

A guide to the new national and regional rules for freshwater

# Agricultural intensification

Conversion of land to a different use is regulated under both the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater and the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan.

## ► Dairy farm conversions

A consent is required under the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan and the Regional Water Plan for the conversion of land to dairy farming. Depending on the area of land being converted, a consent may also be required under the national regulations.

If you can't meet the following permitted activity criteria, then additional consent will be required under the national regulations.

### National Environmental Standards for Freshwater criteria

- If you already used some of your farm for dairy before 3 September 2020, then you can continue to use that land plus 10 ha.
- In any other case, the area of the farm that can be used for dairy farm land must be no greater than 10 ha.

For all new dairy farm conversions, please contact the consents team for advice.

## ► Dairy support

Land used for dairy support means land on a farm that is used for grazing dairy support cattle (i.e. dairy cattle that are not yet being milked and are being grazed on land that is not grazed by dairy cattle).

The use of land for dairy support can be undertaken without needing consent under both the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan and the national regulations, however you will need to meet all of the permitted activity criteria.

If you can't meet the following permitted activity criteria, then you'll need to apply for a consent.

### National Environmental Standards for Freshwater criteria

- The land on the farm must have been used for dairy support between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2019
- The area of the farm that is used for dairy support must remain the same.

### Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan criteria

EITHER:

- The landholding is less than 20 hectares in area

OR:

- A farm environment management plan is prepared and implemented in accordance with Appendix N

Depending on the condition(s) that cannot be met, the consent required could be under the national regulations, Southland's proposed plan, or both.

If you cannot meet the criteria above, please contact our consents team for advice.

If you are intensive winter grazing on the support land, then you'll need to comply with the intensive winter grazing conditions in the national regulations and Southland's proposed plan.



## ► Irrigation of dairy farm land

The proposed Southland Water and Land Plan and Regional Water Plan do not control the use of land for irrigated farming, however, there are permitted activity thresholds for water abstraction and use (noting that consent is required for any type of take and use in the Waiau Catchment):

### Surface water (Rule 18 of RWP)

- 10,000 litres (rate of no more than 5 litres per second)

### Groundwater (Rule 23 of RWP)

- 20,000 litres (rate of no more than 2 litres per second)

For volumes above these thresholds, a consent is required for taking and using water for irrigation. Depending on the area of land being irrigated, a consent may also be required under the national regulations.

If you can't meet the following permitted activity criteria, then additional consent will be required under the national regulations.

- If you already irrigated dairy farm land at any time in the 12 months before 3 September 2020, then you can continue to irrigate that land plus 10 ha.
- In any other case, the area of the dairy farm land that is irrigated must be no greater than 10 ha.

For all new dairy farm irrigation activities, please contact the consents team for advice.

## ► Conversions from plantation forestry to pastoral land

The conversion of land used for plantation forestry to pastoral land can be undertaken without needing consent if you can meet all the permitted activity criteria in both the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan and the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater.

Here's what you need to do. If you can't meet one or more of the criteria, then you'll need to apply for a consent.

### National Environmental Standards for Freshwater criteria

- If you already used some of your farm for pastoral land before 3 September 2020, then you can continue to use that land plus 10 ha.
- In any other case, the area of the farm that can be used for pastoral land must be no greater than 10 ha.

### Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan criteria

EITHER:

- The landholding is less than 20 ha in area

OR:

- A farm environment management plan is prepared and implemented in accordance with Appendix N

Depending on the condition(s) that cannot be met, the consent required could be under the national regulations, Southland's proposed plan, or both.

If you cannot meet the criteria above, please contact our consents team for advice.