

LAKE ROTORUA RULES & INCENTIVES DEVELOPMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Questions on farm viability, farm nutrient plans and compliance	
How can Council say farms will still be viable at the reduced nutrient discharge allowances without knowing individual circumstances? How can you know viability or effects?	<p>In developing the framework to allocate nitrogen to pastoral land-use many farm scenarios and examples were explored.</p> <p>We know that the nutrient discharge allowances will be hard for most farms to meet. In some cases the allowances won't be viable with the current systems in use and significant change will be required.</p> <p>Development of the Farm Nutrient Plans will allow us to consider individual circumstances and work with farmers to help understand what the effects are and how these effects can be managed.</p> <p>We recognise this will come at a cost to landowners and won't necessarily be easy.</p>
You have talked about two sectors – dairy and dry stock. What about dairy support?	<p>The framework has been developed based on two key sectors, dairy and dry stock. We are still fleshing out the detail of whether we need to add a dairy support sector into the framework.</p> <p>These decisions are still to be made and updates will be provided.</p>
How will farm nutrient management plans be developed?	<p>The Regional Council are working with Dairy NZ and Beef + Lamb to develop the template for the Farm Nutrient Plans.</p> <p>Support will be provided by the Regional Council for Dairy NZ, Beef + Lamb and agricultural consultants to help farmers complete their Farm Nutrient Plans.</p>
What percentage do small blocks contribute to the nutrient load?	<p>There are around 2,300 small block owners (classified as under 40 hectares). These properties make up about 25% of the catchment area and contribute around 20% of the nutrient load.</p>
What are the compliance costs going to be?	<p>The detail around what compliance is needed and how this will be monitored is still to be worked out.</p> <p>What we can say is we know compliance and monitoring can add additional costs for landowners and we want to ensure</p>

	that these costs are minimised.
What about Rotorua District Council and rules for sub-division?	<p>The Rotorua District Council is establishing an enabling regulatory framework to make it easier for landowners in the catchment to change land-use for the benefit of water quality. The proposed Transferable Development Rights are one way they are trying to do this.</p> <p>The District Council has been waiting for confirmation of how we plan to allocate the nitrogen limit to pastoral land-use before they finalise their policies.</p>
What will you do if farmers refuse to make changes to develop a Farm Nutrient Plan and make any changes to meet their property's nutrient discharge allowance?	<p>Farms in the catchment will require consent under the new framework. We are working out the details of this, and the type of consent that will be required. However, Farm Nutrient Plans will be a condition of consent. This means that a Plan will be required in order to get a consent to discharge nitrogen.</p> <p>It is important that everyone contributes and we will work with farmers to ensure this happens. Ideally we will not have to use enforcement powers to make this happen but all farmers should participate or it is not fair.</p>
What is the cost of compliance for small blocks?	<p>At this stage the details of compliance and monitoring are still to be worked out.</p> <p>We recognise that for small blocks Farm Nutrient Plans will be overkill. We are looking to develop a streamlined approach for small block owners that include simple look-up tables to confirm what stock levels can be grazed on small blocks.</p>

Questions on what assistance will be available for landowners

<p>For farmers in the catchment that can't meet the new nitrogen discharge allowance, what help will there be?</p>	<p>We hope most farmers can meet the new discharge allowances and support will be provided to farmers and landowners to develop their Farm Nutrient Plans. This will be done with the assistance of Dairy NZ, Beef + Lamb and agricultural consultants.</p> <p>This will provide farmers with the options for their individual properties to meet their nutrient discharge allowance by 2032.</p> <p>The \$40.5 million incentive fund will provide opportunities for these farmers to diversify into alternative land-uses.</p> <p>We are investigating what other support and extension services are required to assist landowners through this process.</p>
<p>What agencies will be available to help prepare the Farm Nutrient Plans?</p>	<p>Dairy NZ and Beef + Lamb are working with the Regional Council to develop the template for the Nutrient Management Plans.</p> <p>Farmers will be provided support by Dairy NZ, Beef +Lamb and independent agricultural consultants. The details of how this will work are still to being considered.</p>
<p>How are you going to help farmers with current nutrient losses well in excess of the new nutrient discharge levels?</p>	<p>Support will be provided to farmers and landowners to develop their Farm Nutrient Plans. This will be done with the assistance of Dairy NZ, Beef + Lamb and agricultural consultants.</p> <p>This will provide farmers with the options for their individual properties to meet their nutrient discharge allowance by 2032.</p>
<p>Who will be paying for the support to farmers and to develop Farm Nutrient Plans? I presume this will come from our rates payments?</p>	<p>Costs for the rules and incentives project for Lake Rotorua are covered by general rates, targeted lake rates, investment income and crown funding.</p>

