

Team Effort Keeps Southland Roads Clean

With Gypsy Day come and gone, it is clear that efforts to reduce stock truck effluent have paid off. Southland farmers and truck drivers should be proud.

Environment Southland Senior Compliance Office Andy Nesbit called this year's effluent spillage rate a "huge improvement" over last year's.

"With thousands of stock being carted to Northern Southland for winter grazing over the past few weeks, it's clear that farmers have been standing their stock and truck drivers have been emptying their holding tanks," Mr Nesbit said. "It's encouraging to see all the parties buying into the process."

Mr Nesbit ascribed the success to the collaboration among Southland local authorities, Fonterra, DairyNZ, Federated Farmers NZ, NZ Road Transport Association and NZ Transport Agency. The organisations and agencies joined forces in mid-April—calling themselves the stock effluent working group—to devise and implement a joint communications strategy.

Leading up to Gypsy Day, farmers were advised to stand their stock off green feed for a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 12 hours. The working group reinforced this message through jointly produced factsheets, farmer profiles and advertisements.

Additionally, to encourage truck drivers to unload the stock effluent from their trucks, Environment Southland negotiated the use of temporary facilities in Lumsden, Mossburn, Centre Bush, Ryal Bush, Wairio and Gore. Meanwhile, the New Zealand Transport Agency continued advancing a network of permanent sites with funding assistance from Environment Southland.

"We saw a tremendous decrease in effluent spillage on roads this year, and have received a very positive response from the Southland community," said Environment Southland Principal Planner Rachael Millar.

"On behalf of the stock effluent working group, I really want to commend all those farmers and truck drivers who acted in accordance with the best practices we have been advocating. The success of Gypsy Day belongs to you."