

From: Nigel Searles
To: s 9(2) .co.nz
Subject: Question on carbon, forests and land
Date: Wednesday, 12 August 2020 2:52:07 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.jpg](#)

Dear S

Response to your Official Information Act 1982 request [20-D-01410]

On 28 July 2020, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) transferred to the Ministry for the Environment (the Ministry) your request for information under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

The MAJORITY of our carbon credits is from forests that have been planted post 1989? If this is correct, there is a significant amount of forests and other green spaces, that positively contribute to greenhouse gases that are not included.

Have we ever calculated what New Zealand's net balance is, re greenhouse emissions if ALL positive impacts from forests pre 1989 and other green areas are taken into consideration?

It seems that the emission trading scheme is focused on NEW forest areas post 1989, and takes no account or value of other green spaces and pre 1989 planted or naturally grown [original native forests and parks] forests. It would be great to know if NZ

- *Has a net positive impact on greenhouse gases*
- *What the financial benefit would be to New Zealand if the numbers were worked on this basis.*

The information you have requested is publicly available. Therefore, your request for information has been refused under section 18(d) of the Official Information Act 1982. However, to help you access this information, we have summarised the information from published sources and provided you with links to the original documents.

The way in which New Zealand reports its annual emissions and how we account towards meeting our international emissions reduction targets differ. Emissions included under the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) differs again. The ETS is a domestic policy designed to help New Zealand reduce emissions and meet international targets. While the ETS is aligned to how we account for emissions internationally, it is not directly linked.

New Zealand reports all emission and removal activities at a national level. This is done annually and reported in our national greenhouse gas inventory, which is publicly available: <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/publications/climate-change/new-zealands-greenhouse-gas-inventory-1990-2018>.

Emissions and removals from all land use types, including pre-1990 forestry, wetlands, grassland and cropland, are reported on. This means that historical activities in forests and on land can affect emissions and removals today and into the future. New Zealand has an obligation to report these emissions to the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) annually, and follows the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) guidelines (<https://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/2006gl/vol4.html>) for the measurement and reporting of these emissions.

You may find table 1 and figure 1 below, which can be found in the latest inventory, useful.

The findings from the inventory are summarised as follows: In 2018, New Zealand's gross greenhouse gas emissions were 78,862 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (kt CO₂-e). The Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sector offset 30 per cent of New Zealand's gross emissions. Therefore, New Zealand's net emissions were 55,468 kt CO₂-e in 2018.

Table 1: New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions for the LULUCF sector by land use category in 1990 and 2018

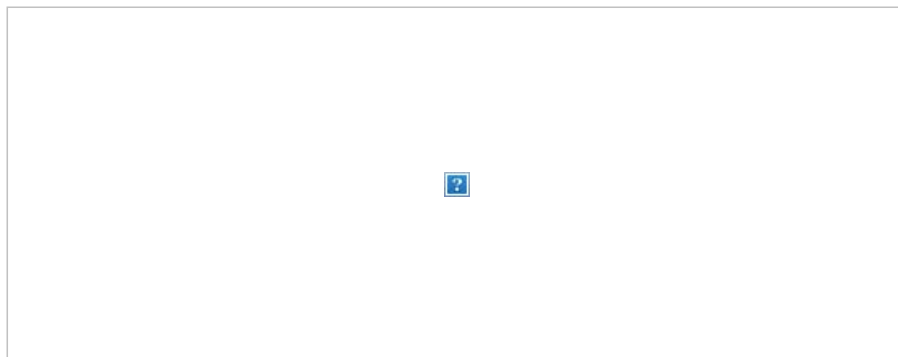
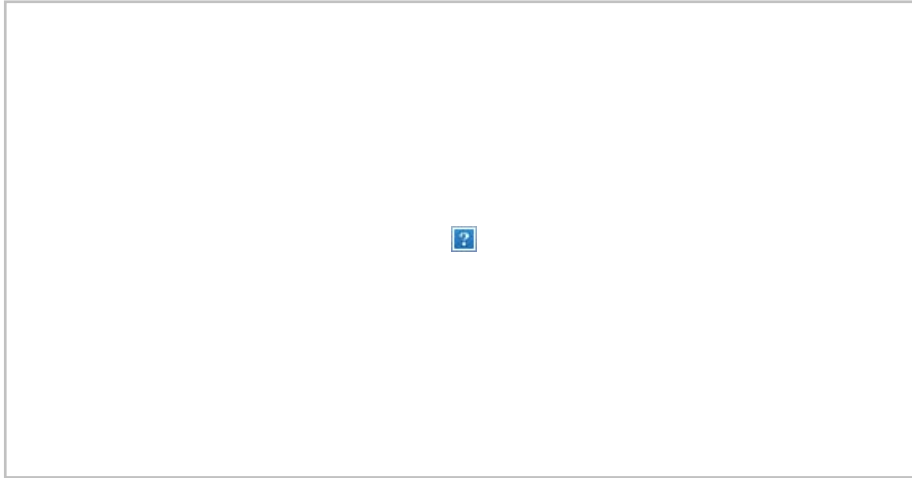


Figure 1: New Zealand's gross and net emissions (under the Convention) from 1990 to 2018



To meet our 2013-2020 emissions reductions target, New Zealand uses an accounting ruleset that was internationally agreed by Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (including New Zealand). This ruleset is designed to provide an incentive for behaviour change to reduce emissions (eg, reduced deforestation and increased afforestation).

The rules largely factor out emissions and removals that are the result of historical actions that are difficult to influence or would have occurred anyway. New Zealand therefore accounts for post-1989 afforestation and reforestation towards our target. Any deforestation, regardless of the forest age, is counted as a liability against our target. New Zealand also accounts for emissions and removals from Forest Management activity from pre-1990 forests which diverge from a projected baseline.

Emissions from other land use types, unless accounted for under deforestation, are not included in New Zealand's target accounting. New Zealand undergoes annual reviews of its greenhouse gas inventory for adherence to the rules.

New Zealand has elected to continue to account towards its 2021-2030 emissions reduction target using a modified Kyoto Protocol approach for accounting of emissions and removals from land-use and forestry. This information is publicly available and can be found here:

<https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/New%20Zealand%20First/New%20zealand%20first%20NDC.pdf>.

This approach is referred to as averaging and it includes removals from afforestation up until the long-term average carbon stock is reached. Averaging limits removals compared to the Kyoto Protocol approach, but also excludes emissions from harvest as long as the forest is replanted. This approach provides a better incentive for afforestation by removing peaks and troughs associated with growth and harvest cycles in forests.

The Paris Agreement target continues to account for deforestation and largely excludes emissions from pre-1990 forests. The decision to include other land use, including cropland, grassland and wetlands, will be revisited for the second emissions reduction period of the Paris Agreement.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of this decision, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at: www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Regards.

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