

THE DAIRYING AND CLEAN STREAMS ACCORD: SNAPSHOT OF PROGRESS - 2003/2004



WORKING TOWARDS CLEAN HEALTHY WATER

On 26 May 2003 the Dairying and Clean Streams Accord was agreed between Fonterra Co-operative Group, the Minister for the Environment, the Minister of Agriculture, and regional councils. The parties to the Accord agreed to work together to achieve clean healthy water, including streams, rivers, ground water, and wetlands, in dairying areas.

Framework for action

The Accord is both a statement of intent and a framework for actions to promote sustainable dairy farming in New Zealand.

The Accord:

- draws on many actions already underway and prompts others
- for the first time sets understandable targets for environmental performance across all of New Zealand
- aims to ensure environmental considerations become an automatic part of farm development and ongoing day to day management.

Snapshot of Accord progress

A crucial aspect of the Accord is finding out if it is having an impact on the farm. The purpose of this report is to provide an open and transparent snapshot of the efforts, successes and challenges of implementing the Accord during 2003/2004.

The success of the Accord comes down to the efforts of individual farmers. Much of the data for this snapshot is sourced from the Fonterra *On Farm Environment and Animal Welfare Assessment Survey*, conducted in 2003/2004. This assessment was carried out by AgriQuality and Quality Consultants New Zealand Ltd (QCONZ), and included a 24 question environmental survey. The Accord partners would like to thank the 99% of farmers supplying Fonterra, who voluntarily completed this survey.



ACCORD TARGETS THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

Dairy cattle are excluded from streams*, rivers, lakes and their banks

Accord national target: Dairy cattle are excluded from 50% of streams, rivers and lakes by 2007, 90% by 2012.

Progress: Data indicates that the 2007 target has been met. 67% of Fonterra suppliers currently either have total stock exclusion from waterways or no Accord-type waterways.

Regular (more than twice a week) race crossing-points have bridges or culverts

Accord national target: 50% of regular crossing-points have bridges or culverts by 2007, 90% by 2012.

Progress: Data indicates that the 2007 target has been met.

Farm dairy effluent is appropriately treated and discharged

Accord national target: 100% of farm dairy effluent discharge complies with resource consents and regional plans immediately.

Progress: Data indicates that 99% of Fonterra suppliers who require resource consents for farm dairy effluent have them.

Nutrients are managed effectively to minimise losses to ground and surface water

Accord national target: 100% of dairy farms have in place systems to manage nutrient inputs and outputs by 2007.

Progress: Data indicates that 17% of Fonterra suppliers have a nutrient management system that includes inputs and outputs.

Existing regionally significant or important wetlands (as defined by regional councils) are fenced and their natural water regimes are protected

Accord national target: 50% of regionally significant wetlands fenced by 2005, 90% by 2007.

Progress: Where regionally significant wetlands have been identified, both the 2005 target and the 2007 target have been met.

Source: *On Farm Environment and Animal Welfare Assessment Survey*, Fonterra, 2003/2004.

***The accord definition of a stream**

Streams are defined as “deeper than a Red Band” (ankle depth) and “wider than a stride” and permanently flowing.

Fonterra and Regional Councils

Regional action plans developed

Fonterra and regional councils develop regional action plans for the main dairying regions to implement this Accord by June 2004.

Nine regional action plans have been completed and four are still being developed. The first nine regional action plans have been developed with regional councils in areas where Fonterra suppliers have a significant presence. The regional action plans detail what individual regional councils, Fonterra, and others are doing, and how they can work together to support the Accord's targets.

Regional councils actively encouraging farmers to meet Accord targets

Regional action plans may also include: "...the development and alignment of council-managed incentive schemes to target dairy farmer needs..."

Regional councils are leading a variety of significant programmes to encourage farmers to implement measures that will help meet the Accord targets. Examples of these include financial grants for riparian fencing, assistance with preparation of riparian plans and planting, and planning or planting assistance for farmers whose properties border significant wetlands.

Fonterra Co-operative Group

Understanding of Accord growing and regional partnerships improving

Provide information and advice to suppliers in relation to priority actions.

