

One Plan Frequently Asked Questions

Thursday 31 August

Is Horizons considering a Plan change?

Yes. At their Strategy and Policy committee 9 August 2017, Horizons Regional councillors moved a recommendation for Council to investigate partial One Plan change options.

How long will the Plan change take?

Changing a Plan is not easy, simple, or quick. It is both a legal and a public process. A partial Plan change may take 2-4 years. We need to identify the impact on individual landowners and the community as we all work to improve our rivers.

Can I wait to see if this Plan change happens?

Unfortunately not. Even if there is a Plan change being prepared, the existing One Plan rules and policies still have legal effect.

So what should I do?

The best place for farmers to be is engaged with Council. You can contact our Rural Advice or Consents team on freephone 0508 800 800 for more information. We encourage farmers to work towards gathering information required for a consent application as this information will be required even under a Plan change.

What information should I put together?

There are a number of components to a consent application. The components that farmers can get on with are: for dairy farmers, work with DairyNZ and complete your base file. Work with a rural consultant to identify how far you are from table 14.2 and mitigations on your farm, and check the other requirements of the One Plan (e.g. for stock crossings).

What if I can meet the controlled activity status?

If you can meet the requirements of Table 14.2 and other matters of control such as stock crossings, you should go ahead and complete the consent application process. Forms are available from Horizons at the end of August. We strongly recommend that you consult with the Horizons Consents team in advance of preparing your application.

After identifying my on farm mitigations, what do I do if I still can't meet Table 14.2 and the other matters of control?

You would need to apply for a restricted discretionary consent. This will require a much more complex application than for a controlled activity. You will likely need expert advice from a planner, ecologist, and/or environmental scientist. Your application will need a thorough Assessment of Environmental Effects (an AEE).

Producing an AEE report will be very difficult and in most cases will require catchment water quality models that Horizons is currently developing. This information is not likely to be available for several months. Our focus is on the Upper Manawatu catchment first. Most farms will want to have this

information before developing an AEE. It is recommended that you consult with the Horizons Consents team if you intend trying to prepare an AEE in advance of Horizons completing its water quality modelling.

There is no guarantee that Horizons can grant consent even when an AEE has been completed.

What does the Environment Court's decision mean for farmers who require consent under the existing intensive farming rules?

Around 180 dairy farms, 20+ horticulture operations and a small number of cropping operations should have an intensive land use consent and do not. For these operations where Table 14.2 cannot be met, the current consent pathway is extremely difficult without causing significant impacts on the viability of those farming/growing businesses.

Will Horizons continue to implement the One Plan?

Horizons is obliged to implement the intensive farming rules as directed by the Court. Horizons is aware that there are farms that under the One Plan require a consent but don't yet have one. Horizons is taking further advice on managing this situation and will provide further advice.

Potential consent applicants are advised to start preparing the information for a consent application as detailed above.

What do I need to know if I have a horticulture operation?

You are going to need to know and manage your nutrient use. Horizons are currently working on an AEE process, including catchment load information. Horizons recommends that you continue to implement the good practice methods to reduce your environmental impact.

What do I need to know if I run a cropping operation?

You should start the process by understanding your nutrient budget, identifying mitigations and whether you can meet controlled activity status. The advice regarding AEEs above applies.

What do I need to know if I have an existing land use consent?

Horizons will continue to monitor consents already granted under the intensive land use rules.

When will more information be available?

Our advice will evolve over the next few months. New application forms and guidance material for applicants seeking intensive land use consents will be available from Horizons at the end of August. Farmers can also sign up for Horizons' Dairy e-news via their website www.horizons.govt.nz to be kept up to date.

Where can I get support if I need it?

Horizons can be contacted directly on 0508 800 800. Horizons also encourages farmers to continue to work with and seek support from their industry bodies (DairyNZ, Beef & Lamb, Hort NZ). The industry is there to work with farmers through this process. The Rural Support Trust (0800 787 254) is also a free support agency for farmers, please do not hesitate to call them. Horizons staff will hold local meetings from September onwards.