

Disposal of Waste Milk



Milk being irrigated

Milk disposal can be an issue, due to the failure by the milk company to pick up milk from the dairy farm or milk over and above the farmers quota.

Disposing of waste milk can be a problem for farmers, due to environmental issues, but there are acceptable methods of disposal.

Discharging or dumping of milk into a waterway is not acceptable. Milk has an effect on watercourses a thousand times more drastic than farm dairy shed effluent. Any discharge of milk will deplete oxygen and kill all river and stream life—trout, eels, insects, koura and vegetation.

The preferred method for milk disposal is spray irrigation. Milk can be sprayed onto pasture without causing pasture damage if it is diluted with water at a ratio

of 1 litre of milk to 10 litres of water. This can be sprayed using existing effluent irrigation equipment. Following irrigation clean water should be flushed through the system to remove milk from grass leaves. Irrigators should be sited as far away from watercourses as possible. They



Whey spill in drain

should be shifted to a new site after each discharge to minimise pasture damage, which is a concern with this type of waste.

Alternatively, four consecutive milkings can be discharged to a correctly sized and constructed pond system without affecting the ponds performance. Any additional milk put into the ponds after this period would cause a rapid deterioration of the ponds discharge and receiving water quality.

A trench or holding pond could also be constructed to accommodate 48 hours of raw milk. It can then be filled in after the emergency has ended. Care should be taken in deciding where to locate any emergency pond as seepage to water-courses could cause problems. Keep at least 50m away from any water course.

Whole milk can also be fed to calves or transported to any nearby piggeries if suitable storage is available.

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

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