GOOD FARMING PRACTICE ACTION PLAN FOR WATER QUALITY 2018

THE ACTION PLAN AT A GLANCE

The Action Plan is a voluntary commitment developed by a partnership between primary sector organisations, regional councils and central government. You can find the whole document at www.fedfarm.org.nz

WHAT IS THE ACTION PLAN ABOUT?

The agricultural and horticultural sectors are committed to swimmable rivers and improving the ecological health of our waterways. The Action Plan is part of the way we will deliver this. The widespread adoption of Good Farming Practice, alongside greater collaboration between sectors, regional councils and central government, will allow improved water quality to be achieved faster.

The Action Plan's purpose is to accelerate the uptake of good farming practices for improving water quality, to measure and demonstrate this uptake, to assess the impact and benefit of those farming practices, and to communicate progress to the public.

HOW WILL THE ACTION PLAN ACHIEVE THIS PURPOSE?

The Action Plan has four main components:

- A set of good farming practice principles that are practical and achievable (overleaf)
- Every farmer and grower being supported to have a Farm Environment Plan to help them identify and implement the relevant good farming practices for their farm and catchment
- Monitoring and reporting so land and water stewardship can be demonstrated
- Communicating progress to the sectors and the public.

WHEN WILL ALL THIS BE HAPPENING?

ACTION	TIMEFRAME
Identifying priority principles for a region, catchment and/or sector	2018-2020
Supporting every farm and horticultural property to have assessed risks against priority principles for catchment/sector and developed their response actions ("farm plan")	2018-2030 Priority catchments and sectors completed first
Accelerating uptake through sector and council extension programmes and communicate learning	2018 - 2020
Develop systems for monitoring and reporting on Good Farming Practice uptake	2018-2020
Communicate progress on farming practice to communities, councils, central government	Ongoing
Strengthen and validate support systems and tools to: ☐ Improve and expand training and certification for consultants, council Land Management Officers, auditors ☐ Manage data for monitoring and reporting ☐ Promote harmonisation of approaches across New Zealand	2018-2020
Update the Good Farming Practice Action Plan	2020

Supported by the Regional Council Sector

AGREED NATIONAL GOOD FARMING PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

GENERAL PRINCIPLES	
1.	Identify the physical and biophysical characteristics of the farm system, assess the risk factors to water quality associated with the farm system, and manage appropriately
2.	Maintain accurate and auditable records of annual farm inputs, outputs and management practices
3.	Manage farming operations to minimise direct and indirect losses of sediment and nutrients to water, and maintain or enhance soil structure, where agronomically appropriate
NUTRIENTS	
4.	Monitor soil phosphorus levels and maintain them at or below the agronomic optimum for the farm system
5.	Manage the amount and timing of fertiliser inputs, taking account of all sources of nutrients, to match plant requirements and minimise risk of losses
6.	Store and load fertiliser to minimise risk of spillage, leaching and loss into waterbodies
7.	Ensure equipment for spreading fertilisers is well maintained and calibrated
8.	Store, transport and distribute feed to minimise wastage, leachate and soil damage
WATERWAYS	
9.	Identify risk of overland flow of sediment and faecal bacteria on the property and implement measures to minimise transport of these to waterbodies
10.	Locate and manage farm tracks, gateways, water troughs, self-feeding areas, stock camps, wallows and other sources of run-off to minimise risks to water quality
11.	Exclude stock from waterbodies to the extent that is compatible with land form, stock class and stock intensity. Where exclusion is not possible, mitigate impacts on waterways
LAND AND SOIL	
12.	Manage periods of exposed soil between crops / pasture to reduce risk of erosion, overland flow and leaching
13.	Manage or retire erosion-prone land to minimise soil losses through appropriate measures and practices[1]
14.	Select appropriate paddocks for intensive grazing, recognising and mitigating possible nutrient and sediment loss from critical source areas
15.	Manage grazing to minimise losses from critical source areas
EFFLUENT	
16.	Ensure the effluent system meets industry-specific Code of Practice or equivalent standard
17.	Have sufficient suitable storage available for farm effluent and wastewater
18.	Ensure equipment for spreading effluent and other organic manures is well maintained and calibrated
19.	Apply effluent to pasture and crops at depths, rates and times to match plant requirements and minimise risk to waterbodies
WATER AND IRRIGATION	
20.	Manage the amount and timing of irrigation inputs to meet plant demands and minimise risk of leaching and runoff
21.	Design, check and operate irrigation systems to minimise the amount of water needed to meet production objectives

1. *Implementing this principle may mean that Class 8 land is not actively farmed for arable, pastoral or commercial forestry land uses as this land is generally unsuitable for these uses as described in the Land Use Capability Handbook.*

These principles were updated from the 2015 Industry-Agreed Good Management Practices Relating to Water Quality. While first applied in Canterbury, they were developed to be applicable across all regions of New Zealand.

WHO DEVELOPED THE ACTION PLAN?

This Action Plan was developed by a Governance Group comprising senior representatives of the primary sectors, regional councils and the Ministry for the Environment / Ministry for Primary Industries joint water directorate:

- *Chris Allen (Federated Farmers)*
- *Sam McIvor (Beef+Lamb New Zealand)*
- *Nigel Corry (Greater Wellington Regional Council)*
- *Tim Mackle, Rick Pridmore, David Burger (DairyNZ)*
- *Chris McLay (Waikato Regional Council)*
- *Mike Chapman (Horticulture New Zealand)*
- *Roger Bannister (Water Directorate)*
- *Andrew Curtis (Irrigation New Zealand)*
- *Martin Workman (Water Directorate)*
- *Nadeine Dommisse (Environment Canterbury)*

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