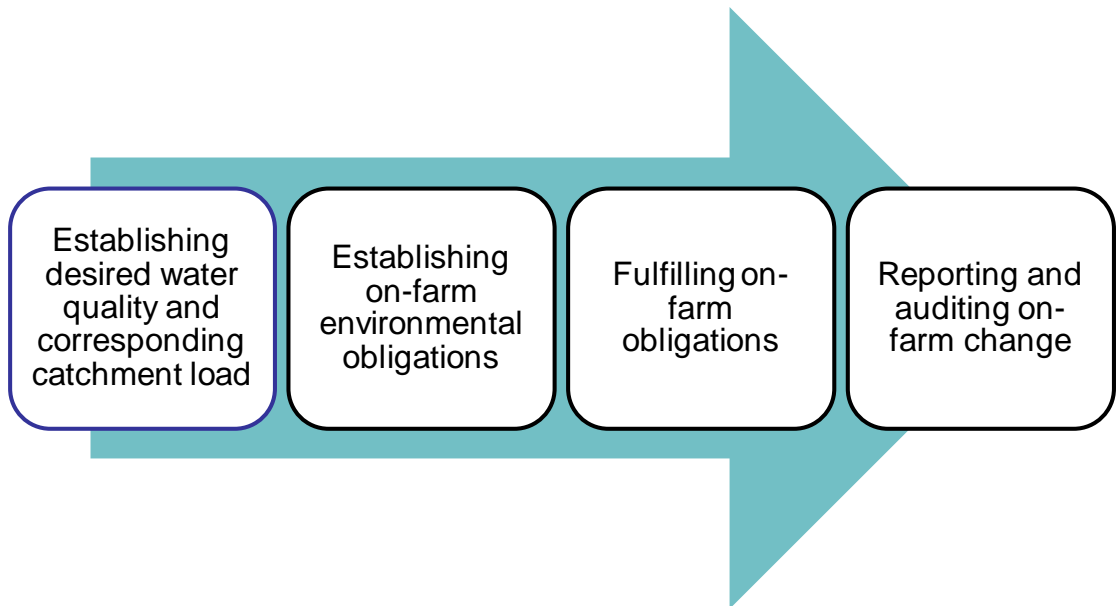


A Sustainable Future for Dairying



Over the last twenty years we have seen significant growth in dairying in New Zealand as a result of relatively unconstrained access to land and water resources. The next 10-20 years will see increasing constraints on growth imposed through the setting of freshwater quality and quantity limits.

We see four important steps in the process of setting limits in our waterways. Dairy industry engagement in each step is critical:

- At the outset, the community needs to clearly define the set of values relevant to each waterway and agree on freshwater objectives.
- The inevitable trade-offs between environmental, social, cultural and economic values must be made with the best possible information. Farmers and industry hold much of this information and policy-makers will need to work with us to ensure that regional plans contain the most effective and efficient means of achieving objectives.
- Every dairy farmer in the country will face increased environmental obligations as the freshwater limits are set. However, support systems are being put in place within the industry, so that farmers have access to a suite of options based on sound science and delivered by certified or accredited advisors. However, we need to ensure that the timeframes set out for change do not exceed the capacity for change.
- Finally, robust monitoring systems need to be in place within the dairy industry. Systems such as the Sustainable Dairying: Water Accord provide industry with the ability to measure performance and track change. This vital information will be used to demonstrate farmer and industry commitments to the wider community.