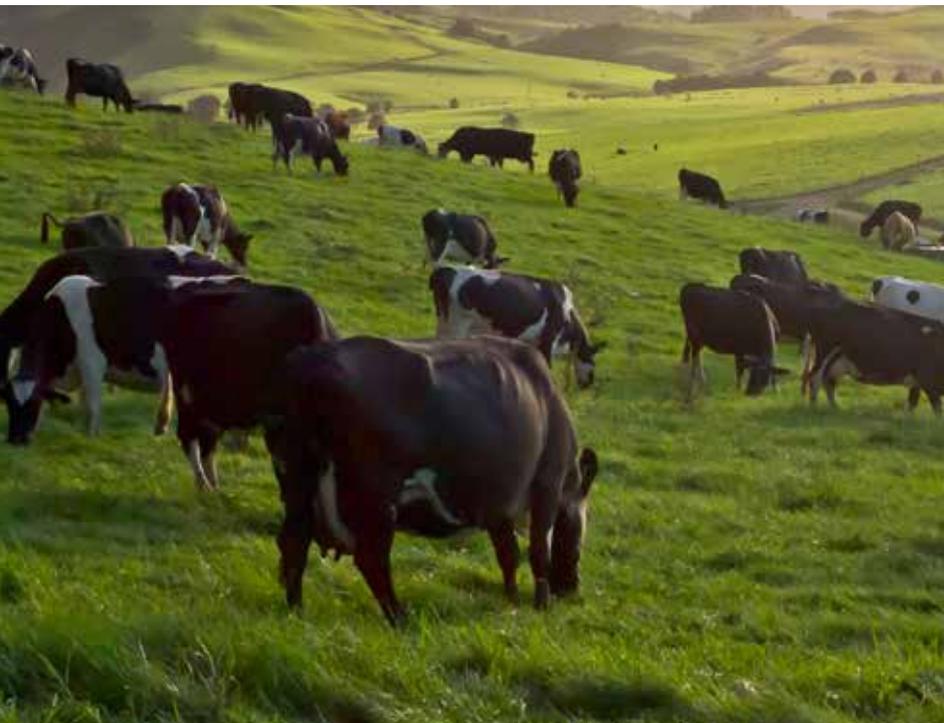


Dairy farmer news

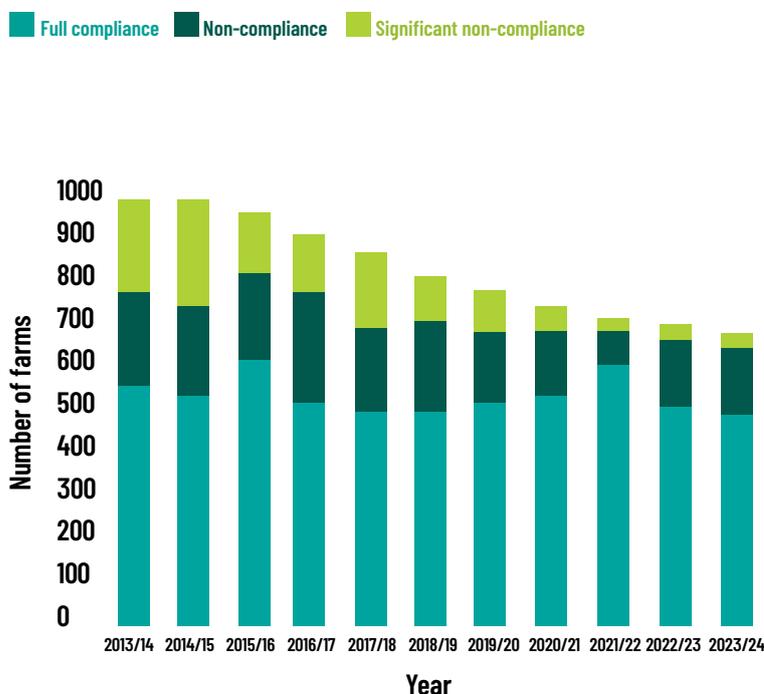
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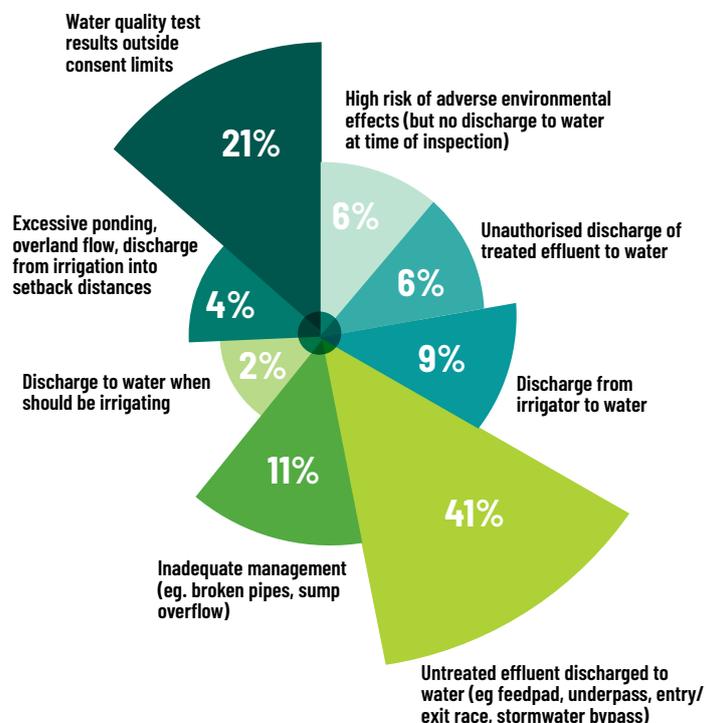
The start of the last season was very challenging having come off a wet and wild summer with no respite before winter.

