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Council cracking down on cow effluent on roads

Council is cracking down on farmers not complying with existing stockdroving bylaws.

Buller's new Compliance Manager, Stuart Gray, has found the majority of farmers do the right thing and clean effluent after their cows have crossed roads, but is cracking down on those that don't.

"It is disappointing that some local farmers abuse the privilege of using public roads to move their stock without cleaning up after them," says Mr Gray. "I have photographs of children having to make their way through stock effluent on their way to school. Some of the problem areas have been of concern for years despite repeated requests from Council to clean up."

Buller's Stockdroving Bylaw 1996 outlines the regulations for using public roads to facilitate stock movements. A copy of the bylaw can be found on the Council website - www.bullerdc.govt.nz/main/Bylaws/. The bylaw requires farmers to remove animal effluent within two hours.

Offending farmers risk being prosecuted under the Local Government Act. This would include being summonsed to appear in court and incurring the associated costs and fines if convicted.

"We are currently talking with persistent offenders and have given final warnings in some instances," says Mr Gray. "If any more confirmed complaints are received following a final warning, prosecution will follow."

Council are hoping that offenders will voluntarily improve practices but expect that more final warnings will be issued over the next few weeks.

A new draft Stockdroving Bylaw will soon be out for public consultation. The proposed maximum fine will increase to \$20,000 and there will be a requirement in most cases to clean up immediately after the last cow crosses.

Council receives a large number of complaints regarding effluent on roads across the district. Stuart has asked concerned locals to photograph non complying crossings wherever possible and email him the images to him at stuart@bdc.govt.nz. The time, date and location should be included. This assistance will enable him to follow up on more complaints.

Along with being offensive to road users, effluent on roads can pose a significant road safety hazard, cause environmental damage as well as damage to the road surface.

ENDS



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