

## AQUAFIER RECHARGE

The following is a simple demonstration to help people understand “Nature’s processes” for water renewal of the Canterbury Plains.

Put water in the sink to near the top. Then using a vegetable draining colander immerse in the water and watch how quickly the incoming water fills the colander. Next, lift up and observe how fast the water drains. What you are seeing is how nature’s plumbing system works in regards to aquifer water recharge.

This is the system of the Canterbury plains and has worked satisfactorily for man and beast etc., and has had sufficient underground reserves of water along the foot hills of the Alps to maintain a flow for the Aquifers for several years when rainfall and snow is at a low ebb. The position now is that there are hundreds of deep bore wells, that have over 10 or more years drained the natural reserves of water so the sink is empty.

The consequence of this is going to be a massive disaster. The first being no drinkable non-treated water and each year becoming worse.

It is false information that the rivers are dry because of low rainfall. The cause is excessive draw off of the natural water reserves by the dairy cow industry. (Irrigation for agriculture is not a problem, it is seasonal.)

Of the many opinions expressed just lately about our water and no matter how correct and genuine they are, no change to the current situation is possible until the deep well owners are required to lift their pumps three metres per year until equilibrium is reached. It has taken less than ten years to get to this very serious state of affairs and will take at least fifteen years to start recovering.

The laughable side of the situation is that the present National Government collapsed the Environmental Council. They put in Commissioners to allocate water fairly, and have failed in their responsibility. We are now back to the earlier Council’s discussion that the water takes are all over allocated.

The sad side is that many farmers towards the coastline who attended the many zone committee meetings are going to be disadvantaged to have enough water to run their farms and they will be fighting the upland water takers.

The serious side is that as the mean water table drops, the overload of pollutants from dairying will contaminate progressively the water supply for many communities until it reaches Christchurch proper.

The Christchurch City council has knowledge of this, and since the earthquake era has been replacing damaged bores, but they are going much deeper so the pollution factor will not show as early as with the shallower wells.

The water bottling companies need to be aware that the present purity of supply is in jeopardy. In all of 70 years of being able to vote in a general election I don’t recall such a bad situation as that which we have at the present time. Even the 1951 strike action and the Holland Government response was tame compared to the present time. We are now dealing with survival of Canterbury.

**The cause of this serious situation is simply the present Government, the Overseas Investment Office and the Banks that urged farmers to go into a very large debt repayment system with the promise of an abundant water supply. The Government used inadequate water science to start with and is failing to recognise that many farming units are going to fail because of debt repayment. It will be the Government's responsibility to accept the debt of failed farms and pay the money lenders.**

**It is also ironic the Government is giving millions of dollars towards the rebuild of Christchurch city, but ignores the oncoming disaster that has already started by the destruction of our once famous artesian waters.**

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