

Discharges to Surface Water



Two pond system with T-baffle pipes (photo courtesy of New Zealand Dairy Research Institute)

The discharge of untreated farm dairy effluent to surface water is not approved of in the Bay of Plenty.

Effluent must be treated to a good quality in a minimum of two treatment ponds or in some cases, more advanced waste water treatment systems.

Treatment can be achieved by collecting effluent in a series of treatment ponds (minimum of two), barrier ditch sections, in wetland areas or some combination of these. There are also more advanced systems that can be used in order to get better quality effluent. Pond sizing is influenced by herd size, environment temperatures, rainfall and evaporation. Anaerobic ponds need to have a

small surface area and have a depth of 3-4m. Aerobic ponds have a greater surface area and are shallow.



First barrier ditch section (photo courtesy of New Zealand Dairy Research Institute)

Environment Bay of Plenty regards these discharges as the least desirable method for disposal of effluent from farm dairies. Environment Bay of Plenty discourages discharges to surface water in the region and encourages farmers to use land disposal methods.

Advanced pond systems (APS) is a more advanced system which utilises at least four ponds to maximise effluent treatment to produce a high quality discharge.

Applications

Applications for a resource consent to discharge effluent to surface water require a higher level of information than for other systems. Applicants will need to



Latter barrier ditch section (photo courtesy of New Zealand Dairy Research Institute)



provide an Assessment of Environmental Effects (AEE) as part of the application. You need to include enough information in your AEE so that the council can evaluate your proposal. Your AEE needs to include a description of the environmental effects including the significance and nature of the effects. A

description of alternatives to avoid, remedy or mitigate any significant environmental effects and a record of any consultation, including names and views of people you talked with needs to be included. It is likely that you will require assistance from a consultant to complete this. There are a number of professionals who assist in preparing AEE's, such as engineers and resource management consultants. Environment Bay of Plenty staff may be able to give advice on who can help you. It is not adequate to state in your AEE that there are no environmental effects.

For more detailed information see the Ministry for the Environment's good practice



Advanced pond system trialled at NIWA (photo courtesy of NIWA)

guide on how to prepare an AEE and its brochure on making resource consent applications. The application will be publicly notified and may attract submissions in opposition and may require a formal hearing. The applicant will be required to justify choosing this disposal method.

Conditions in the resource consent will place restrictions on:

- Term of the resource consent
- Quality of effluent discharged
- Effluent discharge rates
- Maintenance regimes for the system
- Monitoring requirements

Environment Bay of Plenty guidelines and policy require more frequent monitoring of surface water discharges, thereby incurring higher compliance monitoring costs.



For further information and advice, contact Environment Bay of Plenty:

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Farm dairy information is also available at:
www.dexcel.co.nz
www.niwa.co.nz/aps

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