



Kaikōura Plains Recovery Project

Mahinga kai on farm in Kaikōura – the nuts & bolts

Information for farm managers and owners

The short version - What is mahinga kai?

- The term literally means ‘to work the food’ - which is basically what farmers do.
- It's what lives in the water, what grows on the sides and what flies in the air.
- Generally speaking – think of your whole farm system; if you have a healthy land (farm), healthy stock, a diversity of productive areas & vegetated areas/water ways, then you're already providing for healthy mahinga kai values.
- It is treasures/habitats that support our environment to provide services that help us live – like fresh and clean waterways, wetlands, drains and springs; native vegetation, riparian areas and the critters that live in it.
- There are likely to be special areas of your property that you already actively take care of. There could also be things you were not aware of.
- Each farm has different mahinga kai values.

Why is mahinga kai important?

- It supplies food, resources, medicine and tools for people to live, be well and ultimately survive. Farming over the years has evolved, but the need to farm for survival hasn't.
- It is educating and protecting the historic value of mahinga kai for Māori, also.
- It's being more sustainable on farm

Whose responsibility is it to protect mahinga kai?

- Yours. Ours. Everyone's.
- As current guardians of the land, there are certain responsibilities on landowners, but everyone living in or visiting Kaikōura has a part to play in protecting and enhancing mahinga kai.
- While the active protection of mahinga kai is a key foundation of the Treaty of Waitangi, it is also part of wider environmental stewardship (kaitiakitanga). Farmers are now required to include how they are managing the risks of farming to mahinga kai, when implementing their Farm Environment Plans.
- This means you need to identify and understand mahinga kai values and risks on your farm and respond to these when carrying out good management practice.

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What should I be doing?

Firstly – think of mahinga kai as part of your day to day operations – how to look after and protect.

If you are filling out your Farm Environmental Plan and not sure what to put down for mahinga kai, then consider:

- Do you schedule your irrigation so that it doesn't coincide with rain, and do you irrigate efficiently? (soil health, stock health, waterway health, leaching...)
- If you irrigate effluent are you careful not to over-apply it? (soil health, stock health, waterway health, leaching...)
- Are there areas of native vegetation on farm? You can provide for mahinga kai by excluding stock from this land (diversity & habitat provision, regeneration of native areas...)
- Are stock excluded from wetlands, riparian areas, drains, rivers, lakes and springs? (waterway health on farm and for community, stock safety etc, avoiding regulatory issues....)
- Have you considered and identified any sediment hot spots on farm?

If not, you can still look at how you operate your farm in relation to how it affects the natural environment up and down the catchment.

'...Mahinga kai is about more than just survival for Ngāi Tahu, it is about thriving and maintaining those things that sustain and nourish us, and that bring us well-being – clean water, clean air, clean soil, and sufficient shelter. Access to and being able to gather clean and healthy kai as our ancestors did, and doing this in a sustainable way, considering our future generations is also important...'

'.... what's good for māori, is good for the world...' Mananui Ramsden, Pō Mātai kō

Thanks for reading.

Where can I find more information?

- Online at www.ecan.govt.nz/mahinga-kai
- Via phone at 03 319 5781
- In person at Kaikōura Environment Canterbury (Level 2, 96 West End, Kaikōura)
- Head to the back section of this folder for more resources and info.

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