



# Farm Environment Plan update 2018–2019 annual report

## Protecting the environment is the top priority

The work to protect and improve Canterbury's rural environment has several parts:

- Set the necessary **nutrient limits** across Canterbury via planning rules
- Promote **Good Management Practice** (GMP) for farmers
- Require **land-use consent to farm** and an **independent Farm Environmental Plan audit** (this report)
- Ensure effective and targeted **consent compliance monitoring**
- Respond quickly to as many **incident reports** as possible,
- **On-the-ground work programmes** to protect and improve the environment.

### Our goal

- That each Farm Environment Plan audit achieves an A grade.
- An A grade audit means industry-agreed Good Management Practice was achieved for that property.

### FEPs in place

- As of 30 June, there were more than **2300** Farm Environmental Plans in place. There were **1129** Farm Environmental Plan audits in the 2018-19 year.

### Audit grade summary

**Thirty six per cent** of Farm Environment Plans (FEPs) achieved an A audit grade in the 2018/19 year (the farmer/land manager is meeting GMP standards).

Another **57%** of FEP audits achieved a B grade (the farmer/land manager is on track to meet the industry-agreed good management practices).

In total, **93%** of FEPs audited achieved an A or B grade and complied with the relevant Farming Land Use Consent or irrigation scheme requirements.

### FEP audit grades 2018-19



36%



57%



7%

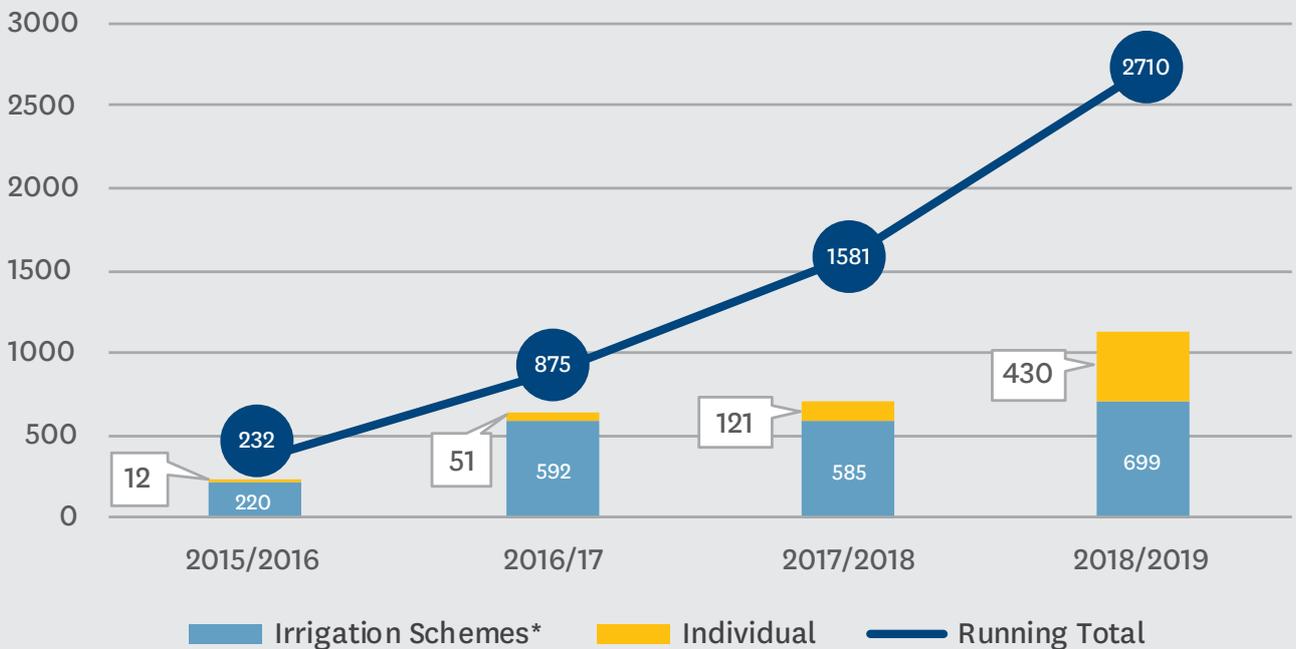
# FEP audit annual and running results

Over the past four years 2710 FEP audits have been completed including the 1129 in the 2018-19 year. Farmers who achieve an A or B grade benefit by having more time before their next audit is due (see “What do the FEP Audit grades mean”).

