

# Freshwater farm plans



## March 2024 Update

Kia ora,  
Welcome to the March issue of ORC's Freshwater farm plans (FWFP) newsletter.

## An update from the Government

The regulations remain in effect however the coalition Government has signaled their intention to improve freshwater farm plans to ensure they are cost effective and realistic for farmers.

In the meantime, Government has advised we continue with work as per the current system, until they make a further announcement. We now expect to have more information in April.

Implementation of the freshwater farm plan roll out by regional and unitary councils has been going well. We are now working through what implementation looks like in our region and will be in touch as soon as we know more.

We will continue to keep a close eye on any updates from central government, advocate for the needs of our region, work through what any changes mean for us locally, and keep you informed.

Keep an eye on our [freshwater farm plan web page](#) on our website or watch for our next newsletter for updates.

## Assessor training event

The first assessor training for Otago was held on February 28<sup>th</sup>. A morning session was held at Karitane Hall with the afternoon spent on a nearby farm.



*Staff and attendees at the Karitane assessor training day.*

Three potential assessors for Otago attended the training as well as some staff from Otago Regional Council, Environment Southland, and potential certifiers for Southland too.

A Ministry for the Environment staff member was in attendance to provide some context and there was also a presentation from mana whenua representatives.

The assessors for the region will have a crucial role to play in ensuring we have certifiers within Otago who know farming systems, have the capability to work with farmers, and who will also support achieving the desired environmental outcomes of FWFPs.

## Regional training programme

Regional training for farm certifiers began in March and includes the following online modules:

- Otago context
- Intensive Winter Grazing (IWG)
- Dairy effluent
- Otago science
- Waterways and wetlands

After completing the online modules, there will be an in-person component of the regional training which will need to be attended.

This first in-person session will be run in April/May 2024, with the date confirmed once we have an update from the Government on the regulations.

You can register your interest in training by emailing [farmplans@orc.govt.nz](mailto:farmplans@orc.govt.nz)

We'll share more details as they become available.



## Lower Clutha next to rollout

Farmers and growers in the Lower Clutha [Freshwater Management Unit \(FMU\)](#), will have new freshwater regulations activated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August 2024.

The following land uses will require a freshwater farm plan to be developed, and these need to be completed and certified within 18 months of the above date:

- 20 hectares or more in arable or pastoral use
- 5 hectares or more in horticultural use
- 20 hectares or more of combined use

If you require any help or guidance, please reach out to us at Otago Regional Council by calling **0800 474 082** or emailing [farmplans@orc.govt.nz](mailto:farmplans@orc.govt.nz)

## Planning a farm plan event?

We know that catchment groups and businesses are keen to talk about farm plans or hold events within their communities. We are happy to support these and know that a number of events may be in the planning stages.

As we are still waiting to hear about direction from the Government for farm plans in early April, if you are looking to run a farm plan event in April or at a later stage, please contact us and we can work on a plan for this together.

## Farm plans and winter 2024

If you are in the North Otago FMU and are wanting to use a freshwater farm plan for your intensive winter grazing this season, please contact us.

We know that people are interested in using this pathway and we are keen to support you where we can.



## Getting started

Not sure where to start with your freshwater farm plan?

We have a [Getting Started](#) section with some simple steps to ensure you're on the right track to completing your freshwater farm plan and some handy resources if you'd like to learn more about what goes into one of these plans.

## Just joined?

If you've just signed up since our last newsletter and want to check what you've missed on this journey so far, you can view past newsletters [here](#).

## 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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