

Nutrient limits

In 2012 strict nitrate pollution limits were imposed on Canterbury farmers (in the Land and Water Regional Plan). Since then even more stringent limits have been introduced in areas with rising nitrate levels (Selwyn district, Ashburton Hinds, and South Coastal Canterbury).

Land users are required to measure and manage nitrate leaching via a consent to farm and an associated Farm Environment Plan (FEP). To ensure farmers are doing what they need to do, there are regular independent farm plan audits which result in a grade: A or B (acceptable); C or D (not acceptable). Those with C or D grades are required to improve and are subject to more frequent compliance visits and audits.

Good Management Practices

There are agreed Good Management Practices around water use efficiency, nutrient management, effluent management, soil management, as well as farm hotspots (waste pits, offal or silage pits) and these are recorded and audited via Farm Environment Plans. These Farm Environment Plans also cover riverside and drain management (erosion and sediment) as well as keeping stock out of waterways, to protect and improve water quality.

GMP progress update

Around 2300 Canterbury farms (out of 8800) need a land-use consent to farm. Each of these farms will also require a Farm Environment Plan to manage and mitigate environmental risks. An audit, conducted by an independent expert, is required for each FEP at regular intervals.

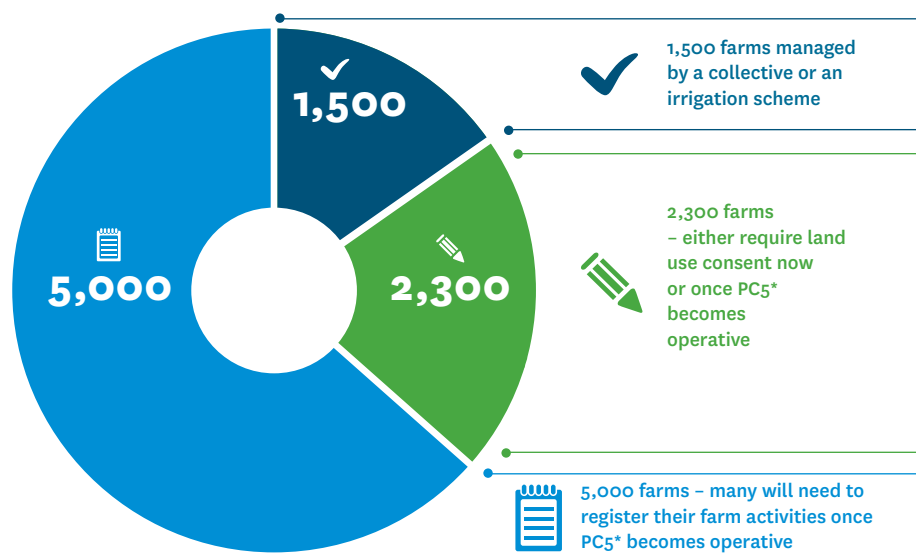
Another 1500 farms are managed within irrigation schemes, as part of the scheme resource consents. All farms within schemes require Farm Environment Plans with regular independent audits.

A summary report of each scheme's FEP auditing grades is provided to Environment Canterbury.

The remaining 5000 farms are likely to be covered by permitted activity rules. These activities are typically on a smaller scale, and while they need to meet the rules, will not require a resource consent.

Many land users, however, will need to register their activities with Environment Canterbury and may also be required to have a Farm Environment Plan.

8,800 farms in Canterbury



*PC5 is the Nutrient Management and Waitaki Plan Change to the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan.



Case Study

Monitoring water takes during restricted periods

Water use restrictions are designed to protect rivers at times of greatest stress, such as during Canterbury's hot dry summers. By restricting the taking of water from waterways, the environmental flows in streams and rivers can be maintained for as long as possible. Rivers can still dry up completely, however, because of extended dry periods.

Environment Canterbury ran a water use monitoring programme over the 2017-18 summer to assess compliance with water use restrictions and consent conditions.

