

Stockholding areas and feedlots



According to the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020 (NES-F) rules

Stockholding areas and feedlots can pose a high environmental risk to freshwater if they are not managed well. When stockholding areas and feedlots are in a poor location or are not adequately designed, effluent can leach and pollute waterbodies as well as increase erosion.



Typical stockholding area (feed pad) example that has an impermeable base. If your stockholding area does not meet the minimum permeability standard you will need to apply for resource consent. Note that you may need a consent or variation to your current consents for effluent storage if you have an impermeable stockholding area. (Photo: Don Chapman – Chapman Dairy Ltd)

In August 2020, the Government released the Essential Freshwater Package. The package includes, among other regulations, the National Environmental Standards for Freshwater 2020 (NES-F).

The regulations for feedlots and stockholding areas must be considered alongside the rules in the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan (pSWLP).

Part 1 of this factsheet covers the NES-F requirements, while Part 2 covers the pSWLP requirements. Please note that the NES-F regulations are applicable to cattle only, whereas the pSWLP requirements are applicable to both cattle and deer.

Depending on your activity, there may be different rules that apply.

Defining a feedlot/stock holding area

In addition, the definition of 'feedlot' differs in the NES-F and pSWLP. This means that if your facility does not come under the definition of a feedlot in the NES-F, it may still come under the definition of a feedlot in the pSWLP. These definitions differ because the Government produced the NES-F after Environment Southland produced the pSWLP.

Facilities such as wintering barns (roofed structures), sacrifice paddocks or self-feeding silage stacks are excluded from the NES-F stockholding area and feedlot regulations, however are covered by the regulations of Rule 35A – Feed pad/lot of the pSWLP.

There is some overlap between the stockholding area and feedlot definitions in the NES-F as a feedlot is a subset of a stockholding area. See the following definitions:

A stockholding area:

- Means an area for holding cattle at a density that means pasture or other vegetative ground cover cannot be maintained (for example, feed pads, winter pads, standoff pads, and loafing pads); but
- Does not include an area used for pastoral purposes that is in the nature of a stockyard, milking shed, wintering barn, or sacrifice paddock.

For avoidance of doubt a wintering barn is any area that holds cattle and has a roof. If the wintering barn/roofed structure has an area attached that is not roofed, then this area is not part of the winter barn and may be considered a stockholding area.

A feedlot is a stockholding area where cattle:

- Are kept for at least 80 days in any 6-month period; and
- Are fed exclusively by hand or machine.

Permitted activity criteria for stockholding areas and feedlots

A permitted activity means you can undertake the activity without needing a resource consent. Regulations 9 and 12 of the NES-F outline the permitted activity criteria for feedlots and stockholding areas. The stockholding area or feedlot is permitted if it complies with the following condition:

- Ninety percent or more of the cattle held in the stockholding area must:
 - Be no more than 4 months old; or
 - Weigh no more than 120 kilograms.

(Note: the above condition is the same in both Regulation 9 and 12 of the NES-F)

If you cannot meet the above conditions, your use of land for a stockholding area or feedlot can still be permitted, provided it meets the following conditions:

- The base area of the stockholding area or feedlot is sealed to a minimum permeability standard of 10-9 m/s; and
- Effluent expelled in the stockholding area or feedlot is collected, stored and disposed of in accordance with rules 32B, 32D, and 35 of the pSWLP and Rule 50 of the Regional Water Plan or a resource consent; and
- The stockholding area or feedlot is at least 50 metres away from any waterbody, any water abstraction bore, any drain, and the coastal marine area.

Examples that meet the minimum permeability standard may include a concrete base or other completely impermeable material such as a synthetic base.

If you can't meet these conditions, you will need a resource consent. See also Rule 35A – feed pad/lots in the pSWLP in Factsheet - Part 2.

Questions

Q: I have a clay/woodchip based calving pad/stand-off pad/feed pad. Does it meet the permeability standard?

A: No it doesn't meet the permeability standard. Liquid effluent can still infiltrate both woodchip and clay. If you have a clay/woodchip based calving pad/stand-off pad/feed pad you will need to apply for a resource consent.

Q: If I put a roof over my calving pad/stand-off pad/feed pad, will I need a consent?

A: You will not need a consent under the NES-F as a stockholding area does not include an area used for pastoral purposes in the nature of a winter barn.

However, you may still need a consent under the pSWLP. See Part 2 of this factsheet below for the permitted activity criteria.

Q: What is the difference between wintering barns, feed pads, stockholding areas, sacrifice paddock and feedlots?

A:

- A wintering barn has a roof and is therefore not a stockholding area or a feedlot as defined in the NES-F. However, it is considered to be a feed pad/lot as defined in the pSWLP, see Part 2 for permitted conditions.
- A feed pad without a roof is a stockholding area if it holds cattle.
- A feed pad is not a stockholding area if it holds any animal other than cattle.
- A sacrifice paddock is specifically excluded from being a stockholding area. However, sacrifice paddocks are captured in the pSWLP, see Part 2 for permitted conditions.
- A feedlot is a stockholding area that holds cattle for more than 80 days in any six-month period which are fed exclusively by hand or machine.

