



FACTSHEET

The Government's consultation on amendments to the stock exclusion regulations (low-slope map for stock exclusion)

Summary by B+LNZ, Federated Farmers and DINZ

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This factsheet briefly summarises the Government's proposed options for stock exclusion regulation amendments and provides some preliminary analysis.

The options relate to the low-slope map for stock exclusion, which B+LNZ, Federated Farmers and DINZ, and impacted farmers, have raised significant concerns about. The options put forward are a positive step but it's important that the pros and cons of each are carefully assessed.

The following table summarises the options and some of the potential benefits or considerations. It does not cover everything in the discussion document but is a summary of what we see as the three main options available.

The Government's proposed amendments reflect the fact that most sheep, beef and deer farming systems are low-impact in nature. The amendments are therefore only intended to apply to non-intensively grazed beef cattle and deer. Note the stock exclusion regulations do not apply to sheep.

Dairy cattle, pigs, dairy support cattle, and intensively grazed beef cattle and deer on any terrain still need to be excluded, regardless of any amendments to the regulations.

The Government has clarified that (if the map is retained) slopes greater than 10 degrees captured **by error** on the low-slope map are not intended to have non-intensively grazed beef cattle and deer excluded, even if that land is captured by the map. We will be questioning what happens to slopes between 5 and 10 degrees captured in error.

The Government's discussion document and the link to provide feedback are on the Ministry for the Environment website here: <https://consult.environment.govt.nz/freshwater/low-slope-map-for-lower-intensity-farming>

Key areas to consider

Proposed options	Potential benefits	Considerations
<p>Complete removal of the low-slope map and its replacement with a freshwater farm plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple option that fixes many issues, including river crossing restrictions and feasibility. • The low-slope map and its errors would be removed. • Stock exclusion requirements for beef cattle and deer would be assessed at a farm level, rather than nationally. • Opportunities to tailor mitigations based on risk at a farm level and catchment context. • Regional councils will have more flexibility to impose stricter rules to fulfil catchment values. For example: sensitive waterbodies or degraded catchments. • FW-FPs could be a useful tool to simplify multiple regulations and decision-making into one place. Noting that the Government currently requires all farms over 20ha to have a FW-FP that will be phased in under the recently released FW-FP regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially some changes to the timeframes for exclusion will be needed to align with the FW-FP rollout which is later. • This option could be considered to decrease certainty, as requirements for stock exclusion are moved from a clear national standard, to being assessed through the FW-FP process. • It is unclear exactly what the FW-FPs will look like and how the FW-FP process will impact farmers. We are also advocating for reconsideration of the thresholds because we do not believe all farmers should have to do a certified and audited FW-FP.
<p>Keep low-slope map but have a farming intensity exception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farms that meet a low intensity definition, based on stocking rates, will not need to exclude beef cattle or deer from waterbodies under the stock exclusion regulations regardless of slope. • For example, if you have an annualised stocking rate across the entire grazed area of the farm below Xsu/ha you will not need to exclude beef cattle or deer under the stock exclusion regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal has not put a number on what the “low intensity” threshold might be yet – we need your feedback on this. • For those farms under the threshold it will be expected that any stock exclusion requirements will be assessed through the FW-FP process, as well as still allowing for regional requirements to be more stringent. This means that any higher risk practices or sensitive catchments for example would be assessed on a case-by-case basis for those activities under the threshold.
<p>Keep low-slope map – but potential alternative pathway through a freshwater farm plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A hybrid approach could be explored (noting this hasn’t been directly put forward by the consultation) which uses a low intensity threshold where the map does not apply. If you are above the threshold (su/ha) you then have the alternative option of FW-FP to manage exclusion of beef cattle and deer, rather than directly meeting the national exclusion requirements. • FW-FPs could include tailored mitigations for individual farms that meet specific triggers in the regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this stage it is unclear what this option might involve, and it could be more complex than the option above that simply removes the map entirely. • We don’t yet have any guidance about what the specific triggers could be. • This option would not replace the low-slope map but would provide for exceptions to the map under specific circumstances.