

LIVING

WATER

Dairy and freshwater thriving together

Living Water FAQs January 2020

What is Living Water?

Living Water is a 10 year, \$20 million partnership between Fonterra and the Department of Conservation focused on finding game-changing and scalable solutions that will enable farming, freshwater and healthy ecosystems to thrive side-by-side. The partnership began in 2013.

What is the problem?

Dairy farming is central to New Zealand's economy, but how we are farming is having an impact on our lowland freshwater ecosystems. Our streams, lakes, rivers, lagoons and coastal estuaries are being impacted by high levels of nutrients, sediment, effluent and other pollutants.

Freshwater ecosystems have been reduced and degraded. We need to change this because water is a key part of our national identity and New Zealanders expect to be able to swim, fish and gather kai in our waterbodies.

How is Living Water trying to fix the problem?

Living Water selected five catchments across New Zealand that presented a variety of situations as well as being significant dairying regions.

Our initial focus was establishing relationships, investigating and assessing local challenges, and piloting projects to determine what solutions will significantly reduce farming impacts on freshwater and improve ecosystem resilience.



That's great but what are you actually doing on the ground?

Living Water currently has a number of tools and approaches that are being designed and piloted with farmers in five significant dairy regions around New Zealand. The focus has been on testing mitigations that reduce contaminants, increase waterway health and recognising cultural values, with little disruption to the farm system. This will give farmers an assurance that the tools we recommend go some way to improve their farming footprint and target the right problem in the right place with the right tool. Living Water is also beginning to look at how to lower the cost of implementing these tools and achieve environmental outcomes at a catchment wide scale.

How do you track improvement?

We can measure the progress of the catchment with a variety of markers including monitoring water quality, biodiversity, partnering with research institutes and consultants but also social changes and understanding of wider issues.

All the results are on our website so others can learn from them: www.livingwater.net.nz

Where does the money come from?

Along with Fonterra's investment of approximately \$2million/year, The Department of Conservation is also investing up to \$500K/year. Work is occurring on Fonterra farms, public conservation land, council land, and on other land uses (e.g. non-Fonterra dairy, deer, lifestyle, horticulture, sheep and beef).

Why is Living Water spending Fonterra money off Fonterra farms? And why is DOC investing in work off Public Conservation Land?

Living Water is demonstrating a catchment-based approach, which is internationally agreed good practice for delivering biodiversity and water quality improvement outcomes. Many rural catchments are characterised by forestry, protected native bush, lifestyle, and sheep and beef farms in the upper catchment with dairy on the flatlands. Together, Fonterra farmers and DOC manage almost 40 % of New Zealand's land area. The catchment approach means we must engage and support non-Fonterra farmers and work on private land.

What happens at the end of the 10 years?

Living Water lessons and solutions will be embedded into Fonterra's Sustainable Catchments and DOC's operations and shared with the agriculture industry, land managers, central and local government, iwi and communities.



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