

# **FARM DAIRY EFFLUENT: ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES**

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For a number of reasons, the treatment of farm dairy effluent (FDE), particularly via land application, has been difficult on many of New Zealand's dairy farms. Many farmers still struggle to comply with their resource consents, thereby tarnishing the image of dairying both locally and internationally.

A substantial amount of research and investment by the industry has resulted in: the development of design standards for FDE irrigation systems, identification of 'best management practices', and the production of 'decision support' tools to help farmers manage FDE on a daily basis. Furthermore, there are a number of initiatives in place to improve the design of FDE systems and encourage the adoption of these BMPs.

FDE contains a large quantity of nutrients. It is important that these nutrients are re-used efficiently and that losses to the environment are kept to a minimum. The role of FDE in nutrient management plans has not received the attention that it deserves.

The importance and value of FDE to the farm system is likely to increase in the future. The most influential factor here is the likely increase in the quantity of FDE produced as a result of greater use of animal shelters and feedpads.

**Editor's Note:** An extended manuscript has not yet been submitted for this presentation.