Information emerging from Fonterra and regional council work on action plans over the last year indicates that the aims behind the Accord are understood and being applied. All regional councils have identified the Accord priorities as issues and are happy to work with Fonterra and dairy farmers to address them. There is good understanding that the environmental effects are a result of the intensity of land uses, and that the Accord targets are not necessarily applicable or appropriate to less intensive land uses.

Farming best practice promoted

Promote on farm environment best practice through extension and on farm management programmes.

Fonterra has supported a number of industry-wide initiatives for on farm environmental improvement. One example is Dexcel's creation of the Envirodirect website. This website provides dairy farmers and their advisers with access to crucial information, such as farm dairy effluent management, stand-off pad management and clean streams information.

Farm assessments agreed

Make arrangements with its suppliers to ensure the priority targets are met.

Around 99% of all Fonterra suppliers have voluntarily agreed to the initial farm assessment carried out by Fonterra.

Fonterra suppliers have continued their programmes of on farm improvements, including beginning to use nutrient management tools offered by the fertiliser industry and rural professionals.

Regional councils have worked with dairy farmers so that most now have the necessary resource consent for farm dairy effluent.

Environmental survey undertaken

Develop an assessment scheme for individual dairy farmers with independent third party audit, by June 2003 and implement by June 2004.

An environmental survey was carried out as part of the Fonterra *On Farm Environment and Animal Welfare Assessment Survey*, 2003/2004. There was a 99% participation rate with the voluntary environmental survey. For the first year the survey was conducted by means of an interview with each farmer. In future Fonterra is planning to engage independent auditing of its survey work to assure all parties of the accuracy of the information being gathered.

Market Focused uptake improved

Continue to develop, promote and implement the Market Focused environmental management system to assist farmers to identify key farm specific environmental issues and to demonstrate progress towards the five priority targets.

Fonterra has continued to promote the Market Focused environmental management system, with uptake rising from less than 1% to 12% over the last 12-month period.

Commitment ongoing

Continue to support the "Healthy Water" Regional Action Teams' initiatives beyond June 2003.

Regional Action Teams, led by Dexcel and funded by the Ministry for the Environment's Sustainable Management Fund, have been formed in 10 regions. The teams have mainly focused on the management of waterways and effluent. Extension tools resulting from this focus have included regionally specific booklets, on farm field days, roadshows and the like.

Industry wide research continuing

Continue to identify, support and be involved in farm related environmental research and development that supports the priority targets.

Fonterra suppliers continue to fund (through an industry levy) farm environmental research, including best practice in monitoring catchments, new and improved effluent systems, research on the effects of intensive dairy farming on groundwater, tile drains, feed-pad effluent, and water efficiency and reuse.

Publicly available progress report completed

Report publicly on progress annually.

This snapshot fulfils this requirement, which will be ongoing.

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and Ministry for the Environment (MfE)

Support for Accord continued

Publicly support this Accord, and keep Ministers, national representative bodies (including farmer organisations) and the public fully informed of progress.

MfE and MAF have prepared and presented communications supporting the Accord in public forums throughout the year.

Overview role undertaken

Monitor overall progress towards the Accord targets (MfE).

Throughout the Accord's first year, MfE has kept abreast of progress, issues and challenges arising through the Accord implementation. MfE is working with the Accord partners and working to prepare a robust monitoring and reporting strategy. This will cover the life of the Accord. A formal review of the Accord targets will be undertaken in year three.

A range of tools produced

Facilitate the development of tools to assist implementing the Accord.

MAF has continued to upgrade and distribute the *Overseer* nutrient budgeting computer programme to farmers. Workshops have been held with farmers. Discussions are currently underway – via AgResearch – for the Agriculture Industry Training Organisation to incorporate *Overseer* into its farm training courses. Massey University continues with its Nutrient Management short course (built around *Overseer*), which all fertiliser representatives must attend and pass.

MfE has published standardised bridge and culvert design guidelines in October 2004, these are available on MfE's website. Model rules on stock access to waterways for regional plans were distributed by MfE in March 2003.

National barriers still need investigating

Identify any legislative and institutional barriers to effective implementation of the Accord, promote ways to overcome such barriers, and report by June 2004.

Regional action plan development has started to canvas possible legislative or institutional issues regionally. The Ministry for the Environment over 2004/2005 will undertake further investigations to identify issues and solutions.

Developing a strategy for the scientific and research needs of the Accord

With Fonterra, and regional councils, assess science and research needs to implement the Accord.

MfE and MAF have co-ordinated funding for research into the development of best management practice for the dairy industry through the Sustainable Management Fund and the Sustainable Farming Fund. Issues such as lack of information on regionally significant wetlands and the impacts of tile drains have been identified through the first year of the Accord as requiring further information and/or research.



WHAT WAS LEARNT THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

Accord Progress Varies Regionally

There appears to be significant regional differences in progress towards meeting the Accord targets. The regional action plan process has identified many of these regional differences, and responses to them, while recognising that the Accord targets are valid nationwide.

Fonterra's environmental assessment has confirmed that a majority of its suppliers already farm within the Accord targets for fencing of waterways. Fonterra reports that 67% of its suppliers either have total stock exclusion from waterways or no Accord-type waterways. The length of waterways on farms range from metres to over 50 km, but most suppliers have less than 2 km. 33% of suppliers need to improve.

There are over 18,805 race crossings of waterways, 11% of these are unbridged and 435 are crossed more than twice weekly. Some represent significant challenges and costs that need to be addressed.

Recent Dairy Conversion Areas More Likely to Have Fenced Waterways

The survey showed that many recent dairy conversion areas in the South Island are more likely to be compliant with the Accord targets than older established dairying areas.

Farm waterways: a regional comparison

- Most waterways on dairy farms.....Waikato
- Fewest waterways on dairy farmsHawke's Bay
- Greatest length of waterways per farmSouthland
- Least length of waterways per farmAuckland
- Longest length of waterways.....Wellington
- Most stock exclusionSouthland
- Least stock exclusionWellington
- Largest percentage of oxidation ponds.....Taranaki
- Largest percentage of spray disposalSouthland
- Largest number of race crossings per farmManawatu/Wanganui
- Least number of race crossings per farmHawke's Bay
- Most unbridged regular crossingsWaikato
- Greatest uptake of nutrient budgets.....Southland
- Most outstanding resource consentsNorthland

Source: *On Farm Environment and Animal Welfare Assessment Survey*, Fonterra, 2003/2004.



WHERE TO FROM HERE THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Doing Well - Keep Striving To Do Better

Over the first 12 months a lot has been achieved. The following are some of the main areas of work over the next 12 months.

- **Improve monitoring and auditing**

All Accord partners have a reporting role which will continue to be developed and strengthened over the next year.

The Ministry for the Environment has a co-ordinating and overview role for monitoring under the Accord. The Accord sets targets out to 2012. As such, there is a need to work with regional councils to establish long term monitoring programmes that will advise the partners of the success or otherwise of the actions of all parties.

Fonterra will continue to carry out its *On Farm Environment and Animal Welfare Assessment Survey* as part of their monitoring input to the Accord.

- **Focus on improving nutrient management**

While nutrient management improved in 2003/2004, more work is needed to make sure nutrients are managed effectively to minimise losses to ground and surface water. MAF will continue to develop nutrient budgeting tools such as *Overseer*.

- **Focus on new dairy conversions**

Fonterra will require new dairy conversions from June 2005 onward to meet industry environment requirements, including the Accord targets, as part of their set up.

- **Implement regional action plans**

Fonterra, farmers and regional councils will be working together to implement the regional action plans. Regional councils will be carrying out work to monitor the environmental effects of implementing the targets of the Accord in their regions. All parties will also share experiences and information on implementing the Accord through regular workshops organised by Ministry for the Environment.

- **Improve regionally significant wetlands inventory**

The snapshot notes that, where regionally significant wetlands have been identified, the Accord targets for fencing off have been met. However, many of these wetlands have not yet been identified. An important part of next year's work will be to ensure a better inventory of regionally significant wetlands.

- **Promote Market Focused**

The Market Focused environmental management system will continue to be promoted as the planning tool of choice.



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