



## NOIC NEWSLETTER

4<sup>TH</sup> QUARTER 2019

### Welcome

In this Quarterly Newsletter we welcome Emily Anderson as our new Environmental Manager, who has some hot tips for riparian planting & getting prepared for the new irrigation season

### Important Notices

#### Irrigation Season 2019-20

*If you require assistance with irrigation, environmental plans or admin matters please don't hesitate to call and make an appointment for someone from the NOIC team to visit. Call us on 03 433-1201.*

### General News

The main topic of discussion recently has been the Governments proposals for new standards intended to improve freshwater quality in both urban and rural environments. Few New Zealanders would argue with the objective; however, the proposals are deficient in areas of science, economic effect, timing and relevance. Many of the 17,500 submissions on these proposals (including from NOIC) will have identified these deficiencies and pointed out the need to recognise the natural differences between catchments across the country and allow the development of standards particular to each. Perhaps more troubling is the messaging from the Government, which has sought to isolate the rural sector and paint them as the "bad guys" in order to garner urban support. The polls suggest this strategy has failed and New Zealanders have maintained their respect for and support of the rural sector. There is no doubt these proposals, in some form, will become legislation, but we can only hope the Government has heard the voices that have raised objective, scientifically based arguments and will modify the proposals accordingly.

Regardless, pay-outs are strong, farming is strong and global demand for sustainably produced, high quality, natural protein is and always will be strong. It's a case of producing **what** those consumers want and **how** they want it produced. That happens to tie in with how most Kiwi's, and most farmers, want the land to be managed anyway.

#### Some NOIC records broken

Supply Charges - November's Supply Charge of \$0.052 per m<sup>3</sup> was the **lowest** in the company's history.

This betters the previous low of \$0.06 per m<sup>3</sup> in December 2009. Average Supply charges for the first three months of this season are

- \$0.05 per m<sup>3</sup> less than the same period last year, and
- \$0.02 per m<sup>3</sup> less than the same period in 2017.

This saving is due to a renegotiated power contract agreed last year, and not recovering any operational costs from Supply charges.

Supply charges reflect variations in each month's contracted power price and the actual volume of irrigation pumped. We have the certainty of fixed power prices until April 2022.

Supply charges will be \$0.09-0.15c per m<sup>3</sup> in the shoulder season and at times of low demand. When demand is high, Supply Charges will be in the range of \$0.05-0.07 per m<sup>3</sup>.

Water volumes - the ramp-up in demand in the first week in December was as rapid as anyone can recall. The volume delivered on Thursday Dec 5<sup>th</sup> (386,000,000 litres) was the second highest volume in a single day in NOIC's history. The dry winds and high ET were behind this record demand.

### Your Admin

Meter Readings - thanks to everyone who sent their readings in on time for the November water charges. Invoicing was completed ahead of the deadline and **Nov water charges were the lowest in NOIC history.**

The NOIC office will be closed on Dec 24<sup>th</sup> and re-open on Monday Jan 6<sup>th</sup>. It is important that ALL readings are in before Kathy gets back from holiday. Entering readings and invoicing will need to be completed in record time to meet deadlines.

Please send in the reading together with your offtake number by:

- Logging in to the Shareholders' area of the website [www.noic.co.nz/shareholders](http://www.noic.co.nz/shareholders); or
- Texting - 0274 815 2845; or
- Emailing - [office@noic.co.nz](mailto:office@noic.co.nz); or
- Phoning - 03 433 1201

*Early readings are welcome at the end of the month.*

If you have not used any water, we still need to know this. Send your reading in as "Nil Used" and remember to write in the offtake number.

If you have any problems reading the meter or accessing the website, let the office know and the team will be glad to help.

If readings are not supplied, we will send one of the operators to read it and a fee of \$125+GST will apply.

Office hours – the NOIC office will close on Dec 24<sup>th</sup> and re-open on Jan 6<sup>th</sup>.

See Summer Reminders below for availability of Operations staff.

## Operations Update

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While irrigation demand is extreme now, the end of September proved to be a bit of a false start as in October demand slowed to a trickle. This shows how important it is that NOIC maintains a high level of flexibility in the scheme to ramp up and ramp down according to your need for water.

We are up to date on the winter maintenance tasks that were deferred due to being “irrigation ready” due to demand back in July and our current focus is on optimising control functionality across the pump stations, along with day to day operations and maintenance tasks.

We recently had our first major leak on the 1100mm steel main pipeline where it crosses the Waiareka Creek at Queens Flat. At 4.5m deep, beside the creek, this was a repair that should have taken weeks to complete, however, the response from the Ops team, SSG and Palmers was outstanding, with disruption to supply limited to 4-5 days.

This leak does provide a reminder to all shareholders and farm managers that NOIC infrastructure will require repairs and maintenance and that some of this cannot be planned. We do understand the impact of these disruptions to your businesses and endeavour to complete works as quickly and safely as possible. We do strongly recommend that you have appropriate short-term contingency plans in place for alternative water supply should the need arise in the future.

### Summer Reminders from the Operations Team

- Please ensure all on-farm valves (manual or automated) open and close **SLOWLY** – sudden changes impact NOIC offtake and pump station control, potentially interrupting supply to shareholders. The main ones to check are your pivot control valves!
- Please don't touch or attempt to repair anything inside the NOIC Offtake box – if there is a problem, **call a NOIC technician/operator**.
- We provide a 24/7 service to our shareholders but remember that after-hours, on weekends and during the Christmas holidays this service is provided by a single staff member, there to ensure the entire NOIC system remains operational. Please remember to use this service only if urgent and the issue cannot wait until the next working day.
- Identifying and alerting NOIC to offtake issues early in the day or week will help ensure the most rapid response from NOIC operators
- If you have an issue, please call the office on 03 433 1201 or 0800 333 437 and a work order will be lodged and issued to available operators. Please do not call operators directly.