Fifty-three high-risk consents across Canterbury were identified for regular monitoring over summer. The taking of water was monitored via telemetered data and our officers followed up with visits.

The results showed full compliance with water take restrictions and consent conditions – i.e. no non-compliance. The increased visibility of Environment Canterbury officers in the field was also seen as a positive for consent holders and land holders.



Compliance monitoring 2017-18 ANNUAL REPORT

Protecting the environment is the top priority

The work to protect and improve Canterbury's rural environment has several parts:

- Set the necessary **nutrient limits** across Canterbury via planning rules
- Promote **Good Management Practices (GMP)** for farmers
- Require **land-use consent to farm** and **independent audit** (for higher risk activities)
- Ensure effective and targeted **consent compliance monitoring** (this report)
- Respond quickly to as many **incident reports** as possible.

We want to deal with environmental risks before they turn into incidents and cause damage - let's have a fence at the top of the cliff. This is happening through nutrient limits and the Good Management Programme of continuous improvement on farm.

Monitoring consent compliance and responding to incidents, while necessary and important, are more like the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff. They are needed to fix a problem often after the environmental damage has occurred and stop it happening again.

As long as we have consents with conditions we will continue to monitor them to ensure the activity is compliant. But what consents we monitor and how we monitor is changing. We are more focused on monitoring high-risk consents or those consent holders with poor compliance history. Better technology will improve our ability to monitor activities for compliance without having to do as many physical site visits.

Note: These compliance results report on the year ending 30 June 2018 only (there is no trend information). The previous year's results (year ended June 2017) have been put into the same format, available separately, to allow comparison.

Compliance monitoring

JULY 2017 – JUNE 2018 REPORT

Why this matters

We are working with land managers, individuals and industry to improve compliance to ensure the best long-term environmental results.

Consenting rules

- Resource consents allow people or organisations to do something that may have an effect on the environment, but this comes with conditions to protect the environment.
- It is important consent holders comply with their conditions otherwise they can have a negative impact on the environment.

How we respond to improve compliance grades

- If there is an issue, our first response is to work with individuals and businesses to stop any immediate environmental damage.
- We then investigate to determine what actions should be taken, including enforcement.
- Education can achieve better outcomes and is valued by consent holders who need help. If education does not get the right results, there are a range of compliance actions as set out below:
- Formal written warnings** notify of an offence and require action to be taken.
 - Infringement notices**, which include a fine, are issued for more significant breaches.
 - Abatement notices** are typically issued when the offender doesn't co-operate or if we have reason to believe that the offence could happen again.
 - Prosecution** is reserved for offences so serious that they warrant proceedings through the courts.

