



Media Release
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DEVASTATING AND COSTLY PEST COULD BE CONTROLLED

Strengthening New Zealand's data protection legislation could lead to the management of a devastating pest which costs New Zealand's agriculture sector up to \$90 million annually in lost production.

Grass grub attacks the root system of a plant and is estimated to affect almost half of New Zealand's productive land – about 17.5 million hectares.

AGCARM chief executive Graeme Peters said only a tiny fraction of this land is treated against grass grub due to the dated and expensive treatment options available in New Zealand, which require the crops and land to be sprayed.

He said New Zealand's agriculture sector is missing out on new more effective treatments, which could control grass grub, due to data protection laws that discourage investment in introducing these technologies.

"Almost everywhere else in the world a new product supplier has ten years before the market is opened up to generics. In New Zealand we require agrichemical companies to invest in trials, which can cost up to \$500,000, to register the product and then only give them a five-year window to make back that investment. This means it is simply not economically viable to introduce some products."

New Zealand's agriculture industry bears the cost through limited access to these products and lost production, Mr Peters said.

"We understand New Zealand's farming sector needs to be competitive and costs should be kept low, but in this case it is denying the industry effective treatment against this damaging pest."

The government is currently reviewing the levels of data protection for new products, new uses for existing products, and reformulated products.

“New Zealand data protection is woeful compared to other countries. The result is that farmers and growers are missing out on the latest technology available overseas, especially the technology used on minor animal species or small crops,” he said.

Agcarm is the industry association of companies which manufacture, distribute and sell products that keep animals healthy and crops thriving. Member companies are committed to ensuring that these products are used safely, effectively and sustainably

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