SUSTAINABLE DAIRYING – WATER ACCORD
A commitment to New Zealand by the dairy sector

TWO YEARS ON...
SUMMARY
What have we achieved?
What do we need to keep working on?
Foreword

This is the second annual progress report for the Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord. We have made some real and meaningful progress during the 2014/15 dairy season.
Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord

The Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord (the Accord) has been developed under the oversight of the Dairy Environment Leadership Group (DELG). DELG includes representatives from farmers, dairy companies, central government, regional councils and the Federation of Māori Authorities.

Accountable Partners

In accordance with this Accord, the following parties have specific responsibilities and are accountable for delivering the commitments and monitoring and reporting as specified. They undertake to carry out those responsibilities in good faith and to the best of their abilities.

Friends of the Accord

Friends of the Accord are supportive of the purpose of this Accord and commit to contribute to its success in the spirit of collaboration.

- Westland Milk Products
- Regional/Unitary Councils: Northland Regional Council; Auckland Council; Waikato Regional Council; Bay of Plenty Regional Council; Hawke’s Bay Regional Council; Gisborne District Council; Taranaki Regional Council; Horizons Regional Council; Greater Wellington Regional Council; Environment Canterbury; West Coast Regional Council; Marlborough District Council; Tasman District Council; Otago Regional Council; Environment Southland
- The Federation of Māori Authorities
- Ministry for Primary Industries
- Ministry for the Environment
Summary and highlights

WHAT WE’VE ACHIEVED SO FAR...

96% of the waterways\(^1\) on New Zealand dairy farms are now excluded\(^2\) from dairy cattle.

This represents 25,656 kilometres of fenced-off and measured waterways.

MORE THAN 99% of 42,773 regular stock crossing points\(^3\) on dairy farms now have bridges or culverts to protect local water quality.

8,598 nutrient budgets have been processed in 2014/15 to give useful nitrogen leaching information back to farmers. This represents 75% of the industry.

Over one billion dollars has been spent by farmers on environmental initiatives over the last five years, with the majority of investments (70%) on effluent system upgrades.

Significant non-compliance for dairy effluent discharges has dropped to its lowest on record 5.8%.

The Primary ITO (Industry Training Organisation) has doubled the number of farm staff annually attending effluent training to 508.

THERE ARE NOW 100 certified Nutrient Management Advisers operating across the country.

Nine regionally-tailored planting guidelines for waterways have been produced for farmers with information on recommended set-back distances, planting density and appropriate plant species.
We are very close to 100% on a number of targets such as stock exclusion from waterways and providing bridges or culverts for stock crossings.

Dairy companies have identified 175 new dairy farm conversions since 2013. 29% measured as complying with standard by May 2015, 81% by March 2016.

We made great strides towards our target of 100% of dairy farms providing quality nutrient management data. It’s currently sitting at 75%, up from 56% last year.

The Accord defines a waterway as a lake, spring, river or stream that permanently contains water and any significant wetland. Waterways and drains greater than one metre in width and deeper than 30cm are included in the definition. Stock exclusion from streams smaller than that definition may be negotiated as part of regional programmes of action.

The Accord defines stock exclusion from waterways as “effectively barred from access to water and to the banks of a waterway either through a natural barrier (such as a cliff) or a permanent fence, except for any regular stream crossing point.”

The Accord defines a regular stock crossing point as “a point on a waterway or drain where dairy cattle cross to access the milking shed, then return following milking, more than once per month.” In these cases they must be bridged or culverted.

THE TOUGHEST CHALLENGES ARE STILL...

Collecting nutrient management data and performance benchmarking

The collection of nutrient management information is still one of our biggest challenges. That’s because of the level of information required and the individual processing through the computer modelling tool OVERSEER to produce a reliable Nitrogen (N) loss estimate for each farm.

We are driving continual improvements in the quality of data from the farmer and also of information going back to farmers. We are keeping the focus on nutrient management data collection at the farm level and how to benchmark and deliver quality and useful information back to farmers.

Collecting information on significant wetlands in regional council boundaries

Collecting this information is proving problematic, with all councils having different definitions and identification processes. More work is planned in this area, including ongoing engagement with regional councils.

WE’VE MADE THE MOST PROGRESS ON....

