



# Farmers making environmental progress on-farm

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Since early 2017 Environment Canterbury staff have been working with farmers across Canterbury to improve the environment as part of the Farming to Limits consent programme.

We've been asking a lot of farmers, and you've been responding. We would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have taken the steps required to protect the environment and improve water quality in your local area.

## What's happening now?

We want to deal with environmental risks before they turn into incidents and cause damage - a fence at the top of the cliff. This is happening through land-use consents to farm, tighter nutrient limits, and the Good Management Practices Programme of continuous improvement on farm, managed through the completion of Farm Environment Plans and auditing of practices.

Land use consent is now required for 1875 Canterbury farms, which are being reached through a rolling programme, targeting those farms that require consent.

The programme started by working with the highest priority farms; those across Canterbury with more than 50 hectares of irrigated land. Of these, 99% have now taken the action appropriate for their farm.

In recent months, the programme has reached more farmers in and around South Coastal Canterbury, Hinds and Selwyn, with a focus on those farming with fewer than 50 hectares of irrigated land. The work being done in these areas is important to deliver the water quality required for areas like Wainono Lagoon, the Hinds River, and Te Waihora/Lake Ellesmere.

The initial response to these campaigns has also been pleasing. Many reached so far are either already consented or on-track to be, or operating as a 'permitted activity', with no requirement for a land use consent to farm. Compliance follow up work for those yet to take action will start shortly.

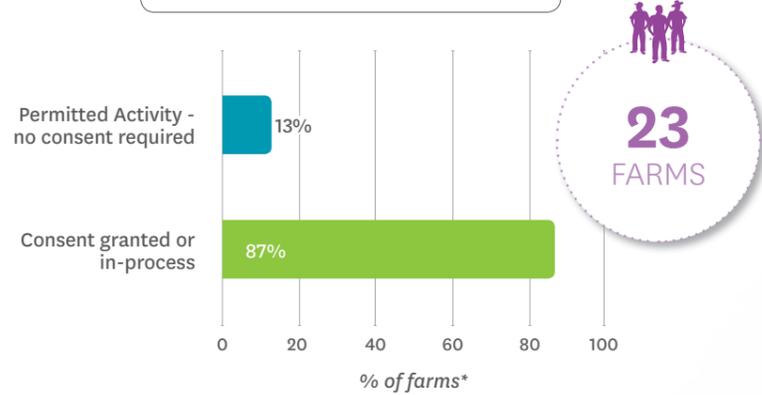
These pages contain details of the responses we've had to our work. For more information about Farming to Limits, please visit [canterburywater.farm](http://canterburywater.farm)

# Farming Land-use Consent Progress Measures

The 1875 farms that require land use consent now are being reached through a rolling programme designed to advise farmers of their requirements and assist them to take appropriate actions. The work being done with these 1875 farms is outlined below. Work with the remaining 425 farms will commence once Plan Change 5 is operative.

