

ERADICATING TB THROUGH TB MANAGEMENT AREAS

OSPRI's TBfree programme aims to control and eradicate bovine TB from New Zealand. To achieve this aim we have created a framework of TB Management areas that set out our plans at a local level.

WHY WE NEED TO ERADICATE TB

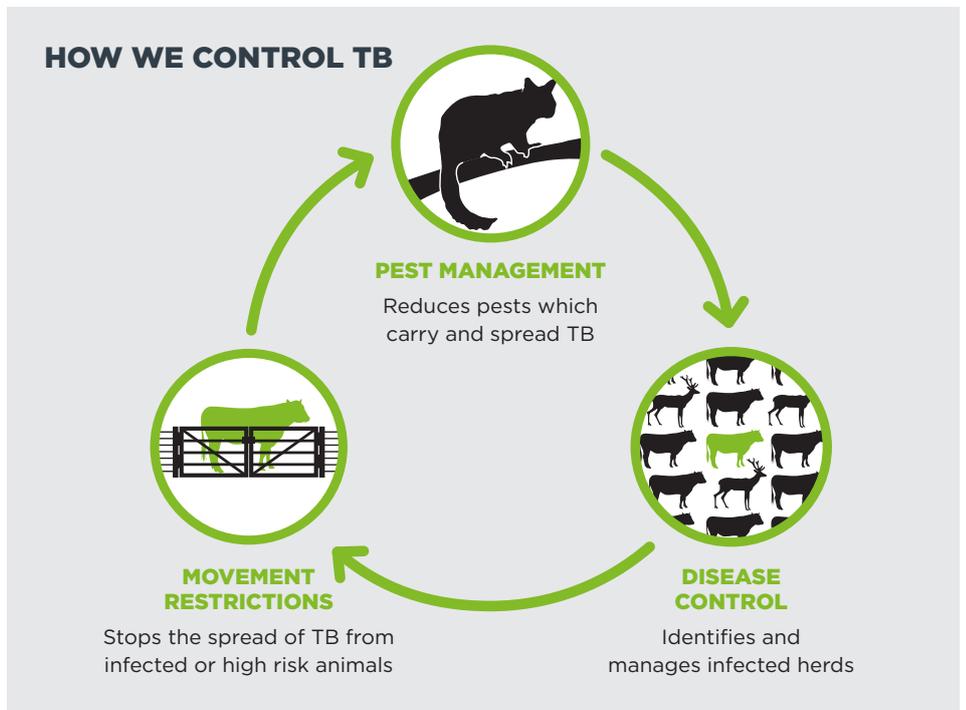
Bovine TB is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis* and is spread by close contact between animals. In New Zealand, possums are the main carrier and spreader of TB to livestock. Once in a herd, the disease can spread within and to other herds. TB in cattle and deer herds can reduce farm productivity and income, and if left uncontrolled could have an adverse impact on the willingness of export markets to buy New Zealand products.

OUR ERADICATION GOALS

To protect the value and quality of New Zealand's cattle and deer farming industries, OSPRI's TBfree programme is now working towards the complete eradication of bovine tuberculosis (TB) from New Zealand.

The key goals of the TBfree programme are to eradicate TB from livestock by 2026, from possums by 2040 and from all hosts of the disease across the whole of New Zealand by 2055. This presents an exciting opportunity for OSPRI to build on the success of the TBfree programme so far, with major benefit for farmers and the wider communities and regions where we work.