### There are three types of FEP audits:

- Individual farming land use consents,
- Approved International Standardization Organization (ISO) programme (e.g. Synlait Lead With Pride and New Zealand Good Agricultural Practice)
- Irrigation schemes (including collectives).

## FEPs audited by year with running total



\*includes collectives/enterprises

## How do good management practices help improve water quality?

Achieving on-farm good management practices is key to meeting nitrogen loss limits and mitigating other environmental risks, as well as maintaining and improving freshwater quality across Canterbury. Implementation of a Farm Environment Plan that is

subject to an independent audit gives confidence that farmers have implemented or are on track to implement good management practices by their next audit.

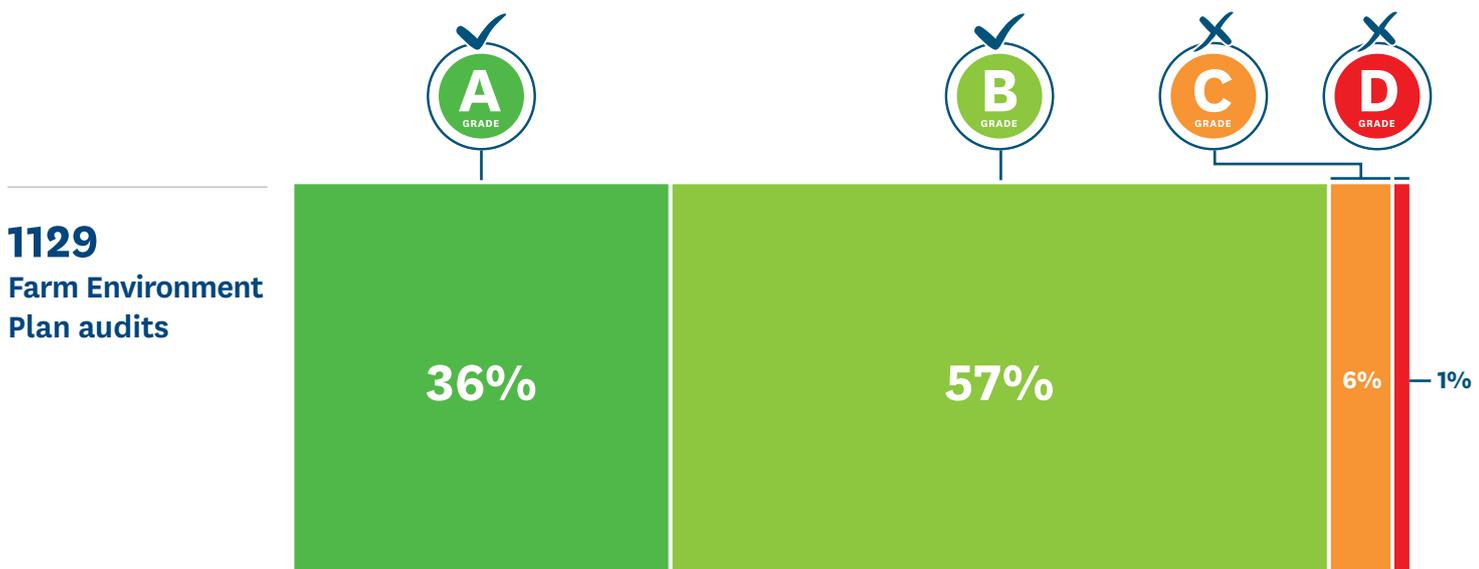
# FEP audit result by scheme or individual farm

There were 22 certified FEP auditors operating in Canterbury who completed 1129 audits during the 2018-19 year.

The programme is on-track to ensure that by this year all farms that are part of an irrigation scheme have at least one audit and by 2024 all individual farms have been audited at least once.

