



20 October 2023

**Simon Upton**

Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment

Via email: [pce@pce.parliament.nz](mailto:pce@pce.parliament.nz)

Dear Mr Upton,

Thank you for your letter of 1 October commenting on the report from Oxford and Cranfield Universities entitled *“Agriculture emissions and warming in Aotearoa New Zealand to 2050: Insights from the science.”*<sup>1</sup>

The primary objective of the research, from our perspective, was to measure the warming impact of the current methane targets to 2050. We believe this analysis provides new and more detailed insights into the ambition and impact of New Zealand’s current targets on our country’s contribution to global warming. This latest report incorporates some insights gained during the five years that have passed since your own methane report and is from a world-leading group on climate science and policy.

The analysis of “no additional warming” did indeed produce results like those of the Reisinger and Leahy report, although we haven’t previously seen it using the SSP 119 and SSP 245 pathways. That two studies have independently reached similar conclusions using different modelling is to be welcomed. This combined evidence should give policymakers greater confidence. The fact that the data in the Oxford/Cranfield report came from an open-source climate model is an additional point of difference. We believe our report has contributed to greater understanding of the issues facing New Zealand.

Our submission to the Climate Change Commission focused on the warming impact of the current targets. The analysis showed that under the current targets, New Zealand’s contribution to warming would peak in the 2030s and then reverse back to 2022 or 2027 levels of warming. We would be very interested to see a comparison of the warming impact of New Zealand’s targets against those of other countries. As the report notes, the majority of countries in the world emit carbon dioxide as their principal source pollutant. This means that other countries will create additional warming until they reach net zero – potentially all the way to 2050.

New Zealand’s current targets are based on a previous IPCC report indicating global emissions reductions pathways that were consistent with achieving 1.5-degree warming goals. Those ranges were never intended to be used strictly as national level targets however.<sup>2</sup> As far as we are aware when those ranges were referenced by the New Zealand Government there was no research to understand what they would mean in terms of New Zealand’s overall contribution to warming.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/PDF/full-report-agriculture-emissions-and-warming-aotearoa-new-zealand-2050-insights>

<sup>2</sup> Reisinger and Leahy, 2018. Scientific aspects of New Zealand’s 2050 emission targets.

<https://www.nzagrc.org.nz/assets/Publications/NZAGRC-Report-Scientific-aspects-of-2050-methane-targets.pdf>

Whether these targets should be adjusted or what further contributions New Zealand needs to make is a separate discussion, and one that will be better-informed by the report.

An objective of the research was to improve the understanding of what is being asked of different greenhouse gases from a warming perspective to inform a discussion of what the targets should be. It has been a frustrating process trying to engage the Government on a warming-based approach to the issues. Disconnects between emissions and their respective warming have persisted.

We do need to correct one common misunderstanding. There has been needless opposition to the accurate measurement of methane's warming on the assumption that this automatically 'grandfathers' existing methane emissions and creates, as you put it, a "right to continue an existing level of warming indefinitely." Accurate measurement is about the 'is', it does not determine the 'ought' – it informs policy and does not determine it. Knowing the warming effects of emissions reductions can help decide questions of equity, effectiveness, and fairness among sectors. As we have many times pointed out, farmers are not seeking a 'free ride' here. Just a fair one.

Very recently, we are pleased to note, warming is being discussed in the media, and the differences among different gases are being highlighted.<sup>3</sup> And contrary to the impression gained from your letter that we wanted to hide an inconvenient truth about the potential of methane to reduce New Zealand's warming, we will welcome a discussion on just that issue.

We would really value an opportunity to meet with you to talk through some of the important policy-relevant issues covered in the report.

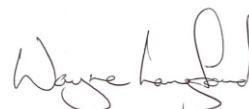
Yours sincerely,



**Kate Acland**  
Chair, Beef + Lamb NZ



**Jim van der Poel**  
Chair, DairyNZ



**Wayne Langford**  
National President,  
Federated Farmers

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<sup>3</sup> [Methane targets could put NZ on road to 'zero warming', report says | Stuff.co.nz](#); [Burps & Bluster — North & South Magazine \(northandsouth.co.nz\)](#)