

Waikato Farmers and Native Bush

A Report
Prepared for Environment Waikato



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
Te Raupapa

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Summary

This report is a brief summary of the results from a 2005 survey of farmers in the Waikato Region of New Zealand. In this survey, farmers were asked how they felt about native bush and what Environment Waikato could do to motivate them to plant more native bush on their property.

In general, we find approximately half of the farmer respondents to be in favour of having native bush on their property and half that are not. Rates remissions that are currently offered for planting native bush are very low and do not provide much of an incentive. Better incentive recommendations include: assisting with fencing, assisting with obtaining trees (this can be in the form of free trees or discounted trees), providing better rates remissions and assisting with planting of trees.

Introduction

In the winter of 2005, a survey was mailed to farmers in the Waikato Region. The goal of the survey was to discover how Waikato farmers feel about native bush. Several questions were asked including: whether they feel it is important to have native bush on their land, do they currently have native bush on their land, what Environment Waikato could do to motivate them to plant native bush on their land, as well as several demographic questions. The answers to these questions are presented in the rest of this report.

Farmer Response Rate

We obtained contact details for 296 farmers, 193 of these contact details included phone numbers. Contacts with phone numbers were called and asked if they would complete a mail survey. If they said yes, they were then mailed the survey as well as a \$1 scratch off lottery ticket as an incentive. For those contacts without phone numbers, surveys were mailed; however, no lottery ticket was included.

In all, we received 139 surveys for a response rate of 47%

Response Rate: 47% - 139 respondents out of a possible 296

Demographics

Demographic questions included sex, age, ethnicity, income, and type of farm. Results are represented in the following charts and tables.

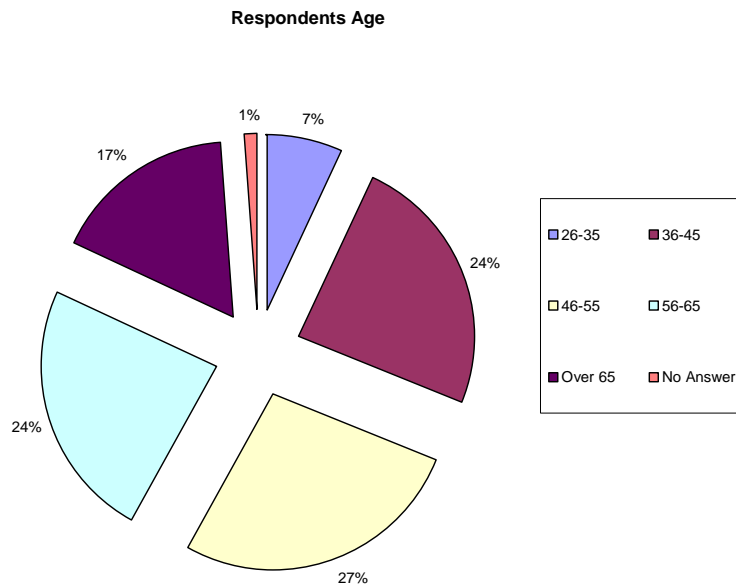
Sex:

Approximately 35% of the respondents were female, while 65% of respondents were male.

Sex Ratio: 35% Female

Age:

Respondents were asked to categorize their age into one of the following six options: under 25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65, and over 65. As can be seen, none of the respondents were under 25. The largest category was 46-55 representing 27% of respondents.



Ethnicity:

The majority of the farmers that responded to this survey were Pakeha.

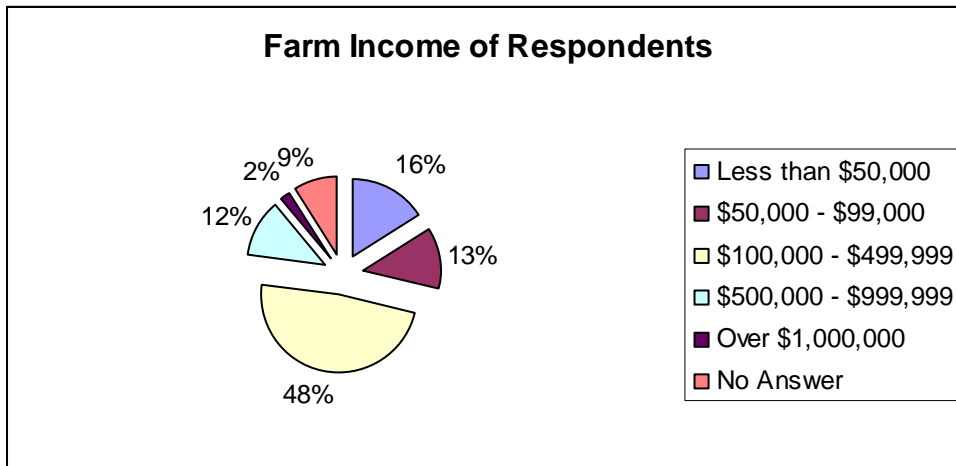
What is your ethnicity?

