

CONCERNED ABOUT NITROGEN FERTILISER CAP REGULATIONS? DON'T BE

RUSTICA TIME RELEASE® NITROGEN CAN HELP

A recent article in Farmers Weekly (Striking the right Balance – May 29) highlighted a concerning move by the Government to cap synthetic nitrogen fertiliser use on pastoral farms. The aim of this is to improve fresh water quality, supposedly by reducing dissolved inorganic nitrogen in soils and ground water under the Government's Action for Healthy Water ways program. Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor said there has been a sevenfold increase in the amount of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser used in New Zealand since 1990. And to address that the Government is introducing a cap of 190kg N/ha/year on the pastoral sector with dairy farmers required to report annually to regional councils from mid 2022 on the weight of nitrogen applied. Fertiliser companies will have to report annually on nitrogen fertiliser sales to ensure its overall use does not continue to rise. The minister went on to say that about 80% of dairy farmers won't be affected by the cap though about 2000, mostly in Canterbury and Southland, might need to reduce their fertiliser use to stay under it. Viable Agriculture Ltd has major concerns with this approach. But importantly, also a solution.

1. The minister states that 80% of dairy farmers won't be affected by these restrictions and 2000 farms mostly in Canterbury and Southland might need to reduce fertiliser use - but using stats from Dairy NZ show total herds of 11,372 – South Island has 28% of herds that is 3,184 (not 2000) farms in the South Island. www.dairynz.co.nz/media/5792398/quickstatsabout-dairying-new-zealand-2019.pdf
2. These farmers are already financially up against the wall. The minister in our opinion is seriously underplaying the financial hardship this will cause South Island Farmers.
3. Viable Agriculture can help alleviate this situation as our Rustica Controlled Release Nitrogen fertiliser only uses 70 - 80% of the standard rate of Nitrogen with no loss of production, in fact independent field trials showed significant DM increases. Full product information can be found here: viag.co.nz/rustica-time-release

CURRENT GROWTH RATES

N fertiliser is a growth multiplier; when pasture growth rates are high the response to N will be higher, with greatest response rates achieved in spring. When using N, canopy closure will typically occur at a lower leaf stage. Ideal pre-gazing yields of 2600-3200 are recommended with grazing residuals of 7-8 clicks on a rising plate meter.

PASTURE GROWTH RATE PASTURE	GROWTH (KG DM/KG N)	RESPONSE (KG DM/KG N)	TIME FOR FULL RESPONSE (WEEKS)
Slow	10	5	10 - 14
Moderate	20 - 40	10	6 - 8
Fast	50 - 70	15	5 - 6
Rapid	80	20	3 - 4

Source: DairyNZ Facts & Figures, published May 2019

AVERAGE PASTURE GROWTH BY DISTRICT (KG DM/HA/DAY)

SOUTH ISLAND																
Site	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	t DM/ha	From	To	Notes
Culverden	67	50	70	48	38	8	9	18	47	71	67	73	20.0	2014	2016	265 kgN/ha
Oxford	72	58	51	43	28	21	8	17	39	65	68	61	19.0	2014	2016	330 kgN/ha
LUDF	80	82	75	55	32	17	15	28	48	79	85	90	21.4	2008	2015	Irrigated more than 300 kg N/ha
Lincoln University research farm P21 High N	73	69	67	45	23	7	20	27	40	72	70	87	17.6	2012	2015	309 kgN/ha calibrated RPM data
Lincoln University research farm P21 High N	60	68	66	43	23	4	19	26	41	68	62	72	16.3	2012	2015	154 kgN/ha calibrated RPM data
Dunsandel	81	77	69	57	27	20	8	11	35	67	75	84	21.7	2014	2016	280 kgN/ha

DairyNZ Facts & Figures, published May 2019

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0800FERTILISER (0800 337 845) WWW.VIABLEAGRICULTURE.CO.NZ

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