CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND SIKA FOUNDATION EST. 2015

Website: www.sikafoundation.co.nz
Email: info@sikafoundation.co.nz

Central North Island Sika Foundation Inc.

Policy statement on the use of 1080 poison (sodium monoflouroacetate) to control vertebrate pests in New Zealand

Background

1. The purposes of the Central North Island Sika Foundation are:

- To actively manage the central North Island Sika herd as a "Herd of Special Interest" under the Game Animal Council Act (2014), in order to provide enhanced benefits to hunters and a higher level of protection for the forests and grasslands in which they live.
- To advance a management regime that involves a collaborative partnership between recreational Sika hunters, the Game Animal Council, the Department of Conservation, local Iwi, interested landowners and businesses with an interest in Sika.
- To achieve and maintain consistent, appropriate harvest levels of healthy Sika by better coordination of recreational Sika hunting effort.
- To increase the understanding by recreational Sika hunters of the Sika herd through better information and education.

2. Sika deer are a cultural, economic and recreational resource that is highly valued by New Zealanders. More than 30% of New Zealand's estimated 65,000 big game hunters hunt Sika annually. The annual Sika Show at Taupo, which has been running since 1993, is one of the largest outdoors/hunting trade shows in the Southern Hemisphere. The Sika industry is currently estimated to be worth $18million annually.

3. Sika are highly susceptible to poisoning from 1080 baits. They are a small forest deer that actively forages on the forest floor. Pellet or carrot baits applied to forest environments to kill pests are readily eaten by Sika and only small amounts of toxic bait are required to achieve a lethal dose. The inevitable by-kill of Sika deer from aerial 1080 baiting operations that target pests for disease control or conservation outcomes, is a contentious issue. Loss of hunting opportunity, animal welfare and pesticide residues are among

some of reasons Sika hunters are averse to the aerial application of 1080 baits.

4. Many Sika hunters also use dogs for indicating Sika. Dogs are particularly susceptible to being poisoned with 1080 through secondary by-kill via the scavenging of carcasses, even months after operations have been completed.

5. The Foundation accepts that Sika deer can and do become infected with Bovine TB and are potentially vulnerable to a wide range of other livestock diseases. Sika hunters do not wish to see the Sika herd infected with any livestock diseases.

6. The Foundation also accepts that Sika deer can have an impact on conservation values, in some forest environments, if population density becomes high.

7. The Foundation supports the need to control possums, rodents and mustelids as both vectors of Bovine TB and for conservation reasons. The Foundation recognises the threat that these vertebrate pests pose to both New Zealand's natural ecology and the potential risk that an unacceptable prevalence of TB presents to New Zealand's status as an agricultural trading nation.

8. The Foundation will cooperate with the government and other official organisations in finding sustainable solutions to NZ's conservation and animal health problems, but will be unequivocal in opposition to the aerial application of 1080 baits as a non-selective killer of Sika Deer. The Foundation believes any population control of Sika, where this is deemed necessary, should be undertaken selectively by removing females using aerial or ground based shooting/culling.

9. The Foundation reluctantly acknowledges the aerial application of 1080 baits to manage pest populations as a pest control tool in difficult or inaccessible terrain, but only until such time as alternative methods of pest control or protection of livestock from disease are found. Where such operations are proposed within Sika Habitat, the Foundation believes pest control agencies should:

    - show a clearly demonstrated need for the aerial 1080 operations, based on sound science and an inability to use alternative control methods;
    - Undertake a proper consultation process with stakeholders during the planning phase of the proposed operation(s).
    - Endeavour to mitigate any sustained or long-term negative effects on the Sika herd, Sika hunters, Sika business, landowners and the wider environment.

10. The Foundation is concerned that there is still no clearly enunciated statement from any agency responsible for the use of 1080 in New Zealand in

relation to managing the unnecessary by-kill of wild deer, including Sika. The Foundation advocates for all agencies with statutory responsibility for conservation and/or pest control (DOC, MfE, MPI, Ospri, Regional Councils) to establish a common policy and operating protocols to ensure consistent application and defensible standards around avoiding the non-target by-kill of wild deer from aerial 1080 bait application.

11. The use of deer repellents can reduce (but not eliminate) the likelihood of Sika ingesting 1080 baits. The Foundation advocates strongly that, where there is a clearly demonstrated need to aerially apply 1080 baits for pest control within Sika habitat, all agencies use such tools to minimise the unnecessary by-kill of Sika. The Foundation strongly advocates for ongoing research to refine such tools so as to maximise their efficacy.

12. The Foundation strongly advocates that an antidote for dogs be researched and developed.

Policy

The Central North Island Sika Foundation:

- Opposes the indiscriminate use of 1080 poison when used in a non-selective way to kill Sika, deliberately or otherwise.
- Reluctantly acknowledges the aerial application of 1080 baits as one of the tools to control pest populations for both conservation and Bovine TB control reasons, only as an interim measure until such time as other control methods are developed and implemented.
- Advocates for the general policy of reducing the use of toxins, including 1080, in our environment.
- Supports the allocation of sufficient resources to find more acceptable alternatives to the use of toxins in the environment, including reducing the susceptibility of domestic deer and cattle to disease.
- Advocates that an antidote for dogs be researched and developed.
- Maintains that there is currently no justification to use 1080 for the control of Sika (or any other) deer in New Zealand and strongly opposes any such use.
- Rejects the argument that limited Sika "by-kill" is an acceptable cost of aerial 1080 poisoning.
- Strongly advocates for use of deer repellent wherever aerial 1080 baits are to be applied over Sika.
- Strongly advocates for a consistent national policy around the use of 1080, which has regard to animal welfare, residue safety, consistency of application and adoption of best practice to avoid any Sika by-kill.
- Until alternative methodologies for control of pests are developed, the Foundation advocates that the aerial application of 1080 is carried out in ways that:

- are consistent nationally across all agencies responsible for its use.
- are targeted at the specific pest species needing control.
- consider the views and interests of stakeholders during the planning phase for all operations in a fair and timely manner.
- ensure the risk of residues entering food consumed from recreationally harvested Sika deer is effectively mitigated.
- mitigate any sustained or long-term negative effects on the Sika herd, Sika hunters, Sika business, landowners and the wider environment.

****