

## Future developments

Implementing the new consenting regime for water takes under Variation 6 will require a lot of effort from farmers, their advisors and representatives as well as the regional council.

The council will develop an implementation plan, including expected consent costs, with the dairy sector.

We are committed to providing farmers with clear and timely information on their responsibilities, and will aim to keep the costs as low as possible.



For more details:

Phone Waikato Regional Council's  
resource use group on 0800 800 401



# Water Allocation Variation 6

February 2012

Information on the new rules for managing the  
allocation of water in the Waikato.

**Waikato**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
*Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato*

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## Facts for farmers

- A recent Environment Court decision has established new rules for managing the allocation of water in the Waikato.
- The so-called Variation 6 to the Waikato Regional Plan has increased the allocable amount of water from the Waikato River above Karapiro.
- Waikato Regional Council now has the job of implementing the rules set in Variation 6.
- This will involve working with dairy farmers to ensure they have the right water take consents.
- The regional council wishes to work with the farming industry to best manage this consenting process.

## What will farmers need to do?

Variation 6 affirms an existing requirement that farmers taking more than 15 cubic metres of water a day for dairy shed wash down and milk cooling must have a resource consent.

Some 3500 farmers in Waikato who do not currently hold such a consent will need to obtain one.

Farmers who were taking more than 15 cubic metres a day for dairy shed wash down and milk cooling as at October 2008 will generally have the amount taken in 2008 “grandparented” providing they meet a range of conditions, such as applying for a consent by 1 January 2015, developing a riparian management plan (if the take is from surface water) and excluding stock from waterways.

The regional council is looking to manage the huge number of consent applications in a phased way. We don't want too many too soon but at the same time we don't want them all coming on at the last minute. So we'll work with industry to manage the applications in a phased way.

Farmers who meet the criteria for getting more than 15 cubic metres a day for dairy shed wash down and milk cooling under the “grandparenting” rules, and who get their applications in by the deadline, can be confident of getting the water volume they were using in 2008.

However, for operations that began after 2008, and who want more than 15 cubic metres a day, much will depend on whether the relevant waterway and the catchment the farm is in is already fully allocated or not.

Also, in waterways and catchments where rivers and streams are already fully or over allocated, any new water take will require consent even if it is less than 15 cubic metres a day. Previously, taking up to 15 cubic metres per day has generally been an “as of right” permitted activity, and will remain so in catchments that haven't been fully allocated.

## Technical issues

When it comes to establishing how much farmers were taking as at October 2008 for dairy shed wash down and milk cooling, the council is looking at a range of options:

- using data supplied by farmers who have measured their water use
- using past stock numbers to estimate water use

Establishing systems for metering water use on farms will likely be part of the conditions for any new consent to take water under Variation 6.

Metering has a number of benefits:

- it will show that farmers are not taking too much water it will provide information that farmers can use as they trial and implement water efficiency measures

