Final DairyNZ positions

Policy	Proposal	Implications for Dairy farmers	DairyNZ position	DairyNZ Recommendation
Improving farm practices				
Freshwater Farm Plans (FW-FP) 	• All farmers and growers to have a FW-FP to manage risks to waterways by 2025	• Generally aligns with Dairy Tomorrow sector strategy • Builds off industry and farmer efforts so far • Approximately 3000 dairy farms already have an environment plan • Existing plans may not align or meet all new NPS/NES criteria • Robust plans for all 12,000 dairy farms will require time and capability to deliver	• Support mandatory and audited FW-FPs prepared by certified advisors • This is the best way to manage environmental risk on-farm and to start improving water quality outcomes quickly for all contaminants • Support national certification scheme similar to the approach proposed by Waikato PC1 and currently being developed under the Integrated Farm Planning process led by MPI/MfE • Support proposed timeframes and content but require clarity on drafting • Plans need to be adaptable and allow for innovation	• Avoid penalising early adopters; those with current, robust Farm Environment Plans shouldn't need to have them redone • That Government works with the sector on integrated farm planning, certification and implementation to ensure practicality for farmers and policy achieves intended outcomes • Government needs to invest in infrastructure (certification and auditing schemes) and capability to support delivery within the proposed timeframes
Immediate action on N loss 	• Reduce N-loss through interim measures in proposed high-N catchments • Three options being considered: N-cap, fertiliser- cap and FW-FPs	• Targets allocation ahead of improving farm practices • Implementation requires robust Overseer files and supporting data for current and historical years for 21% of all dairy farms; this data is not currently available and will take several years to achieve	• Support the need to manage nitrogen in priority catchments where the science linking nitrogen to impact is clear • Do not support thresholds based on N loss as there is insufficient information or systems to deliver immediate action • Support modified options 1 and 3 (reducing N surplus through a FW-FP) as an interim approach	• Focus on improving N-use efficiency and practices as an interim measure before completion of limit setting and allocation (Option 3 of RIS) • Target highest N surplus farms (90th percentile) in each catchment; this will lead to immediate action in the short term and still drive reductions in N loss • Farms under threshold need to remain at current N surplus or below
Restricting further intensification 	• No further intensification from June 2020 • Applies in catchments where limit-setting process not fully implemented	• Any increases in contaminant loading in these areas risks requiring all farmers to make greater reductions to their footprint in future • Intensification already prohibited for many dairy regions	• Broadly support no further intensification in over-allocated catchments until the limit-setting process is implemented • Require further clarity around the allocation status of many catchments	• Regional councils define allocation status for N, P, sediment and bacteria for all catchments within 12 months • Provide clarity on how the proposal would quantify sediment and bacteria discharges; this cannot be achieved with existing tools
Stock exclusion	• Regulations for stock exclusions and buffer widths on permanent waterways	• Dairy farmers have already made significant voluntary investments to exclude large (>1m) waterways	• Support current fencing to remain in place if minimum setbacks are achieved • Support 1m minimum setback	• For this policy to be effective it needs to capture more rivers on steeper slopes. Our modelling suggests load reductions are

	• Some moving of fences will be required • Timeframes for moving fences based on minimum setback	• Existing fence lines not meeting the new criteria would need to be moved; this penalises early adopters for marginal environmental gain	• Support capturing smaller streams and critical sources through FEPs • Support an average setback approach but not 5m • Stock exclusion will only be effective if all land users exclude significant waterways	nearly doubled if stock exclusion is extended from 5 degrees to 15 degrees • Average setback is 3m, in line with many regional council plans • Existing fence lines not meeting the required setbacks are replaced at the end of the service life of the fence • Flood control restrictions and requirements should take precedent (as set by regional councils) • Government needs to clarify where the setback starts and finishes
Intensive winter grazing 	• Standards for wintering of forage crops within 6 months of policy coming into effect • Two options proposed: regulation or sector standards	• Most practices proposed are considered good practice by the primary sector	• Support mandatory wintering plan in an FW-FP as a standard for a permitted activity • Support a mix of proposed 'national' and sector standards • Do not support pugging rules and these cannot be implemented or assessed on-farm	• Permitted Activity status up to a slope of 15 degrees and wintering area of 15% or 100ha, based on the Southland Land and Water Plan • Use of an interim winter grazing plan if a FW-FP has not yet been developed • Protocols and tools needed to measure and define slope • Support minimum standards and GMPs, according to individual farm risk • Remove the pugging rules
Stock holding areas 	• Consented standards for stock-holding areas, including feed, wintering, stand-off and loafing pads	• An additional resource consent would be required for stock holding areas including feed pads • Sacrifice paddocks permitted activity if criteria met	• Support measures to manage environmental effects of stock- holding areas as permitted activities through FW-FPs • Oppose requiring a consent	• Clear, defined set of requirements are best managed through FW-FPs • Need further clarity on whether calf sheds and wintering barns included as both trigger rule thresholds
Improving Ecosystem Health				
New attributes & management approach 	• 15 additional attributes proposed for inclusion in the NOF	• Implications vary as managing ecosystem health is complex and involves managing a multitude of stressors on freshwater systems	• Support the need for additional attributes, particularly inclusion of integrated, holistic measures (dissolved oxygen, *E. coli*) • Support MCI as per existing MfE guideline, but not the proposed changes to the thresholds (no scientific basis) • Do not support multiple metrics for the same measure, as this results in confusion around assessment of state,	• Place emphasis on measuring ecological outcomes through regional councils customising catchment-specific management responses via action plans based on what's driving the problem • Require national guidance on criteria and content of action plans for the attributes identified in appendix 2B • Apply the MCI metric as the best integrated ecosystem health measure, as based on robust science and testing for over 30 years