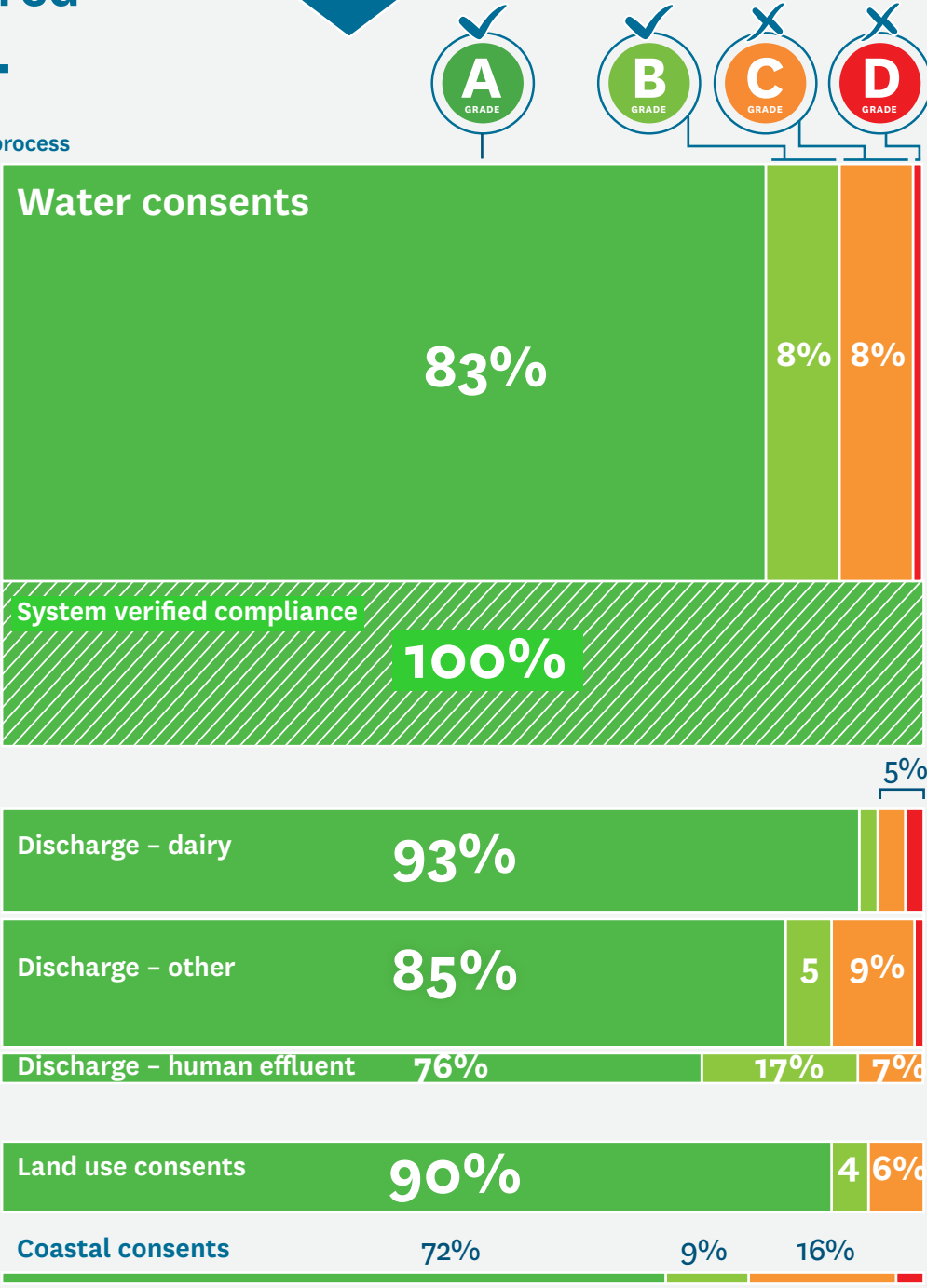
What we monitored
5,754
Consents
including 523 in process

65%
of consents monitored

27%
of consents monitored

7%
1%

What we found

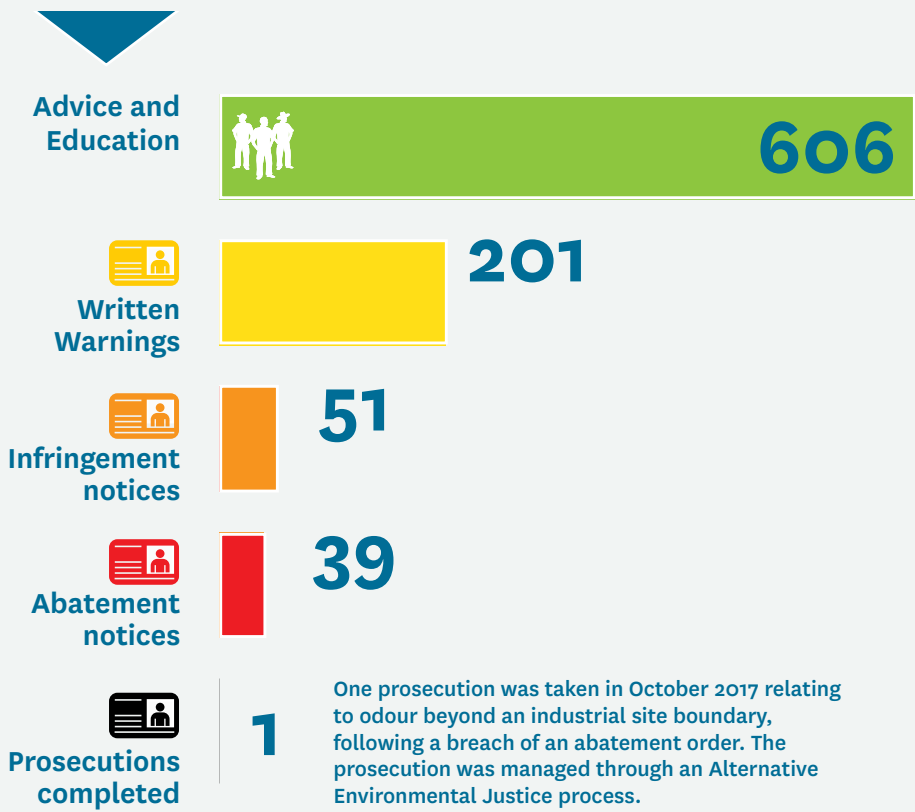


Note: In the graph above the 523 consents that are currently still 'in process' are not shown. It only presents data for completed monitored visits.

What the grades mean

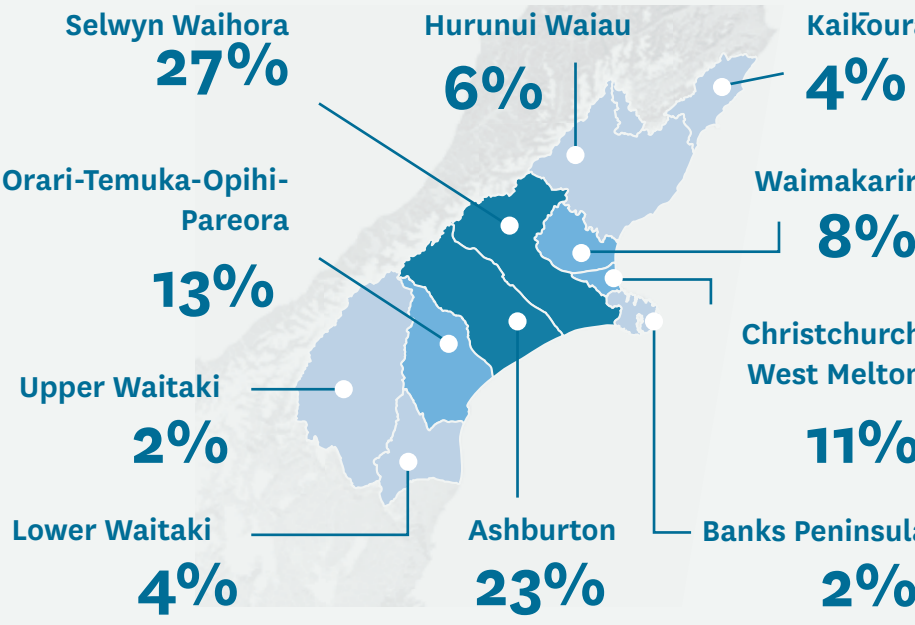
- A/B (Compliant)**
Our response is to work with the consent holder to maintain compliance.
- C/D (Compliance issues)**
Our response is to provide advice and assistance and require action to be taken. Actions may vary depending on the issue.
- System verified compliance**
Is an automated system which checks water consent compliance from water use data. Only those consents that are considered compliant are recorded by the system. If a consent appears as non-compliant it will be checked by a person and recorded as part of water consents.

How we responded to improve compliance grades



6,278 inspections and 1,590 system verifications by zone

Some consents have multiple inspections, these include those with a C or D compliance rating, as well as those identified as high-risk which are subject to more regular monitoring.



Zone percentage of inspections and system verifications out of a total of 7,868