

AERIAL TB CONTROL OPERATION HIHITAHİ 2016

OSPRI'S **TBfree** PROGRAMME

OSPRI's TBfree programme aims to manage and eventually eradicate bovine tuberculosis (TB) from New Zealand's farmed cattle and deer and wild animal populations. Controlling the disease prevents livestock production losses and protects the world leading reputation of New Zealand's dairy, beef and deer products. To achieve this objective, OSPRI uses possum control, along with regular herd testing and movement restrictions.

Information gathered from wild animal surveys, recent and historic findings of TB in wild animals, herd testing results and the pest control history of the region is used when planning operations.

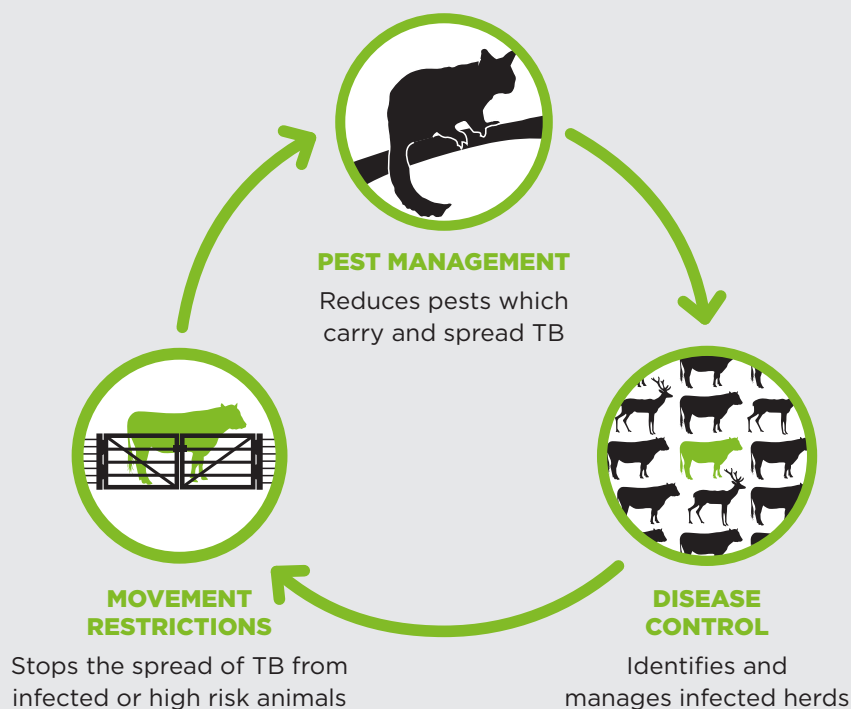


TARGETING POSSUMS

We're running a possum control operation in the Hihitahi area (please see map). It will cover approximately 2000 hectares. This could be the last time the area is treated by OSPRI's TBfree programme if no TB is found following the operation.

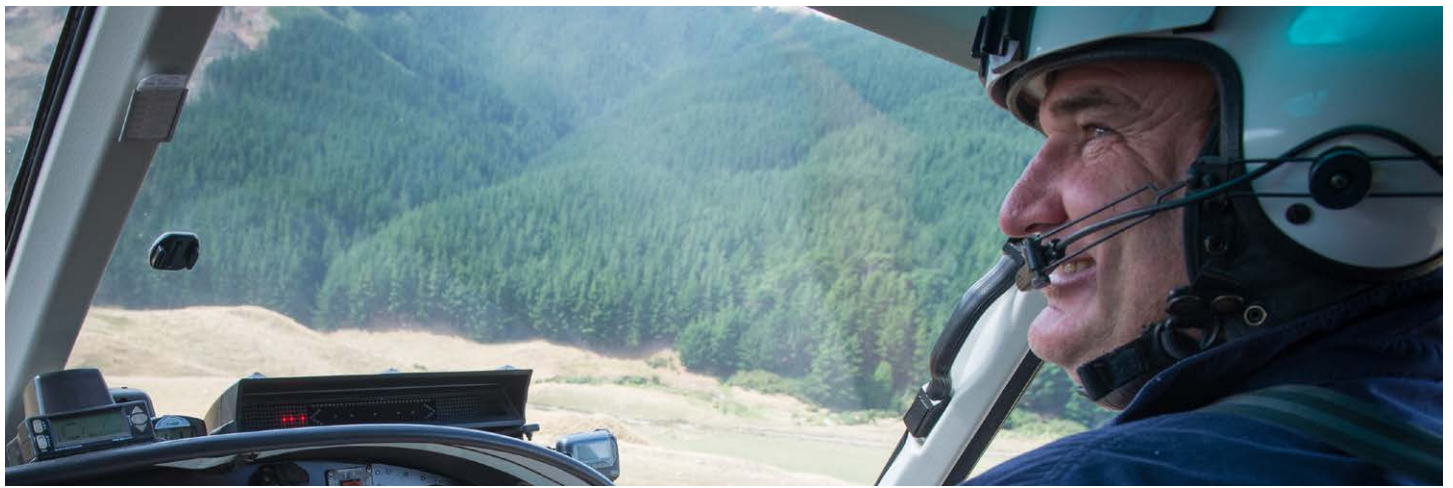
To eradicate bovine TB, possum numbers need to be kept extremely

