

## Media Release

18 December 2019

### **SHEEP ATTACKS STOP, DOG FOUND**

**Animal management officers are praising owners who came forward with their dog after attacks on sheep.**

During November there were three attacks, all unwitnessed, at four Echo Valley lifestyle blocks where 22 sheep died.

The follow-up is being touted as a good example of responsible owners and a new, proactive animal management team working together for community safety in Mangawhai.

In response to the attacks, dog control officers door-knocked the area to inform people and seek information on stray dogs. The owners voluntarily handed in their dog which they suspected had savaged sheep.

On Saturday morning November 30 the owners contacted officers, saying the family dog had come home bloodied after escaping the previous evening and being out all night. The owners sought advice as they suspected it was due to an attack on sheep.

“It was a very hard thing for the dog owners to do, and we really respect people who can put the wellbeing of the community ahead of their own,” say the Kaipara District Council animal management team.

Moving forward, the animal control teams encourages people in rural Mangawhai to:

- Report stock attacks, even unwitnessed ones, as the team can offer advice and help
- Educate themselves and their dogs – seek advice around stock training

Officer Kim\* says, “City dogs moving into rural areas are at high risk in their new environment with often just farm fencing to keep them secure. When dogs lack stock training, the consequences can be devastating for stock owners, the dog’s family and the dog. It can be the family Labrador, so please don’t think it can’t happen to you!”

The team is relieved to get an outcome for local farmers who were “excellent to deal with”. They have updated stock owners that the dog suspected as being responsible for the attacks has been identified in co-operation with the owner and that the sheep attacks have stopped.

The revamped animal control team hit the streets on November 4 and the three new officers bring a wealth of collective experience from roles with Whangārei District Council, Waitakere City Council and the SPCA. Their Kaipara District Council Team Leader Rachel Sheppard congratulates the animal management team on their collective work during the incident.

For more information about owning a dog in Kaipara, visit the Dogs page on Council's website, [www.kaipara.govt.nz/dogs](http://www.kaipara.govt.nz/dogs) or Call Kaipara District Council on 0800 727 059 for advice or assistance with animal control issues.

## **STORY ENDS**

### **MEDIA BACKGROUNDER TIMELINE - ECHO VALLEY STOCK ATTACKS**

**November 11:** Attack on sheep reported to Kaipara District Council Animal Control.

**NB:** The attack involved 3 lifestyle blocks in Echo Valley Road, Mangawhai, with the final number of sheep lost at 12. No witnesses.

- It was the second sheep attack in the area, the first was not reported to Animal Control.

**November 12:** Dog officers conduct door knocks to advise of attacks, engage with dog owners, catalogue dogs, open lines of communication.

- Humane dog traps dispatched to the 3 affected properties shortly afterward.

**November 29.** Stock attack at a 4<sup>th</sup> lifestyle block and lost a total of 7 sheep. Not witnessed.

**November 30:** Dog owners come forward. Suspect their dog has been responsible overnight for an attack on sheep. Seek advice.

- (This would become the third sheep attack in the area (see above) and had not yet been reported to Animal Control.)

#### **December 1-4**

- Final count on sheep lost over the course of attacks: 22.
- Stock owners advised dog responsible for attacks known to Animal Control via owners.
- Humane dog traps removed.
- Echo Valley area sheep attacks have stopped.

**ENDS**