

# Freshwater farm plans



## November 2023 Update

Kia ora,

Welcome to the first issue of the new regular Freshwater Farm Plans newsletter.

In issue #1 we:

- Introduce you to freshwater farm plans
- Share details about the rollout of freshwater farm plans throughout Otago
- Provide an opportunity to train as a certifier or auditor of farm plans; and
- Direct you to more information, resources, and support.

## What is a freshwater farm plan?

Freshwater farm plans will support on-farm actions to protect ecosystems.

They must include:

- Maps identifying waterways and wetlands
- Any contaminant discharges
- Any risks to freshwater wetlands and ecosystems from activities such as irrigation, nutrient application, effluent, winter grazing, stock-holding areas, stock exclusion, offal pits or farm landfills
- Actions to mitigate these risks.

They will be tailored to the individual farming or growing enterprise and the farm's unique surrounding environment and will be certified and audited.

We know looking after the environment is important to farmers, that there is some really great work already being done, and farm plans will support this in a targeted and site-specific way.

You can learn more about freshwater farm plans on our [Freshwater Farm Plans web page](#).

Wondering where to start? Check out our [Getting Started](#) section or click below for answers to frequently asked questions.

Discover more in our freshwater farm plans [FAQ section](#)

## Otago rollout of freshwater farm plans

The rollout of freshwater farm plans across the country is being done a few regions at a time, starting with Southland and Waikato on 1 August 2023.

Otago, the West Coast, and parts of Manawatū-Whanganui are next and will begin phasing freshwater farm plans in over the next two years from 1 February 2024.

For Otago, the rollout will follow the boundaries of ORC's existing five Freshwater Management Units (FMUs)/rohe (areas), beginning with North Otago.

Each of the Otago areas below will have 18 months to submit their freshwater farm plan following their start date.

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) expects about 34,500 freshwater farm plans to be in place across the country eventually.

Order	Start date	Anticipated number of farms	Approximate hectares covered by freshwater farm plans*
North Otago FMU**	1 Feb 2024	756	256,264
Lower Clutha Rohe***	1 Aug 2024	821	337,328
Upper Lakes Rohe, Dunstan Rohe, Manuherekia Rohe, Roxburgh Rohe	1 Feb 2025	913	1,033,254
Taieri FMU	1 Aug 2025	520	484,782
Catlins FMU	1 Aug 2025	185	83,944
Dunedin and Coast FMU	1 Dec 2025	342	86,339

\*Note that some of these measurements cover farms which are across FMU boundaries and incorporate parts of farms.

\*\*Otago is divided into five Freshwater Management Units (FMUs). An FMU is an area around a water body or multiple water bodies of a manageable size where freshwater objectives and limits will be set.

\*\*\*Rohe means 'area' in te reo and is used to define distinct areas within a larger FMU.

## Community meetings

As the first area in Otago to need freshwater farm plans, ORC has been working alongside North Otago catchment groups and irrigation companies to organise meetings that give communities an opportunity to come and ask questions, and learn more about these plans, time frames, and the process by which to complete them.

Together with North Otago Sustainable Land Management (NOSLaM), North Otago Irrigation Company (NOIC) and the Lower Waitaki Irrigation Company, our team met with various communities in halls across Weston, Papakaio and Hampden.

East Otago Catchment Group and ORC also organised four meetings with the community in Shag Valley, Palmerston, Macraes and Waikouaiti throughout November.

Thank you to all of those who attended these meetings. We fielded some great questions, and the feedback we received was invaluable!

If you couldn't make one of these meetings but would like to learn more about freshwater farm plans, we're happy to come to you and speak to several farmers/growers on farm.

You can get in touch with the Freshwater Farm Plans team at: [farmplans@orc.govt.nz](mailto:farmplans@orc.govt.nz)



## Want to train as a certifier or auditor?

You can support on-farm work to protect freshwater ecosystems by becoming a farm plan certifier or auditor.

National training will be provided by Government-owned assurance scheme provider AssureQuality to new freshwater farm plan certifiers and auditors.

To work as a certifier or auditor in Otago, you'll also need to complete regional training to build and demonstrate your understanding of the key issues in our region.

If you or someone within your business is interested in becoming a freshwater farm plan certifier or auditor and would like to be notified when Otago's regional training is available, you can find more information about the process and register your interest [here](#).

## In the news

ORC has put out several media releases in the lead-up to Otago's rollout of freshwater farm plans, outlining the timeline, benefits of freshwater farm plans, what this means for farmers and the support that is available.

7 July 2023



## **Media release: Freshwater farm plans on horizon for Otago**

[Read more](#)

11 September 2023

## **Media release: Freshwater farm plans rollout confirmed**

[Read more](#)

26 October 2023

## **Media release: ORC offers farmers and growers support for new freshwater farm plan regulations**

[Read more](#)



## **Contact us**

If you have any questions about freshwater farm plans, the timeline or process, what support is available or can't find an answer in the [FAQ section](#) on our website, please don't hesitate to email us at: [farmplans@orc.govt.nz](mailto:farmplans@orc.govt.nz)

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