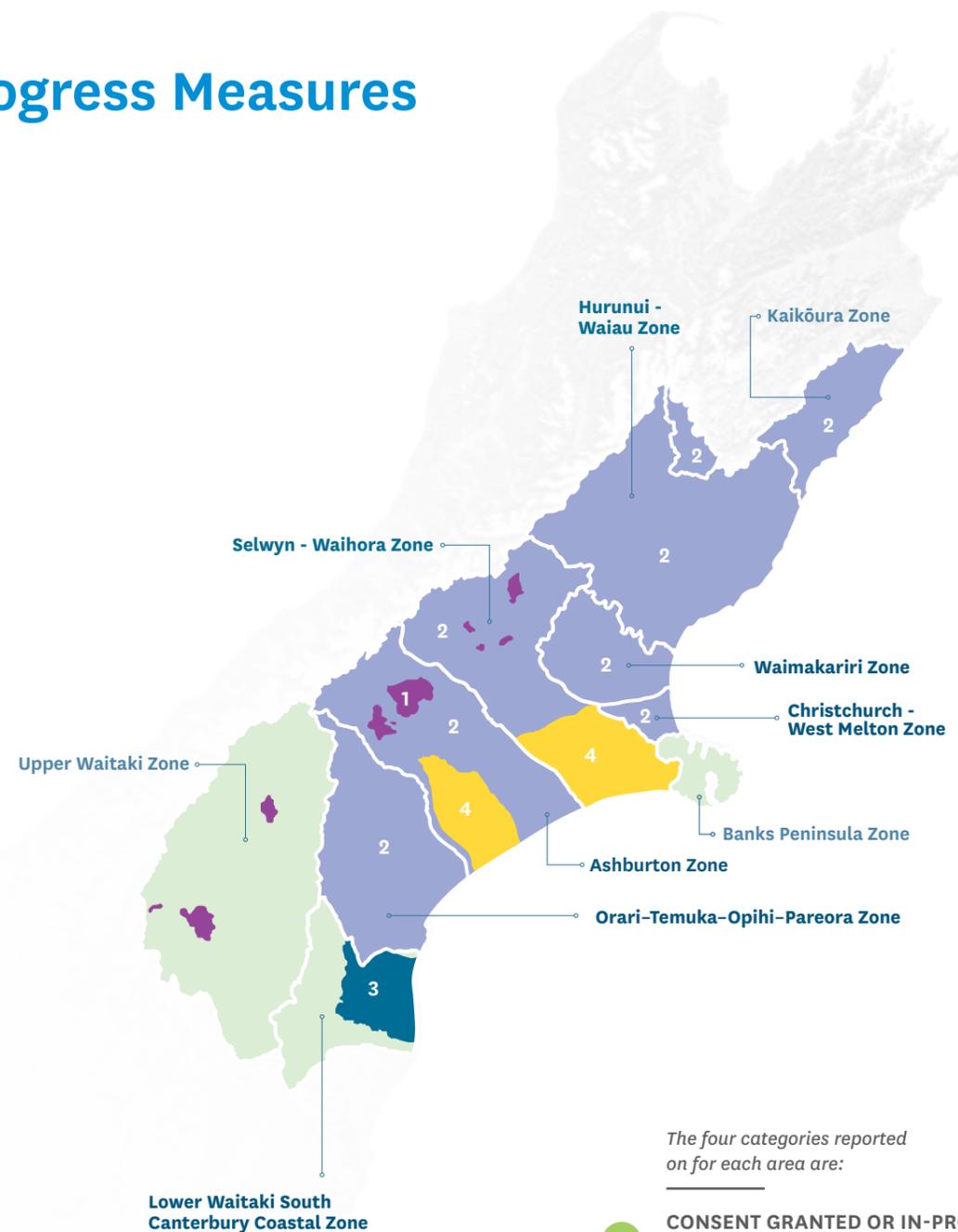
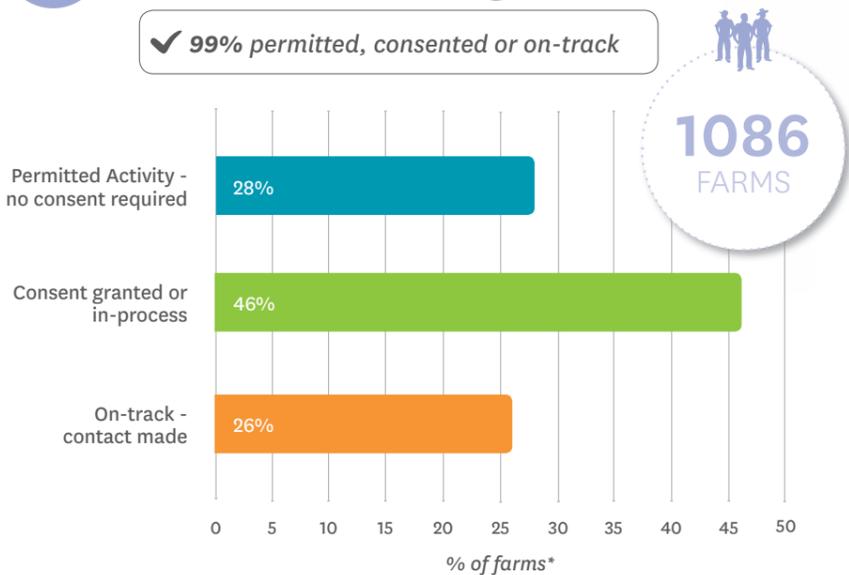
## 1 FROM JAN 2017 Sensitive lakes

✓ 100% permitted or consented



## 2 FROM MAY 2017 Farms with >50ha of irrigation

✓ 99% permitted, consented or on-track



- 1 Sensitive Lakes
- 2 Farms with >50ha of irrigation
- 3 South Coastal Canterbury Streams
- 4 Hinds & Selwyn/Te Waihora < 50ha Irrigation

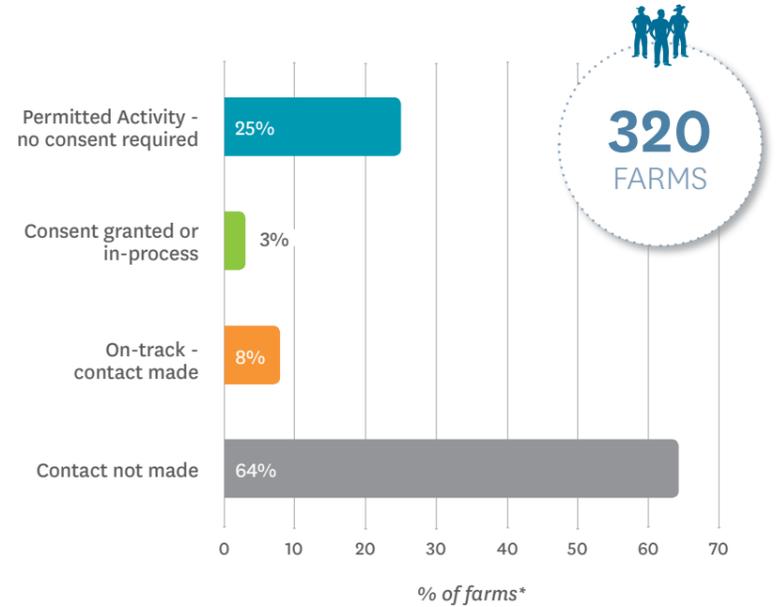
\*Graphs exclude properties determined not to be target farms

