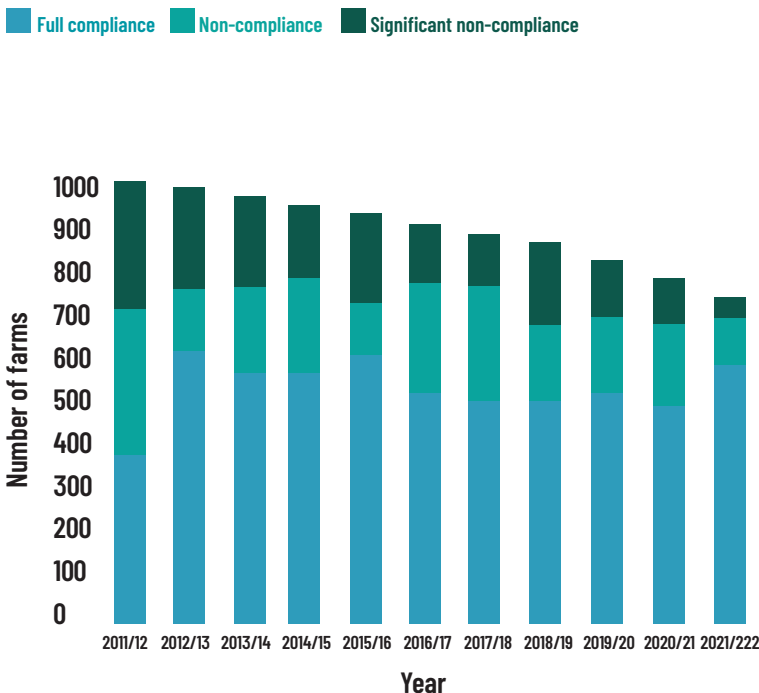




### An upward trend in compliance rates

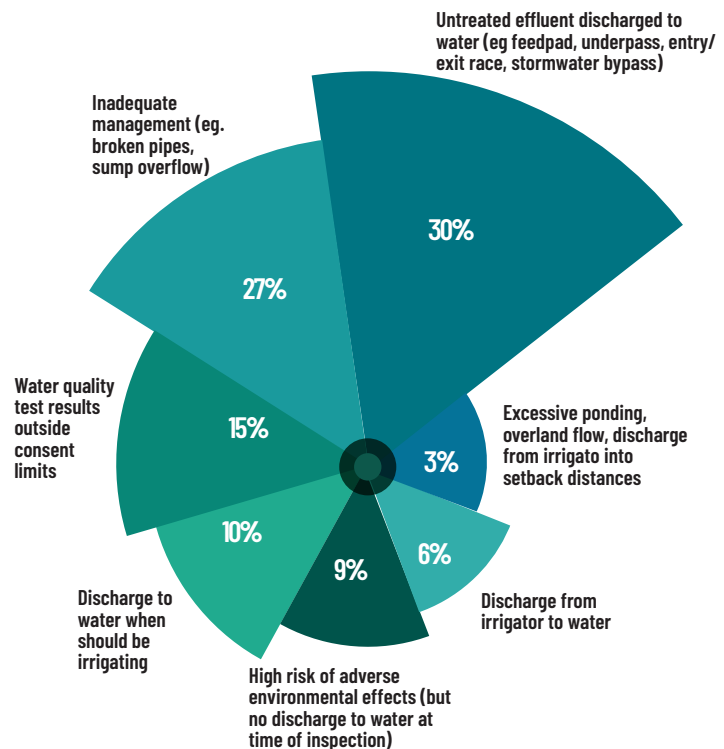
There has been some fantastic work taking place on farm throughout the region and we've seen that reflected by a record low significant non-compliance rate of just 3.57% this season. All up, 757 farms were monitored and while a change to how we reported compliance this year no doubt contributed, it also reflects how our farming community are positively responding to the changes in practice that are required.

#### Farm dairy effluent compliance (all farms)



Comparative compliance rates showing last season and the previous 10 years.

#### What is causing non-compliance?



Graph showing the causing of non-compliance over the last 3 years



## Effluent Pond Level Programme

After last year's routine monitoring inspections, all farms that were identified as non-compliant for either having significantly poor discharge results (consented farms), or no contingency storage (permitted activity farms), were placed on the pond level check programme.

39 non-compliant farms were emailed in February requesting verification (i.e photos and/or contractor invoices) the ponds had been emptied in autumn. If council did not receive 'evidence' that a farms effluent pond/s being emptied prior to 15 April, it was communicated that council officers would visit the farm between 19 April and 1 May.



## Why did we visit?

### For consented farms

For farms holding a discharge resource consent there is a condition (depending on age of consent) requiring;

- » All ponds to be at/near empty by 1 May each year or,
- » The treatment system must be adequately maintained (includes desludging/emptying of ponds).

All consented farms have been 'sized' to allow adequate storage of farm wastewater during the wetter months and ensure wastewater is adequately treated prior to any discharge. This is based on all ponds being emptied prior to winter.

### For Permitted Activity farms

For farms operating under the permitted activity criteria (no discharge to water) the regional rule requires that;

- » Ponds must have at least 75 percent working volume available between 1 March and 1 May each year.