## Environmental Update

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### Introducing Emily Anderson - Environmental Manager

Emily was brought up on a sheep station in Central Otago. She has a bachelor's degree in resource management and has worked for Department of Conservation and ECan in land management and advisory roles and, more recently, for Morven Glenavy Irrigation.



Emily is very approachable and happy to provide assistance on any environmental management queries or improvement concerns or plans you may have for your property. She is currently visiting those farmers who are being audited this season to help prepare them for their Farm Environment Plan Audits.

### Topic for this month - Riparian Planting

We've had a few requests lately for advice around planting sites – which is fantastic! I am able to come and visit on farm to advise you on strategic planting, especially to target run-off and Critical Source Area management.

Having a 5 – 10-year planting plan which prioritises your highest risk areas first is advisable. Planting plans are easy using the Dairy NZ riparian planting tool – check it out at:

<https://www.dairynz.co.nz/environment/waterways/riparian-planner/>

By typing in your address this tool finds your farm on a satellite type map. You can then highlight the area you want to plant. The tool will estimate the cost to plant the project site. Remember to be strategic with your planting projects as often rank grass can be enough to filter run-off.

### The New Irrigation Season is here – helpful tips to get yourself prepared!

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#### CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT

##### - Leaks

Water in the wrong place is water wasted! Check for leaking hydrants, broken pods and sprinklers, split pipes and check end guns.

##### - Do a Bucket Test

Bucket tests tell you how much water you are applying and how even your application is. Knowing how much water you are applying is critical for irrigation scheduling. Does your pivot control and bucket test agree on application rate? How effective is your rate of application – is water infiltrating into the soil, ponding or running off?

##### - Flows & Pressures

If you take water directly from the Waiareka Creek, check your pump to ensure that flow and pressures are within 10% of operating design. The wearing of pump impellers can significantly impair



performance over time. This is critical to application efficiency.

- Pre-season maintenance (start-up) checklists are necessary, these are available on the NOIC website or <https://www.irrigationnz.co.nz/PracticalResources/RiskAdvice/StartUp>

#### MAKE A PLAN

- **Think about your seasonal plan**  
Identify your higher production areas and your lower production areas. Does your system have the capability to isolate areas of lower performance if the season gets tight?

#### IRRIGATE INTELLIGENTLY

- **Use information and data to schedule each irrigation event**  
Efficient irrigation is only possible with smart scheduling. Knowing when to irrigate and how much to apply will save you time and money.
- **Invest in soil moisture monitoring equipment & pay attention to weather forecasts**  
Linking soil moisture monitoring with weather forecasts will allow you to take advantage of any rainfall during the irrigation season and prevent the risk of over-irrigation and the risk of run-off.
- **Monitor Compaction**  
Compaction significantly reduces infiltration rates. Graze in advance of the irrigator to reduce soil compaction - stock hooves compact wet soils. It is a good idea to take a spade with you during the season to check on soil compaction.
- **Keep Records**  
Make sure you are recording your irrigation data and decisions for when the auditor arrives.

#### TRAIN YOUR STAFF

- NOIC's New Manager Training days were in October but if you have any new staff that you need to upskill, let us know. Your irrigation equipment is expensive and poor irrigation can lead to poor environmental outcomes. Ensure your staff know how to use the equipment properly and how to optimise water use to avoid damage to gear and the environment.

## Community

### Helpful Hint – from Alpine Energy

Alpine Energy know irrigation is an essential part of farming but mixed with electricity it can quickly become dangerous.

Follow their top tips to ensure safety on your farm and avoid disruptive and expensive power outages

- **Distance** – Keep irrigators at least 4m away, ideally further, from overhead lines
- **Placement** – Make sure jet irrigators and the booms of rotary irrigators are not directed at power lines.
- **Movement** – Ensure pipes or metal parts aren't accidentally swung into lines.

- **Power** – Treat every electric wire as live at all times.
- **Guidewires** – Take care working around the guide wires on electrical poles – bumping these wires can cause the lines to snag.

Accidental contact between irrigators and overhead power lines is a genuine concern on New Zealand farms.

Irrigation equipment in close proximity of power lines can be fatal for you or your farm staff.

Alpine Energy teamed up with EA Networks, Orion, Mainpower and Network Waitaki to produce a handy one-page information guide for you and your staff.

This guide can be found on this link <https://www.alpineenergy.co.nz/safety/farm-safety/irrigation-plus-electricity-can-be-fatal>

There were 5 incidents last irrigation season where water from irrigators connected with power lines, causing outages and infrastructure damage.

If you receive the Central Rural Life newspaper, there is an article in Farm Safety about working safely with irrigators and power lines in the 6<sup>th</sup> November edition that is worth a read also.

*We hope this irrigation season will be great for farming and great for you.*

*We hope you find time to reflect on what a key part you play in this country.*

*Merry Christmas and best wishes from the NOIC team*

#### Shares Available

Up to 80 Shares available for sale and/or lease  
Contact: Derek Chalmers  
027 496 7177

Shares to Lease:  
Brenda McLeod 100-130 shares please call 027 513 1100

22 shares for sale  
Contact: Doug Rodgers 027 609 9071