

EC Number:
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Ready to get your land use consent to farm? Nice one!
We'll help you get started, so you can get sorted this year.



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. If it is, we can help you get underway.

Why are consents now required?

Farming to Good Management Practice is now part of good business. More than 3000 Canterbury farmers have already completed Farm Environment Plans, ensuring a strong, resilient, profitable business while doing the right thing by the environment.

Within the Orari Temuka Opihi and Pareora (OTOP) Zone we are experiencing increasing nitrate levels in shallow wells, lowland streams with declining water quality, and increasing tension between in-stream and out-of-stream uses of water.

Your local Zone Committee is working with the community to address these issues through the Healthy Catchments Project. Through a collective effort, we can achieve better environmental outcomes in the OTOP Zone.

Do you need a land use consent to farm?

In the OTOP Zone, consent is required if your current nitrogen losses are greater than 20 kilograms per hectare per year. A new website, www.canterburywater.farm, has been developed to help farmers understand what farming to limits means for you. If you don't already know your nitrogen loss, use the link to NCheck, which will help you to do a quick calculation to determine if you are likely to need a land use consent or not. Simply identify your farm and NCheck will walk you through the process.

What do you need to do?

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

However, there is plenty of help available, and we will stay in contact with you to provide all the assistance you need along the way. 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.

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 black ink, appearing to read "Michael Hide", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Hide
Zone Manager
0800 324 636

Ready to apply?

The five steps to getting the thumbs up.

Determine whether you need a land use consent to farm

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

Prepare your nitrogen baseline

All farms requiring a land use consent to farm need to prepare a nitrogen baseline. If you need consent, contact your nutrient advisor for help, as you'll need to provide your baseline as part of your Farm Environment Plan (FEP). 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.



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

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.

Dates and locations can be found on the events page 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.

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**

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.

Why have I been contacted?

Properties that irrigate over 50 hectares of land, or those that have the ability to irrigate over 50 hectares, are more likely to require consent.

The onus is on you as the property owner to determine whether consent is needed.

When is my consent application due?

There are different requirements depending on your location; however, all land use consents need to be completed this year. Determine the requirements for your farm at www.canterburywater.farm.

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.

How does this all relate to the Healthy Catchments Project?

Across Canterbury, the Land and Water Regional Plan now requires certain actions to be taken to improve water quality, including land use consents for some farms. Locally, your zone committee is leading the Healthy Catchments programme, which is a community project building on these regional actions to address water quality challenges through specific, local solutions.

Will Environment Canterbury be undertaking enforcement action?

This letter is a formal request for you to work out whether you need a land use consent to farm.

If you do need consent, you must apply as soon as possible. Enforcement action will be taken if consent is required and not sought.

Why do I need a nitrogen baseline?

A FEP ensures you are implementing Good Management Practices on your farm, while a nitrogen baseline ensures you are farming to your nitrogen limits. Your nitrogen baseline accounts for your previous nitrogen losses. 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?

If you don't know your nitrogen losses, use OVERSEER® or the NCheck tool at www.canterburywater.farm, and determine whether you need a land use consent to farm.

What if I am waiting to get my nitrogen baseline completed?

We acknowledge that there is a delay getting baselines completed. If this is the case please call **0800 324 636** to let us know that you're on the waitlist and the likely date it will be completed.

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 your nitrogen baseline 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 Environment Canterbury doing about farms that do not irrigate or that are under 50 hectares?

Farmers in this group also need to confirm whether a land use consent to farm is required. Our focus will turn to these properties next.

For information specific to your farm, visit:

www.canterburywater.farm
0800 324 636