went to grazing.

Summary of Consent Proposal (Proposed Operations)

19. As a result of the opportunity to add the additional land (East Block), we decided to also work through adding an additional 81 cows to our existing consented operation. This would see our total peak milk cow numbers increase from 599 to 680 over an area of 224.5 hectares. In our opinion we considered this to be a positive effect as this proposal would reduce our Nitrogen and Phosphate losses, which we believe will be positive in terms of our environmental footprint. For our property it also means we can employ a third employee to make our farm a more sustainable workplace (we have done this since 2017) In summary our proposed farming operations would include;
 - 224.5 ha total land holding, peak milking 680 cows. The key mitigations to reducing our Nitrogen and Phosphorus losses are as follows:
 - No fodder crops grown on farm, all stock are wintered on a paddock, shifted onto fresh grass and fed baleage daily.
 - The East block won't be grazed in August or May.
 - We will change feed fed through the in-shed feeding system; to a mainly barley (or a feed with similar nutrition lower protein feed) fed system
 - On the East block we will change our Phosphate fertiliser to a RPR type of fertiliser.
 - There will be some minor adjustments to some fences on a laneway and bridges to ensure there is no runoff into waterways
20. It should also be noted that the losses from the East block are lower than budgeted and normal as a result of not being able to use the block for its intended purpose since 2017. We haven't artificially intensified the losses for the block during that time and have acted in good faith.

Summary

- Prior to starting this process some 24 months ago, we sought to engage the advice of a range of experts to ensure that we undertake the proposed addition of land and cows in a manner which minimised effects on the environment. Our approach has always been to think things through by talking to the right people and take time to consider that advice and make sure we do it right.
- As family farmers we genuinely believe that this proposal is better for the environment and more sustainable long term than the current farming system. This farm is our life not just our business, and we are driven to be good stewards of the land for not only ourselves but for our children.

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'T.D. Driscoll' and the signature on the right is 'J. Driscoll'.

Tim and Jocelyn Driscoll