

Freshwater Farm Plans and Catchment Surveys FAQs

What are freshwater farm plans (FWFP)?

Freshwater farm plans will help protect and restore New Zealand's freshwater by assessing each farm's potential impact on freshwater. Mandated by central government, each landowner is required to produce an action plan to improve water quality. These plans will be certified and submitted to Council and are specific to a particular farm's circumstances, physical environment and what is important to the catchment that farm is located in.

Who will need a FWFP?

- farms larger than 20ha
- horticulture/viticulture farms larger than 5ha

What will FWFPs need to include?

- farm maps identifying features such as farm boundaries, areas of land use, waterways, landforms, slope, winter grazing, any irrigation areas and contamination runoff zones (critical source areas)
- a risk assessment across farming and growing activities and the associated action plan to manage the identified risks

Farming and growing risks to water may include irrigation, application of nutrients and effluent, winter grazing, stock-holding areas, offal/rubbish pits, chemical storage and washdown areas.

What is the process for submitting FWFP?

- process of turning catchments on begins July 2024 and runs until Dec 2025
- the farm plan is developed (either by the farm operator, a consultant or using industry programme)
- the operator creates a FWFP then engages an approved certifier
- farms then have 18 months to submit their certified FWFP from the advertised rollout date
- within 12 months of certification the plan must be audited to ensure progress on the action plan
- information will be updated regularly on Marlborough District Council website

How can MDC help landowners with freshwater farm plans?

- provide information on the catchment context, challenges and values within the local catchments
- support catchment groups with advice, information about risks to water quality and support to form catchment groups
- by partnering with landowners, MDC can help identify and develop solutions for improving water quality through catchment condition surveys

What is a Catchment Condition Survey?

Catchment Condition Surveys are voluntary and collect information regarding waterways. The survey involves walking the waterways on a property, mapping locations of any features including in-stream conditions, culverts, stream crossings, bank erosion, fencing, riparian buffers, critical source areas for sediment and nutrient runoff and any weed challenges. Degraded or at-risk waterways will be prioritised.



Want to start a catchment group?

For more information on this please get in touch with Council's catchment care team

Catchment Care programme

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