

# Farm environment plans for consented 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 arable, livestock and commercial vegetable farms that require resource consent must submit a farm environment plan alongside their application for consent. The FEP must be prepared in accordance with Schedule D2 of plan change 1 and be certified by a certified farm environment planner (CFEP) before being submitted for consent.

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

An FEP will outline the measures being taken on farm to demonstrate how the requirements set out in Schedule D2 of plan change 1 will be met.

An FEP includes three key parts.

- An assessment of losses of nitrogen, sediment, phosphorus and bacteria and whether farming practices are consistent with specified goals and principles.
- Existing and planned mitigations: current and future mitigations/good management practices that will reduce contaminant loss need to be identified.
- Action plan: mitigations and good management practices identified for the farm need to be committed to in an action plan. These actions need to be auditable, specific and time bound.

Schedule D2 in plan change 1 details what information should be present in your FEP.

## Who puts together my farm environment plan?

Any person can put together your farm environment plan, but it will need to be certified by a certified farm environment planner before being submitted.

The certified farm environment planner will make sure the FEP adheres to the requirements set out in Schedule D2 of the plan change and that the proposed actions and farm practices will be consistent with achieving the goals and principles specified.



## 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, and 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, and the work you've already completed to protect your property and the local environment.

## When will I need to submit a consent application?

All farms operating under rules 3.11.4.4 to 3.11.4.8 need to submit their consent application based on priority catchments status and due dates.

## Will my farm environment plan need to be reviewed?

Yes. Each farm environment plan will need to be assessed by a certified farm environment planner:

- within 12 months of your consent application being granted, and
- at subsequent review intervals specified in the conditions of each resource consent.

The purpose of the assessment is to check whether the activities on farm are consistent with both the contents of the FEP (requirements in Schedule D2) and the plan change. The results of each assessment will be provided to us so we can assess compliance with the consent.

## Where can 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. Our intention is to align our work with the national scheme to ensure consistency for farmers and rural professionals.

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

FEPs are designed to be a living document – that means they can be changed and updated as your business changes. However, if you propose changes to your FEP it will need to be submitted at review to ensure it still meets goals and principles as set out in part D Schedule D2 of plan change 1.

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

You invest a lot in having good soil and nutrients. Through your FEP you can identify ways to reduce sediment and nutrient loss. This will help to protect this investment and, in doing so, can save you money.

### 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 Kaunihara ā Rohe o Waikato