HOW WE CONTROL TB



low – around one to two animals every ten hectares. Monitoring has shown that further control work is needed in the Hihitahi area to reduce the possum population and minimise the risk of the disease spreading through

wild animal populations to farmed cattle and deer. Possum control has dramatically reduced the number of infected herds in the Central Manawatu-Whanganui region. This area was last aurally treated in 2012.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE OPERATION

The operation will begin with the distribution of non-toxic, tan-coloured cereal pellets by helicopter. This “pre-feed” gives possums a taste for the pellets and overcomes bait shyness.

One to two weeks later (weather permitting), toxic, green cereal pellets coated with deer repellent – each containing 0.15% biodegradable sodium fluoroacetate (also known as 1080) – will be applied by helicopter at a rate of two kilograms per hectare. That’s about one bait to every 60 square metres.

The Hihitahi operation will be subject to strict safety, quality-assurance and monitoring requirements. Advanced GPS navigational equipment will be used to ensure the pellets are accurately placed and identified exclusion zones are avoided.



Baits covered in deer repellent. The non-toxic pre-feed pellets are brownish-tan while the toxic baits are green.

THE METHOD

The vast majority of possum control in the region is done by local contractors using ground-based traps and hand-laid toxins. The remaining area is controlled using aerially applied pellets containing biodegradable 1080.

Aerial control is efficient, cost-effective and has been extremely successful at knocking possum numbers down to the very low levels needed to eradicate TB from wildlife and declare areas free of TB. It is preferred in areas like Hihitahi due to the rugged nature of the terrain.

The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment supports aerial control. The Commissioner completed an extensive review into the use of 1080, in which she strongly endorsed its continued use in New Zealand.

Please visit pce.parliament.nz to read this report.

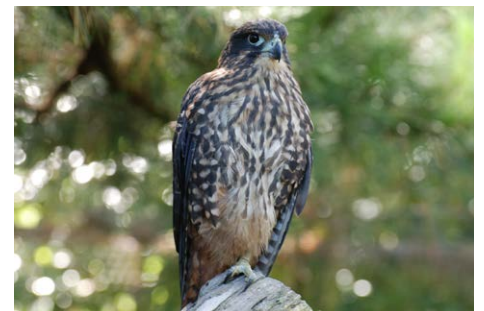
WHAT HAPPENS NOW

The Hihitahi operation is planned to begin in July/August 2016, weather dependent. A contractor will be doing the work on behalf of OSPRI’s TBfree programme. Before the operation, all landowners and occupiers within and adjacent to the proposed control area will be contacted and visited by our contractors. They will discuss boundary issues, water supply safety and the management of any risks to dogs and livestock. Consents from

the Department of Conservation and the Ministry of Health are required for this operation. Affected landowners and occupiers will be contacted again before the operation starts, notices will be published in local newspapers and warning signs will be placed at all likely access points to the operational area.

