

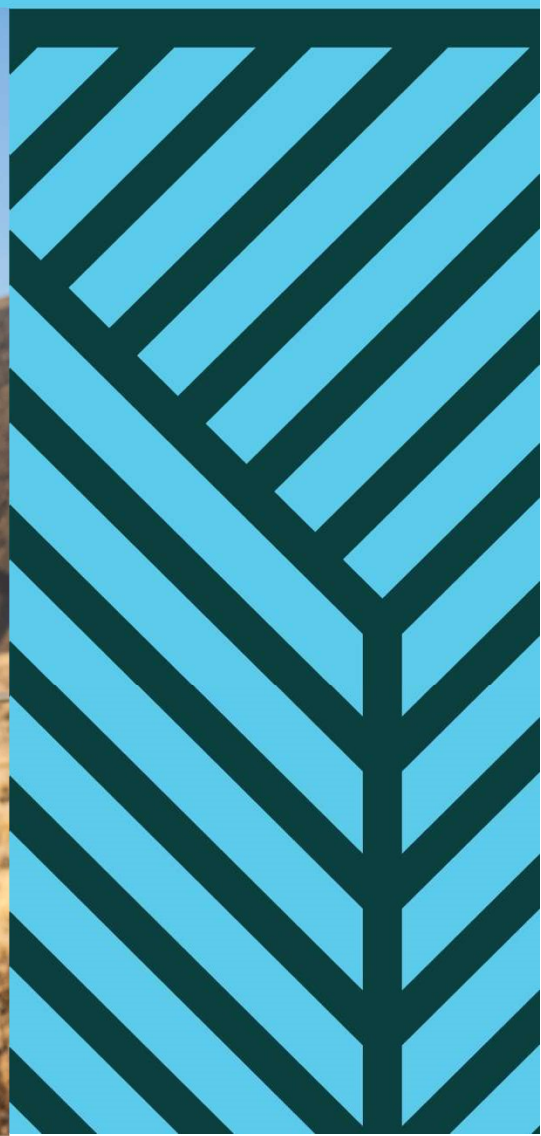


Regional and  
Unitary Councils  
Aotearoa

GUIDANCE FOR REGIONAL AND UNITARY COUNCILS

# FWFP: Cross-regional boundaries

FRESHWATER FARM PLAN PROJECT TEAM  
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# Guidance overview

## GUIDANCE PURPOSE

This guidance has been developed by the Te Uru Kahika Freshwater Farm Plan project team with input from regional and unitary council staff. The purpose of this guidance is to provide councils with business rules that will need to be applied to situations where farms that require a Freshwater Farm Plan cross a regional council boundary.

## ISSUE DEFINITION

The roll-out of the freshwater farm plan system is happening across the country from now until the end of 2025. The staged roll-out of the system means the regulations will:

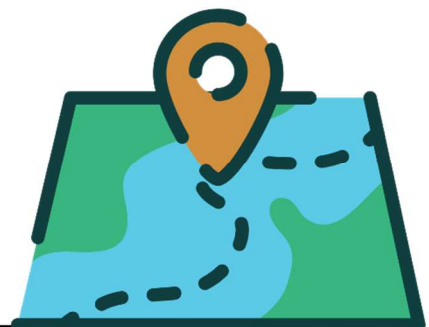
- Come into effect in different regions at different times; and
- Where a region has opted for a phased roll-out within their region, regulations will come into effect in different parts of the region at different times.

For farms that are located across boundaries and require a Freshwater Farm Plan, the regional sector needs a consistent way of dealing with these scenarios that's pragmatic and efficient, so clarity can be provided to farm operators in these circumstance.

## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Getting alignment on approach from the regional sector to these scenarios at the outset of the freshwater farm plan system is important for several reasons:

- Farmers need to know what their obligations are for complying with the freshwater farm plan regulations and how these will apply and be interpreted by regional councils when a farm crosses a boundary.
- It is important for consistency in approach to help with clear communications and messaging between councils, and between councils and the rural community.
- There is a risk to data integrity if different approaches are taken to managing the issue across the country.



# Regional sector implementation solution: principles and rules

## PRINCIPLES

Our Te Uru Kahika Freshwater Farm Plan project team was guided by the following principles when considering how best to approach rules for cross-regional farm.

PRINCIPLE	MEANING
1. <b>Keep it simple.</b>	Make it as easy as possible for councils, farm operators, certifiers, and auditors to manage this issue.
2. <b>Be pragmatic.</b>	It needs to be a straightforward process to communicate to farm operators and avoid the need for two separate freshwater farm plans having to be prepared at different times, with different certification and audit cycles.*

## RULES FOR WHERE A FARM CROSSES A BOUNDARY

- Farmers can submit one Freshwater Farm Plan that covers the requirements of both regional councils. This means a farm that contains the regional council boundary line does not need to have two separate Freshwater Farm Plans.
- Where a farm operator has a farm that straddles a boundary, being either a boundary within a region created by intra-regional phasing or boundary between two councils, then the farm operator should not be required to submit a Freshwater Farm Plan to a certifier for certification until such time as the later of the two councils or two areas of the region have had the regulations commenced. This ensures that all information (e.g. CCCV) necessary for developing the plan is available. We acknowledge that in adopting this approach it will mean the farm operator is technically in breach of the legal requirements.
- The above approaches apply to all farms that cross a regional council boundary.\*
- Certifiers and auditors certifying/auditing a Freshwater Farm Plan that straddles a council boundary need to be appointed in both regions.

\*This is in terms of the national freshwater farm plan system roll-out. It does not preclude existing regional plan rules that require a Freshwater Farm Plan or Farm Environment Plan at a specific point in time that may not align with when the regulations commencement. In some cases, because of specific regional plan requirements, it may be in a farm operator's interest to have two separate Freshwater Farm Plans. In those cases, these principles may not be appropriate to follow.

# Managing boundaries across the freshwater farm plan system

## STAGE-BY-STAGE

### FWFP SYSTEM FOR FARMS SPANNING BOUNDARIES

These are the actions for farmers, certifiers, auditors, and council CME staff to follow once regulations are switched on for all regions that a farm covers.

