

Landfarm Legacy – Benzene in groundwater

The two landfarm reports released by Taranaki Regional Council last week make sober reading. Groundwater has clearly been affected by the dumping of drilling wastes at both landfarms, with chloride and total dissolved solids way above consent limits. At Waikaikai landfarm, drilling mud had been stored in an unlined pit and the operation rated 'improvement required' – apparently up from the 'poor' rating of the last two years. An area previously spread with drilling wastes has been planted with maize before consent limits have been met.

At the BTW Brown Road landfarm, benzene has been detected in groundwater since 2012, with levels consistently exceeding consent limits in at least one test bore. This particular area has received drilling wastes, oily wastes, contaminated soil, and well workover fluids including returned fracking fluids from various wellsites. The most recent disposal took place in September 2013. The council says the contamination is of a "legacy nature" and "given the absence of environmental consequences", the operation received a 'good' performance rating. Really?

How can contamination of groundwater possibly be without environmental consequence? What sort of legacy are we prepared to leave for future generations of farmers and kaitiaki?

<http://www.trc.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/CR0302-public.pdf>

<http://www.trc.govt.nz/assets/Publications/technical-reports/oil-and-gas-compliance-monitoring-reports/1423857w2.pdf>

<http://www.trc.govt.nz/assets/Publications/technical-reports/oil-and-gas-compliance-monitoring-reports/1413791w2.pdf>

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