



Speech

Agcarm President Mark Christie to the Agcarm Summer Conference

Villa Maria Estate, Mangere, Auckland

9.00am, Wednesday 25 February 2014.

Today, I want to talk about some of the regulatory changes ahead and the steps that Agcarm is taking to tackle them.

These changes will affect our industry in New Zealand and overseas. But rest assured, Agcarm is well equipped for these and any other issues that may arise.

This position is based on three factors.

Our membership is strong, our board is strong and our secretariat is strong.

Our membership is clearly growing and that's something I'll touch upon at the end of my speech.

The board is balanced and stable. And, as president, I'm supported by experienced board members with diverse skills who represent the crop protection, animal health, distributor and associate organisations.

Recent governance skill training identified that most of our processes are best practice – and they need to be to ensure that we address the changes and challenges, and provide value to you as members. We are striving to ensure all governance practices are best practice.

There are many changes.

The **first regulatory change** I want to discuss is one that many members have been waiting for. Data Protection.

We understand that some of you have been holding off on registering new uses and reformulated products. Keen to acquire a three-year guard on intellectual property.

The lack of protection as it stands today has been a long-running issue for members. But it's something we've persisted with for many years. Now there is just one more hurdle before us.

That is, when will data protection come into force?

The answer lies at the mercy of the government's legislative priorities. So it's hard to estimate when data protection will apply. What we do know is that the bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament by the end of next month - March 2015.

The **second change** will require many of you to commit to extra work and expense in the short term. The upside is that it will align New Zealand with global practice.

I'm talking about the proposal to forgo New Zealand's HSNO classification system in favour of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals or GHS.

The change will affect labelling, packaging and safety data sheets.

Submissions on the consultation by the EPA closed a few days ago. Agcarm's submission asked for a five year transition period, instead of the proposed two-years.

The **third significant regulatory** change comprises of the biggest shake up in health and safety legislation in New Zealand in 23 years. The Health and Safety at Work Act.

The EPA will become an enforcement agency to ensure that manufacturers and importers meet their HSNO obligations. This includes having the right approvals and meeting requirements for labelling, packaging and safety data sheets.

Agcarm advises the EPA on these issues through a compliance advisory group. It also gives direct feedback on the regulations as they are being written, through a health and safety regulation stakeholders group.

Both of these opportunities have allowed Agcarm to have significant input into the new regime, which is expected to begin on 1 October 2015, as it applies to our industry.

With all these regulatory changes, it's fair to say that our regulators have been busy and will be getting even busier.

There is one, however, that is struggling with its current workload and is not well placed for the increase.

So Agcarm has been pushing for a boost to resourcing for the ACVM group at the MPI.

ACVM has a critical role in the provision of modern technology to farmers and growers.

Agcarm has met with the MPI twice regarding industry concerns. MPI have said that they are aware of the issue. They are strengthening the core – of which ACVM is a part of.

Let's hope they do a little better than some of the ab machines on the market.

More recently, Agcarm wrote a submission on MPI's proposal to recover costs for food safety and biosecurity services. Agcarm was supportive of a fee increase, but only if core activities will speed up registrations.

On a global level, Agcarm has called on the New Zealand government to make its views known to Europe about proposals to restrict use of many common chemicals dubbed 'endocrine disruptors'.

In its submission, the MPI said it would urge the EU to base its decisions on a risk assessment. This is instead of the EU's proposed hazard-based approach.

So Agcarm has been hot on the case of national and international regulatory issues. But wait – there is more

Agcarm is also proactive in addressing industry issues. There are two examples of this.

Firstly, Agcarm and the New Zealand Veterinary Association are working together to improve the management of antimicrobial resistance. To achieve this, they have set up a governance group to co-ordinate research, monitor AMR, and communicate its findings.

The next piece of work took our distributor members over five years to develop. In conjunction with the Primary ITO, members developed the New Zealand Certificate in Agrichemical Supply. The qualification finally received approval from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority last year.

This level four qualification promotes safe storage, handling and use of agrichemicals and animal health products.

The programme is expected to be completed and approved this year. But it will be 2016 before it is rolled out.

In addition to regulatory changes and its work, Agcarm itself has also changed. In my introduction I spoke about the strength of the Agcarm secretariat. It now has a new leader. Mark Ross started as chief executive two weeks ago.

I'm very pleased to welcome someone of Mark's calibre to the organisation. He has strong leadership ability, as well as advocacy and policy development experience.

Mark comes from Federated Farmers, where he was General Manager of Policy and Advocacy for seven years and stood in as acting CEO. Before that Mark worked at MPI for 12 years.

Mark is well-versed in agricultural issues and has relationships with government bodies that Agcarm has regular contact with.

Mark replaces Graeme Peters who ends his seven year tenure as chief executive this Friday.

I hope you can all stay till 4.30 when I have a bit more time to elaborate on Graeme's significant contribution to Agcarm.

In the meantime we have an interesting line up of speakers presenting today.

Before I pass you over to our next speaker, I would like to welcome our new members.

We are always happy to welcome back members. So it is with great pleasure that I welcome **Tim Herman** from Pipfruit New Zealand as an individual associate member. He was with Eurofins. Now **Eurofins** have joined as a Corporate Associate member. **Zelam** will join as a manufacturer member in April.

Brad Crawford from Agworld and Mark Linton from Renovo Technologies have joined as individual associate members.

Rural Contractors were approved to join by the board yesterday

Welcome to our recent new members!

Just before I finish, I would like to thank the board for their hard work, members for their support, and to all of you for coming here today and thus ensuring another successful summer conference.

Enjoy the day and I look forward to talking with you during the day to discuss any of these or other issues.

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