

Reducing costs for farmers and growers

- **\$50 million investment to create single farm planning to streamline compliance**
- **Reducing costs for farmers and growers**
- **Creating greater returns for farmers**
- **Supporting a transition to a clean, green carbon neutral New Zealand**

Reason for action

New Zealand's farmers and growers are creative, innovative and constantly looking to improve their practices. They are taking steps to improve freshwater quality, protect biodiversity and reduce emissions, which has created real value for our exports and is a core part of our New Zealand brand.

Farmers and growers have told us the sector is grappling with a growing number of compliance and that there is currently no universal system across central government, councils and industry to fulfil compliance requirements.

Many farmers and growers are working hard to improve their environmental and farming practices but having to complete multiple and overlapping compliance requirements creates barriers to their progress. We want to work with them to remove barriers and make it easy and practical for them to fulfil regulatory obligations and track their progress.

Integrated farm planning is a vital next step in helping to achieve a clean, green, carbon neutral New Zealand, while also helping farmers and growers reduce compliance costs and meet reporting requirements in a coherent way.

We are committed to working alongside industry to streamline processes, boost environmental practice, attract greater returns for farmers and growers' hard work and ensure that our country is in great shape for future generations.

Integrated farm planning

Running a farm or a growing operation is complex and we want to make that as easy to manage as possible.

The aim of integrated farm planning is to provide a single planning framework for farmers and growers to use for key parts of their operation, including environmental management such as freshwater and climate mitigation, labour, biosecurity, animal welfare, and health and safety.

We want to build on the important industry work already under way on integrated farm planning, and will provide an initial \$50 million of funding to kick-start a closer collaboration that will reduce compliance costs for the sector.

We've proven through the Mycoplasma Bovis eradication effort, backing farm catchment groups, work to reduce emissions through He Waka Eke Noa and the development of the Fit for a Better World Roadmap, that partnership with the sector works.

Working together we will aim to achieve three key goals:

1. A comprehensive national planning framework that adopts a 'whole farm' approach, which farmers and growers can use to fulfil their requirements.
2. Online tools and wider assistance for farmer and growers through extension services.
3. Improved levels of digital data exchange across the sector.

The first stage will be to establish an agreed farm plan framework and to create industry agreed templates that will include:

- **Process standards** – which identify how a farmer or grower develops and implements their farm plan, in a way that is fit for purpose, to meet the requirements and needs of the end user.
- **Technical standards** – which identify the minimum regulatory requirements farmers and growers need to meet and farming practices that need to be put in place to ensure they are met.
- **Information standards** – which determine nationally consistent reporting and improved data sharing.

Integrated farm plans will be modular in nature. This will enable elements to be added over time, ensuring that plans are adaptive, responsive, and progressive. Farmers and growers will be able to build upon baseline standards and templates, and with time and modular completion, form the basis of all government reporting requirements for farmers and growers.

How this will help farmers and growers

- **This will reduce the costs for every farmer and grower** – on average it costs between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for each property to develop an integrated farm plan. We will create a cost sharing agreement with industry which will ensure every farmer and grower pays less for their compliance. Labour will invest an initial \$50 million to support integrated farm planning, and will help the Ministry for Primary Industries to implement this work programme and form a core contribution of the cost sharing agreement.
- **Overtime this will result in one mechanism for compliance** – we will work with the industry to develop standardised reporting and templates. Overtime we hope all 'on-farm' government reporting requirements will be done through integrated farm plans, replacing the wide ranging reporting, auditing and consents that are currently required.
- **Greater returns for farmers** – by making reporting easier, and by providing clear data that shows the work farmers and growers have undertaken to improve freshwater quality, protect biodiversity and reduce emissions, they are able to add value to their products and market their products at a higher rate to the world.
- **Supporting a transition to a clean, green carbon neutral New Zealand** – the government has set clear goals to clean up our rivers and waterways and to be a net zero carbon economy by 2050. By supporting farmers and growers to fulfil their regulatory obligations we will ensure we meet our targets.

Labour is committed to working with the sector to develop effective integrated farm planning as this is the practical support farmers have been asking for.

We want to have planning, data sharing and industry cost-sharing agreements drafted by mid-2021, with initial templates then implemented by the end of 2021. We will be guided by the sector around timing to ensure it works best in terms of implementation.

Modular template example

We are committed to working with local councils and the industry to create a template for intensive winter grazing that fits within the existing legislative requirements. We see this as the first modular element that could be rolled out next year.

Parliament in 2020 legislated for certified and auditable freshwater farm plans (FFPs). An FFP is intended to be a module within an integrated farm plan that covers other areas as well. An FFP would identify any adverse effects of the farming operation on freshwater or freshwater ecosystems, specify how those effects would be dealt with, and demonstrate how freshwater standards and regulations would be complied with.

An FFP sub-module is being developed to deal with intensive winter grazing in Southland. The Government is working on this with local councils, the industry, and environmental NGOs. The sub-module for intensive winter grazing will need to comply with the new rules for this activity. This process would make applying for a winter grazing resource consent much easier or, over time, supersede the need to do so.

It is important to note that this process would only apply if activity was deemed outside of the local permitted rules and requirements of the local council and consent was required.

Building on the work we have already undertaken in government

In government, we have already invested \$1.5 billion to help boost sustainability and value for our farmers and growers, including \$1.1 billion to create environmental jobs, \$229 million in Productive and Sustainable Land Use and \$100 million to kick start the Fit for a Better World Roadmap. The Roadmap has the shared vision with industry to:

- Add an additional \$44 billion in export earnings over the next decade through a focus on creating value.
- Reduce our biogenic methane emissions to 24-47 per cent below 2017 levels by 2050; and 10 per cent below by 2030.
- Restore New Zealand's freshwater environments to a healthy state within a generation.
- Employ 10 per cent more New Zealanders from all walks of life in the food and fibre sector by 2030, and 10,000 more New Zealanders in the primary sector workforce over the next four years.