

What can you expect from a Waikato Regional Council Farm Compliance Inspection?

One of our roles is to ensure that Waikato rural businesses are acting in an environmentally sustainable way.

We are required to assess compliance with environmental regulations relating to managing dairy effluent, and other relevant farming legislation. This is a big job with over 3800 dairy farms in the Waikato region.

These inspections are completed by our Rural Compliance Team, usually working in pairs.

Our Rural Compliance Team will always attempt to advise the farm owner (or farm contacts listed at council) of the compliance inspection enroute to the property. If we are unable to contact anyone, we will still complete the inspection.

Environmental law authorises warranted council officers to enter private property, without permission of the landowner, for the purpose of assessing compliance with environmental regulations.

We have our own health and safety policies and procedures, which our officers strictly adhere to. We will also comply with all reasonable safety guidelines on farm when made aware of them. As a biosecurity measure, council staff will disinfect boots between each farm compliance inspection.

Our Rural Compliance Team will take the opportunity to update our records and will ask for current contact information. We also have questions to gain an understanding of your current farming operation.

The inspection will involve an assessment of the effluent system infrastructure and effluent management on the property. Infrastructure that will be assessed, if present, includes but is not limited to:

- the dairy shed (including the entry/exit and drainage points)
- storm water diversions
- sand traps or other solid separation systems
- sumps
- feed pads / standoff pads
- effluent storage facilities
- irrigators
- underpasses and associated effluent systems
- race bridges over surface watercourses.



We need to understand whether there are appropriate effluent infrastructure that can enable compliance at all times, adequately sealed effluent storage facilities, sufficient training provided to farm staff, understanding of relevant rules and regulations, and an appropriate effluent management plan for your farm.

Information will be gathered throughout the inspection and may be in the form of written notes, photographs, videos, and potentially samples. Our officers hold a CAA approved qualification and may also use a drone to assist with obtaining aerial images, which can help paint the bigger picture.

You will be informed of any non-compliance or concerns identified.

Following the inspection, you can expect a follow up notice that will include a compliance rating and any actions that may need to be addressed. If non-compliance is identified, then further enforcement action may be considered and undertaken by council.

If you have any concerns or questions, please direct them to dairycontacts@waikatoregion.govt.nz.