

Speech

I am Lincoln Grant we farm a 600 ha hill country farm at Pahiatua. If we blanketed the farm in pines the Government would pay us about \$400,000 a year for doing nothing. The Minister is saying this is not a subsidy. The revamped ETS averaging scheme is a government backed subsidy. I understand investors don't claim the one billion trees planting subsidy because there is a stand down period before tapping into the ETS.

In our local town the backpackers is filled with young men from the Pacific Islands blanket planting pine trees on good farmland for the Carbon Forestry investors. Once planted no work will be done on these farms ever again, they are no-cut pines. The latest property to go that way is just 2 minutes drive from Pahiatua township.

The Minister calls them permanent carbon forests. There is nothing permanent about the pine forests or their carbon storage, these have a life time in which they will harbour pests; possums, rats and pigs which will invade neighbouring farms. After which time they will rot and fall down leaving a rotting eyesore for future generations. To throw away farmland in this manner is ludicrous and defies logic.

Kerry has outlined the social and economic cost. It's huge and irreversible.

There is an environmental cost as well.

Concerns supported by the governments own Department of Conservation which warns, and I quote from the DOC website 'Wilding pines threaten to permanently alter our unique landscapes, as conifers overwhelm our native landscapes they kill our native plants and evict our native animals. They also have a huge impact on the economy. They suck valuable water out of catchments, add big costs to farming and impact on our tourism and recreational opportunities'. We have one government dept getting rid of pines, another incentivizing and advocating their planting.

Everything has been done to incentivize forestry at the expense of pastoral farming. Forestry is put on an environmental pedestal but the truth is they leave a hell mess of earthworks and slash after harvest.

All of Nelson Marlborough Area 7 scallop fishery has been closed for 3 years due to sediment run-off and trash from forestry smothering the seabed. The flounder aren't fairing much better. Similar things are happening in Northland.

We all saw what happened in Tolaga when massive forestry sediment run-off and trash was unleashed on Poverty Bay.

They turn a blind eye to the 3rd world practice of Methyl Bromide log fumigation done under tarps at Port of Tauranga and Northport where this poisonous, ozone depleting gas is simply released to blow away in urban areas. Banned in other countries it's use has increased 6 fold in NZ since 2000 to satisfy the Chinese where they are largely used for boxing, the ultimate low value product then probably burnt. Carbon credits for what?

Meanwhile farming is constantly affronted and villainized as bad for the environment, despite a huge effort and expense that has gone into fencing waterways, tree planting, land and water catchment groups working with regional council staff for positive change. Despite this Mr Parker wants to turn council staff into policeman with a 'one size fits all' government rule book.

We have billions of trees on our farms the government just doesn't count them. It suits them not to but lets sort that out.

At the heart of this, is the question. Is the ETS a good environmental solution and means of reducing pollution? The ETS doesn't change behavior it just condones it and allows major emitters an out to carry on increasing their pollution. Our national airline Air NZ is a classic example. Using offsetting as a 'greenwashing' marketing tool for guilt free holidays. The reality is offsetting is offloading, 2 fold environmental damage, polluting the atmosphere burning jet fuel (incidentally Air NZ spent 1.27 billion on fuel last year) then dumping unwanted pine trees on farmland as a cure that will eventually be rotting mess and a fire hazard. A short sighted lose/lose situation.

We can do so much better for the environment and our people. Surely renewable energy projects are better investment. We are burning more coal than ever in NZ to generate electricity and importing it from Indonesia.

One local 1200 ha farm going into no-cut pines will cost the country 54 million dollars over 20 years in carbon credits and lost export earnings without even considering unemployment. This would be enough to provide solar panels for all the 10,000 homes in the Taraura District.

Wouldn't it be great if the government supported and promoted NZ agriculture the way they do our tourism industry. Proudly supporting our free range, grass fed farming as the world leading efficient industry it is, not facilitating burying it forever under a blanket of pine trees for a flammable, short term, carbon target fix.

I would like to say a huge 'thank you' to everybody for attending today, particularly the support of our district majors and thank you to the people who have come out and supported us that aren't farmers but can see this is plain wrong. Politics and the ETS is smoke and mirrors but you guys are real people that care. We can only hope they listen.

We are all here because we've had a gutsful of what's happening but I want to give the last word to the dogs, our loyal friends whose jobs and way of life is also on the line. So if you have a dog come forward and we'll ask them to speak up.