

**SUBMISSION ON CENTRAL HAWKES BAY DISTRICT COUNCIL PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN**

**TO:** Central Hawkes Bay District Council  
P O Box 127  
Waipawa 4240

**BY EMAIL:** districtplan@chbdc.govt.nz

**SUBMISSION TO:** Central Hawkes Bay District Council Proposed District Plan

**NAME OF SUBMITTER:** Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited

**ADDRESS FOR SERVICE:** Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited  
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This is a submission by Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited<sup>1</sup> on the Proposed District Plan.

Ballance cannot gain a trade competition advantage through this submission.

This submission is divided into two parts as follows:

**Part A:** Introduces Ballance, its activities and shareholders; and

**Part B:** Sets out the specific submissions and relief sought by Ballance.

Ballance seeks the relief set out in this submission, including such other additional, alternative or consequential relief as may be necessary to give effect to the changes sought.

Ballance wishes to be heard in support of this submission.

Signed for and on behalf of Ballance by



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Dominic Adams

Environmental Manager

5<sup>th</sup> August 2021

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<sup>1</sup> Hereafter referred to as 'Ballance'

## **Part A: Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited**

Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited is a farmer-owned co-operative with over 19,000 shareholders and approximately 800 staff throughout New Zealand. We own and operate super-phosphate manufacturing plants located in Tauranga and Invercargill, as well as New Zealand's only ammonia-urea manufacturing plant located at Kapuni, South Taranaki.

In addition to manufacturing and sales Ballance provides farm sustainability services including nutrient management advice. We place a strong emphasis on delivering value to our shareholders and on the use of the best science to inform sustainable nutrient management.

Reinforcing this, Ballance has extensive interest in the development of tools to manage nutrient losses on farms. Ballance, with Ag Research, has undertaken extensive research into 'MitAgator' which is a GIS-based water quality decision support tool that links with OVERSEER® to refine the latter models output. The use of management tools such as MitAgator, provides greater insight into the spatial variability of nutrient (as well as sediment and microbial) loss within a farm landscape and allows users to identify critical source areas (or 'hot spots') for nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and microbial loss across their own farm. Targeted application of mitigation and management strategies to these critical source areas help to provide more cost-effective environmental management solutions for farmers, while ensuring that effective water quality outcomes can be achieved in timeframes that recognise the socio-economic impacts of changing farm management practices.

The Company also owns and operates 'SealesWinslow' (a high-performance compound feed manufacturer) and the agricultural aviation company 'Super Air'.

The majority of our concerns in relation to the proposed District Plan relate to our Super Air operation. Super Air is the largest topdressing company in New Zealand and runs state of the art aircraft utilising the SpreadSmart system which uses geospatial referencing and computer controlled hydraulics to deliver market leading product placement. Super Air has a growing clientele in Central Hawkes Bay including a five year contract to topdress all of the government owned "Pamu" farms in the region.

Ballance supports the intent of the proposed District Plan which has an overall aim to manage natural and physical resources that are important in the district and to ensure that environmental qualities and values are safeguarded for future generations to enjoy. Ballance recognises that safeguarding the environment and ensuring our interactions will enable a resilient economy that can thrive, is a priority for New Zealand and we also recognize that farmers support this - with a large number of them, whom we are involved with, already implementing measures and planning further mitigations to reduce nutrient and contaminant losses from their farms.

Our main points of concern are to ensure that the proposed District Plan does not lead to any unintended negative impacts on the area's environment, and economic and social aspirations. With our expertise in aerial spreading, we have detailed below the areas of the proposed District Plan which have the potential to have significant detrimental effects on agricultural production within the district. We note that central government policy relating to climate change, with planned increases in forestry, puts pressure on the Hawkes Bay region as an established significant food producing area. Food production systems need to be optimised and supported by suitable regional and district policies to help establish a resilient primary sector which will form an integral part of the success of any region in New Zealand.

Part B of this submission addresses the parts of the proposed District Plan that are relevant to the interests of Ballance.

Part B: Reasons for Submission and Decisions Sought by Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited

Provision	Clause	Support/ Oppose	Reason	Decision sought
NOISE-S5 Specific Activities exempt from the Noise Limits in NOISE-S4.  (Agricultural Aviation Movements)	<p><b>11.</b> Exempt for up to 14 days in any calendar year.</p> <p><b>12.</b> Otherwise, must comply with the noise limits as for rural airstrips (NOISE-S5(13), (14) &amp; (15)) and helicopter landing areas (NOISE-S5(16), (17) &amp; (18)).</p>	Oppose	<p>The clause seeks to limit agricultural aviation movements to 14 days in any calendar year. The current wording of the clause will have significant unintended negative impacts on agricultural production in the Central Hawkes Bay area and the subsequent economic and social aspirations of the district and region.</p> <p>Any one day of aerial spreading in the Hawkes Bay area may on average only represent 3 active hours of spreading due to time spent in transporting product and equipment to and from the relevant farm airstrip. In the event of weather interruptions (rain, wind, fog etc), which can happen frequently, this active spreading time can be reduced to a couple of hours or even less than one hour, requiring a return visit on the next appropriate day to complete the job.</p> <p>The restrictions placed on the operation of aircraft due to weather conditions is led by safety. Hence if aircraft movements are restricted to 14 days per year this could conceivably lead to pilots and aerial companies pushing safety boundaries and flying in more hazardous conditions in order to complete spreading jobs within the limited allowable window.</p> <p>Not all hill country farmers own an airstrip and so in many cases the same airstrip may be used to run numerous nearby spreading activities from. A 14 day restriction would lead to a first-come-first-served spreading basis and would limit the ability to service the agricultural sector in the Central Hawkes Bay area. Growth on hill country farms is based in nitrogen application at various specific times of the year (such as pre-lambing etc) to ensure adequate growth of grass and crops to prevent feed deficits. This clause would therefore encourage early spreading and sub-optimal fertiliser performance leading to greater potential nutrient losses to air and water, and reduced benefit to farmers in terms of crop or pasture growth response. Imported feeds are not generally practical on hill country farms which rely on farm-grown feed.</p> <p>It should also be recognised that agricultural aviation movements relate to spreading of fertiliser and separately lime (as a soil conditioner – not a fertiliser), as well as spraying of herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides. All of these need to be completed separately and at different times of the year, hence again they will be impacted significantly by the 14 day limit.</p> <p>The impacts of the 14 day rule on agricultural aviation is likely to lead to greater use of ground spreading equipment. In hill country farms this represents a serious risk of injury and death due to trucks rolling or losing traction on steep terrain. This has happened in New Zealand in the past and aerial spreading is recognised as a safer option for spreading and spraying in areas of steeper ground.</p> <p>Agricultural aviation movements are led by the seasonal requirements of agriculture. Movements are intermittent and are focused on specific purposes. It is clear therefore that any such movements will have limited duration and hence should not be restricted further.</p>	<p>Amend NOISE-S5 (11) and (12) to provide a total exemption for agricultural aviation movements as follows Amend NOISE S5 (11) Exempt Delete NOISE S5 (12)</p>
NOISE-S5 (13)	The day-night average sound level (Ldn) generated by aircraft movements (excluding emergency aviation movements, and agricultural aviation movements for up to 14 days in any calendar year) must not exceed 55 dB Ldn, measured at the notional boundary of any building containing a noise sensitive activity on a separate site under different ownership in the General Rural and Rural Production Zones, or at the boundary of any site containing a noise sensitive activity in all other zones.	Oppose in part	As a consequence of changes sought to NOISE S5 (11) the provision should be amended to delete reference to 14 days in any calendar year.	Amend S5 (13) as follows: and agricultural aviation movements <del>for up to 14 days in any calendar year</del>

NOISE-S5 (16)	The day-night average sound level (Ldn) generated by helicopter movements (excluding emergency aviation movements, and agricultural aviation movements for up to 14 days in any calendar year) must not exceed 50 dB Ldn measured at the notional boundary of any building containing a noise sensitive activity on a separate site under different ownership in the General Rural and Rural Production Zones, or at the boundary of any site containing a noise sensitive activity in all other zones.	Oppose in part	As a consequence of changes sought to NOISE S5 (11) the provision should be amended to delete reference to 14 days in any calendar year.	Amend S5 (16) as follows: and agricultural aviation movements for up to 14 days in any calendar year
GRUZ-R4 Agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities	1. Activity Status: PER  Where the following conditions are met: N/A	Support		Retain.
GRUZ-R5 New, or expansion of existing, rural airstrips and/or helicopter landing areas	1. Activity Status: PER  Where the following conditions are met:  a. The rural airstrip or helicopter landing area is located a minimum distance of: i. 2km from any General Residential, Large Lot Residential (Coastal), Settlement, or Rural Lifestyle Zone boundary, and ii. 500m from the notional boundary of any building associated with an existing or consented noise sensitive activity not located on the same site, and iii. 50m from a State Highway. b. Total combined aircraft and helicopter movements do not exceed a total of 1,000 movements per calendar year (excluding emergency aviation movements and agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities undertaken on the same site). c. Limited to 100m <sup>2</sup> gross floor area of buildings ancillary to the activity per site.	Support in part	It should be clear that the rule will not apply to facilities for agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities.	Clarify that the rule will not apply to facilities for agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities.

<p>RPROZ-R4 Agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities</p>	<p>1. Activity Status: PER  Where the following conditions are met: N/A</p>	<p>Support</p>		<p>Retain.</p>
<p>RPROZ-R5 New, or expansion of existing, rural airstrips and/or helicopter landing areas</p>	<p>1. Activity Status: PER  Where the following conditions are met:  a. The rural airstrip or helicopter landing area is located a minimum distance of: i. 2km from any General Residential, Large Lot Residential (Coastal), Settlement, or Rural Lifestyle Zone boundary, and ii. 500m from the notional boundary of any building associated with an existing or consented noise sensitive activity not located on the same site, and iii. 50m from a State Highway. b. Total combined aircraft and helicopter movements do not exceed a total of 1,000 movements per calendar year (excluding emergency aviation movements and agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities undertaken on the same site). c. Limited to 100m<sup>2</sup> gross floor area of buildings ancillary to the activity per site.</p>	<p>Support in part</p>	<p>It should be clear that the rule will not apply to facilities for agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities.</p>	<p>Clarify that the rule will not apply to facilities for agricultural aviation movements ancillary to primary production activities.</p>