Pakeha	97%
Maori	1%
Asian	1%
NA	1%

Farm Income:

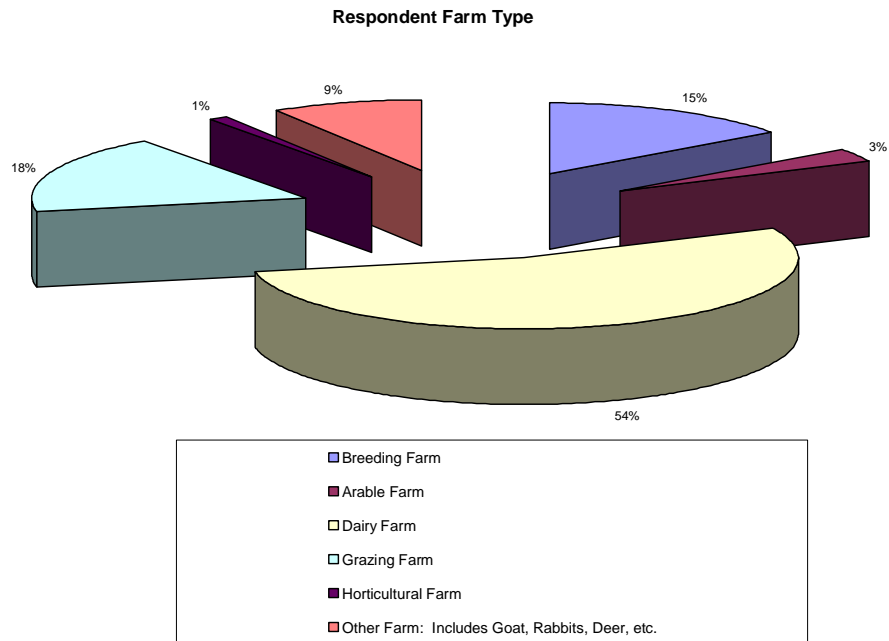
Farmers were asked to select the category that best represented their average annual income. Options included: under \$50,000, \$50,000-\$99,999, \$100,000-\$499,999, \$500,000-\$999,999, and over \$1,000,000. Almost half of the farmers annual income fell between \$100,000 and \$499,999.

Annual Income of Farm?



Farm type:

Farm types included breeding or finishing farms, arable farms, dairy farms, grazing farms, horticultural farms and “other” farms. If the farmer selected “other,” they were asked to explain what type of farm it was. “Other” responses included deer farms, goat farms, and rabbit farms, as well as several others. As can be seen, the largest group of farmers were the dairy farmers, approximately 54%. This was to be expected as the Waikato region is known for its dairy production.



Importance of Native Bush

The next set of questions included whether the respondent believes that native bush is important to have on a farm property, whether they have native bush on their property, whether rates remissions motivate them to protect native bush, as well as a few others. Results are represented in the following tables and charts.

Native bush question 1:

Do you think that it is important to have native bush on farm properties?

Yes	45%
No	50%
NA	5%

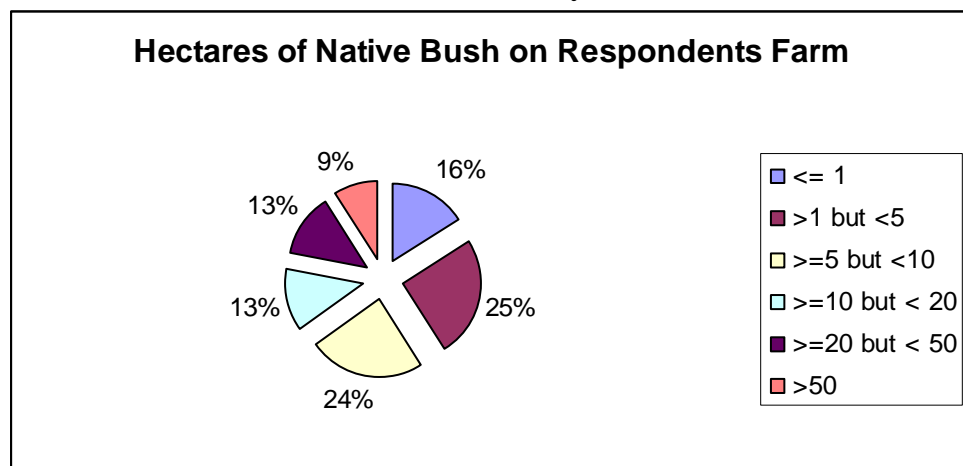
Native bush question 2:

Does the farm you currently manage/own have native bush on it?

