



Irrigators and travel stop mechanisms

A common issue found on farm this season was broken or missing travel stops for travelling irrigators. Regional rules require no discharge within a setback distance of 20m from waterways, public roads, bores and neighbouring properties.

Therefore, it is vital that a travel stop is used when irrigating to reduce the risk of non-compliance with regional rules.

Compliance rates on the right track

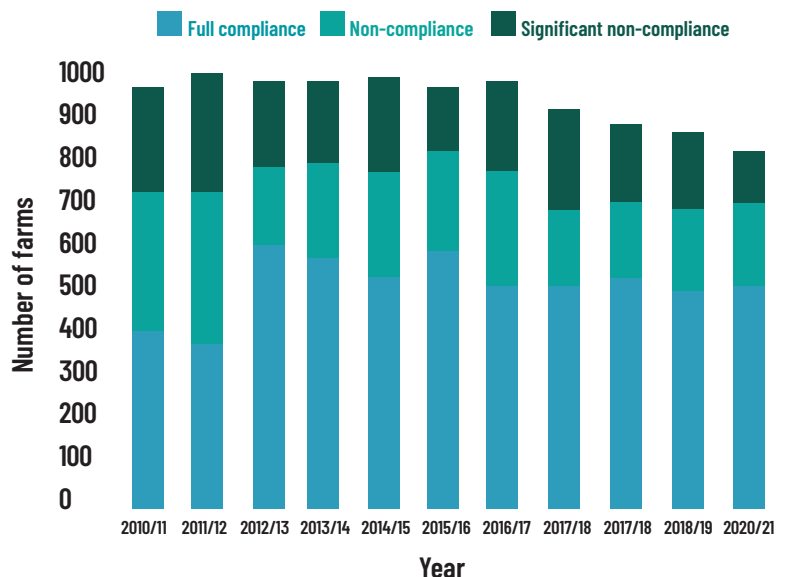
The rate of significant non-compliance (SNC) over the 2020/21 monitoring season was our lowest ever at 10.65%. This is a great achievement and reflects the ongoing investment and commitment Northland dairy farmers are making to achieve best practice on farm and improve water quality.

The main reasons for significant non-compliance among farms with dairy effluent consents were discharges of untreated wastewater to water and inadequate management of dairy effluent. For permitted activity farms, the main reasons were unauthorised discharges of treated wastewater to water and no (or inadequate) contingency storage.

Planning for future changes and regular checks of the wastewater system are key to keeping the significant non-compliance rate down.

YEAR	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
No. SNC	134	166	194	142	121	84
% SNC	14.19%	18.06%	21.60%	16.61%	14.83%	10.65%
Total farms	944	919	898	855	816	789

Farm dairy effluent compliance (all farms)



Rules for wastewater discharges to land

The appeals process for rules relating to wastewater discharges to land in the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland is close to completion and the final version is awaiting the consent order from the court. In addition to the current rules, the following changes have been agreed to:

Permitted Activities for farm wastewater discharges to land.

- » No discharge of wastewater to land within 50m (for a distance of 2000m) upstream of a priority drinking water abstraction point.
- » No discharge of wastewater to land within 20m of an artificial watercourse.
- » Roof water must be permanently diverted away from the yard and ponds (unless wastewater storage facilities are designed to accommodate the additional volume).
- » A stormwater diversion system is maintained and operated for the yard (unless wastewater storage facilities are designed to accommodate the additional volume).
- » Catchment stormwater is prevented from entering the ponds.
- » Ponds are adequately sized.
- » Ponds must have 75% volume available at 1 May each year.



Storage pond sizing

The Proposed Regional Rules for Northland now require farm wastewater storage facilities to be adequately sized for each farm operating under the Permitted Activity criteria.



Northland Regional Council strongly recommends pond volumes are calculated to allow for adequate storage through the predominantly wet period of 1 May to 1 October - along with having all ponds at or near empty by 1 May. This is key to ensure wastewater can be stored when conditions are unsuitable for land application.

An accurate estimate of inputs into the system is vital to ensure calculations allow for adequate contingency storage.

These include:

- » herd size and milking regime
- » calving regime
- » effluent volumes generated at the dairy (largely impacted by water use)
- » stand-off/feed pad use
- » stormwater diversion (and its use)
- » roof water from the dairy and surrounding buildings (if pond is sized to accommodate this, otherwise it should be diverted)
- » average local rainfall
- » soil types.

If you would like assistance with pond sizing on your farm contact your local Fonterra Sustainable Dairying Advisor. Alternatively contact Nathan Walker at the council's farm monitoring team.

Dead stock disposal

Proper disposal of dead stock is important to protect human health and the environment.



Do:

- » Bury dead animals at least 50 metres away from any watercourse, water supply bore, home, and/or 20 metres from a public road or space.
- » Adequately cover the burial site to prevent nuisance smells and access by vermin.
- » Prevent catchment runoff from entering the storage site.
- » Remove dead animals from streams or watercourses for proper disposal.

Don't:

- » Dump dead animals in streams or watercourses.
- » Use a gully as an uncovered disposal site.
- » Bury dead animals within 50 metres of any watercourse or home.
- » Dump dead animals in your dairy effluent ponds.

Grants & support for erosion-prone land

Do you have a run-off that has some eroding or marginal hill country? Are you looking to control erosion, retire land or convert pasture to high-value forestry?



We may be able to help with the cost. For those in the wider Kaipara catchment, funding has moved from the Northland Regional Council's Environment fund to the new Kaipara Moana Remediation (KMR) Programme. While this new entity is being set up, contact us for future funding – we'll pass your details on once things are up and running.

Find out what funding and support is available, contact our land management team on 0800 002 004.

Orders for subsidised poplar and willow poles are also open now – get in quick!

New standards for synthetic nitrogen use

Recently we have seen several changes from central government aimed at improving water quality throughout New Zealand under the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-FW). Dairy farmers have a key role to play and are in a good position having made incremental environmental improvements on farm over the last decade.



Water quality is a complex issue that requires all industries to work together to achieve a common goal.

For more information on how the new NES-FW standards may apply to Northland dairy farmers, visit our website at www.nrc.govt.nz/essentialfreshwater

The key standard to note at this time is around synthetic nitrogen use, which is capped at 190kg/Synthetic N/ha/yr.

The dairy industry must keep records of use from July 2021. This includes:

- » Receipts for synthetic nitrogen fertiliser for the contiguous landholding.
- » The types of synthetic N applied and the % of N component by weight.
- » Rate of N applied (in kg/ha/yr) and dates to pasture/annual forage crops/other land.

The above information, along with the information listed below, will be required to be reported to council each year starting from July 2022, and uploaded to the Northland Regional Council website.

- » A map of pastoral land use identifying pasture and annual forage crops.
- » The area of land in other uses in the contiguous landholding (in hectares).

Team movements

We welcome David Fern who joined the team in late March to take up the expanded Farm and Forestry Monitoring Manager role.

After more than seven years in the Farm Monitoring team, Rachael Anderson has moved to a new role with Ministry of Primary Industries based here in Northland. Nathan Walker is now your primary contact for all farm wastewater monitoring and water take related matters.

Unsure about something related to your farm dairy wastewater system?

Get in touch with our Farm Dairy Effluent team, we are here to help.



David Fern
Farm Forestry
Monitoring Manager



Nathan Walker
Farm Monitoring
Specialist



Megan Evans
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Officer

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 www.nrc.govt.nz/farmmanagement