HOW WE CONTROL TB



OUR GOALS



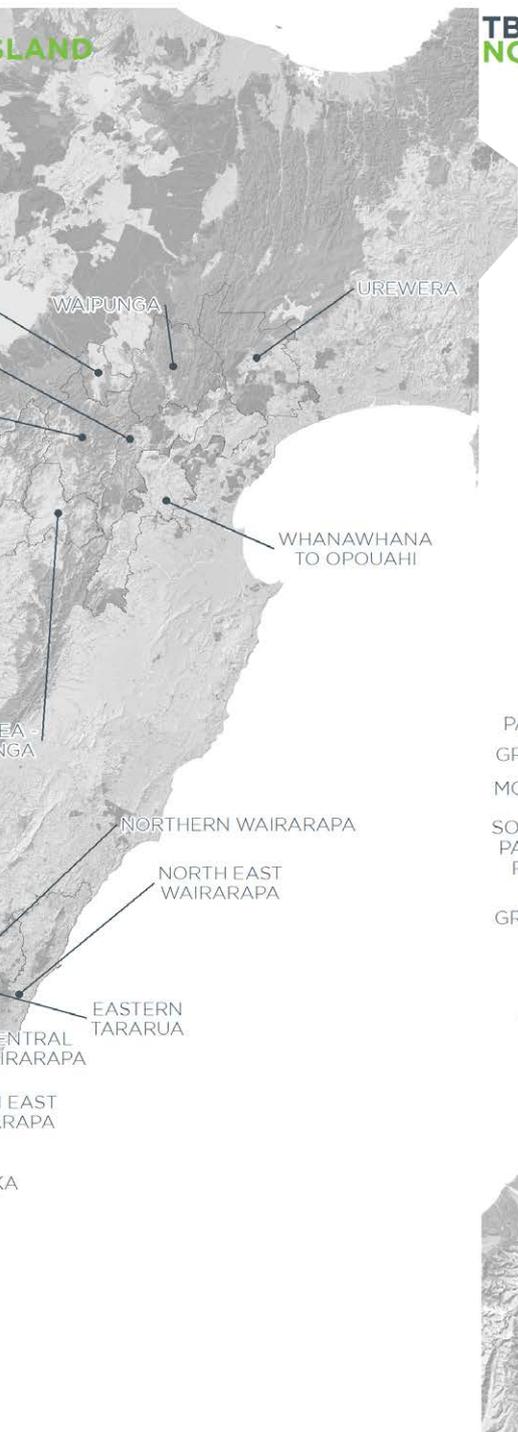
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