Yes	35%
No	61%
NA	4%

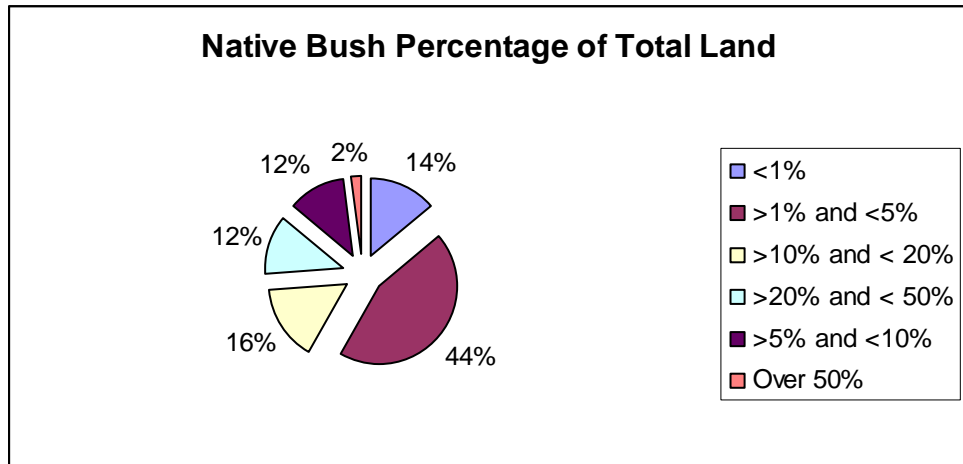
Native bush question 3:

Of the farms that do have native bush on their property, how many hectares of native bush do they have?



Native bush question 4:

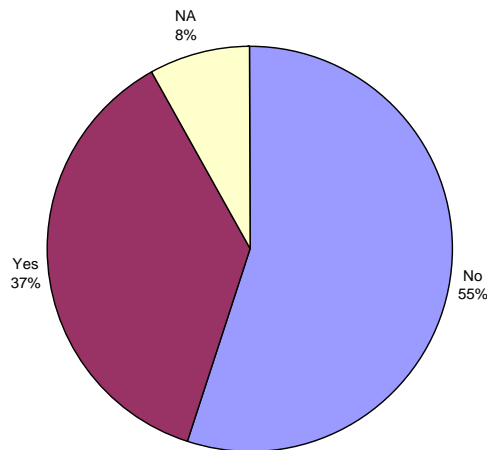
What is the percentage ratio of native bush to hectares of land on your property? (For example, 50 hectares of bush and 100 hectares of land is 50%, 500 hectares of bush and 1000 hectares of land is also 50%)



Native bush question 5:

Does the availability of rates remissions motivate you to protect native bush areas through covenants?

Do Rates Remissions Motivate You to Protect Native Bush?



Native bush question 6:

What could Councils do to give you an incentive to plant more native bush?

While 30% of respondents did not answer this question, there were 4 recommendations that came up commonly: assist with fencing, assist with tree purchasing, give bigger rates remissions, and assist with planting.

<u>Suggested Incentives for Native Bush Planting</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No Answer	30%
Fencing assistance	13%
Tree purchase assistance	12%
Bigger incentives or rates remissions	9%
Planting assistance	6%
Other	4%
Educate people about native species	4%
Cost assistance	2%
Don't Know	2%
Maintenance assistance	2%
Do Nothing	2%
Only plant natives in areas not suitable for anything else	1%
Pay all expenses	1%
The price of intensively farming means there should be no native bush on it	1%
Will not plant bush on good farmland, only unproductive areas	1%
You plant it and fence it	1%
Acknowledgement	1%
Advertise	1%
Carbon Credits	1%
Council should own their own nursery to supply plants	1%
Don't spend rates money on cinema complex and sport arenas	1%
Fund conversions	1%
Good farm land is not suited for native bush	1%
P.D. Workers should supply labor	1%
Pay for our mortgage	1%
People that want to see more native bush should contribute to a fund	1%
Put land in QEII trust and receive extra titles	1%
Remove control	1%
Stay away from farms	1%
Stop trying this	1%
Weed control assistance	1%
Total	100%

Conclusions

The results of this survey show that approximately half of the farmer respondents believe it is important to have native bush on their properties, while half do not. Current rates remissions are low and do not provide much of an incentive to plant native bush. What respondents do recommend as an incentive to plant native bush includes: assisting with fencing, assisting with obtaining trees (this can be in the form of free trees or discounted trees), providing better rates remissions and assisting with planting of trees.

Acknowledgements

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