

### **Lifestyle block owners to be surveyed about biosecurity**

Lifestyle block owners will be surveyed to find out their attitudes and behaviours with respect to on-farm biosecurity as part of the *Mycoplasma bovis* Programme's efforts to eradicate the disease from New Zealand.

Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research has been appointed to undertake the survey, which will build on data collected in its 2019 Survey of Rural Decision Makers.

"Like commercial farmers, lifestyle block owners have an important role to play in accelerating the eradication and supporting ongoing absence of the cattle disease from New Zealand," says John Roche, Chair of the *M. bovis* Strategic Science Group, and the Chief Science Adviser for the Ministry for Primary Industries.

He says there are 140,000 to 175,000 lifestyle block owners in New Zealand, however, they have been identified as a group about which there are little data regarding their on-farm biosecurity practices.

"These survey results will help us understand how we can best engage this group in the *M. bovis* eradication effort. It will provide useful data for the Programme as it moves towards confirming absence of disease," says Dr Roche.

Researchers will survey a sample of lifestyle block owners on their biosecurity practice and attitudes, including questions about animal ownership and awareness of, and compliance with, legal obligations under the NAIT and Biosecurity Acts.

Manaaki Whenua will run the voluntary electronic survey in June to best fit with the farming calendar. The results are expected to be available in September 2020.

The survey is part of the *M. bovis* science programme, which will see up to \$30 million invested in priority research projects to help accelerate eradication of the disease from New Zealand.

