



FACTSHEET

PASTURE-BASED WINTERING OF CATTLE

Pasture-based wintering is the supplementary feeding of cattle (excluding lactating dairy cows) grazing on pasture over winter. It differs from intensive winter grazing where stock are grazed on forage crops.

Although pasture-based wintering is not new to Southland, there has been an increase in the number of farms using this practice. These paddocks tend to have high stock numbers and can become significantly de-vegetated when grazed in winter. If not managed well, these paddocks have the potential to impact waterways from run-off containing high levels of nutrients, sediment, and pathogens.

Maintaining groundcover, having adequate buffers and keeping stock out of high-risk areas such as critical source areas can reduce the risk of contaminant loss to waterways.

The Environment Court introduced a new rule into the Southland Water and Land Plan that aims to minimise the effects of this activity on Southland's water quality (Rule 20B).

What is pasture-based wintering?

Pasture-based wintering is defined as the break feeding of cattle (excluding lactating dairy cows) on pasture over the winter grazing period (1 May – 30 September), where supplementary feed (e.g. baleage, hay) offered is more than 10,000 kilograms of dry matter per hectare.

For example, 600 kg bales with 40% dry matter will have a total of 240 kgDM per bale. If 45 bales are placed per hectare, total supplementary feed will equal 10,800 kgDM/ha (45 bales/ha x 240kgDM = 10,800 kgDM/ha).¹

You can continue your pasture-based grazing without resource consent if it occurs below 800m above sea level and meets the following conditions:

- Stock must be separated by a vegetated buffer:
 - ▶ 10m back from a waterbody or wetland on slopes between 0 - 10 degrees
 - ▶ 20m back from a waterbody or wetland on slopes over 10 degrees
 - ▶ 20m back from a regionally significant wetland, sensitive waterbody, statutory acknowledgement areas, estuary or coastal marine area.
- If significant de-vegetation occurs, re-establishing vegetation is done as soon as practicable.
- A Farm Environment Management Plan is prepared, with a specific winter grazing plan that includes:
 - i. downslope grazing or a 20 metre 'last-bite' strip at the base of the slope; and
 - ii. back fencing to prevent stock entering previously grazed areas; and
- Any critical source areas within land used for pasture-based wintering are identified in a Farm Environmental Management Plan and have stock excluded from them.

If you cannot meet one or more of these conditions, you will need to apply for a resource consent. If you are unsure, please get in touch with one of our consents officers for advice on 0800 76 88 45.

¹ Numbers estimated from these resources - <https://beeflambnz.com/sites/default/files/factsheets/pdfs/fact-sheet-68-feed-planning-in-a-tough-winter.pdf> and <https://www.pggwrightsongrain.co.nz/grain-marketing/valuing-supplementary-feed>

Common questions and answers

We've listed the answers to some commonly asked questions here. If you're still not sure about what you need to do or have another question you want help with, give our consents team a call on 0800 76 88 45.

► What if my supplementary feed is less than 10,000 kgDM/ha?

Your activity is permitted as it doesn't trigger the definition of pasture-based wintering. However, good management practices should still be followed.

► How can I demonstrate I don't exceed 10,000 kg dry matter per hectare?

The break-feeding area and the expected supplementary feed will generally have been planned before winter, and the information will form part of your Farm Environmental Management Plan.

If, due to conditions during winter, your supplementary feed is higher than planned and exceeds the dry matter/hectare threshold, you will be in breach of the rules. To minimise environmental impacts, you should comply with the buffer, critical source area, back-fencing, "last-bite" strip and revegetation conditions in Rule 20B(a). And then use the information on the higher feed requirements to plan for subsequent years.

► What time of the year does this rule apply?

The rule is applicable from 1 May to 30 September inclusive. Outside of this period it is recommended you manage this activity following good management practices.

► If I'm managing stock other than cattle in a pasture-based wintering system, do I need to comply with these rules?

Rule 20B in the Southland Water and Land Plan applies only to cattle. However, there are still risks to freshwater when undertaking this activity with other stock types so good management practices should be followed. In some cases rule 35B in the Southland Water and Land Plan on sacrifice paddocks may apply, so check this rule to see if this applies to you.

► How do I know if I have a regionally significant wetland or sensitive waterbody on or near my property?

Regionally significant wetlands and sensitive waterbodies are listed in Appendix A of the Southland Water and Land Plan. Maps are available on the Environment Southland website or in the online winter grazing and cultivation tool.

► What are the statutory acknowledgement areas and how do I know if I have one on or near my property?

Statutory acknowledgement areas are known **nohoanga** (seasonal occupational sites for food gathering), **mataitai** reserves (freshwater and marine areas where a particular Māori tribe has exclusive fishing rights) and **taiapure** (coastal fishing areas of significance to Māori). Check Appendix B of the plan to find out more about these areas.

► What does it mean 'as soon as practicable' when re-establishing vegetation?

Re-establishing vegetation needs to be planned and implemented as soon as practicable considering factors such as soil and weather conditions, paddock contour, availability of machinery and appropriate seed and/or crop rotation implications. For more refer to the Ministry for the Environment's groundcover guidance.

Definitions:

Intensive winter grazing –

Grazing of stock between May and September (inclusive) on forage crops (including brassica, beet and root vegetable crops), excluding pasture and cereal crops.

Waterbodies and wetlands –

Under rule 20B, this includes any river, lake, artificial watercourse (regardless of whether there is any water in it at the time), modified water course or natural wetland.

Critical source area - Landscape feature, such as a gully, swale or depression, that accumulates runoff from adjacent land and delivers (or has the potential to deliver) contaminates to a waterway or subsurface drain.

Please read the plan for full definitions.