Many farmers were left in the vulnerable position of having full ponds and soggy paddocks. Despite these challenges, the sector performed well in terms of compliance rates, achieving less significant non-compliance (SNC) rates than the previous year.

Farm dairy effluent compliance (all farms)



What is causing non-compliance?



Unsurprisingly, most of the non-compliance recorded relates to a discharge of untreated effluent and non-compliant water quality results. This is likely related to many farmers having full ponds before winter.

Feel free to contact our farm monitoring team to discuss your situation - 0800 002 004

Building resilience into your farm systems

Over the last few years, we have experienced both dry and wet weather extremes in Northland. Both droughts and storms/floods are likely to become more frequent so building resilience into your farming systems is important for good environmental and stock welfare outcomes.

Droughts: Plan for improved water storage and more diverse pasture species. Plan to increase stock shade to reduce heat stress.

Storms/floods: Have a plan for moving stock to higher ground and discuss this with your neighbours if necessary. Think about alternative power supplies and consider investing in a generator or solar system.



Stock in waterbodies

Council is receiving more reports of stock in waterbodies since rules in the Proposed Regional Plan for Northland and the Resource Management (Stock exclusion) Regulations 2020 are now largely in force for dairy farmers.

Know your obligations

If you have dairy stock, the chances are that they need to be excluded from most waterbody types by now. Check the table below to find out about the specific dates that may apply to your waterbodies. Council will be assessing stock exclusion where possible during the 2024 monitoring season. If you want to discuss your situation ahead of your inspection, please contact the farm monitoring team.

| Waterbody type | By when and setback from water |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Wetlands >0.05ha | 1 January 2023 (0m)# |
| Wetlands that support a population of threatened species. | 1 July 2025 (0m)* |
| Lakes (all) | 1 July 2023 (3m)* |
| Lakes >1ha | June 2022 (0m)# |
| Rivers upstream of swimming sites on Hātea and Raumanga rivers - Identified in the Regional Plan maps click on 'Catchment specific layers' | June 2024 (0m)# |
| Rivers and streams > 1m - Wider than one metre at any point within a property | February 2022 (0m)# 1 July 2023 (3m)* |
| Streams < 1m - The entire stream within a property is less than one metre wide. Only applies to streams that continually contain water | 1 January 2023 (0m)# |
| Artificial watercourse >1m - A man-made channel, continually flowing with water. It does not include a channel constructed in or along the path of any historical or existing river, stream or natural wetland - refer Regional Plan for full definition | February 2022 (0m)# |
| Artificial watercourse <1m - A man-made channel, continually flowing with water. It does not include a channel constructed in or along the path of any historical or existing river, stream or natural wetland - refer Regional Plan for full definition | 1 January 2023 (0m)# |
| Inanga spawning sites - The margins of rivers and estuaries that are inundated by spring high tides. There is no map of inanga spawning sites | June 2022 (0m)# |
| 1000m upstream of a mapped priority drinking water abstraction point. Refer Regional Plan maps. Click on 'Priority Drinking Water Abstraction Points' | June 2022 (0m)# |
| Outstanding freshwater body - Identified in the Regional Plan Maps click on 'Water Quality and Quantity Management Units' then 'Outstanding Freshwater Bodies' | June 2022 (0m)# |
| Coastal marine area - Beaches, mudflats, saltmarsh and other foreshore areas. This rule has been in place since 2009 (previously in the Regional Coastal Plan for Northland) | 2009 (0m)# |

KEY # = Regional Plan rule C.8.1.2 * = Stock Exclusion Regulations

Frequently asked questions

Who do these regulations apply to?

Anyone who owns or controls dairy stock.

What are the setbacks I need to follow?

Under the Stock Exclusion Regulations, a 3 metre setback is required for all rivers and streams over 1m wide as well as all lakes. For streams under 1m wide, no setbacks are defined.

What if I already have a fence or my stock are naturally excluded (i.e. cliff, riparian vegetation)?

The rules require that stock are 'effectively excluded' which includes natural barriers and vegetation. If you already had a

permanent fence before the date the exclusion was required, you do not need to change anything even if it does not have a 3m setback provided that stock are effectively excluded.

