

Freshwater farm plans



September 2024 Update

Kia ora,

Welcome to the September issue of ORC's Freshwater farm plans newsletter.

Government pauses freshwater farm plans

On Tuesday, the Government announced an official pause in the rollout of freshwater farm plans to allow time for changes to the system.

You can read the press release [here](#).



The changes aim to provide time for freshwater farm plans to be made more cost effective and practical for farmers in managing freshwater risks.

This pause will impact farmers and growers in North and East Otago where freshwater farm plans have started. Without this pause, these farmers and growers would have needed to complete a freshwater farm plan next year.

Minor amendments to the Resource Management Act, to enable the pause, are expected to be made before the end of the year.

Once these amendments are made, farmers and growers in areas where freshwater farm plans have been rolled out will not be required to submit a plan for certification while changes to the system are underway.

Ministry for the Environment (MfE) and Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) are already working with the primary sector, iwi, and regional councils to simplify freshwater farm plans and enable more local catchment-level solutions.

If you have a question about freshwater farm plans or the pause, you can reach out to us at Otago Regional Council by calling **0800 474 082** or emailing farmplans@orc.govt.nz.

ORC is also actively working with central government to ensure we have a freshwater farm plan system that will help achieve community expectations around freshwater outcomes and is fit-for-purpose in Otago, while being practical on-farm.



What does this mean for farmers?

Pausing the rollout before the end of the year allows everyone to take stock and consider changes to make the freshwater farm plan system more workable, cost-effective and risk based.

Farmers and growers are still encouraged to make a start and continue their efforts with on the ground actions and working on farm plans. There is a lot of good work happening within catchments and there is more planned — these efforts will not be wasted.

The more farm operators do on-farm to manage risks to freshwater *now*, the easier it will be to get your freshwater plan certified in the future.

Let's keep it up!

Next steps

We will continue to provide regular updates from central government as we receive them, advocate for the needs of our region and its people, work through what any changes mean for farmers and growers locally, and keep you informed.

Continue to keep up the great work – it isn't going unnoticed and will likely reduce the amount of work necessary down the track.

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

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

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