

EC Number:
Agribase Number:

Not sure if you need a land use consent to farm? It's time to look into it.

24 October 2017



Dear Landowner

Are you aware of the new requirements under the Land and Water Regional Plan to control the effects of farming on water quality? Farmers now have a responsibility to farm within water quality limits, which is all about improving results in your local area.

Your farm may be one of many which now require a land use consent to farm by **1 March 2018**. If it is, we can help you get underway.

Why are consents now required?

Farming to Good Management Practice and water quality limits are now part of good business, ensuring strong, resilient, profitable farming while doing the right thing by the environment.

In the last 30 years, the South Coastal Canterbury area has seen substantial land use change. This has been accompanied by declining water quality in parts of the zone and the decreasing health of Wainono Lagoon and surrounding waterways. Your community, led by the Lower Waitaki South Coastal Canterbury Water Zone Committee, has created a vision for addressing these issues. Collectively, we can achieve better environmental outcomes here.

What do you need to do?

What you do matters. If you haven't already, it's time to make a start as, from 2018, our compliance visits will focus on farming consents as a priority.

Overleaf, we have outlined the key steps you need to take, and the support available from across the farming sector – the people you can call to help you take your next step. A new website, www.canterburywater.farm, contains information to help you understand the regulations, including maps of the sub-areas within South Coastal Canterbury (some properties may cross sub-area boundaries). We will also be holding local information sessions, so check out the dates for these.

Please get in touch on **0800 324 636** and let us know where you are in the process. This helps us to better support farmers who need assistance.

Thanks for taking the time to get this done. It will mean a lot for our local lakes and rivers, and will ensure you get the most out of your land from generation to generation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Eccleston", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Eccleston

Zone Manager
0800 324 636

The five steps to getting the thumbs up.

Determine whether you need a land use consent to farm

If your current nitrogen losses are greater than 15kg/ha/year you will need consent if:

- current losses are greater than your nitrogen baseline; or
- current losses are less than your nitrogen baseline but over the maximum cap for your soil type.

To determine your nitrogen losses, use OVERSEER®, or the NCheck tool at www.canterburywater.farm.

Farms supplied water by the Waihao Downs, Morven Glenavy, or the Hunter Downs Irrigation Schemes will not have to get an individual land use consent. Talk to your scheme to understand your environmental requirements.

Prepare your nitrogen baseline

All farms requiring a land use consent to farm need to prepare a nitrogen loss calculation and nitrogen baseline using OVERSEER® or an approved alternative*

We know there may be a delay for these to be completed, so let us know when you are on the waitlist to get yours done.

Create your Farm Environment Plan

All farmers requiring a consent to farm will need to prepare a FEP.

Approved templates and industry help available at www.canterburywater.farm.

Apply for your land use consent to farm

Ready to apply for a resource consent? We offer a free one hour pre-application consultation to help you prepare. See www.canterburywater.farm for information.

Implement Good Management Practices on your farm

Your Primary Industry Sector has a set of agreed GMPs that can be used to improve water quality. Take a look at www.canterburywater.farm/gmp for help relating to your own industry.

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All of the relevant forms and links for help can be found at www.canterburywater.farm, a website designed to help you.

*NCheck has been approved for some arable and horticultural uses until 2020. For further info see www.canterburywater.farm/ncheck



Need a hand? No worries!

Help is at hand

We know the land use consent to farm is a new requirement for farmers, so we're here to help. You can find the information you need by checking out our website or giving us a call.

www.canterburywater.farm
0800 324 636

Industry support

Your industry body offers plenty of support and advice for preparing your Farm Environment Plan, calculating your nitrogen losses, and meeting Good Management Practice.

A variety of independent consultants also offer additional advice and support.

Contact details can be found at
www.canterburywater.farm

Pre-application meeting

Get prepared before lodging your consent, in a free one-hour pre-application meeting with an Environment Canterbury consent planner.

Drop-in sessions

Environment Canterbury regularly hosts drop-in sessions to provide advice and support as you work towards gaining your land use consent to farm.

Thursday 2 November

Makikihi Country Hotel, 10am-2pm

Friday 3 November

Waimate Events Centre, 10am-2pm

If scheduled drop-in sessions don't suit you, the Waitaki Zone Team in Timaru is also available for one-on-one support. This can be organised through Customer Services on **0800 324 636** or **ecinfo@ecan.govt.nz**.

For information specific to your farm, visit:

www.canterburywater.farm

Got a question?

We may have it covered here. If not, check out www.canterburywater.farm or give us a call.

When is my consent application due?

If you do require a consent, you will need to lodge your application by 1 March 2018.

How much will my consent application cost?

Most applications start at \$1725 including GST. An increase in costs may occur if the application is complex or bundled with another application.

Will I need to employ a consultant?

This is your choice. Many farmers are able to write their own FEP, possibly with industry body assistance, while in most cases your nitrogen budgets will need to be done by a nutrient management advisor. The consent application has been developed to make it as simple as possible to complete yourself.

What is a FEP and how does it help me?

Creating your Farm Environment Plan (FEP) will help you recognise on-farm environmental risks and set out a programme to manage those risks. Your FEP is unique to your property and will reflect the local climate and soils, the type of farming operation, and your goals and aspirations as the land user.

Your FEP will record your progress towards Good Management Practice, and demonstrate you're doing the right thing environmentally. You will need your FEP when you apply for your land use consent. An independent certified auditor will then audit the implementation of your FEP once your consent is in place.

Why do I need a nitrogen loss budget?

A FEP ensures you are implementing Good Management Practices on your farm, while nitrogen loss budgets ensure you are farming to your nitrogen limit. Think of the limit as a measure of your environmental footprint which your business can operate within. The nitrogen budgets and the FEP will help you identify areas where improvement can be made and therefore provide valuable business planning tools.

I don't know what my nitrogen losses are?

You'll need to work out what your current losses are, and in some circumstances your nitrogen baseline.

Current nitrogen loss: this is the rate of nitrogen loss averaged out over the most recent 1 July – 30 June four year period.

Nitrogen baseline: this is the rate of nitrogen loss averaged out over the years of 1 July 2009 – 30 June 2013.

What can I use to work out my nitrogen losses?

NCheck is a simple online tool that can be used to work out whether you need land use consent or not. OVERSEER® can also be used for this purpose.

If you do need a land use consent, you will need to use OVERSEER® in the consent application process. Arable and horticultural farms can also use NCheck, although any consent granted will have an expiry of 2020.

What if I am waiting to get a nitrogen budget prepared with OVERSEER®?

We acknowledge there is a delay in getting nitrogen budgets prepared with OVERSEER®. If you are on a waitlist with a consultancy, please call **0800 324 636** to let us know, and the likely date it will be completed.

What is the maximum cap?

This is the upper limit for nitrogen loss. If your nitrogen losses are above the maximum cap then you will automatically need a land use consent and will also need to reduce losses over time. Check the maps on www.canterburywater.farm to see what soil type is mapped for your property.

| Soil type | Kilograms per hectare per year |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Shallower | 35 |
| Deeper | 25 |
| Wetter | 20 |

For information specific to your farm, visit:

www.canterburywater.farm
0800 324 636