Individual farms receiving an A grade for their FEP audit will be on an audit cycle of up to three years with farms in schemes or collectives on a maximum four year audit cycle.

Farms that receive a B, C or D grade will receive more frequent compliance follow-ups (see below “What do the FEP Audit grades mean”).



## What do the FEP Audit grades mean:

### Overall Grade

Compliance against resource consent and GMP status



**COMPLIANT AND ACHIEVING GMP**



**COMPLIANT AND ON TRACK TO ACHIEVE GMP BY THE NEXT AUDIT**



**NON-COMPLIANT AND NOT ACHIEVING GMP**



**SERIOUS NON-COMPLIANCE AND NOT ACHIEVING GMP**

### Frequency of Audit

	A	B	C	D
Individual farms	3 years	2 years	1 year	6 months
Farms connected to an Environment Canterbury Approved ISO Accredited Audit Programmes (Industry Programme)	Dependent on Approved ISO Accredited Programme timeframe	2 years	1 year	6 months
Farms connected to an Irrigation Scheme, Principal Water Supplier or Hurunui Waiau Collective	4 years	2 years	1 year	6 months
Change in management or significant change in farm system	1 year	1 year	Within the year	6 months

## New tech the way forward

Using the latest water telemetry technology ensures Waimakariri dairy farmer Dave Ashby's operation is a smooth one with data sent directly to his phone.

"It's worth its weight in gold. If I didn't have the tools, I'd have to dig a hole to find the information," he said.

The farm has two soil moisture monitoring sites, plus it is part of a NIWA irrigation justification scheme.

"The soil water budget shows when I can irrigate, how much I can put on and when I can put on effluent. I can check soil moisture, deep moisture and soil temperature and compare with target zones – all on my phone."

Dave, as a former chair of the Waimakariri Water Zone Committee, understands the data is key in meeting the goals in his Farm Environment Plan as well achieving industry agreed Good Management Practices (GMP).

"Making that B FEP audit grade was good but I want an A and it takes a lot of effort and money to operate at GMP. When I see negative trends in the data, I know it'll cost me money and is bad practice. I want to only apply a little irrigation when I need to.

"It's a real privilege to have water available for irrigation, we have beautiful spring water which supports invertebrates and mahinga kai. We take real pride in the water coming out of our farm running clean.

"We have riparian planting along the edges of our waterways too. In a lot of cases we just keep the stock out and the plants come back as they would naturally.

"Even things like having the right tools for the job and regular irrigator bucket tests to check application rates and uniform distribution. It's getting things serviced regularly – and daily, week, monthly, and annual checks against standard operating procedures," he said.



Dave Ashby uses many water telemetry tools to assist his decision-making on farm.

## FEP audit FAQs

### How does Environment Canterbury ensure consistency between auditors?

What underpins the FEP Audit Programme is a robust quality assurance framework. Included in this framework are processes for auditor approval, auditor monitoring, mandatory training days, calibration exercises, annual assessments and spot checks.

The programme is accountable to the Farm Environment Plan Auditing Reference Group with formal six-monthly reporting and face-to-face meetings. The group includes primary sector bodies, NGOs, our treaty partner Ngāi Tahu and two nominated FEP auditors.

### What is the compliance follow-up for C and D grade farms?

The approach is farm-by-farm, one-on-one follow-ups. Experience has shown that each farm has a unique set of circumstances and challenges on their journey to implement good management practices.

Both irrigation schemes and the two approved ISO programmes connect with each C/D farm to provide the required support and agree an improvement plan. Farms that do not meet the compliance requirements are subject to the irrigation environmental management scheme rules and the ISO programme rules for ceasing membership. In the case of an irrigation scheme this may mean stopping water supply to a poor performing farm.

The C and D grade individual farms are provided support via a Land Management Advisor before there is any compliance follow-up. All compliance follow-up is determined by a panel to ensure that farmer circumstances have been fully considered prior to determining a compliance approach.

### Find out more

Visit the farmers hub on our website:  
[ecan.govt.nz/farmers-hub](http://ecan.govt.nz/farmers-hub)