

Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

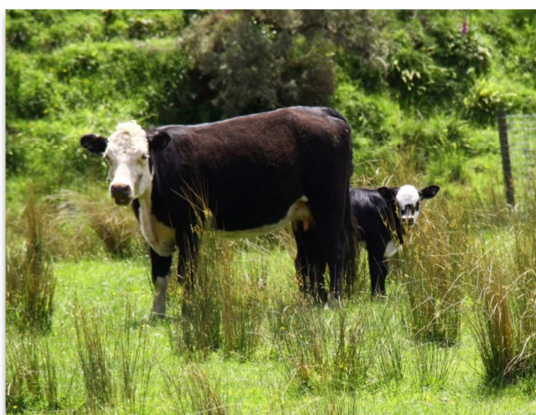
Farming



Agriculture, horticulture and forestry are important economic activities in the Wellington Region. These land uses contribute about 10% of the region's gross domestic product (GDP) and cover almost 90% of the available land area. Much of the land use devoted to farming, horticulture and livestock is located in the Wairarapa.

Key facts on farming in the Wellington Region (as of 2012) are:

- About 250 sheep and beef farms of more than 500 hectares
- Almost 200 dairy farms
- More than 1500 other livestock enterprises, many of them as part of life-style blocks
- More than 100 cropping farmers and 240 horticulturalists
- 300 properties where forestry was the predominant land use



Protecting the environment

The proposed Natural Resources Management Plan for the Wellington Region (proposed Plan) allows for many everyday farming activities while addressing aspects of farming that can adversely affect natural and physical resources, such as biodiversity, soils, water and air. Most provisions in the proposed Plan are "region-wide", although there are also provisions that are specific to catchment or place.

Limits for water quality and water quantity

The use of land for food, fibre and timber production changes the nutrient cycling that occurs in the soil. These changes can result in the loss of nutrients to groundwater and nearby waterways. Land managers are expected to continually implement good management practices that are appropriate to their land use and environmental conditions.

Between 2014 and 2018, five catchment committees, known as 'Whaitua Committees', will work with their communities to decide on catchment-specific provisions for water quality and quantity limits, which will be added to the Plan over time.

Farm infrastructure and operations

The proposed Plan contains new rules for installing and maintaining farm infrastructure. Existing drains may be maintained but specific methods must be used to minimise adverse effects on waterways.

What is the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region?

The Proposed Natural Resources Plan (the proposed Plan) is a new regional plan designed to integrate the Wellington Region's five existing regional plans-- the [Regional Coastal Plan](#), [Regional Freshwater Plan](#), [Regional Soil Plan](#), [Regional Air Quality Management Plan](#) and [Regional Plan for Discharges to Land](#). Regional plans are developed under the Resource Management Act to set out the objectives, policies and methods for people and organisations that use a region's resources for a variety of purposes:

The proposed Plan was developed following a review of the five existing

There is a lot of information in the proposed Plan and a lot to understand, so if you need help to figure out if your activity is permitted, or requires a resource consent, or if you have any questions at all, please contact us for more information

Permitted: no resource consent is required provided you comply with the conditions in the rule.

Controlled, discretionary or non-complying: a resource consent from Wellington Regional Council is required. Conditions may need to be met.

Prohibited: cannot be undertaken at any time.

Small bridges, fords and culverts may be put in place to allow vehicles and livestock to cross without disturbing riverbeds, but the conditions or criteria in the proposed rules should be checked first. If structures don't increase flooding on neighbours' lands, increase erosion or restrict fish passage, they may be permitted.

There are provisions in the proposed Plan that address rubbish disposal sites on properties, as well as discharges of odour, smoke and dust. Agrichemical sprays should be used according to label instructions to avoid adverse effects on peoples' health and safety and to avoid drift beyond property boundaries. Fertiliser application must avoid runoff to, and direct entry into, waterways.

In addition, farmers should generally manage any outstanding or significant sites, including wetlands, on their properties to protect biodiversity, cultural or historical values. Wellington Regional Council currently provides some help in these cases and is investigating options to provide additional assistance.

Cropping Farmers and Horticulturalists

Cropping and horticultural farmers will need to take care with their cultivation practices. The proposed Plan requires set-backs from surface water bodies for many forms of cultivation or tilling the soil.

Livestock Farmers

The Resource Management Act allows farmers to take fresh water for the reasonable needs of their animals' drinking water. The proposed Plan also allows the take of water for most uses as long as the take does not exceed specified volumes or rates. Above these amounts, landowners will need to apply for consent.

Livestock farmers should pay particular attention to provisions restricting access of livestock to waterways (see Livestock Access information sheet), set-backs from surface water bodies for break-feeding, installation of bridges and culverts, use of nutrients and the storage of conserved feeds such as silage.

Dairy farmers need consent to irrigate with effluent collected from the dairy shed, feed pad or other areas where cows are confined. Consent conditions are based on good management practices, including the use of sufficient storage in sealed ponds or tanks to avoid having to irrigate during periods of unsuitable ground conditions, the use of low application rate irrigators, and avoiding waterways and wetlands.

Sheep and beef farmers should be aware of provisions addressing land development, tracking and weed control. Earthworks (of less than 0.3ha – half a rugby field) are permitted as long as specified conditions are met, including that there is no increased risk of erosion and no increase in sediment loss into nearby waterways. Clearing woody vegetation on erosion prone land requires consent from Wellington Regional Council.

Aerial applications of agrichemicals should follow label instructions and be undertaken by certified contractors. Applications should not create noxious, dangerous, offensive or objectionable material beyond the property boundary.

