

New Agrichemical spray rules for Northland

Following extensive consultation and Environment Court decisions the new rules relating to agrichemical use in Northland are now operative

Below is a brief introduction to some of the new spray requirements. We encourage all users of agrichemicals to also review the more in-depth Horticulture NZ summary [found here](#)

The full regional plan referenced below can be found here: <https://www.nrc.govt.nz/your-council/about-us/council-projects/new-regional-plan/>

Significant areas of change or new requirements:

Spray Sensitive Areas

A key understanding for growers is what has been determined in the plan as a Spray Sensitive Area (SSA). Neighbouring orchards, residential buildings, wetlands and reserves are all included. As you will see from the full list within the plan there are not many areas that are not considered a SSA apart from uninhabited pasture.

Spray plans

As per previous requirements, all growers must update their Spray Plan annually.

Notification requirements

New requirements mean that when a Spray Sensitive Area is within **50m** of the application area for ground based spraying or **200m** for aerial applications notification must be made no less than **24 hours prior**. New provisions enable notification to occur via a documented agreement between the applicator and the person to be notified. Meaning agreements can be established with neighbours that a different arrangement can take place (including an agreement that no notification is required) provided it is in writing, signed by all parties and reviewed annually.

Signage requirements

Signage, with complete details of the activity, is required if spraying is within 100m of a 'public amenity area' and must be in place prior to the commencement of spraying and remain in place until spraying is complete.

Distances to Spray Sensitive Areas

The following restrictions in relation to buffer distances, wind speeds, wind directions and risk assessments are applicable to:

- **ground-based** applications where there is a spray-sensitive area **within 100m**
- **aerial** applications where there is a spray-sensitive area **within 300m**.

Buffer and effective shelter requirements

A buffer is the minimum distance permitted between the spray activity and the spray sensitive area. The plan lists the specific buffer distances required depending on available shelter and describes the qualities of "effective shelter" and acknowledges that artificial shelter may be useful in reducing spray drift.

As with notification requirements, there is the ability to agree (via written agreement, with the relevant spray-sensitive area owner/occupier) to waive buffer requirements.

Wind Speeds where spraying is not permitted

New requirements mean that when spraying near a Spray Sensitive area it is **not** permitted to apply agrichemicals when:

- Wind speeds are **greater than 6 m/s** plus gusts (any wind direction)
- Wind speeds are **between 0-1 m/s** and inversion conditions are present (any wind direction).
- Wind speeds are greater than **5m/s** and **wind direction is towards** a spray sensitive area.

Wind Direction requirements

There are new risk-based requirements depending on a combination of both wind speed and the direction of wind (whether it is towards or away from a spray sensitive area). See the plan for the permitted activities based on wind speeds and their direction.

Risk assessment

New requirements require a Risk Assessment of every proposed agrichemical application to identify risks of off-target spray movement, risks to spray-sensitive areas and measures to address those risks while considering the on-site weather conditions.

A Risk Assessment must be undertaken prior to the application and the applicator must continue to assess whether the conditions have changed.

There must be a documented record of a risk assessment – notes within the industry spray diary maybe appropriate.