The four categories reported on for each area are:

- CONSENT GRANTED OR IN-PROCESS**  
 The land manager has applied for and been granted a land-use consent to farm, or the application is being processed.
- ON-TRACK - CONTACT MADE**  
 The land manager has been contacted and is taking the steps required to get a land use consent to farm (e.g. waiting for a consultant to help with modelling their nitrogen losses).
- PERMITTED ACTIVITY - NO CONSENT REQUIRED**  
 A land-use consent to farm is not required, but farming activity is still covered by the conditions in the relevant plan.
- CONTACT NOT MADE**  
 We have attempted to make contact (by letter or phone-call) but the land manager has not yet responded. We keep trying until we do get a response.

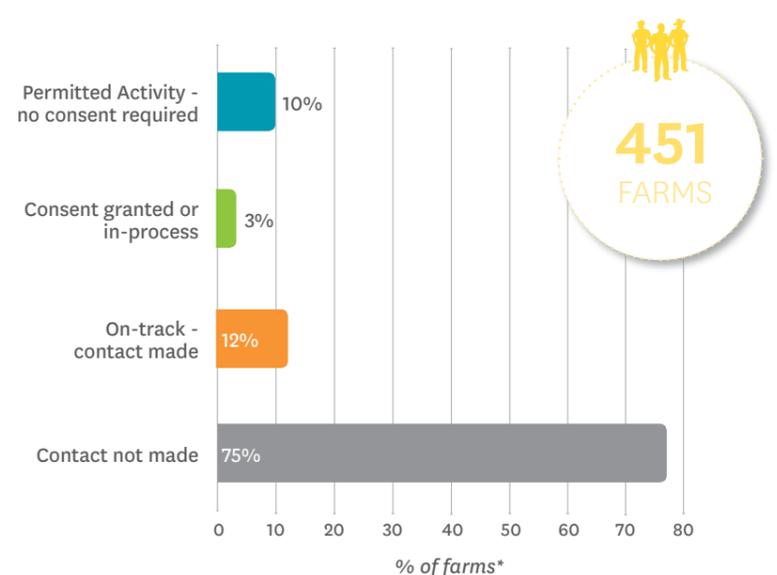
## 3 FROM NOVEMBER 2017 South Coastal Canterbury Streams

✓ 36% permitted, consented or on-track



## 4 FROM APRIL 2018 Hinds & Selwyn/Te Waihora < 50ha of irrigation

✓ 25% permitted, consented or on-track



# Different country, different problems

## HOW YOU SOLVE THEM IS THE SAME



### Selwyn Waihora zone delivery lead Johannes Welsch is a man with a vision.

He believes Selwyn farmers could be the future leaders in environmentally friendly farming.

“It’s not going to happen overnight, but we have farmers who have already reduced their nitrate leaching beyond what is required and they’re still pushing the boundaries.”

Johannes’ passion for the environment and facilitating relationships began when he spent almost two years working on social and agriculture restoration projects in South America.

“I had no idea what to do when I left high school. I heard through a friend that there was this cool project happening in South America and emailed them asking how I could help,” Johannes says.

He worked with landowners in Tena, Ecuador to show them how to use trees to build their homes, as an income source, and to improve biodiversity values in the area.

“It wasn’t so much me telling them what to do, but rather working with them around what are their values and translating them to the real world.

“It was about improving biodiversity but also educating them on the importance of the tree - if you cut down every tree there’s no seed source left so no trees are going to come back.”

The biggest learning from this experience was the importance of communication.

“At the start of the project, everyone was just talking past each other or at each other. But for me, the penny dropped when we started talking about understanding each other. That’s when things started to come together.”

Taking the time to understand different perspectives is a lesson that has transcended Johannes’ work as a biodiversity officer and now Selwyn Waihora zone delivery lead.

“While it was a different language, different setting, different problems, how you solve the problem is actually the same.

“When I started at Environment Canterbury as a biodiversity officer, it was about understanding people’s needs and their concerns. Some of them we can address, some of them it’s about

getting people to talk to each other and maybe we facilitate that conversation.”

It is this ability to build relationships that has seen some incredible biodiversity restoration successes in the Selwyn Waihora Zone.

One of Johannes’ favourite projects is the protection of a wetland on Quartz Hill Station.

*“For me that’s just one of those outstanding projects where just under 40ha of the south branch of the Selwyn River has been fully stock proofed and covenanted. The landowner loves the project and it feels great that we could contribute to that.”*

“Now, more and more Selwyn landowners are considering how they can improve the biodiversity elements of their properties and we have plenty of projects underway to help with this.”

While the job isn’t without its challenges, Johannes’ measure of success ultimately lies with the farming community.

“Success for me would mean that all farmers are operating well beyond GMP. It would be farmers coming up with ideas and solutions before we’ve even thought of it is a problem. That’s success.”