Note that there are different permitted criteria and conditions which apply between the pSWLP and the NES-F.

Q: Is there a minimum time period that triggers stockholding area regulations? For example, can I put my cows on the laneway for 1 day without triggering these requirements?

A: No. If you are holding cattle in that location then it becomes a stockholding area and will trigger the rule in the NES-F. If they are simply walking along a lane/race or can feed from a feed lane as they walk to their paddock, then they are not held there and it is not a stockholding area or a feed pad/lot under both the NES-F and the pSWLP.

If you require any further assistance including preparing for a resource consent application, please contact the Environment Southland consents team on 0800 76 88 45.

Feed pads/lots



According to the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan rules

A feed pad/lot is a fenced in or enclosed area that is used for feeding or loafing cattle or deer. The aim of these facilities is to avoid damage to pasture when soils are saturated, and can be located indoors or outdoors. It includes ‘sacrifice paddocks’, wintering pads, stand-off pads, calving pads, loafing pads, and self- feed silage storage facilities.



There are rules in the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan that cover these structures as there are risks to water quality and soil health if a feed pad/lot is poorly designed, located

or managed. Properly designed and managed feed pads (or wintering pads or standoff pads) can reduce the amount of pugging that occurs on pastures over the winter months. They are also beneficial to stock health.

A permitted activity means you can undertake an activity without needing a resource consent. Under the proposed plan, you can now have more than one feed pad/lot on your property without needing a consent as long as you meet the criteria outlined in the rule.

This includes:

- It does not have more than 120 adult cattle or 250 adult deer that remain on the feed pad/lot longer than three continuous months (or equivalent numbers of young stock)
- The pad/lot is not located within:
 - 50 metres of a watercourse, dwelling on the same landholding, road or subsurface drain
 - 200 metres of any dwelling not on the same landholding
 - 100 metres from a water abstraction point
 - 250 metres of a microbial health protection zone. These areas are outlined in Appendix J of the pSWLP.

- It has a sealed and impermeable base and any liquid effluent or stormwater is directed to an effluent system; or it has minimum 500mm base of wood-based material
- Material from the feed pad/lot is collected and applied in accordance with Rule 38 (Spreading of Animal and Vegetative Waste)
- Overland flow or stormwater is prevented from entering the feed pad/lot

If you can't meet these criteria you will need to apply for a consent.

You'll also need to look at Rule 38, which covers the discharge of sludge from feed pad/lots.

Questions

Q: How many feed pads am I allowed on my property?

A: There is no limit to the number of feed pads/lots per landholding so long as you meet the permitted activity criteria for each one.

Q: What is a sacrifice paddock?

A: A sacrifice paddock means an area on which

- Cattle or deer are repeatedly, but temporarily, contained (typically during extended periods of wet weather); and
- The resulting damage caused to the soil by pugging is so severe as to require resowing with pasture species.

If the grazing of cattle is managed in such a way that pugging of soil is not so severe that resowing with pasture species is not required, then this is NOT a sacrifice paddock.

Q: Is my self-feed silage stack considered a feed pad/lot?

A: A self-feed silage stack is a silage storage facility. If cattle are grazing directly from this silage storage facility, then it is considered to be a feed pad/lot and must comply with the feed pad/lot rule (Rule 35A)

Bales of plant material completely encapsulated in plastic are NOT considered to be a silage storage facility.

Q: If I add supplementary feed to pasture or a crop paddock, is this considered a feed pad/lot?

A: It may not be considered a feed pad/lot, but it depends on your situation. Please call our consents team for advice.

Q: I am able to plumb my feed pad directly to my existing effluent storage system?

A: Yes. Feed pads/lots have a large surface area and are capable of generating a lot of effluent. Before they can be plumbed to an existing system you need to ensure that there is enough storage. This would require a Dairy Effluent Storage Calculation and a variation to your existing dairy discharge consent.

Q: Am I able to use my feed pad year round?

A: If the feed pad is used for longer than a continuous three-month period consent is required. This would also have to be reflected in a Dairy Effluent Storage Calculation if plumbed in to an existing effluent storage system.

Definitions

Effluent - A liquid that may include solid components discharged as waste that originates from agricultural activities but excludes solid waste.

Landholding - An area of land used as a single operating unit. Please refer to the full definition in the plan, or contact the consents team if you are unsure whether your property is one or more landholdings.

Subsurface drainage systems – An underground system installed to drain water or moisture from land. These systems can include tile, mole, concrete and clay drains, wooden box drains

and plastic subsurface drainage pipes. Stormwater systems, drainage by use of sumps, and on-site wastewater systems are not included in this definition.

The information provided is based on Rule 35A in the decisions version of the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan, April 2018

If you're thinking about making a change to your farming activity, it's important to remember what the proposed Southland Water and Land Plan is striving towards. Don't forget to address the objectives and policies alongside of the relevant rules when you are making an application for resource consent. The objectives and policies are the key drivers of the rules and need to be considered carefully.