

HORTICULTURE NZ - FRESH WATER POLICY: 31 October 2007

1. Horticultural production in all regions of New Zealand is reliant on reliable supplies of fresh water that are suitable for sustained crop production and post harvest washing and processing. Water is essential for the production of food.
2. Horticulture NZ's position is that:
 - A sufficient quantity of fresh water is a key driver that will ensure the horticulture industry can continue to operate, expand and prosper.
 - Reliability of supply of water in terms of volume, quality and timing is critical for growers and their production.
 - Water is a resource that needs to be managed on a catchment basis, with minimal transfer occurring within a catchment, and controlled from within each region.
 - Augmentation of supply from storage needs to be encouraged, supported by the community, and be a priority in at risk catchments.
 - Consents to take water belong with the land for which they are issued.
 - Consents to take water should not be able to be owned by third parties.
 - The trading of consents to take water should not occur.
 - The transfer of water allocated by a consent should be limited to within a catchment and to land owners and productive uses.
3. Horticulture NZ acknowledges that:
 - Water is a public resource that must be protected, and its allocation and quality managed at an appropriate level for the catchment or location.
 - The in-stream and cultural values of water need to be recognised.
 - There are many competing users of water; e.g. domestic, livestock, recreation, industry, energy, environmental, cultural as well as its use for crop irrigation and post harvest washing and processing.
4. Horticulture NZ supports appropriate regional planning mechanisms for managing the allocation and efficient use of water (including its measurement) in situations where:
 - It is necessary to manage the resource efficiently and sustainably, based on robust scientific measurement. Consenting authorities must use best practice based on good science when formulating catchment and aquifer allocation.
 - The measurement, data collection and reporting requirements are relevant, practical, achievable and necessary.
 - Recognition is given to the need to minimise risk through the allocation mechanism.
 - Regulatory costs are minimised.

5. Where as a result of new planning policy there is a negative economic impact on horticultural production then appropriate compensation needs to be provided.
6. Horticulture NZ advocates there should be no further degradation in water quality other than by natural or climatic causes. It supports growers working in catchment-based partnerships involving: other users, the community and the regulatory authority for the management of fresh water. It is committed to providing the transfer of knowledge required for growers to demonstrate genuine progress towards achieving appropriate improvement targets.
7. Horticulture NZ supports the use of appropriate industry and public funding for science to research and develop the required models & tools for growers to use on a catchment basis to achieve the necessary water management and quality targets in consultation with their community, other users and regional authority and in preference to regulation.

Definitions of terms used in the policy:

Allocation – is the consenting authority’s (e.g. Regional or Unitary Authority) formal process of deciding the volume and description of the resource (e.g. from surface water body or ground water aquifer) and then consenting applications within the limit of the resource.

Consent to take water – The right to take and use water as granted through a consent approval process. This is sometimes referred to colloquially as a “permit”. (Under the old Soil and Water Act they were referred to as “privileges”)

Transfer – changing the description of the place of use of a right to use water from one location to another or one right holder to another. This may be for a part or a whole of the right and can be seasonal, temporary or permanent. All rights to use water describe the name of the holder of the right and the location of the take and use points. If this is to change the right must be transferred to the new owner or point of take and use. Transfers must be approved by the allocating body.

Trading – selling the right to use water either through a formal or informal market. The trade could be for seasonal, temporary or permanent ownership change.