



# Farm environment plans for permitted activity farms

March 2020

Farm environment plans (FEP) are a useful tool to help you manage environmental risks on your farm and potentially improve your bottom line.

FEPs are the most practical way for you to look at your farm and farm system, identify works which have already been completed and plan environmental work which needs to be undertaken in the future to protect land and water quality on your property.

## Do I need a farm environment plan?

All low intensity farms operating under permitted activity rule 3.11.4.3 need to prepare an FEP. Farms that may operate under this rule include:

- drystock farms where the winter stocking rate is equal to or less than 18su/ha
- farms other than drystock where the nitrogen leaching loss rate is low in accordance with Schedule B, Table 1.

## What needs to be in my farm environment plan?

The FEP will confirm the standards in Schedule D1 are being met, or the measures that need to be taken to meet the standards.

Some examples of these standards include:

- Monitor soil phosphorus levels and maintain them at or below agronomic optimum.
- Nitrogen fertiliser application rates to pasture are no greater than 30kgN/ha per dressing.
- Stored fertiliser is covered or roofed with impermeable material.

To ensure the standards are being met, a certified farm environment planner will assess farming practice against the standards within 12 months of it being submitted to us.

## Who puts together my farm environment plan?

An FEP may either be prepared by the landowner, or by any person (including a certified sector scheme) on behalf of the landowner.

## What can I do to start my farm environment plan?

FEPs are expected to identify the following areas on farm:

- land management units or blocks
- waterways
- areas at risk of contaminant loss for nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and *E.coli*
- areas where work has already been completed
- areas where mitigation will be undertaken to reduce the risks.

All these areas, and potentially others too, help to paint a picture of your unique property, the work you're looking to do to meet the standards of Schedule D2, and the work you've already completed to protect your property and the local environment.

## When will I need to submit a farm environment plan?

All farms operating under permitted activity rule 3.11.4.3 need to submit their FEP to us within six months of plan change 1 becoming operative. Plan change 1 will become operative once the appeals and legal procedures are completed. We'll be in touch to let you know when that has happened.





## If what I do on farm changes – can my plan change, too?

FEPs are designed to be a living document – that means it can be changed and updated as your business changes, as long as it still meets the standards in Schedule D1.

## How do I find a certified farm environment planner?

We're developing a training programme which will need to be completed by rural professionals interested in being certified farm environment planners (CFEPs). For some rural professionals it could take up to 18 months to complete training and certification. There are some others who will be able to be certified much quicker.

The names and contact details of CFEPs will be available on our website as they are certified.

At the same time as we are working on our own certification process, a national scheme is being developed, too. Our intention is to align our work with the national scheme to ensure consistency for farmers and rural professionals.

## How can a farm environment plan FEP help my business?

Going through the FEP process can be of benefit to your farm business. It is an opportunity to critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of the land and farm system. You can map actions completed already, plan changes to the farm system, plan actions to reduce contaminants and prioritise work. You have invested a lot in your land and business already – the FEP process will help you protect your investment.



### Have more questions?

You can find the decisions version of the proposed rules on our website. We also have a team of trained staff who can answer your questions.

Call us on

 **0800 800 401**


Or send an email to

 **healthyrivers@waikatoregion.govt.nz**



**Important**

This information has been provided based on Waikato Regional Council's interpretation of the decisions version of the proposed plan change to be notified in April 2020. Please take the time to read the decisions version and seek your own advice, too. Also note that the proposed plan is subject to possible change by the Environment Court through the appeals process.

 0800 800 401

 [waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyrivers](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/healthyrivers)

 [healthyrivers@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:healthyrivers@waikatoregion.govt.nz)



Healthy Rivers  
PLAN FOR CHANGE

Wai Ora  
HE RAUTAKI WHAKAPAIPAI

**Waikato**  
  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato