



November 2023 Newsletter | Freshwater farm plan certifier and auditor programme

Dear Contact,

Kia ora and welcome to the November issue of our newsletter on the freshwater farm plan certifier and auditor appointment programme. Our Appointment Processing team are at the NZ Association of Resource Management conference in Christchurch this week where we're delivering a masterclass on the appointment journey, stepping attendees through the application process. We look forward to meeting some of you there! We're also pleased to announce the appointment of the first certifier in Waikato. The National Register is now available on the website - [National register of appointed Certifiers and Auditors for freshwater farm plans](#).

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Why become a farm plan certifier or auditor?

Becoming a farm plan certifier or auditor is an excellent opportunity to help New Zealand's farm operators keep up the great mahi underway on their farms for the protection of our environment. Under the farm plan system, farmers and growers create a plan that identifies risks of adverse effects from farming activities on freshwater ecosystems and actions to mitigate those risks. Certification and auditing are important steps to ensure that plans are fit for purpose.

Farm plan certifiers and auditors may come from a range of backgrounds provided they have the necessary skills and experience (competencies) set out in the regulations. For example, rural professionals and people with backgrounds in farm-systems and freshwater ecosystems, and those with strong cultural knowledge related to freshwater may be well-suited to certification roles.

Find out more about [the Certifier role](#) and [the Auditor role](#).

Feel free to share this newsletter with others who may be interested in the programme.

Tips for tackling National Training for Certifiers

National training is the second step of the certifier appointment process. It consists of nine compulsory modules and one optional communication module. It's essential to pass the national training in order to be appointed, so we've put together a few tips to help you successfully complete the training modules and assessments:

- Having prior knowledge is helpful but don't rely on it – you'll need to be up to date with the new legislation. The Ministry for the Environment has some great resources here: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/freshwater-farm-plan-certification-guidance/>.
- Everything you need to know is covered in the training modules. Read all the information in each module carefully before attempting the assessment.
- Make sure you follow the instructions on each assessment question. For example, some questions require you to select all answers that apply.

[Read more about National Training for Certifiers.](#)

Regional Training

Regional Training is the third step in the appointment process, following National Training.



It is specific to catchment context, challenges and values for each particular region. Regional Training is currently available for certifier applicants in Waikato and Southland.

Waikato Regional Training

Once you have passed the National Training you can sign up for Waikato Regional Council certifier training. The online training is split into courses or topics of learning. Each course takes from 30 – 90 minutes to complete and is divided up into bite-sized portions of learning of around 15 – 20 minutes each. Each course has accompanying knowledge checks and includes an assessment at the end for certifiers / auditors (that must be passed).

The courses include:

- [Introduction to the Waikato region](#)
- [Tangata whenua](#)
- [Land and soils](#)
- [Water bodies](#)
- [Effluent](#)

As further topics are developed, additional training will be required to fulfil Waikato regional certifier requirements.

In addition to the online training certifiers must complete a practical on farm training component.

For more information and to sign up, visit wrctraining.co.nz.

Southland Regional Training

Once you have passed the National Training, AsureQuality will provide details on how to join the Regional Training. There are three online modules all with assessment included that must be completed successfully. The modules include:

- [Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku – applying Treaty principles to farm planning in Murihiku](#)
- [Environment Southland - Regulatory and Legal Setting](#)
- [Environment Southland - CCCV](#)

There is an in-person workshop as well.

What's next?

The Freshwater Farm Plan regulations will be coming into effect for Otago and West Coast on 1 February 2024. We'll have more information for these regions soon.

How to contact us

New Zealand has highly competent and passionate rural professionals working with our farm operators, and we look forward to supporting as many people as we can to become appointed as freshwater farm plan certifiers and auditors.

Let's get behind the programme and help our farm operators keep up the great mahi underway on their farms for the care and protection of our environment.

Ngā mihi

AsureQuality Appointment Process Management (APM) team

- [AsureQuality – farmplancertifiers@asurequality.com](#)
- [Ministry for the Environment – freshwaterfarmplans@mfe.govt.nz](#)
- [Waikato Regional Council – pie@waikatoregion.govt.nz](#)
- [Environment Southland – farmplans@es.govt.nz](#)



Level 2, 2A Pacific Rise, Mt Wellington, Auckland 1060
Private Bag 14946, Panmure, Auckland 1741



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