



# Animal Effluent Storage Facilities & Consents



## Animal effluent storage facilities

The collection, storage and spreading of animal effluent, most commonly dairy effluent, provides valuable nutrients that can be cycled back onto farmed land.

However, if this is not managed appropriately, it can have negative effects, particularly on water quality.

You will always need a resource consent to build a new storage facility and a resource consent to discharge effluent.

**You may also need consent for an existing animal effluent storage facility such as a pond or tank.**

The requirement to apply for resource consents for storage and discharge is staged over several years because we recognise there can be significant costs to upgrade or replace these storage facilities.

**We're here to help.**

You can find more information on animal effluent storage facilities here:

W: [orc.govt.nz/consents](http://orc.govt.nz/consents)

E: [publicenquiries@orc.govt.nz](mailto:publicenquiries@orc.govt.nz)

P: 0800 474 082

## Definition of animal effluent storage facility

An animal effluent storage facility includes ponds, tanks, or structures used for the containment or storage of animal effluent.

The definition excludes any ancillary structures for the collection, conveyance, or treatment of liquid or solid animal effluent, such as sumps, stone traps and weeping walls.

## Use of land for animal effluent storage facilities

Animal effluent storage facilities need to be well designed and maintained so they don't leak.

They also need to have sufficient storage capacity for when conditions are not favorable for spreading the effluent.

Our Water Plan rules apply to animal effluent storage facilities (ponds and tanks etc) and then components of an animal effluent system (e.g., sump, weeping wall and stone trap).

## Consents for storage facilities

In general, a well-designed and maintained pond constructed prior to 25 March 2020 may not need consent. A pond/tank constructed after 25 March 2020 will require consent.

## Do I need consent?

If you constructed your storage before 25 March 2020, you DO NOT need consent as long as:

- ▶ It is sized at the 90% volume of the DESC; and
- ▶ In the last five years a suitably qualified person has certified it as having no visible holes, cracks or defects that will allow effluent to leak; and
- ▶ It meets the pond drop test criteria; and
- ▶ You have a management plan as described in the Schedule 21 of the Water Plan; and
- ▶ You supply the above to ORC upon request.

## I don't meet the consent criteria - what should I do?

If your existing storage does not meet the permitted criteria, then you will need to apply for consent. You are temporarily permitted until the dates below, but you will still need to apply for consent. When you need to apply is based on the number of days storage you currently have. You need to use the method in schedule 19B to work this out - not the DESC.

The date your application needs to be in by, is the date the rules are made operative, plus the number of years in the column and an additional 6 months.

Days of storage available as calculated in accordance with Schedule 19B	Year	Application in by
0-10	0.5	1 year after rules operative
11-40	2	Two and a half years after rules operative
41+	3	Three and a half years after rules operative

## Building a new storage facility

If you are building a new pond or tank, you need to apply for the resource consent before you start the work. You may also need building consent – so please contact your District/City Council.

Under our Water Plan rules, you need to know the following information about your animal effluent storage facility:

- ▶ How many animals generate effluent and how often? For example: how big is the milking herd? How often are they milked? How long is the season?
- ▶ Type and size of storage e.g. pond (synthetically lined, concrete or clay) or an above-ground tank
- ▶ Minimum volume required for new storage (using the Dairy Effluent Storage Calculator (DESC))

If you want to continue using a pond that was constructed after 25 March 2020 (that is not already consented) you will need consent.

# FAQs

## What if it isn't dairy shed effluent in my effluent pond?

You can use ponds to store effluent from other animals and not just from dairy sheds — this means the storage rules may apply to you too. A suitably qualified person (see definition on right) may help determine storage volumes by calculating a conversion factor for animals other than dairy cows.

## What is the DESC?

DESC is the Dairy Effluent Storage Calculator. Please refer to the separate Timeline, Rules and Definitions for Animal Effluent Systems fact sheet.

## What is the difference between the DESC and the storage calculation in the plan?

The DESC is a programme used to tell you how much storage you need moving forward based on your specific farm. The calculation in the plan tells you how many days you have now and when you need to apply for consent

## Do I need a management plan?

You will need a management plan prepared for your discharge and animal effluent storage facility. This will need to include all the information required by schedule 21 of the Regional Plan Water (Water Plan).

If you have an existing management plan, you can update this to include this information or check that it is already in there.

## How do I know how many days of storage I have?

There is a method to use to figure out how much storage you currently have. It uses the daily volume of effluent produced and the volume of your current storage.

You can find this method on the separate Timeline, Rules and Definitions for Animal Effluent Systems fact sheet.

## I think I need consent for my pond/tank and weeping wall, what should I do?

Contact our Consents Team at [public.enquiries@orc.govt.nz](mailto:public.enquiries@orc.govt.nz) or any of your trusted farm advisors.

The Consents Team provide free advice for up to 30 minutes and will help you with information you need to provide, and by when.

## What should I be doing immediately?

It's important to talk to people about the best storage option for your farm. Each property is different, so have a think about what will suit you.

### Get a suitably qualified person (definition at right) to:

- ▶ Do a drop test on your existing storage (if needed)
- ▶ Tell you how much storage you will need using the DESC
- ▶ Certify your structures on your property (if needed)

### When you need to upgrade structures on your property:

- ▶ Check the age of your current facilities and how much storage you currently have. This will tell you when you need to apply.

## Who qualifies as a suitably qualified person (SQP)?

To meet the permitted activity rule, you may need an SQP for your animal effluent system design (pond or tank) and to run the Dairy Effluent Storage Calculator for your farm.

The skills this person needs for each activity are shown below. To be an SQP for the effluent system the person does not need to have all of the skills listed under the heading, just one of them.

When you are working with an SQP, please make sure they can meet these criteria. Please note, ORC does not keep a list of SQPs.

### SQP in Animal Effluent Systems:

- ▶ A relevant tertiary qualification in agricultural engineering, natural resources engineering or civil engineering and at least five years' professional experience in designing and constructing effluent management systems; or
- ▶ A relevant equivalent qualification (for example, international qualifications) and at least five years' professional experience in designing and constructing effluent management systems; or
- ▶ At least ten years' professional experience in designing and constructing effluent management systems.

### SQP in Calculating Dairy Effluent Storage:

- ▶ At least five years' relevant professional experience in designing effluent management systems, and **(b)** For determining a conversion factor for animals that are not dairy cows, a relevant scientific tertiary qualification or relevant research experience.

## I have an existing storage facility. Do I still need consent?

If you want to continue using a pond that was constructed after 25 March 2020 (that is not already consented) you will need consent. You do not need a consent for your sludge bed, weeping wall, or other component of an animal effluent system if:

- ▶ the volume is less than 35,000 litres; and
- ▶ It has no holes, visible cracks or defects that would allow effluent to leak; and
- ▶ It is not located within 20m of any lake, river, Regionally Significant Wetland, bore or soak hole or water supply used for humans; and
- ▶ A suitably qualified person (see definition overleaf) under Schedule 20 has in the last 5 years certified the facility as having no cracks, holes or defects that would allow effluent to leaks.

If the combined volume of your animal effluent system exceeds a total of 35,000 litres you will also need to prepare a management plan under Schedule 21.

If you can't meet any of the above criteria for your existing facility, then you will need to apply for consent.