

# ARE WE ON COURSE FOR A TRAIN WRECK WITH SOIL INFORMATION AND DATA FOR SUSTAINABLE NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT?

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Information and data regarding the properties and distribution of New Zealand soils has traditionally been collected by research-orientated organisations, generally at scales that facilitate the mapping of large areas efficiently. Increasingly, however, a variety of new providers are emerging to service the growing demand for more detailed soil surveys of individual farms, driven largely by council-requirements for sustainable nutrient management, and by the pursuit of resource-use efficiencies around fertiliser and irrigation. While aptly qualified providers exist, there is a risk of new providers entering the market without experience or qualification. Currently there are no standards or quality controls regarding farm soil survey, and anyone can claim to have expertise in soil characterisation and farm soil mapping.

In this paper we discuss why the collection of reliable farm-scale soil information is a difficult undertaking, and demonstrate financial and environmental risks of 'getting it wrong' with soil information for farm management and compliance requirements. Considerations for promoting greater transparency, assurance to end users, and national consistency, are also discussed.

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