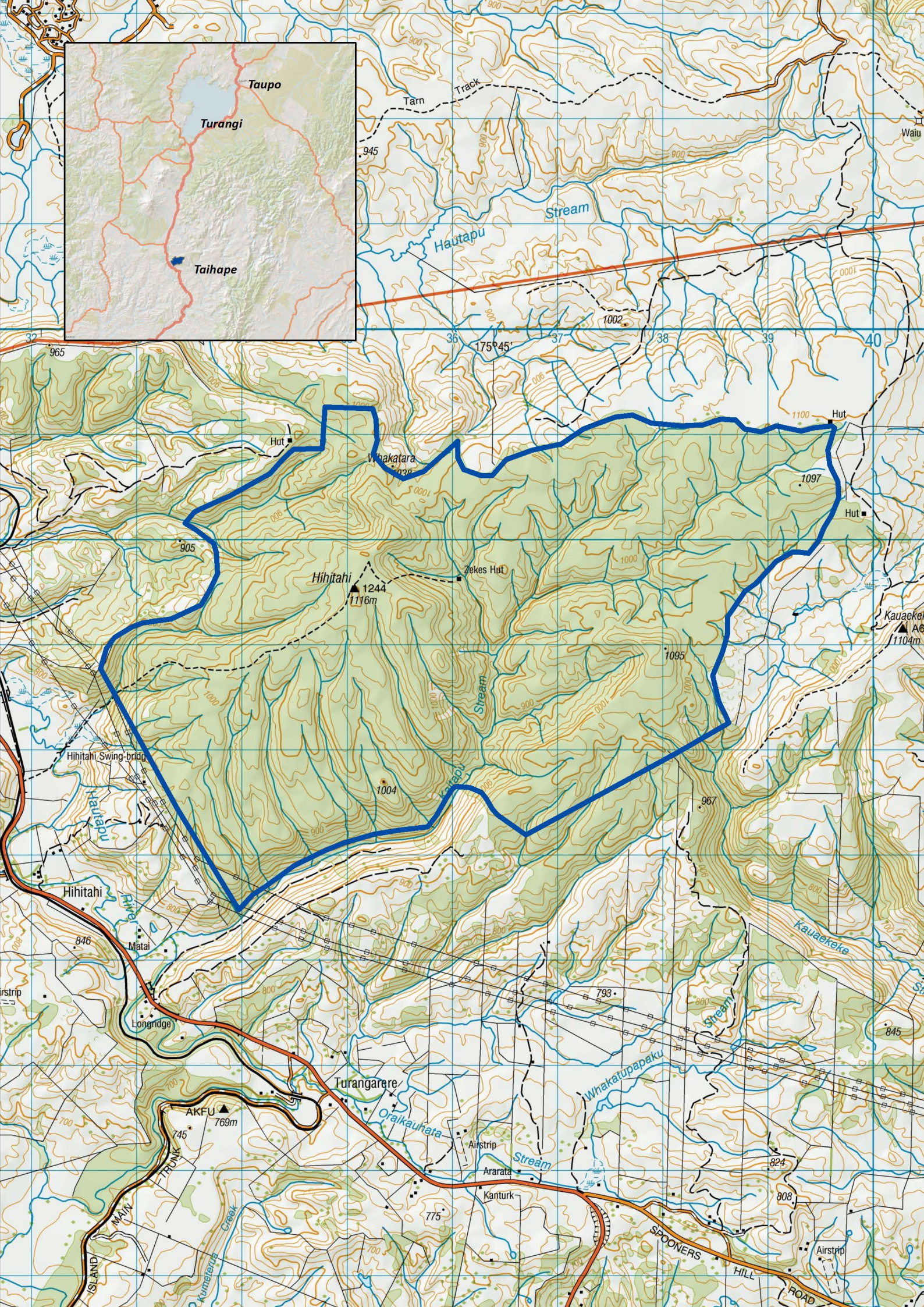
REDUCING THE IMPACT ON DEER

During the landowner consultation, land users are considered and plans are put in place to reduce any potential impact on them from the operation. In areas where there is a strong interest from deerstalkers, a deer repellent is added to the pellets making them less palatable to deer.



BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS

The operation will have additional conservation benefits for native birds and bush. Possums eat the forest canopy and prey on native birdlife, including eggs and chicks. Biodegradable 1080 is also extremely effective at controlling other introduced predators which destroy our native species, such as ship rats and stoats.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Warning signs will be placed at all main access points to the operational area and everyone must follow the cautions on the signs. There's no health risk when using this area as long as you follow these instructions:

Do not handle any bait or allow children to wander unsupervised. Cereal baits containing 1080 are dyed green.

Do not hunt or take game from within a two kilometre radius of the operational area for human or pet consumption. It's an offence

to sell meat products that have been exposed to 1080. Hunting can resume approximately four months following the control work, or after two months if 100mm of rain has fallen.

Please observe these rules whenever you see warning signs about the pesticide. Warning signs indicate that pesticide residues may still be present in baits or animals. When the signs are officially removed, you can resume normal activities in the area. Free dog muzzles will be provided on request. Please contact OSPRI on 06 353 2710 to obtain a muzzle.



Do not bring dogs into the area until the warning signs have been officially removed.

Dogs are particularly susceptible to 1080. They must not be allowed access to bait or poisoned carcasses which remain toxic to dogs until they have fully decomposed.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT POISONING

Contact your local hospital or doctor, or **dial 111**.

National Poisons Centre
0800 POISON (764 766).

If a domestic animal is poisoned, contact a local veterinarian.



FURTHER INFORMATION

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For more information on controlling bovine TB and why 1080 is used in New Zealand, visit 1080facts.co.nz

THERE IS NO RISK TO PUBLIC DRINKING WATER

Biodegradable 1080 is highly soluble and does not persist in water or soil. Local health authorities apply strict conditions to aerial operations so that drinking water supplies are not contaminated. Safety has been confirmed by tests on several thousand water samples taken after aerial 1080 operations over many years.

