IN THE MATTER	Of the Resource Management Act 1991
AND	
IN THE MATTER OF	A Resource Consent Application to discharge agricultural effluent to land from up to 840 cows, to take 85,800L/day of groundwater and to use land for two winter barns, a new agricultural effluent storage facility, and to establish a new dairy farm at 444 Springhills-Tussock Creek Road
BY	Capil Grove Limited
REF	APP-20222055

STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE NELSON LINDSAY ON BEHALF OF CAPIL GROVE LIMITED

INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Nelson Lindsay

2. I am the trustee of the family trust which owns the company Capil Grove Limited, the land owner of Farm 444, at 444 Springhills-Tussock Creek Road.

3. To run the farm owned by Capil Grove Limited we have formed a separate company called Arlake Limited. Arlake Limited is run by Carl and Blake Lindsay, my sons.

4. I have worked alongside and been involved in the dairy industry for 3 decades now through my involvement with Winton Stock Feed Ltd. Winton Stockfeed imports and distributes molasses as supplementary feed for cattle.

5. My evidence is given in relation to the application for resource consent for the conversion of Capil Grove's Farm 444 from Dairy Support grazing to Dairying.

FARMING OBSERVATIONS

6. Farming has been through cycles. What were small family farms are now larger commercial operations. While the older farms were basic they would have had a local impact on their surrounding environment. As farms have got bigger, the reach of that impact has grown. We need to manage impacts so they are sustainable. This requires a balance between environmental outcomes, financial considerations and what the wider community want.

7. I watch some dairy farms in our community try to operate on a low cost system. This is where there is very little spent on infrastructure - small effluent ponds, no feed pads and no barns.

8. I understand there needs to be significant investment to do things better. Doing things better will help the environment, but if we do it right it will also help our financial wellbeing and benefit our community.

OUR FARMING PRACTICE

9. We began dairy farming with a barn at Capil Road in 2017. We relined the existing effluent ponds and are about to increase storage further. We understand the value of effluent. This can be measured by the cost, both financial and environmental, of nitrogen and phosphate disappearing down the drains and into the rivers. We see the results of this valuable resource when applied to the land when the soil temperature is elevated and the plants are growing and, in a state where they can take in the applied nutrients. This works best in the dry periods and with enough storage that applying of effluent can wait to be applied in summer.

10. We also understand the costs of cows pugging the soil. On our Capil Grove property we have a barn to put the cows in when the soil gets wet. This can happen at any time of year and we do not hesitate to put the cows in the barn when there's a storm or when the soil conditions are wet.

11. When there's a storm, cows left in the paddock find shelter and do not eat. They reduce their intake, and they reduce their milk production. They also pug and concentrate excreta where they stand. To avoid pugging and concentration of excreta, and to maintain milk production we put the cows in the barn, where they are fed a concentrated ration and continue to produce milk. Happy and content cows produce milk. This is how we can predict a much larger milk production than the Southland average which has the average cow eating very little when the weather is adverse. While there are clear financial benefits of the barn operation, there are significant environmental benefits. Cows on wet paddocks push a lot of the grass before eating it into the ground with their feet due to the soil being soft with the rain. This means you need to grow more grass to feed the same cow. This can be done by bringing in supplements. If done in the paddock this approach only serves to concentrate nutrients in the paddocks around wet feeding areas, increasing the loss of nutrient from the pugged wet soils into the drains.

12. We want to do more to avoid nutrients being lost from our farm, making it more productive with a smaller environmental footprint. We want to take the learnings from Capil Grove and apply them to Farm 444, and do better than what has occurred in the past.

NEED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

13. I watch other farms renewing consents with minimal requirements for environmental improvements. I see effluent being applied in August when dairy farms run out of storage. With our old 100 % pasture farming ways, New Zealand farmers are often very poor at managing excreta running off into the drains and off to the river after rain. The faeces get mixed with the mud with their feet to make a slurry that also runs into the drain with the water. Getting cows off paddocks and onto feed pads, loafing pads or into barns is vital in my view to look after our pasture and soil, plus of helps to avoid runoff of sediment and excreta when things get wet. Using a barn and feed pads has the benefit of urine and faeces going into a pond waiting to be applied when the soil is dry and the plants are actively growing. This approach benefits the environment, is financially sound and also looks after cow welfare.

FARM 444

14. We bought a farm in 2020, 444 Springhills Tussock Creek Road which came with a 10-year-old twin pit herringbone milking shed set up for sheep milking. With very little changes it can be converted to a cow milking shed. The yards are the right size and shape. There is an existing wintering barn. We propose to build a further big barn and two very large effluent storage ponds.

15. Capil Grove is poised to make a significant investment in what we consider sustainable farming in Southland. It will cost us millions of dollars to upgrade the infrastructure at Farm 444 to achieve the high standard of stock care and environmental responsibility that we are committed to.

CONCLUSIONS

16. I am aware of the pollution problems that can come with poorly managed dairying. I do not want my sons running a farm like the average dairy farm is being run in Southland. We can do better. My sons are wanting to continue to demonstrate that this proposed dairy operation can have a significant improvement on the environmental when compared to what currently exists.

17. We understand that the farming system we are proposing, not just the barn but herd management, is new. This can be difficult to reconcile with existing beliefs about dairy farming.

18. We are excited by the opportunity to demonstrate how things can be better.

Nelson Lindsay
23 May 2023