The Sherry River - A Success Story

Aim
- improve water quality so that the Sherry River meets recreational use guidelines by farm BMPs

Methods
- as part of the Motueka ICM program a water quality monitoring study in the Sherry River catchment was started in 2001 continuing to present day
- a study on cow herds crossing the river was undertaken in 2001
- in 2007–08, TDC and the Sherry Catchment Group undertook sampling of seven of the tributary creeks
- in 2008–2009 a campaign of storm event sampling was undertaken by NIWA
- the relative loadings of these waterways (hotspots) were then used to prioritise on-farm action
- individual farm plans (TDC) to institute BMP’s completed in 2008

Findings and Action
- cows crossing the river - major source of water pollution
- 4 cow crossings replaced with farm bridges
- improvement in E. coli levels attributable mainly to bridging
- 40% E. coli loadings at the Blue Rock site were due to four tributaries
- further improvements are expected for other BMPs
- individual farm plans initiated the following actions:
  -- riparian areas and streams fenced and planted
  -- wetlands protected
  -- greater awareness and stewardship by community
  -- improved farm management

Recent trends
Using the NIWA ‘Times Trends’ statistical analysis package, the Seasonal Kendall (flow adjusted) test for 8 years of monthly E. coli data at the Blue Rock site shows a decline approaching recreational quality in 2011.

References

Should we swim here?
“It may not happen overnight, but it will happen”

Rachel Hunter

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