			where actions plans are triggered, and how success is monitored and reported	
New bottom lines for nutrients 	• New bottom line for instream nitrogen (DIN) and phosphorus (DRP) for ecosystem health • Where instream concentrations exceed proposed values reductions needed over a generation	• Approximately 22% of all dairy farms for DIN and 31% for DRP are in catchments exceeding the proposed limit • Limits may not drive ecosystem health sought by communities or the policy • Our research shows that there are significant regional and national economic implications	• Support policies that protect ecosystem health alongside swimability • Proposed nutrient limits are based on overly simplistic relationships and not supported by robust science • Ecosystem health reporting should focus on ecological responses such as nitrate toxicity, macroinvertebrate community health and dissolved oxygen	• Reduce the existing nitrate toxicity standard from 6.9 to 3.8 g/m3 • Reduce the bottom-line for ammonia toxicity from 1.3 to 0.54 g/m^3 • Implement the 2017 NPS periphyton attribute to address trophic level nutrient concerns relevant to both *hard-* and *soft-*bottom streams for both N and P • No standard for DRP • Regional variability neds to be considered • Change SoE reporting for nutrients so that toxicity attributes are not used to infer 'ecosystem health status'
Reducing sediment 	• New limit-setting attribute for managing suspended sediment (SS) • New 'action plan' attribute for managing effects of deposited sediment	• SS bottom lines may be overly stringent in some areas and potentially too permissive in others, with high variability across small spatial scales • Many classes have turbidity bottom-lines that are lower than published effect-based literature thresholds (some catchments may be subject to limit setting despite having relatively low SS concentrations)	• Support managing SS through a bottom line and deposited sediment through adaptive management, to reflect the importance of sediment in degradation of water and habitat quality • The method used to derive the proposed SS thresholds is untested, does not account for variation in fine sediment at reference state, defines thresholds that are inconsistent with existing NOF attributes and will result in unworkable management outcomes	• Base SS classifications on the natural state of the river • Use a simpler system for managing 'bottom-line' adverse effects of suspended sediment. • Propose two alternative options for consideration: 1) using the values derived from the macroinvertebrates extirpation analysis (Appendix Hf) which produced thresholds of between approximately 5 and 8 NTU and corresponding to loss of 1% to 10% of macroinvertebrate species, or 2) bottom line thresholds based on an increase of 5 NTU relative to reference state
A higher standard for swimming 	• Clear standards for water quality at swimming sites during the swimming season • Councils to prepare action plans to address risks	• Many pastoral catchments fail existing E. coli standards	• Support these proposals	• Undertake further work to understand how sources of bacteria are best mitigated
No further loss of wetlands 	• Protect remaining existing wetlands and put tighter controls on certain activities that damage wetlands	• Would require councils to identify and develop monitoring to accurately determine the condition of the region's wetlands	• Support policies that recognise the importance of wetlands for improving water quality and biodiversity outcomes • Do not support monitoring requirements by farmers	• NES should not put up barriers for farmers who seek to protect or restore wetlands • Developing inventories and monitoring wetland health on private land should be borne by government

		• Would put restrictions on activities considered most destructive to wetlands • Creating stronger incentives for farmers to identify, protect and enhance wetland areas through FW-FPs will deliver increased protection	• Support measures which credit reductions in contaminant losses provided • Activities to maintain or restore natural wetlands should be a permitted activity • Hydrological monitoring requirements in a highly modified landscape is unclear	• Further incentive mechanisms to accelerate wetland protection (i.e. improvements to modelling tools to recognise reductions in contaminant losses, and tax breaks) • The wetland area protected should contribute to the average farm riparian set-back width through the stock exclusion NES • Support the recognition of constructed wetlands as a distinct category
Setting and clarifying policy direction				
Te Mana o Te Wai & mahinga kai 	• Putting Te Mana o Te Wai as the foremost objective of water policy • Introducing a new compulsory value for mahinga kai	• Implications not able to be fully assessed	• Support inclusion of Te Mana o Te Wai and mahinga kai as a compulsory value	• Government develop a range of tangata whenua/mahinga kai values which local iwi/hapū can then select those that apply at a catchment level • Government clearly exclude allocation issues from any development of mahinga kai or tangata whenua values, to prevent these attributes being litigated in every region as iwi/hapū seek to reserve those rights in any regional plans now • Funding to the regions is required to facilitate this process • Need to address all wellbeing's over time
New planning process for freshwater 	• Fast track process with expert, independent panel to advise councils on their plans	• Should enable regional councils to get rules in place sooner, thereby providing certainty and clarity sooner about what's required	• Support these proposals in-principle • Limited confidence that fast-tracked policy process will deliver on community aspirations (risk of implementation failure, farmers losing confidence in process)	• Government and regional councils work with the Sector over the coming months to develop a workable solution

 Support  Support with amendment  Do not support