

Dairy farm effluent

– the rules for achieving compliance in the Marlborough region

This checklist is a self audit for you and your staff to ensure ongoing compliance of your effluent management system with Marlborough District Council (MDC) rules. The checklist is for your own information and you do not need to share it with any organisation.

We strongly recommend that you follow up any crosses or question marks as soon as possible. If you need assistance, please contact one of the organisations listed at the back of the checklist.

Dairy effluent management in the Marlborough region is a permitted activity covered by the Marlborough Sounds Plan, but requires a resource consent in the area covered by the Wairau/Awatere Plan. If you are unable to meet the permitted activity rules in the Marlborough Sounds Plan or are in the Wairau/Awatere Plan, you will need to apply for a resource consent. If you need assistance or are unsure which plan area you are in, please contact the Marlborough District Council.

If you operate under a resource consent, this is what your effluent compliance will be assessed against, so it's a good idea to read this checklist in conjunction with your individual consent. Additional copies of your consent may be ordered from Marlborough District Council.

Key points for compliance:

- You must remain compliant with effluent requirements every day – regardless of the time of year, weather, breakdowns or staffing issues
- Ensure you have a plan in place to cope with all of the above scenarios
- Make sure all staff on your farm know the rules, are fully trained in the operation and maintenance of the effluent system, and know what to do and who to contact if the system breaks down
- Always aim for good practice rather than just achieving compliance.

Marlborough District Council are currently reviewing the dairy effluent plan rules.

New dairy farms in the region requires resource consent and a management plan.



Marlborough region checklist

Permitted activities

In areas outside of the Wairau/Awatere Plan, these activities are permitted as long as the following conditions can be met:



Much of the non-compliance reported in the Marlborough region is for minor issues that can easily be avoided	
Effluent is not applied within 20 metres of a surface water-body or over any unconfined aquifer	
Effluent is never allowed to runoff ¹ into waterways or enter waterways under any circumstances <i>Note: a waterway is a water carrying body, i.e. stream, river, lake, pond, ditch, intermittently flowing drainage channel etc</i>	
Effluent is not applied within 10m of any property boundary	
Effluent collection, containment and application system is a sealed ² facility and not within 20 m of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • surface water such as a stream, lake or pond • areas of special value³ • a neighbouring property boundary without prior written consent⁴ 	
There is no effluent spray drift or objectionable ⁵ odour beyond the property boundary	
An effluent management plan is in place that clearly defines responsibilities. For more information please refer to the <i>Effluent management plan</i> poster.	
The total nitrogen loading ⁶ on the area of effluent application does not exceed 200kg N/ha/yr	
There are contingency measures in place to ensure that the above conditions are met in the event of system failure ⁷ or adverse climatic conditions. For more information please refer to the <i>Effluent management plan</i> poster. <i>Tip: contingency measures include additional storage capacity, the availability of spare pumps or irrigators and staff knowing who to call etc</i>	
All other conditions of your resource consent have been met	
<i>Meeting the MDC rules also applies when effluent ponds are emptied by contractors. It is your responsibility to provide clear written instructions for the contractors and enough suitable area for the effluent to be applied. There is a template to help you with this on compliancetoolkit.co.nz- Effluent Contractors Job Sheet</i>	
Good practice tips for people and systems	
Everyone in the farming operation understands the rules and the importance of effluent management, as well as the consequences of non-compliance. Everyone knows what to do if something goes wrong. For more information please refer to the <i>Effluent management plan</i> poster.	
A training schedule is maintained for staff with direct effluent management responsibilities	
External training courses are utilised to increase understanding of good practice	
All practicable steps are in place including fences, guards, shields, signs, farm inductions and briefings, to ensure the safety of people around the effluent system ⁸ . For more information please refer to <i>A farmer's guide to managing farm dairy effluent</i> .	
Stock movement along or across public roads All practicable steps are in place to ensure the safety of farm workers and other road users while minimising damage of roads. <i>Note: Movement of dairy cattle is the subject of a Traffic Management plan⁹</i>	

- ¹ Topography, rainfall, soil moisture, soil type and drainage all influence the risk of runoff and ponding. A soil moisture probe can be used to check soil moisture
- ² Sealed means does not leak, such as concrete or synthetically lined. For independent advice on sealing options, contact DairyNZ Fonterra or Marlborough District Council
- ³ Special value definition
- ⁴ A copy of the prior written consent needs to be forwarded to Marlborough District Council for their records
- ⁵ An odour will only be considered objectionable, after a Marlborough District Council officer has considered the Frequency, Intensity, Duration, Offensiveness and Location of the odour (i.e. the FIDOL Factors)
- ⁶ Use your nutrient budget to determine nitrogen inputs from fertiliser and effluent combined
- ⁷ M.D.C compliance staff will use their discretion with enforcement action in times of extenuating circumstance such as flood, however, the expectation is that effluent systems are designed to be compliant 365 days of the year
- ⁸ This is a Department of Labour legal requirement. Every year people die doing day-to-day tasks on dairy farms. The effluent system is a particularly hazardous area. A Health and Safety Plan is a legal farm requirement, DairyNZ has a template to help with this; see.compliancetoolkit.co.nz
- ⁹ A copy of Councils 'Stock Diving Bylaw' can be viewed on our website. For an 'Application for Livestock Dairy Crossing Permit' your MDC Compliance Staff can help you

Disclaimer: The information that appears in this checklist is intended to provide the best possible compliance guidelines for dairy farm effluent practices. However, the information is provided as a general guidance only and is not intended as a substitute for specific advice. Practices, systems and advice may vary depending on the circumstances applicable to your situation. The information may also be subject to change at any time without notice. DairyNZ, Federated Farmers, Marlborough District Council, Fonterra and take no responsibility whatsoever for the currency and/or accuracy of this information, its completeness or fitness for purpose.

Contacts

You can check out the rules in the regional plan at marlborough.govt.nz.

If you are not sure of any of the questions in this checklist, or need further assistance contact:

DairyNZ	Sustainability team 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969)
Fonterra	Sustainable Dairying Team 0800 65 65 68
Marlborough District Council	03 520 7400
Federated Farmers	0800 Farming (0800 327 6464)
Primary ITO	0800 80 20 80