

# Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region

## On-farm nutrient and fertiliser management



The use of land for food, fibre and timber production changes the nutrient cycling that occurs in the soil. As land uses intensify, the risk of nutrient losses to groundwater and nearby waterways increases.

Between 2014 and 2018 five catchment committees, known as whatua committees, will work with their communities on catchment-specific provisions around nutrient management, which will be progressively added to the Proposed Natural Resources Plan for the Wellington Region (the Proposed Plan) over time.

Ahead of those catchment-specific provisions, the Proposed Plan provides direction on the management of activities involving the storage and application of nutrients, including on the application of fertiliser and stored animal effluent, cultivation and the management of compost and silage. Some basic information on the direction of the Proposed Plan is provided for each activity below.

The Proposed Plan also identifies a series of priority catchments where intensive land uses require improved nutrient management now (see Method M12). In these areas the Council will prioritise assisting landowners with farm planning processes and fencing, riparian and improved nutrient management practice.

### Do you need a resource consent to apply fertiliser?

The application of fertiliser is a permitted activity under Rule R82, subject to a number of conditions being met. Check the rule for the full set of conditions here <http://www.gw.govt.nz/proposed-natural-resources-plan/>. These include that soil should not be saturated when fertiliser is applied, that fertiliser is kept away from waterways and that the application does not cause offensive or objectionable odours beyond the boundary of the property on which it's being applied. For aerial applications of fertiliser, the pilot's records must be made available to Council if requested.

### Does the Proposed Plan control cultivation of soils?

Cultivation of soil on farms is a permitted activity subject to a number of conditions set out in Rule R94. For example, conditions include that cultivation follows the contour line of the paddock as far as possible and is undertaken no closer than five metres from any water way. This five metre 'setback' aims to reduce the amount of soil running off to water ways.

### How does the Proposed Plan control the application of collected farm animal effluent?

The discharge of collected animal effluent from dairy farms, piggeries, poultry farms and any other premises where livestock are confined requires a resource consent under the Proposed Plan. This is similar to the existing Regional Freshwater Plan. To meet controlled activity Rule R83 to discharge stored effluent to land, the following is required:

- Effluent must be held in storage facilities (including sumps and ponds) when available water storage capacity of the soil is exceeded

**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.

### 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 regional plans from 2011 to 2015. Until the GWRC decides to adopt the proposed Plan, resource users must comply with rules in the proposed Plan and rules in the five existing plans.

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  
0800 496 734 or  
[regionalplan@gw.govt.nz](mailto:regionalplan@gw.govt.nz)

- Farm effluent ponds must be sealed to avoid unmanaged loss of nutrients and pathogens through pond walls and floor
- The application of collected animal effluent to land must not exceed the available water storage capacity of the soil or its ability to assimilate the added material. Therefore, the effluent application area needs to be sufficient to avoid runoff and ponding

Anyone discharging collected animal effluent should monitor the available soil water capacity in order to practice deferred irrigation. Effluent irrigators should have working shutoff values to avoid problems if the irrigator fails or malfunctions.

Discharging stored animal effluent directly into water is a non-complying activity under Rule R84 and is not considered an appropriate activity by the Proposed Plan.

### **Do you need consent to store silage?**

Storing silage is a permitted activity under Rule R90, providing a number of conditions are met. Conditions include that the storage area is at least 20m away from any water way and that an impermeable layer is used to prevent leaching to groundwater. Stormwater needs to be prevented from entering the silage storage area so that the chance of leachate reaching water is reduced.

### **What does the Proposed Plan say about making, storing and using compost?**

Compost is defined in the Proposed Plan as animal or vegetative waste that is not fully decomposed, and specifically excludes human waste, dead animals or animal parts. The manufacture and storage of compost on farms is a permitted activity under Rule R90 subject to a number of conditions. These include that leachate cannot contaminate nearby waterways or groundwater and that there are no offensive or objectionable odours beyond the property boundary.

Applying compost to land is also a permitted activity subject to the conditions of Rule R85. Conditions include that compost should be kept more than five metres from any water way and that there are no offensive or objectionable odours beyond the boundary of the property, similarly to the storage of compost under Rule R90. Further, compost must not be applied to saturated soils or at rates over 150kg nitrogen per hectare per year.