Fencing off waterways and drains and excluding them from dairy cattle

Bridging or culverting regular stock crossing points

Engaging farmers and their advisors in environmental training, assessment and actions

Ensuring farmers have more certified experts they can turn to for nutrient management advice

Regional waterway planting management advice tailored to farmers

1The Accord defines a waterway as a lake, spring, river or stream that permanently contains water and any significant wetland. Waterways and drains greater than one metre in width and deeper than 30cm are included in the definition. Stock exclusion from streams smaller than that definition may be negotiated as part of regional programmes of action.

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3The Accord defines a regular stock crossing point as “a point on a waterway or drain where dairy cattle cross to access the milking shed, then return following milking, more than once per month.” In these cases they must be bridged or culverted.
# Two years on – quick summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>RIPARIAN MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
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<td>90% stock exclusion of the length of waterways present on dairy farms by 31 May 2014; 100% by 30 May 2017</td>
<td>ON TRACK (96% in 2014/15)</td>
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<td>100% of regular stock crossing points are either bridged or culverted by 31 May 2018</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS AND ON TRACK (99% crossings with bridges/culverts by 2014/15)</td>
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<td>100% stock exclusion of all wetlands identified by a regional council as at 31 May 2012 by 31 May 2014</td>
<td>NOT YET ACHIEVED; IN PROGRESS (Still an area of ongoing engagement with regional councils)</td>
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<td>50% of dairy farms with waterways will have a riparian management plan by 31 May 2016</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS</td>
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<td>All of these farms will have completed half of their riparian plan commitments by 31 May 2020; full implementation by 31 May 2030</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS AND ON TRACK</td>
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<td>Riparian guidelines completed for nine regions by 31 May 2015</td>
<td>ACHIEVED</td>
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<td><strong>NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
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<td>Nutrient management data collected from 85% of dairy farms by 31 May 2014; 100% by 31 May, 2015</td>
<td>NOT YET FULLY ACHIEVED; STILL IN PROGRESS (75% achieved by 2014/15)</td>
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<td>Nitrogen loss and Nitrogen conversion efficiency performance information reported back to 85% of dairy farms by 30 November 2014; 100% by 30 November 2015</td>
<td>NOT YET FULLY ACHIEVED; STILL IN PROGRESS (75% achieved by 2014/15)</td>
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<td>50% of Fertiliser Association of New Zealand member company nutrient management advisers are certified by 31 May 2014</td>
<td>ACHIEVED</td>
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<td><strong>EFFLUENT MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
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<td>100% of farms are being assessed by 31 May 2014</td>
<td>ACHIEVED</td>
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<td>A farm dairy effluent Warrant of Fitness scheme available as a tool for farmers by 31 May 2014</td>
<td>ACHIEVED</td>
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<td><strong>WATER USE MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
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<td>85% of all dairy farms to install water meters by 2020</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS AND ON TRACK (30% farms with water meters by 2014/15)</td>
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<td><strong>CONVERSIONS</strong></td>
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<td>All new dairy farm conversions comply with environmental standards before milk supply commences</td>
<td>IN PROGRESS (29% measured as complying with standard by May 2015; 81% by March 2016)</td>
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Building dairy environment leaders – leading through doing

"It takes a brave mind, a spirit of innovation and a passion for what you are doing to step up, work with others and lead the industry into the future as dairy farmers who are both responsible and competitive. This combined with purpose and direction will create the accelerated action our industry requires."

Tracy Brown, chair of the Dairy Environment Leaders’ Forum

More than 3000 dairy farmers attended a series of DairyNZ training events in 2014/15 to increase their awareness of environmental issues affecting the industry.

Dairy Environment Leaders’ Forum – 2015
126 farmers attended the annual Wellington event in 2015 which supports dairy farmers to become environment leaders on their farms, in their communities and for their industry. Sessions were around sustainability, innovation, competitive advantage and leadership. There are now more than 300 farmer leaders networked throughout the forum.

Regional training programme
Thirteen Ahead of the Wave workshops were held in Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Horizons, Canterbury and Southland. The workshops hosted 285 farmers and gave them greater understanding of environmental issues. Topics included how nutrient limits are set, allocation methods, implications of limits and the importance of collective action.

"The reality is that environmental impacts and issues vary significantly, both between and within regions. As dairy farmers, we need to be aware of the impacts we have and the best measures to mitigate them. Impacts from farming on irrigated Canterbury gravels are very different to those on rolling clay soils in Northland."

Conall Buchanan, Waikato dairy farmer and a member of the Dairy Environment Leaders’ Forum