



Water use efficiency

Measuring water and using it more efficiently leads to additional benefits for your business:

- Reduced pumping costs, both for extracting water and disposing of effluent
- Minimised effluent storage
- Better management of nutrient loss by avoiding over-irrigating
- Meeting national and regional council regulatory limits
- Improved reputation and competitive advantage for Fonterra

The first step towards efficiency is to measure and monitor your water use. This will allow you to identify water use for each part of the farm operation. Once you have determined how much water you are using for each use type (for example farm dairy and stock water use) you can then compare your usage against industry benchmarks to measure your efficiency.

Water efficiency benchmarks

The current industry benchmarks for water use are 70 litres/cow/day for farm dairy use and 70 litres/cow/day for drinking water for a lactating dairy cow. These benchmarks are currently under review by DairyNZ.

Setting a single benchmark for irrigation water use is difficult because different farms need different water volumes for pasture production targets. These volumes will be dependent on soil types and climatic conditions. A farm-specific irrigation plan is the best way to be sure you are using irrigation water efficiently.

On farm efficiency tips

For general farm water management tips, search for 'Smart Water Use' at www.dairynz.co.nz.

For irrigation design and operation guidelines, search for 'Good Practice' at www.irrigationnz.co.nz.

You can also contact your Sustainable Dairying Advisor to answer any questions you may have on water use management and requirements.

This fact sheet is produced as part of Supply Fonterra's Water Use Management Programme. This programme aims to help farmers understand when their regional rules are changing and encourages water measurement and monitoring as part of industry wide commitments to better manage this precious resource.

Other fact sheets in this series:

- The Water Use Management Programme
- Regional consent process for water access
- Installing water meters



Dairy for life