

NEWSLETTER

October 2012

Making Irrigation Pay – Managing Within Limits

Irrigation NZ invites irrigators to attend this free workshop



Wednesday 17 October 2012

PLEASANT POINT

9.00am – 12.00 noon

Pleasant Point Rugby Club Rooms,
Pleasant Point Domain.

Given the National Policy Statement on water what is the state of the Environment in your catchment?

- How will the proposed Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan set the framework for *managing within limits*?
- How is Environment Canterbury working with irrigators?

Managing within limits: What does it mean for irrigators?

- Will your practices need to change?
- If so, how?
- What are the tools and knowledge available to meet this challenge?
- Where are the gaps?

There will be plenty of local content, group discussion and question time. This session will introduce irrigators to practical ideas, technology and tools to take back to their own farming system.

For further programme and speaker information go to www.irrigationnz.co.nz

We look forward to having you join us.

Workshop sponsored by:



Regional sponsors:



WELCOME

In this newsletter I have included a brief round-up of scheme activities, a reminder about water ordering procedures, advice on the flood flow schedule for Levels, a report on our recent 'roadshows' and details on an important local workshop on the new Regional Plan requirements that I would encourage you to attend (see the notice above).

ACTIVITY ROUNDUP

Irrigation

The season officially began on 1st September but with the high August rainfall, there has been little demand until the third week when we received a few orders, mainly from within Levels.

The delay in demand has been fortunate as major repair work to flood damage on both Totara Valley and Kakahu has kept both of those schemes out of commission.

Major repairs were completed on the MR1 section of the Kakahu scheme by the third week – these included replacement of a section of main pipe that was crushed by a slip and also repair of a leak in a pipe join midway in the MR1 section. The intake screen was also re-instated after another

refurbishment and modification by the manufacturer. There is still some tidy up work on the MR2 section where the damage resulted from the high flows in the Kakahu River.

On the Totara Valley scheme a section of race was washed out by the high flowing creek eroding a section of bank. This has required major work to realign the race, including piping a section of the new alignment. Installation of an additional siphon has been included in the work to overcome an existing constraint in the system.

All the scheme intakes have required work to get them back into shape after the floods.

I appreciate the tremendous job Steve has done coordinating this important repair work in an effort to get the schemes back on-line as soon as possible.

Chris has been concentrating on getting the Levels scheme up and running as well as getting ahead on some spraying work around the wider scheme earlier in the month.

Lake Storage, Dam and Power Station Operation

The rains in early August filled the lake and there was a short period of spill in the second week. We ran the power station nearly continuously in August to get the lake level down below the spill level and provide a bit of room for the normal level of

spring inflows. There have been a couple of rain events in September and we are currently about 94% full which is a little higher than I think we need to be at this stage. Our concern with a full lake at this stage of the year is the risk to the downstream weir if we have large inflows that result in high spill from the dam. Even though October is our highest flow month for environmental flow releases I anticipate we will be able to maintain the lake level reasonably high as we head into the business part of the irrigation season.

NEW IRRIGATION SEASON

Water Ordering

This newsletter accompanies the Water Ordering Booklet for this season which outlines the requirements for ordering and cancelling water. It is much the same as previous years but I would still like you to refer to the booklet to make sure you are providing all the information we require in your orders.

Please remember the lead times required for your orders and ensure that we also get timely advice of your cancellations so we can conserve the lake storage as much as possible.

We have been working on a new system of water order codes so that each water take has a unique code. Our intention with this system is to simplify the information we require from you with your orders and also to improve the accuracy of the ordering so that we can ensure that the right amount of water is getting to the right place. If the water code information isn't included with this newsletter, then we will be getting it out to you as soon as possible.

Flood Flow Schedule

Coordinating the flood flow irrigation schedule within Levels has proved to be a major challenge for us in recent seasons. We have tried to juggle the flow schedule around the weather and our assessment of when irrigators will require water as well as individual's requirements. This can be difficult for both parties to manage around (irrigators and ourselves) as each irrigator's needs can differ through the season and setting up and running a flood flow rotation is a major commitment for us – both water requirements and raceman time.

This season we are proposing to run a more regular programme based on flood rotations every three weeks. Unless there has been a high rainfall in the region within the intervening period, all those still on flood irrigation should work on the basis that we will be running water every three weeks.

There is still obviously a need to keep in touch with you all and we will contact you if there is any change to this. Similarly we expect you to advise us if you do not require water so we can adjust the round accordingly.

Our first flood rotation is currently scheduled to begin on Wednesday 10th October.

Share Lease Details – Levels Plain Irrigation

We have enclosed a form for those within the LPIC scheme that are currently using leased shares. It is important that we have an accurate record of what shares are held by each irrigator when we are processing the water orders and we would like everyone that is using leased shares to please complete the form and return to us as soon as possible (fax, email, post or drop it in to the office).

REGIONAL WORKSHOP – Managing Within Limits

I have mentioned in previous newsletters and at the roadshows about the new Land & Water Regional Plan that was notified in August. This Plan brings some major changes to land and water use within Canterbury with a new emphasis on land and water use as it impacts on water quality. This has significant implications for all of us and we are fortunate to have the opportunity of the workshop on October 17th at Pleasant Point Rugby Club to hear first-hand what the implications are for farmers. I encourage all of you to attend this workshop – see the notice at the head of this newsletter.

ROADSHOW REPORT

We held a series of three information sessions in mid-August in an attempt to provide some relevant company information to our irrigators and also to get feedback from you on any relevant issues. We had reasonably small audiences at each of the afternoon and evening sessions but overall we had 36 attend. I accept that our notice of the sessions was quite short and I realise now that including newsletters with the monthly invoices might save on postage but also means most of the envelopes don't get opened until the 20th of the month at least!

The feedback from the sessions was that they were a good idea although better notice and probably a rescheduling to June/July would enable better attendance. There was also support for two sessions with the second one in February

The topics covered in the sessions were:

- Review of 2011/12
 - Operations
 - Financial
- Restructure of Opuha Water Ltd
- New Regional Plan and implications
- Environmental Management Strategy
- Sale of incremental water
- Projects
- New season
- Discussion

EMAIL ADDRESSES

We still currently only have about 40% of our irrigators and shareholders emails and I would really like to get a comprehensive list. I sent out an email about last month's roadshow sessions so if you didn't get one of those or you know we are unlikely to have your current email address, can you PLEASE email Christine so we can update our records. christine@opuha.co.nz

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – Nov 28th

Just advanced notice to you all that our AGM is scheduled for Wednesday 28th November, most likely 1pm start. Venue and time details will be published nearer the time.

Regards



Tony McCormick
Ph 027 233 0412
tony@opuha.co.nz