

HOW LOCAL FARMERS ARE WORKING TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT – THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR SURVEY

The Aparima Community and Environment (ACE) project is a local farmer-led initiative which aims to empower farmers in the Aparima freshwater management unit to adopt good farming practices to improve the local environment.

As part of the project a phone and email survey of all Beef + LambNZ and DairyNZ levy payers was done to understand and celebrate good farming practice uptake in the catchment and to track changes over time. 151 farmers responded to the survey.

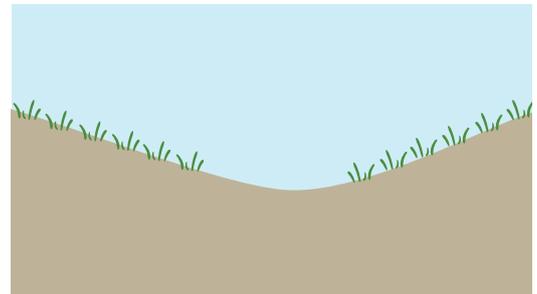
KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

- 80% of farmers surveyed had a Farm Environment Plan – up by 23% from the 2019 survey results.
- Farmers with a plan were significantly more likely to have implemented good practices for waterway protection – such as excluding stock from waterways, creating stock crossings and carrying out riparian planting.
- Those with a Farm Environment Plan were also more likely to have adopted a number of good wintering practices such as using grass buffers around waterways, soil testing wintering paddocks, and not cultivating critical source areas.

WHAT LOCAL FARMERS TOLD US THEY'RE DOING

74% of farmers with a farm environment plan and **36%** of farmers without a plan said they would avoid cultivating areas where runoff can flow into a waterway (critical source areas).

Identifying and avoiding cultivating areas where run-off occurs can make a big difference to sediment and phosphorus losses and ultimately help improve our waterways.

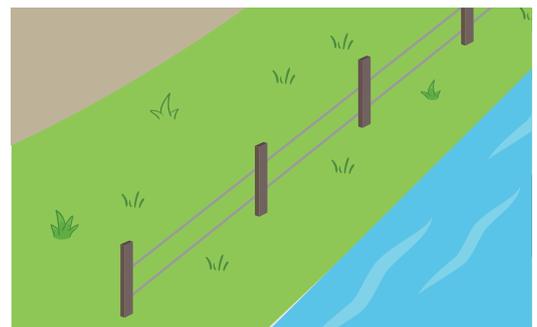


67% of farmers with a farm environment plan and **29%** of farmers without a farm environment plan said they would soil test wintering paddocks.

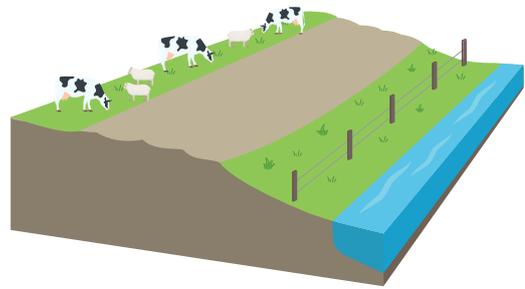
Soil testing paddocks can help you tailor nutrient applications to specific crop and soil needs and avoid unnecessary expense.

82% of farmers with a farm environment plan and **64%** of farmers without a plan said they would leave ungrazed buffers around waterways.

Creating a buffer helps reduce sediment and nutrients entering waterways, helping to improve our rivers.



76% of farmers with a farm environment plan and **50%** of farmers without a plan said they would use directional (downhill) grazing.



76% of farmers with a farm environment plan and **39%** of farmers without a plan said they would use and regularly move portable water troughs.

Both directional grazing and portable troughs minimise the risk of soil and nutrient losses into waterways, and help reduce mud which helps improve animal welfare.

ARE YOU KEEPING UP WITH YOUR NEIGHBOURS?

Together, ACE farmers are raising the bar for farming in Aparima!

A growing number of farmers are developing farm environment plans and we want all farmers to come on board and develop a plan to benefit our environment and community.

If you're interested in developing a Farm Environment Plan there is lots of help available to do this.

You can approach your milk supply company, or an Environment Southland Land Sustainability Officer. Beef + Lamb New Zealand also have guidance on developing a plan online at beeflambnz.com/compliance/environment/environment-plans. Check that your plan is consistent with the Regional Water and Land Plan requirements.

APARIMA COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT (ACE) PROJECT

FARMERS LEADING CHANGE AND TAKING ACTION

ACE is building and supporting the Aparima community and its environmental resilience through on the ground action, while maintaining profitable businesses.

ACE IS SUPPORTING FARMERS

- Helping farmers understand water quality issues and the options available to improve water quality
- Supporting all farmers to obtain a Farm Environment Plan
- Facilitating the understanding and implementation of good farming practice (GFP)
- Assessing the benefit good farming practice adoption has on water quality

WHAT CAN THE FARMING COMMUNITY DO?

- Find out about good farming practice opportunities applicable to your farm, which are often low-cost options
- Rapidly and voluntarily adopt good farming practices, especially around wintering stock
- Obtain a Farm Environment Plan

WHO IS SUPPORTING ACE?

Aparima catchment groups (Pourakino, Lower Aparima, Orepuki, Mid Aparima, Upper Aparima and Waimatiku), Beef + Lamb NZ, DairyNZ, Environment Southland, Open Country Dairy and Fonterra.