

Audited Self Management

Introduction

Since the inception of the company in 2002 the approach to integrating North Otago Irrigation Company (NOIC) into the community has been one of collaboration and of taking ownership of environmental responsibility. This responsibility is fundamental to how NOIC does business today and is reflected in the fact that NOIC has developed a working Audited Self-Management (ASM) system accepted by the water users and community alike, and is the first irrigation company in NZ to have a full time environmental manager on staff to administer the system and provide environmental support to shareholders.

Why was ASM initiated?

During the consenting process, Otago Regional Council recognised that irrigation development would lead to land-use intensification. In order to address environmental concerns raised by intensification, auditable environmental farm plans for each shareholder were proposed to ensure that good management practices were implemented. NOIC worked alongside Otago Regional Council, Te Runanga o Moeraki and the North Otago Sustainable Land Management group (NOSLAM) to develop their ground breaking Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs). The EFP covers the areas of irrigation management, riparian management, soil management, fertiliser management and effluent management.

	Time-line to ASM Implementation
2003	Resource consent.
2004 - 2006	Worked with NOSLAM, ORC and Iwi to develop Farm Plan.
2007 - 2008	Paper audits supported by some on-farm visits.
2009	Switch to on-farm audits – 1/3 annually.
2010	Switch to confidence rating approach. Environmental Coordinator role resourced (contract). Developed procedures to support Farm Plan System
2011	Adopted Environmental Policy statement Set company-level performance objectives Added Environmental Manager as a key staff position Developed a service offer to help other irrigation schemes understand their risks and build their management systems.

What happened next?

NOIC quickly understood that EFPs were just the start of the work required. In order for the EFP and audit process to be effective, additional elements were required. Components of the ASM System developed by NOIC today include:

- * A water supply agreement
- * An over-arching Environmental Policy
- * Environmental Farm Plans
- * Environmental Farm Plan Procedure
- * Environmental Farm Plan Audit Procedure, including:
 - * an Action Plan process to address non-compliances;
 - * an Enforcement Process to compel compliance;
 - * a performance review process to evaluate progress towards company objectives.
- * Annual on-farm audits
 - * Utilising an independent auditor.
 - * Farms receive a low, medium or high confidence rating
- * A pre-audit and general environmental support service
- * An on-staff Environmental Manager to administer the system and integrate environmental requirements into the business operations and planning
- * Company-level performance objectives



Driving Improvement

NOIC will continue to drive improvement in environmental performance through the system it has developed. NOIC will analyse their results each year and develop plans to improve performance year-on-year.

NOIC's strategy to achieve improvements is through the use of: Action Plans - Working with individual farmers on a one-on-one basis and involving Otago Regional Council where necessary.

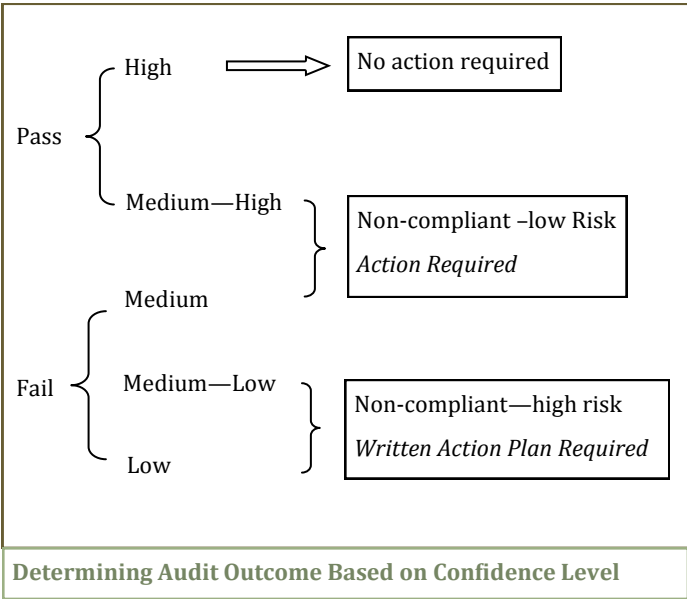
- * Education – Provision of on-going education to all shareholders through field days and other information events.
- * Research – NOIC is a primary partner in Irrigation New Zealand's SFF Hill Country Irrigation Project. This project will provide valuable resources to address environmental issues associated with irrigating rolling topography.
- * Enforcement Action – 'If they don't comply, turn them off'. Procedures and policies are now developed to enable this.
- * Design – NOIC will work closely with on-farm system designers to make sure they understand our requirement to provide producer statements certifying that irrigation systems have been designed in accordance with the INZ Code of Practice and Design Standards. We also encourage independent system evaluations.
- * Regular review of Good Management Practices within Farm Plans.
- * Performing pre-audit checks to resolve non-compliances prior to the audit.
- * Field inspections to check practices.

Industry Application

NOIC's EFPs and other ASM components have been used as a model by the irrigation industry New Zealand-wide, with many learnings from NOIC's development incorporated by other schemes. NOIC regularly speaks at industry events and provides advice to other schemes. Recognising a need in the industry, NOIC has now developed a service offer whereby they are providing advice to near-by irrigation schemes on how they can develop management systems. NOIC is doing this at cost plus 10% rates in order to foster environmental improvement in the North Otago area.

North Otago Irrigation Company

(NOIC) is based in Oamaru and holds consents to take up to 8 cumecs of water from the Waitaki River for spray irrigation. The scheme has been in operation since 2006 and currently delivers 4 cumecs of water to approximately 13,000 hectares via an extensive pressurised piped network. Expansion projects are currently in development to utilise NOIC's remaining water allocation. NOIC also augments water to the Waiareka Creek both for abstraction and to maintain a minimum flow of 100l/s.



	Setting the Bar: NOIC Performance Objectives				
Year	Management Area				
	Irrigation	Soils	Nutrients	Riparian	Dairy Effluent
2012	70%	> 95%	80%	80%	80%
2013	75%	> 95%	85%	85%	80%
2014	80%	> 95%	90%	90%	85%