

Dairying and Clean Stream Accord



Background Information

Dairying and Clean Streams Accord

The Accord aims to promote sustainable dairy farming in New Zealand. It focuses on reducing the impacts of dairying on the quality of New Zealand streams, rivers, lakes, ground water and wetlands.

The Accord is an agreement between Fonterra Co-operative Group, Regional Councils, Unitary Authorities, the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry to work together to achieve clean, healthy water in dairying areas. The goal is to have water that is suitable (where appropriate) for fish, stock water and swimming (in areas defined by Regional Councils).

The six priorities for actions and national targets outlined in the Accord are:

- Fonterra and Regional Councils to develop Regional Action Plans for the main dairying regions to implement this Accord by June 2004.
- Dairy cattle excluded from 50% of streams, rivers and lakes by 2007, 90% by 2012.
- 50% of regular crossing points to have bridges or culverts by 2007, 90% by 2012.
- 100% of farm dairy effluent discharges to comply with resource consents and Regional Plans immediately.
- 50% of regionally significant wetlands to be fenced by 2005, 90% by 2007.
- 100% of dairy farms to have in place systems to manage nutrient inputs and outputs by 2007.

The Northland Regional Council Action Plan adapts the national targets to Northland conditions.

Regional Action Plan

The Accord sets minimum national targets but allows for regional flexibility to eventually meet those targets. The Regional Action Plan for Northland is intended to

be adaptable for local conditions, practical, cost effective (whilst recognising the practical and financial constraints of implementing timeframes) and make a real difference. It is a result of the Northland Regional Council, Fonterra and Northland farmers working together to tailor a Plan to the Northland situation.

Northland Targets

Target ↻

Dairy cattle excluded from 50% of streams, rivers, lakes and estuaries by 2007, 90% by 2012.

Assumptions ↻

- Fencing may not be required when natural barriers prevent stock access.
- The need for/type of fencing will depend on factors such as terrain, frequency and severity of flooding, stock type and costs.
- Streams are defined as deeper than a "Red Band" (ankle depth), "wider than a stride" and permanently flowing.

Target ↻

50% of regionally significant wetlands fenced by 2005, 90% by 2007.

Assumptions ↻

The Northland Regional Council has yet to fully define and identify regionally significant or important wetlands, but has begun this work.

Target ↻

All dairy farms to have systems to manage nutrient inputs and outputs by 2007.

Assumptions ↻

- There are effective nutrient management tools available.
- Farmers can achieve substantial fertiliser cost savings by using fertiliser in a modern, targeted and efficient manner.

Target ↻

50% of points regularly crossed by stock have bridges or culverts by 2007, 90% by 2012.

Assumptions ↻

- This target applies to non-flood conditions.

Target ↻

All farm dairy effluent discharges to comply with resource consent and Regional Plans immediately.

Assumptions ↻

- All dairy farmers should already be complying with their resource consents or the relevant permitted activity rules in the Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland.

Available help

The Northland Regional Council has an Environment Fund that could assist farmers protect regionally significant or important wetlands.

Other high priority issues for Northland

The following issues directly relate to Accord goals but are not specifically addressed by targets in the Accord:

- Discharges of effluent from other point sources on dairy farms (including feeding pads and loafing barns)
- Existing rules (including detailed provisions in the Regional Water and Soil Plan for Northland) covers effluent discharges. Options to include this in the accord will be considered during the first annual review of the Regional Action Plan.
- There is currently a significant shortage of professional advisory services available to Northland farmers, for the detailed design and construction of effluent treatment systems. Both Fonterra and the Northland Regional Council will investigate ways of increasing the availability of professional advice.

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Implementation and monitoring

Fonterra and the Northland Regional Council will:

- Assist with the collection, publication and provision of information and guidance to Northland dairy farmers and their advisors.
- Promote development and use of individual farm plans that include site-specific solutions.
- Evaluate annually progress towards regional targets. A working group comprising representatives of Fonterra and the Northland Regional Council will also make recommendations to both bodies on changes to the Regional Action Plan and priorities for inclusion in the annual work programme.

Fonterra will:

- Endorse development of farm management plans through the Market Focused programme.
- Make suppliers aware of the targets and monitor compliance with the targets during the annual assessment process using on-farm environment assessment.

The Northland Regional Council will:

- Continue with its Resource Management Act regulatory regime for the management of farm dairy effluent discharges including resource consents, monitoring and enforcement.

- Use its State of the Environment monitoring to assess changes in the health and quality of water bodies resulting from implementation of this Action Plan.
- Continue to monitor resource consents and regional rules authorising farm dairy effluent discharges.

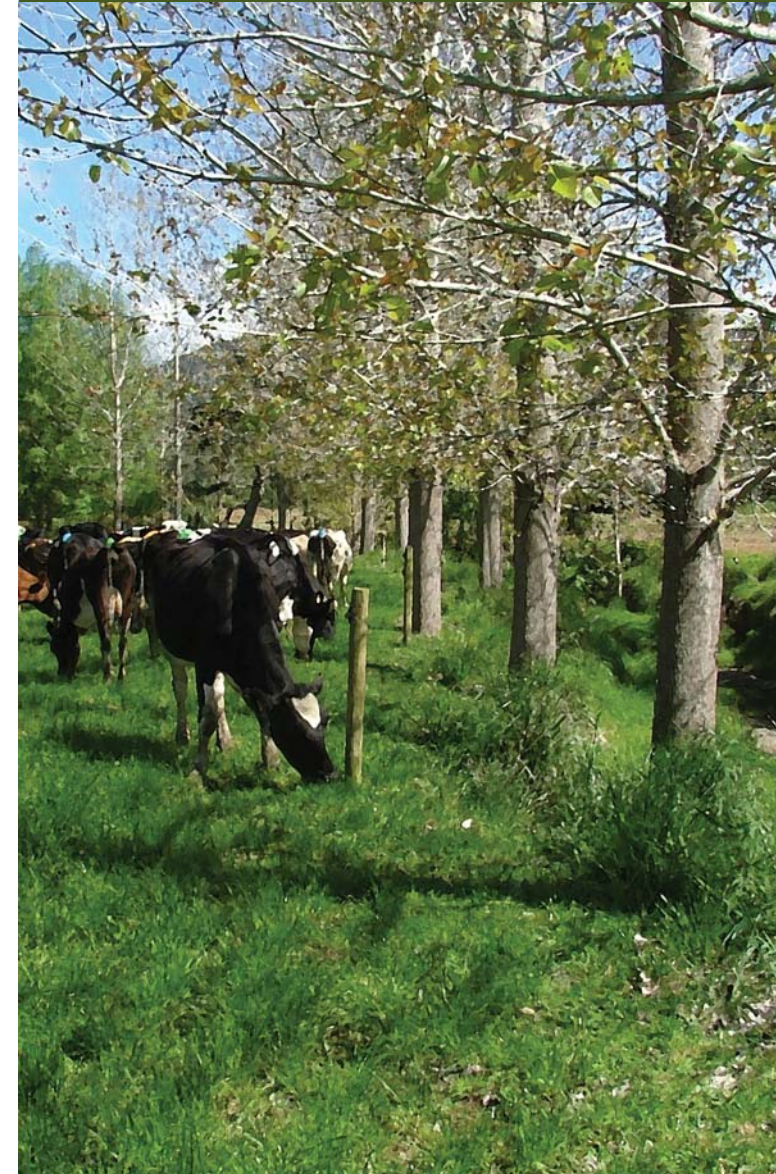
Key principles

- The purpose of this Action Plan is to implement the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord regionally.
- The Northland Regional Council and Fonterra have prepared this Action Plan specifically for Northland.
- The Plan recognises the work already done by the Northland farming community across target areas.
- Monitoring of reporting mechanisms will ensure minimal cross-agency duplication in functions.
- Fonterra recognises the significant financial benefit of this approach in Northland. As such these savings will benefit the Northland dairying community.
- These targets will be reviewed in 2010.



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CARING FOR NORTHLAND AND ITS ENVIRONMENT



Regional Action Plan
for Northland