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## Nuclear aftermath topic of meeting

By Helen Matterson

Where would the medicine for Canterbury's 1500 insulin dependent diabetics come from if a nuclear war occurred in the Northern Hemisphere? How would a nuclear winter affect the region's agriculture? What plans need to be made?

These questions and others on nuclear war aftermath will be answered at a public meeting, which is being organised by the Ministry for the Environment in conjunction with the Canterbury United Council and New Zealand Futures Trust.

Dr Wren Green, the principal author of the Planning Council's recent report called "New Zealand After a Nuclear War," will address the meeting.

In late 1986 the Government contracted the council to undertake a preliminary study into the likely affect a nuclear war would have on New Zealand's environment, society and economy.

It concluded that the impacts would be devastating, but not for the reasons most people suppose. People would not be affected so much by radioactive fallout as by a massive destruction of economic systems, a huge reduction in the standard of living and even a complete social breakdown.

If south-east Australia was a nuclear target, New Zealand's electrical equipment would be severely damaged and communication, energy, banking and transport systems crippled.

Although the report concedes the

affects of Northern Hemisphere nuclear war on New Zealand would be great because of our dependence on that part of the world, contingency planning would improve our ability to cope.

Authors of the report have recommended to the Government that a second phase of investigations should address this issue. These would involve public education, contingency planning, identifying ways of reducing New Zealand's vulnerabilities and further research.

They believe the public should be involved in this and have prompted the Ministry for the Environment to seek public comments and submissions on the report's findings, which can be bought or borrowed from libraries in book form.

The public meeting, to be held at the Civic Regency on October 28, at 7.30pm, is to provide a local forum for ideas and to stimulate interest in making submissions.

The ministry believes it is particularly important for people in Canterbury to look into the report's findings because the impact of a nuclear winter on the growing season in the region would be significant.

A spokesman for the southern regional office, Mr Alisdair Hutchinson, said temperature changes would affect growth. There would be an estimated 29 per cent loss in Canterbury's pasture production in the first year, with a 54 per cent loss in spring production alone.