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Another way to a pollution-free NT

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Environmentalist suggests setting-up an agriculture estate

AN environmentalist yesterday suggested another solution to the pollution problem caused by animal waste — the establishment of an agricultural estate.

The chairman of the Conservancy Association, Mr Wan Sik-lun, said the government's recommendation — to impose a total ban of livestock farming in some areas with tighter controls in others — may not

be accepted by livestock farmers because their livelihood would be affected.

Speaking at a luncheon meeting, Mr Wan said he agreed with the government that water pollution in the New Territories is very serious.

He said: "More than 80 percent of NT rivers are polluted by agricultural waste."

He said there should be some degree of control as the situation has worsened in recent years.

"But it would be more practical if the government invests the millions of dollars — which may be required for compensation should the ban be implemented — on an integrated agricultural estate," he said.

Mr Wan said medium-scale livestock farms could be centralised and could share waste disposal facilities so as to reduce running costs.

He said the government should introduce advanced technology to assist farmers in increasing their productivity. This would also strengthen their competitive power.

Mr Wan said there is a lot of unused land in the New Territories that can be used for the estate. "It is a matter of whether the government would like to proceed with the project."

Mr Wan also criticised the government for not doing its best to tackle the pollution problem in the territory. He said the three existing ordinances governing pollution have no enforcement power.

He added that the present Environmental Protection Agency is more of a consultative body than an enforcement department.

He said the public should not anticipate effective pollution control within a year although the Environmental Protection Department will be set up in April.