

FARM ENVIRONMENT PLANS

Q. WHAT'S A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. Farm Environment Plans are a key part of the approach for reducing nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and bacteria entering our waterways. Landowners will need to understand their current losses, identify how contaminants are lost from their farms and take action to reduce these losses. Farm Environment Plans will be due from 2020, depending on what priority catchment you fall into.

Farm Environment Plans may be developed under a certified industry scheme or a Waikato Regional Council resource consent, depending on individual circumstances.

Q. WHO'LL NEED A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. All commercial vegetable growers and most farmers farming over 20ha will have to prepare a Farm Environment Plan. Properties with small and low intensity farming activities or with low risk factors for water quality won't need a Farm Environment Plan.

For details of properties that won't need a Farm Environment Plan see Rule 1 and Rule 2 in the Summary at waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyivers.

Q. WHAT'S IN A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. A Farm Environment Plan will:

- provide the property or enterprise details
- identify current contaminant losses and how these will be managed
- identify how specified minimum standards will be complied with
- provide a spatial risk map
- describe actions to be taken and the timing of them to hold and reduce discharge levels and requiring the highest nitrogen discharges to reduce their nitrogen discharges to the 75th percentile

Q. WHO PUTS TOGETHER A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. A Farm Environment Plan can be prepared by a certified professional, who will work with the landowner to prepare and approve the Farm Environment Plan. Farm Environment Plans can also be prepared under a certified industry scheme. These schemes would have systems and processes to make sure that each Farm Environment Plan meets the minimum standards.

Q. WHEN WILL PROPERTIES NEED TO HAVE A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. The plan change orders areas of the catchment in terms of the priority for cleaning up the waterways. This is based on the information we have about water quality in these areas now, and where we need to get to within the next 80 years.

You can find out what priority area you are in by visiting waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyivers.

Priority 1 subcatchments	1 July 2020
Priority 2 subcatchments	1 July 2023
Priority 2 subcatchments	1 July 2026

Q. WHAT HAPPENS IF A LANDOWNER DOESN'T WANT TO UNDERTAKE FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN ACTIONS?

A. Waikato Regional Council would undertake compliance monitoring to check actions are undertaken by the dates specified in the Farm Environment Plan. Not undertaking actions in a consented Farm Environment Plan would equate to not meeting conditions of resource consent. Not complying with a Farm Environment Plan under a certified industry scheme would be reported to the council. The last option available to the council in either instance would be enforcement action.

Q. WILL I STILL NEED A FARM PLAN IF I AM ALREADY OPERATING AT BEST PRACTICE, AND HAVE DONE ALL THE THINGS THAT ARE EXPECTED IN THE PLAN CHANGE?

A. If you are a commercial vegetable grower or most farmers farming over 20ha you will still need to complete a Farm Environment Plan. If you are already operating at best practice you will have fewer risks to identify and fewer actions to complete in your plan.

Q. IF I ALREADY HAVE A SUSTAINABLE MILK PLAN, WILL I STILL NEED A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. Some of the content requirements for Farm Environment Plans are not in existing Sustainable Milk Plans. The Sustainable Milk Plan process will provide information that can be used in a Farm Environment Plan.

The first Farm Environment Plans are not due until 1 July 2020. The intention is to minimise the impact on farmers who already have environmental plans such as the Sustainable Milk Plan, and to ensure that initiatives already undertaken are taken into account.

Q. IF I AM LEASING A PROPERTY, WILL I BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARING THE FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN?

A. This depends on your lease agreement. Some agreements say the owner is responsible, while others say the lessee is responsible.

Q. HOW MUCH WILL A FARM ENVIRONMENT PLAN COST?

A. The FEP process could cost anywhere from \$2000 and up to \$10,000 depending on property size and the complexity of the operation. It will also depend on whether a landowner prepares most of the information themselves and has a certified planner approve it, or whether a certified planner prepares and completes the entire plan. There will also be costs associated with the actions required in your FEP to manage the four contaminants on your farm. Those who have already completed work to manage risks associated with the four contaminants will have less to do.



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HE TAIAO MAURIORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT
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HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES



Healthy Rivers
PLAN FOR CHANGE
Wai Ora
HE RAUTAKI WHAKAPAIPAI

Waikato
REGIONAL COUNCIL
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato