

MEDIA RELEASE

Improving fresh water quality is the common goal

13 December 2011

The Dairying and Clean Streams Accord Snapshot of Progress Report for the 2010/11 dairy season, released today by the Accord partners, shows a mixed bag of progress towards improving fresh water quality.

The Dairying and Clean Streams Accord, signed in 2003, is a positive step by Fonterra, and Fonterra dairy farm suppliers, to work with central and local government to improve the quality of waterways in dairying areas. This season's Snapshot of Progress shows that, like last season, two out of five of the Accord's targets have been met, while some progress has been made towards the remaining targets.

Key results from the Snapshot are:

- The level of full compliance with regional council dairy effluent rules and consent conditions increased from 65 percent in 2009/10 to 69 percent in 2010/11. Levels of significant non compliance have also improved, dropping from 16 percent in 2009/10 to 11 percent in 2010/11, but this remains a concern and a major focus of collaborative efforts.
- The 2012 target of 90 percent of regular stock crossing points for dairy cattle to have bridges and culverts has been exceeded. 99 percent was achieved.
- The number of councils that have identified and monitored fencing of their "Regionally Significant Wetlands" remained at 2009/10 levels. The three remaining councils are in the process of identifying their regionally significant wetlands.
- While 99 percent of farms continue to have nutrient budgets in place, 46 percent of farms have taken this a step further and have nutrient management plans.

Today, MAF also released the Stock Exclusion Survey Report, an independent assessment of stock exclusion from Accord-type waterways.

The Snapshot shows that dairy cattle are excluded from Accord-type waterways on 84 percent of farms. The Stock Exclusion Report states 78 percent of Accord waterway stream length is protected and 42 percent of farms have 100 percent stock exclusion on their farm.

Like the Accord it demonstrates there is widespread stock exclusion activity across the country. While the two reports use different methodologies and both identify that progress is being made by the dairying sector, the survey indicates that further work is required before all streams on all farms are protected. The difference in the results between the self reported and independent assessment, demonstrate the benefit of verifiable and robust third party audits.

"While the Accord has made an important and worthwhile contribution to communicating the importance of clean and healthy waterways to dairy farmers, the study has indicated to all involved the benefit of robust and verifiable third party audits." says Paul Stocks, MAF Deputy Director General of Policy.

Fonterra has taken a further step to contribute to water quality, announcing this month that suppliers will be required to complete fencing of Accord waterways by June 2013. This builds on Fonterra's Every Farm Every Year (EFEY) initiative introduced from August 2010 to improve effluent compliance. In its first year of the , EFEY programme 2900 farms were referred to Fonterra's Sustainable Dairying Advisor team, 2,300 one-on-one visits to farms were completed and 1,360 farms had effluent improvement plans developed. Of those, 720 have been completed with the remainder still being implemented. The Accord results show 56 critical compliance issues were resolved within 24 hours.

Fonterra's General Manager Milk Supply, Steve Murphy said the co-operative recognised there is a need to continually improve its environmental performance and was committed to further progress towards Accord goals.

"Regional Councils support the stronger stance being taken by Fonterra to further increase stock exclusion. Fencing is a fundamental step in improving water quality. Planting of riparian margins and implementing nutrient management plans are equally important. We look forward to progressing, these areas too," says *Local Government New Zealand* Regional Sector Chair Fran Wilde.

There is a firm commitment from all parties involved to continue to face the challenges and develop solutions that can deliver real improvements.

"We know that dairy farmers, dairy companies, councils and environmental NGOs all want to see an improvement in water quality. What is new and pleasing is the increased engagement between these groups, their willingness to state what areas they will now focus on and the commitment to work together to tackle the hard issues that will ensure continued improvement," says Paul Stocks, MAF Deputy Director General of Policy.

The Accord expires in 2012. The dairy industry is now consulting with all stakeholders to get views about what form a successor to the Accord could take and what value it would have. An announcement is expected by late-2012.

ENDS

A copy of the 2010/11 Dairying and Clean Streams Accord Snapshot of Progress is available [here](#).

A copy of the Stock Exclusion Survey Report 2011 is available [here](#).

Contacts:

MAF contact: Keri Iti, 04 894 5535, or 029 8945535, keri.Iti@maf.govt.nz

Fonterra contact: 021 507 072

LGNZ contact: LGNZ Kelly Mitchell 04 924 1217 or Kelly.mitchell@lgnz.co.nz

MfE contact: Anne-Marie Johnsen, 04 439 7773 or 027 231 6930, Anne-Marie.Johnsen@mfe.govt.nz

Background information

The Dairying and Clean Streams Accord partners are Fonterra, *Local Government New Zealand*, Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The original Accord is available [here](#).