



Moving farms

New to the Waikato? Welcome!

You may have farmed in a different part of New Zealand and may not be familiar with the effluent rules in our area, or it may be time for a bit of a refresher.

Effluent rules can vary significantly around the country, so make sure you are familiar with this region's rules. They are put in place to protect the environment, and the dairy farm effluent system must comply with them 365 days a year (including Moving Day).

Please note, breaches of the Resource Management Act (RMA) and permitted activity rules for dairy effluent management may attract significant financial penalties. Prioritising effluent management will avoid any compliance issues for you.

Visit waikatoregion.govt.nz and search "effluent management" for more information about our region's effluent rules.

Going to the next farm

Before leaving a farm, make sure its effluent system is in the required contractual condition and discuss any risks if this is not achievable. Provide clear instructions on system operation and key risk areas.

Likewise, before moving to your new farm it's vital to communicate with the current owner or operator about its effluent system, how it works, ahead of moving day. Early communication is key to ensure everyone is clear on what the expectations are.

On arrival, inspect the effluent system and run it to confirm correct operation. Carry out an initial – then monthly – maintenance check, and ensure all staff are inducted, trained and aware of their legal responsibilities.

Take notes and photos of all aspects of the effluent system and associated areas, including the feed pad, stand-off area and any effluent holding facilities. Compile this in an email to the owner so there is a clear record.

Develop and maintain a clear, up-to-date Effluent Management Plan (EMP) that explains how the system operates, outlines responsibilities, and sets out procedures for breakdowns, compliance issues and adverse weather. Review the EMP regularly, involving staff where possible, to ensure it remains effective and well understood.

Visit waikatoregion.govt.nz/effluent-management for more detailed information about how to take over an effluent system.

Before transportation

Care and preparation of stock prior to transportation will reduce their stress during the journey and ensure they arrive on farm safely. Farmers should:

- provide access to drinking water right up to loading
- minimise their time in the yard before loading
- take stock off lush pasture for four to six hours before the trip to allow them to empty out and reduce effluent
- provide roughage instead and hold them on a grazed-out paddock so they can rest.

Working with stock transporters

When booking a stock transporter, ask around for recommendations and/or ask enough questions to ensure you are comfortable trusting your animals in their care.

- Confirm the truck will be thoroughly cleaned before your cattle are transported.
- Confirm the truck has suitable effluent storage and that it will be emptied.

Effluent management during transportation

Stock truck effluent must be contained and not discharged unlawfully during transportation.

The disposal of stock truck effluent must be managed in accordance with the Resource Management Act and Waikato Regional Plan rules – the use of a dedicated, roadside stock effluent discharge facility is recommended.

Where no facility is available on the journey, the driver of the stock truck should consider the capacity of onboard effluent storage and ensure it is adequate for the trip, or if alternative disposal methods are available.

Stock truck effluent must not be discharged into surface water or onto land where it may enter surface water, under any circumstances.

Droving instead?

Restrictions apply to moving livestock along a road, or droving. Droving creates additional traffic management, road safety, environmental and animal welfare risks so must be carefully planned and undertaken. Local bylaws relating to livestock movement on public roads will apply and must be complied with at all times.

Visit dairynz.co.nz and search “moving day” for more information.

Biosecurity risks

To avoid cross-contamination and the spread of diseases, pests and weeds, it's important to prepare and plan when moving from one farm to another. There is a significant biosecurity risk associated with moving stock, plant and machinery between farms. Manage this risk with the thorough cleaning, disinfection and proper transfer of all farm equipment, machinery and stock.

Clean and disinfect vehicles and machinery thoroughly. The standard to achieve is no visible soil or plant material, including on diggers, harvesting equipment, cultivation equipment and seed drills.

- Clean and disinfect any equipment that is used in animal husbandry, for example, calf rearing and drenching equipment.
- Leave dairy sheds and processing plants clean and tidy. Thoroughly clean and sanitise the dairy shed, including all concrete surfaces, vats, pipelines and in-shed feed systems, etc. Use only approved cleaning products.
- Keep cattle in weed-free holding paddocks for at least 24 hours prior to moving to allow time for weed seeds to pass through the gut to help prevent the spread of undesirable weed species.