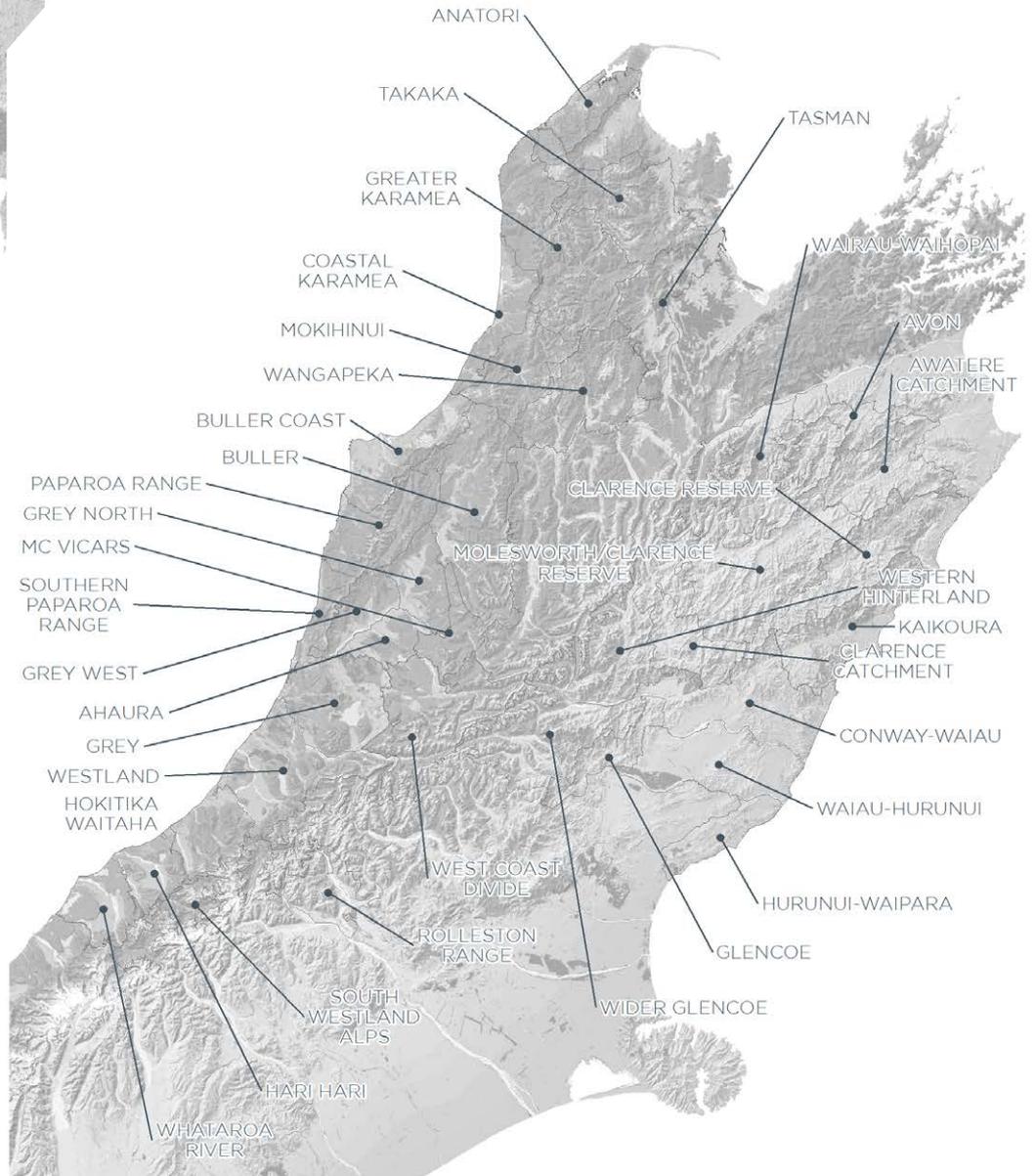
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2055



TB MANAGEMENT AREAS NORTHERN SOUTH ISLAND



will also be contacted personally by our pest management contractors, well before commencement of any work.

PEST CONTROL METHODS

A vast majority of possum control is done by local contractors using ground-based traps and hand-laid toxins. The remaining area is controlled using aerially applied pellets containing biodegradable 1080. Aerial control

is efficient, cost effective and has been extremely successful at knocking possum numbers down to very low levels in the past.

Research has allowed for dramatic improvements to the way we use 1080. Around two weeks before 1080 is aerially dropped, non-toxic bait is now dropped over the site. Possums are creatures of routine and this 'pre-feed' helps overcome their bait shyness. This increases the operation's effectiveness, so less toxic baits are needed.



Baits covered in deer repellent. The non-toxic pre-feed pellets are brownish-tan while the toxic baits are green.

SURVEY ACTIVITIES

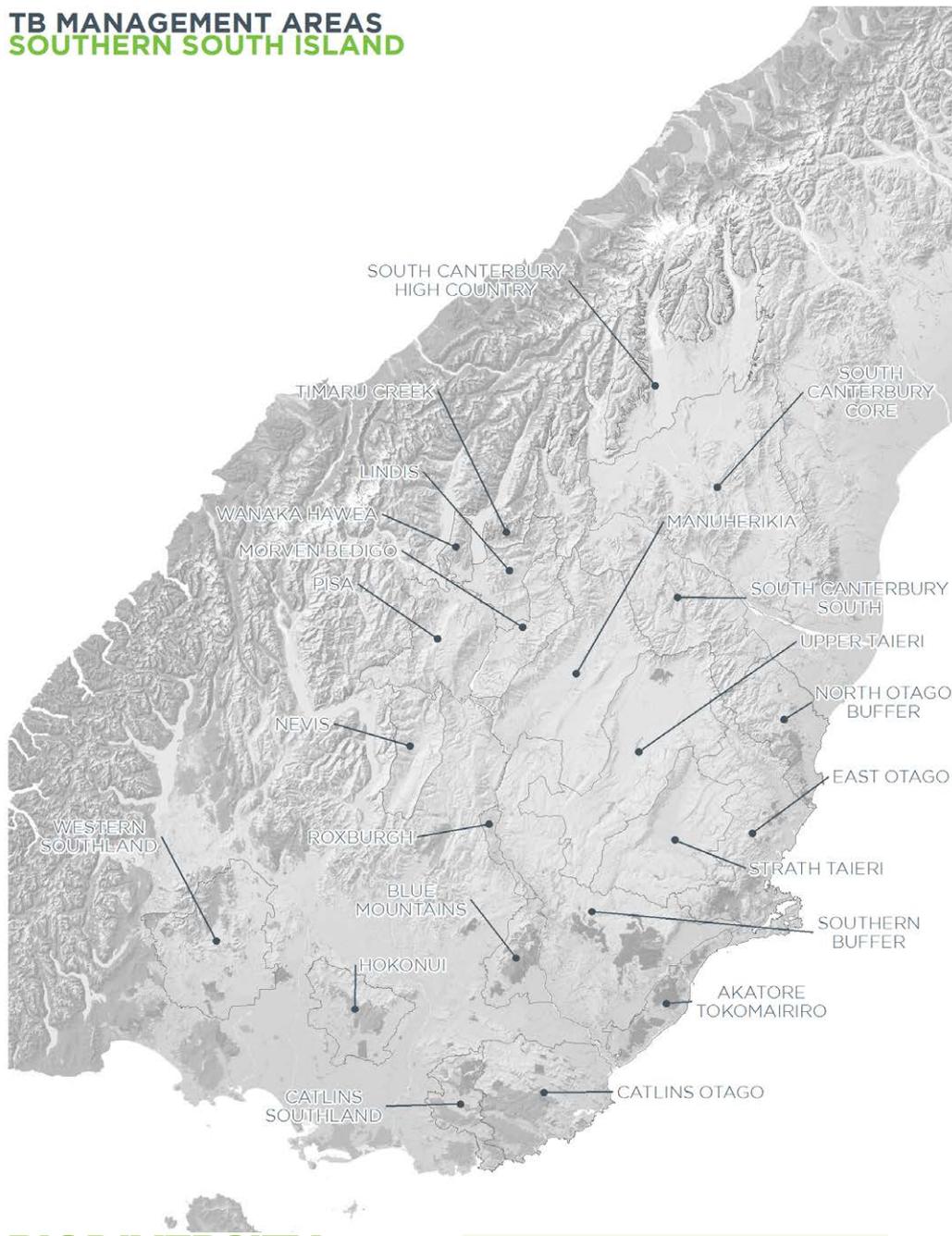
We check the number of possums in an area after pest control has been completed as they need to be kept below two per ten hectares for us to be able to eradicate TB. Once low possum numbers have been sustained over a number of years, we carry out surveys to check animals in the area for signs of TB infection. If TB is not present it's a good sign we're on the way to eradicating TB from the area - if there is TB then we need to do more control work.

During our surveys we post mortem any possums found and check for TB, to make sure it's no longer present in the area. While possums are the main source of TB infection from wildlife, it can be difficult and costly to detect TB in possum populations which is why we also survey ferrets and pigs.

Ferrets and pigs are good indicators of TB in possums because they scavenge, so are likely to get TB from eating TB-infected possum carcasses. Pigs can't maintain TB within their own population, so if they are infected it means it's from another species.



TB MANAGEMENT AREAS SOUTHERN SOUTH ISLAND



BIODIVERSITY BENEFITS

Possums eat native plants and are a major predator of our native birds, preying on eggs and chicks. By keeping possum numbers low, our native wildlife and bush get a chance to thrive. Along with possums, 1080 also kills rats and stoats indirectly when they scavenge on poisoned possum carcasses. This triple hit provides a breeding window for birds that is crucial to increasing chick survival. OSPRI's pest control work is often done in conjunction with the Department of Conservation to achieve the greatest biodiversity benefits.



FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have questions or need a hand visit:

tbfree.co.nz

Or call OSPRI on

0800 482 463