Questions on gorse programme

<p>How are you going to eradicate gorse as part of the gorse programme?</p>	<p>To completely eradicate gorse is very difficult. We all know that if you cut gorse down or spray it, it will just grow back.</p> <p>All our research to date has shown it is mature gorse that has high nutrient leaching.</p> <p>The gorse programme proposes to convert mature gorse stands into forestry or woodlots. The gorse will regrow for the first couple of years and there will also be some small spindly gorse through the forest but it will not be significant.</p>
<p>If I remove gorse can I count this towards reaching my NDA?</p>	<p>Gorse leaching is not accounted for in the nitrogen limit so removing gorse will not be considered as a reduction in your property's nitrogen loss.</p>

Questions on incentive programme

<p>The \$45.5 million is nowhere near enough to pay for the changes needed. Have you considered shifting capital money from other areas of the programme to increase the help to farmers?</p>	<p>We are aware that the funding \$45.5 million will not cover all the costs of landowners to meet the sustainable nitrogen limit.</p> <p>This amount is what Council and Programme Partners think is an acceptable amount to be covered by the community. Half of this funding comes from a mix of general rates, lakes targeted rates and investment income. The other half will be funded by the Crown (pending approval in December 2013).</p>
<p>Have you considered providing an up-front lump sum payment to farmers so they can make the necessary changes or get out?</p>	<p>We know that the funding will not cover all the changes needed by landowners.</p> <p>The nitrogen allocation approach is that farmers should pay the costs to reach best practice levels. \$5 million has been allocated to helping farmers get from best practise to their nitrogen discharge limit.</p> <p>The remaining \$40.5 million will be available for farmers who want to implement alternative low nitrogen leaching land-uses.</p>
<p>Will the incentives scheme be first in, best dressed? How will you ensure a fair distribution of the funds, especially for the smaller operators?</p>	<p>The incentive fund development covers creating principles to ensure a fair and equitable process.</p> <p>At this stage we are looking at having funding rounds throughout the ten year period. We will have the flexibility of increasing funds from one year to another.</p>

Questions on the science behind the programme

<p>What assurance can you give to farmers that you will act on updated science information?</p>	<p>As part of the Oturoa Agreement, signed by the Lake Rotorua Primary Producers Collective, Federated Farmers, Bay of Plenty Regional Council and witnessed by the Lake Water Quality Society, five yearly reviews of the science of the nutrient load and effect on water quality will be undertaken.</p> <p>The framework that has been agreed further commits us to undertake these five yearly reviews of the science.</p> <p>All our science for the programme is peer reviewed by the Water Technical Advisory Group which has members from the Regional and District Councils, SCION, University of Waikato, Te Arawa Lakes Trust, NIWA and GNS Science.</p> <p>Recently we have also added farmer representatives onto the Water Technical Advisory Group. Any farmer can contact the farmer representative (Mike Scarsbrook and Tom Stephens) for assurance that the science is rigorously reviewed and any new information will be acted upon.</p>
<p>Can we get the scientists to Rotorua to present and debate if Lake Rotorua is nitrogen limited or phosphorus limited?</p>	<p>Definitely. The Regional Council have commenced plans on this and will be looking to have a science session for rural landowners to hear and ask questions before the end of 2013.</p>

Questions on wider programme

<p>Is any progress being made on the tikitere de-nitrification trials?</p>	<p>The Tikitere De-nitrification Plant trials are close to being finished. Results to date have shown that we are only getting around 50% of the nitrogen out the test plant from the geothermal source.</p> <p>We have also run zeolite trials which have proven much more successful. No final decisions have been made, but we are in the process of completing a business case to build a full scale zeolite plant with the intention that the build be completed by the end of 2015.</p>
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