Visit [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and search for “FAR Harvester hygiene tips” for an informative video from the Foundation for Arable Research.

Your obligations when moving livestock between farms

Robust biosecurity measures will protect your livestock investment and the wellbeing of your herd and will support the region's biosecurity efforts.

Whether you're selling a herd, moving stock between farms, or sending your stock to grazing, take the time to plan their movement in advance and confirm the exact number of cattle you need to transport. Whether it is 1 June, or not, consider this list of obligations carefully.

- Ensure vaccinations are up to date and that BVD (Bovine Viral Diarrhoea), Johne's disease and other disease testing is done prior to movement.
- Ensure your NAIT (National Animal Identification and Tracing) records are up to date, all animals are tagged, and you're completing all NAIT actions within the required timelines.
- Confirm the health status of any animals that will be mixing with your animals on the new farm and, if necessary, arrange for testing, vaccinations, etc. Keeping new animals separate for seven to 14 days reduces the risk of introducing unwanted diseases.
- Check there are no biosecurity restrictions or requirements on the new farm, for example, as a result of *Mycoplasma bovis* or bovine tuberculosis (TB) control.

Visit [Ospri.co.nz](https://ospri.co.nz) for more about your NAIT obligations.

Dairy effluent infrastructure and management

The change in dairy seasons is a busy time on farm, and it is vital that dairy effluent systems are being well managed and monitored during this period. Waikato Regional Council sees an increase in non-compliance with dairy effluent rules during this time, all of which could be avoidable with good planning and preparation.

Please note, breaches of the RMA and permitted activity rules for dairy effluent management may attract significant financial penalties. Prioritising effluent management will avoid any compliance issues for you.

Preparation for departure

- Fix any maintenance issues that are your responsibility. If they are not your responsibility then ensure whoever it is knows what needs to be done, in writing.
- Ensure effluent infrastructure is left as you found it, and/or is left according to your contractual obligations, for example, an effluent pond is required to be no more than one quarter full of effluent as of 1 June. If this is unlikely to be achieved, have a proactive conversation with the appropriate parties.
- Leave clear instructions for the incoming farm manager on how the system operates, setbacks and any risk areas.

Arriving on a new farm

- Check over the farm effluent system, for example, pond levels and irrigation equipment, including hydrants, automation and records.
- Complete an initial maintenance check programme, to be repeated monthly.
- Run the system to ensure it is operating correctly and identify any risks or faults early so they can be addressed.
- If the effluent system concerns you, take photos and call us on 0800 800 401 to discuss the situation.
- Provide induction and training to all staff, including their legal responsibilities. Create and maintain staff training records.

Effluent Management Plan (EMP)

- Document a comprehensive effluent management plan, so everyone on farm knows how the system operates, what their responsibilities are and what to do in the event of breakdowns, compliance issues or adverse weather conditions.
- Review the EMP regularly, ideally involving your staff.

Visit dairynz.co.nz and search “moving day” for more information.

Updating your farm details

Permitted activity registration

Effluent management on a dairy farm is a permitted activity under the Waikato Regional Plan. Landowners must apply to register to discharge farm dairy wastewater to land. A registration form is available online and registration is specific to a farm property. If you are moving farms, you will need to complete a new registration.

Visit waikatoregion.govt.nz and search “consent application forms”. Fill out the required Discharges – Farm Dairy forms and email them to rm.requests@waikatoregion.govt.nz. Easy!

Consents

You may have a consent for a water take on your farm and need to transfer it to a new owner. You can transfer your consent to another person or party if they will be operating the same activity at the same location. That transfer can involve the whole or part of the consent and may be temporary or permanent.

You can also arrange to surrender (relinquish, cancel) your consent if you will no longer be undertaking the activity it authorises.

Visit waikatoregion.govt.nz and search “surrenders and transfers resource consents” for the forms you need to get sorted.

