



Using synthetic nitrogen fertiliser

The use of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers on land is linked to lowered water quality in rivers, streams, and groundwater. This fertiliser use, and the more intensive land use it allows, needs to be balanced with actions to protect waterways.

From 1 July 2021, a cap on the use of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser applies on any contiguous parcel of pastoral land. The cap has been set at 190kg per hectare per year.

Efficient fertiliser use

Nitrogen applied to pasture that isn't taken up by plants can leach into groundwater and end up in downgradient waterways, including sensitive environments and drinking water sources.

Efficient fertiliser use is about making sure that more of the fertiliser that you apply goes to its intended purpose – promoting pasture growth. More efficient fertiliser use will save you money on purchasing fertiliser and lead to better environmental outcomes.

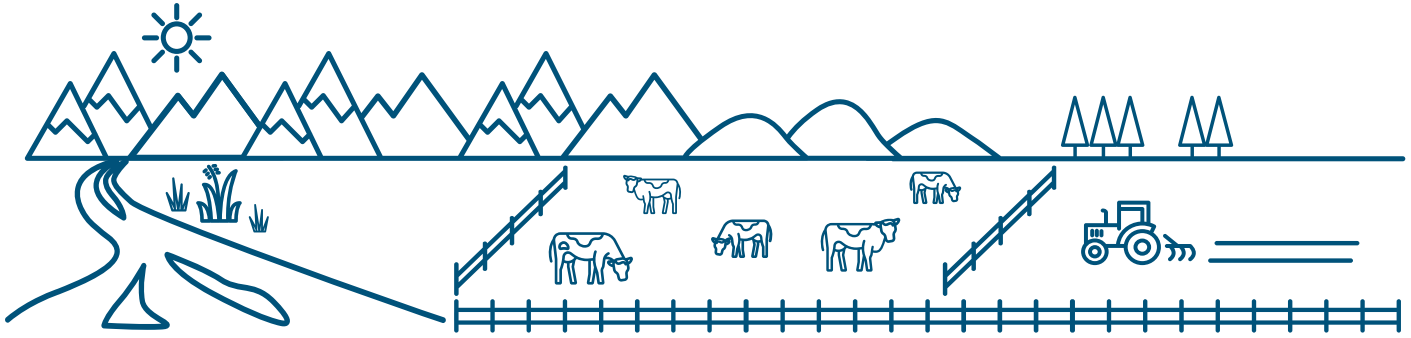
Recording and reporting synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use

On 1 July 2021, the Government introduced a cap on the application of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser for land grazed by livestock under the new Essential Freshwater package.

On grazed pasture, you can no longer apply more than 190kg of synthetic nitrogen per hectare per year (190kg N/ha/year) without resource consent. This limit applies both as an average for the farm, and to each hectare (with a limited exception for land used to grow annual forage crops).

Farm in this case refers to a contiguous landholding – that is, each adjoining or touching land parcel is considered part of the same farm, while land parcels that don't border others are considered separate farms.

Dairy farmers must also record synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use and report it back to us each year.



Which farms does the synthetic nitrogen cap apply to?

The cap on synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use applies to pastoral land – that is, land on which livestock is grazed. It does not include the grazing of the stubble of a crop that has been harvested after arable land use.

On land with mixed use, the 190kg N/ha/year limit applies when the land is being used for the grazing of livestock, from crop or pasture preparation until grazing finishes.

It's important you measure your synthetic nitrogen use to ensure it is below 190kg N/ha/year. On our webpage (ecan.govt.nz/ncap) you can use our calculator to determine your synthetic nitrogen use and if required, review your farming practices to reduce your use.

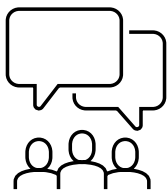
How to submit your synthetic nitrogen use report

Dairy farmers are now required to report their annual synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use to us. This report is to cover the period from 1 July–30 June and is to be submitted by 31 July each year.

Submit your data through the National Online Reporting Tool, at n-cap.teurukahika.govt.nz

The major fertiliser suppliers Ballance and Ravensdown have also developed tools you can use to record and report your synthetic fertiliser use, through the MyBallance and HawkEye programmes. Prior to submitting, you will need to confirm that you agree to any policies or agreements required by these tools.

If you are not currently a customer, you may still be able to use these tools. Visit the Ballance website or contact HawkEye customer support on 0800 73 73 73 to find out how.



Where to get help

Check the website

For more information about the nitrogen fertiliser limits, visit ecan.govt.nz/ncap

Industry support

Your fertiliser supplier (like Ravensdown and Ballance) and industry body will be able to help with synthetic nitrogen reduction tips, as well as advice on recording and reporting its use.

Talk to your Zone team

Your local land management advisor can help you with advice on how to meet best practices and achieve compliance with synthetic nitrogen use. For support in your local area, give us a call on 0800 324 636. We can arrange for your local land management advisor to contact you by email, phone, or face to face.