Do I have to fence or are other exclusion options available?

It is required that stock are excluded from waterbodies. A full wire or permanent fence is not always necessary to achieve this, you may use a single polymer wire fence or a 'virtual' GPS fence.

For more info, visit Farmers Hub

nrc.govt.nz/environment/farm-management

Nitrogen reporting

Farm reporting of nitrogen use for the period July 2023 - 30 June 2024 is due on 31 July. For all farms 20 hectares and larger that have any grazed land, no more than 190 kilograms 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

- » Dairy farmers are required to report on their nitrogen fertiliser usage each year.
- » Submit your nitrogen fertiliser usage information via MyBallance, Hawkeye or the Te Uru Kahika webform.
- » Check the NRC website (in the Farmers Hub) for links to the above reporting tools, reporting requirements and further information about the N-cap rules.

Silage

If not managed appropriately, silage stacks can be a critical source area and cause leachate contaminated run off to water. Keeping a silage stack is permitted provided given that:



1. Silage leachate is not discharged within 50 metres of water, wetlands, water supply bores, an artificial watercourse, a dwelling owned/occupied by another person, or 20 metres of a public road/space.
2. Any leachate generated must be contained and not enter groundwater supply or surface water.
3. Catchment runoff must be prevented from entering the storage site.
4. The discharge must not cause an offensive odour beyond the property boundary.

Non-compliant silage activities

During our last monitoring season, council found that many silage making and storage activities are not meeting the permitted rule, particularly around setbacks. As many silage activities were unlikely to be causing actual adverse effects at the time of inspection, many could be operated as a 'Deemed Permitted Activity' (DPA). An activity may be deemed to be permitted where there is a marginal or temporary breach and the adverse effects are no more than minor and no different to if the activity was meeting the permitted activity rules. Each situation is assessed on a case-by-case basis and our farm monitoring team will contact those farms affected to discuss options for compliance. To discuss your situation and know your options, please contact the farm monitoring team.

Dam safety regulations

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Enterprise, announced on 13 May 2022 new regulations to provide a nationally consistent approach to dam safety. The regulations came into effect on 13 May 2024 and affect owners of 'classifiable' dams.



A dam is classifiable if it is:

"Four or more metres in height and stores 20,000 or more cubic metres volume of water, or other fluid."

Many farmers may have dams on their property for stock watering and storage. If the dam on your property is not classifiable, the regulations do not apply to you.

If your dam is classifiable (or you suspect it may be classifiable) and you have not already received a letter from Northland Regional Council regarding your obligations, please contact damsafety@nrc.govt.nz

Find out more about the regulations, visit nrc.govt.nz/dams

Land preparation/cultivation

Cultivating land for pasture renewal or cropping is commonplace on dairy farms. The process of tilling soil can increase erosion and sedimentation risks to our waterbodies and needs to be managed appropriately.



Know your obligations

Undertaking land preparation is permitted provided:

1. the activity is not undertaken in the catchment of an outstanding lake or a dune lake with outstanding or high ecological value, and
2. the activity is not undertaken:
 - a. on erosion-prone land, or
 - b. within 10 metres of inanga spawning sites, or
 - c. within 10 metres of lake beds, or
 - d. within 10 metres of natural wetlands, or
 - e. within 10 metres of the bed of a continually or intermittently flowing river, unless:
 - i. the mean slope of the paddock adjoining the riverbed is 10 degrees or less, and
 - ii. sediment control measures are installed and maintained in accordance with the Erosion and Sediment Control Guidelines for Vegetable Production 2014 (Horticulture New Zealand) in which case the setback may be reduced to five metres.

For more info, visit **Farmers Hub**

nrc.govt.nz/environment/farm-management

Agrichemical use



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

1. Notify your neighbours (within 50m for ground-based spraying or 200m for aerial spraying).
2. Have your annual spray plan in place – it is your responsibility to ensure your contractor also has a risk assessment in place before any spraying is undertaken.

What is an annual spray plan?

The purpose of a spray plan is to address the possibility of agrichemicals going off-target and identify what measures will be taken to avoid adverse effects beyond the target application area. Your spray plan should include:

1. a plan or map showing the location of surrounding spray-sensitive areas such as houses, schools, roads, waterbodies, and other crops;
2. the area/s to be sprayed;
3. the types of chemicals that are likely to be used, the method of application, and what time of year the spraying is likely to occur;

4. strategies employed to keep agrichemicals within the targeted spray area and avoid spray drift;
5. a list of property occupiers to be notified prior to spraying;
6. the identify of the person likely to be applying the chemical and confirmation of their current qualification (eg. Growsafe certification);

If we get a complaint about spraying on your property, we will request your annual spray plan, as well as the risk assessment done by the spray applicator on the day.

NOTE: The use of some agrichemicals is also governed by other legislation, including the Hazardous Substances and new Organisms Act.

For more info visit nrc.govt.nz/agrichemicalspray



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