For permitted activity farms, the key measures to ensure there is adequate storage available for the predominantly wet period thru May – October are:

- » Having the pond/s at or near empty by May
- » Continuing to apply wastewater to land when conditions are suitable throughout if possible i.e. with no overland flow or excessive ponding over 3hrs.

- » Having a contingency pump (or access to one) in case of break-down to enable irrigation of wastewater whenever ground conditions are suitable (as above).

*Note: Farm wastewater storage facilities are required to be adequately sized for each farm operating under the Permitted Activity criteria. If you would like assistance with pond sizing on your farm contact your local Fonterra Sustainable Dairying Advisor in the first instance.*



## Nitrogen Usage Reporting

Farm reporting of nitrogen use for the period 1 July 2021 – 30 June 2022 is due on 31 July. This is a new requirement for all dairy farmers due to new government regulations introduced in 2021 which specify that on all farms 20 hectares and larger that have any grazed land, no more than 190kgs of synthetic nitrogen per hectare may be applied per year to:

- » Each individual hectare of pasture; and
- » The combined area of pasture + annual forage crops, when averaged across that area.
- » The use of over 190kg/ha/year requires a resource consent.

### What you need to know

- » Submit your nitrogen fertilizer usage information via the Northland Regional Council website.
- » Check the Northland Regional Council website (under Farm Management) for all reporting requirements and further information about the N-cap rules.

## Stockholding Areas

**The National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES – FW) introduced rules for stockholding and feedlots that are now in effect.**

### What is a stockholding area?

(a) An area for holding cattle at a density that means pasture or other vegetative ground cover cannot be maintained (for example, feed pads, and standoff pads; but

(b) Does not include an area used for pastoral purposes that is a stockyard, milking shed, wintering barn, or sacrifice paddock

### What are the rules?

- » The base of the stockholding area is sealed; and
- » Effluent expelled in the stockholding area is collected, stored and disposed of in accordance with or a resource consent; and
- » It's at least 50 metres away from any waterbody, water bore, drain, and the coast.

If you think you might be affected by these changes and want to know more, please contact us to discuss your situation.

## Natural wetlands



Wetlands are an important and necessary part of the natural landscape that deserve our collective protection. They help prevent flooding and improve water quality, as well as providing the necessary habitat for unique species of plants and animals.

### Do you have a natural wetland on your farm?

- » The RMA defines a wetland as including permanently or intermittently wet areas, shallow water, and land water margins that support a natural ecosystem of plants and animals that are adapted to wet conditions.

- » Wetlands include both freshwater and coastal areas.

### The rules:

- » Land disturbance activities (such as earthworks and vegetation clearance) must not be undertaken within 10m of a wetland boundary (unless for wetland restoration or maintenance of infrastructure).
- » Taking, use and diversion of water (including stormwater) must not be undertaken within 100m of a natural wetland (unless for wetland restoration and maintenance of infrastructure).

### What can you do to help look after your wetland/s?

- » Fencing stock out of wetlands is a good starting point, as they can pug the margins, add sediment and nutrients as well as damage habitat for plants and animals. When you fence, you can create a wide buffer zone that you could then plant with appropriate native species.
- » Control pest plants and animals, especially within your fenced area where the reduction of stock grazing will allow weeds to grow.

**To see how fencing can influence wetland health, visit [www.nrc.govt.nz/fencingwetlands](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/fencingwetlands)**



## Silage

Some important changes to our silage rules in the Proposed Regional Plan came into effect in June 2021; here is what you need to know.

- » The storage of silage must not be located within 50 metres of water, a water supply bore, a dwelling owned/occupied by another person, or 20 metres of a public road/space.
- » Any leachate generated must be contained and not enter groundwater supply or surface water.
- » Catchment runoff must be prevented from entering the storage site.
- » The discharge must not cause an offensive odour beyond the property boundary.

If you think you might be affected by these changes and want to know more, please feel free to contact us to discuss your situation.



## Dairy shed water use

As the water take rules in the Proposed Regional Plan became operative, dairy farms assessed as requiring a resource consent for shed use (not stock drinking water) were contacted.

- » All farms estimated to be using over 50m<sup>3</sup>/day i.e. 720+ herd maximum now have a resource consent to secure their water take.
- » Farms estimated to be using between 30m<sup>3</sup>/day – 50m<sup>3</sup>/day i.e. 420 – 720 maximum herd, were assessed and 36 now have a resource consent to secure their water take.
- » Farms using water in the 28 – 35m<sup>3</sup>/day range were given the opportunity to install a meter to verify their take to assess whether a consent is required. 37 farms are currently on this water use verification program and will be reassessed once 6 months' of data is collated.
- » Dairy farms verified to use under 30m<sup>3</sup> per/day are covered under the Permitted Activity criteria and do not require a resource consent for shed water use.

*Council would like to thank all the farms we've worked with for their co-operation in 'rolling out' the new rules around dairy shed water takes.*

## Grass management and spraying

Are you planning on broadleaf spraying your paddocks or using other agrichemicals? If so, you need to:

- » Notify your neighbours (within 100m for ground-based spraying or 200m for aerial spraying).
- » Have a sprayplan in place – it is your responsibility to ensure your contractor is using a spray plan that includes all the required information.

For more information, please visit: [www.nrc.govt.nz/environment/air/issues/agrichemical-spray](http://www.nrc.govt.nz/environment/air/issues/agrichemical-spray)



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