

# Horses and stable waste

## Introduction

This fact sheet provides information and rules regarding the disposal of stable waste in a way that will not affect the environment.

Stable waste (horse manure and wastewater) is classified as a production land activity under the Proposed Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water (PARP: ALW).

Discharges of wastes from production land activities should be carried out so as to avoid contamination of groundwater and surface waters, and to avoid any risk to human health. Rules include restrictions of nitrogen application and matching ability of soil to soak-up waste water.

In most circumstances where wastes can be directed to land no resource consent is required. However, if the maximum daily discharge exceeds 10m<sup>3</sup> you must notify the Auckland Regional Council (ARC).



## Guidelines for horse manure and stable waste disposal

### Land application

Land application has minimal impact on the surrounding environment provided good management practices are used. Horse manure and natural (untreated) bedding materials such as sawdust can provide essential organic matter to soils, improve soil structure, and promote pasture growth through nutrient input.

It is important to ensure that manure and stable waste is dispersed to land following good management practices – ensuring that waste is not applied to land in a place or manner that allows it to cause run-off or enter a waterbody.

### Wastewater

Wastewater from washing horses, stalls and horse-trailers also needs to be managed appropriately. Wash water is not allowed to be directly discharged to waterbodies as it often contains detergents and/or animal wastes.

Small volumes of wash water can be diverted to a grassed infiltration area where it can be absorbed into the soil.

Large volumes must be collected and directed to a central point (i.e. a sump) and dispersed to land through a suitable irrigation system. Attention must be given to application rate, as wastewater must be applied to land at a rate which doesn't exceed the soils' absorption capacity.

Farms that discharge washwater volumes greater than 10m<sup>3</sup>/day must apply to the ARC for a resource consent.

## Storage

Temporary storage of horse manure can produce leachate, which can cause extensive damage if allowed to enter a waterbody. Manure storage areas should be located well away from any drain or waterbody to avoid pollution.

Storage systems must be built on an impermeable base that collects all leachate and directs it to a treatment system. Horse manure piles should be banded and covered to minimize the production of leachate and run-off. Clean stormwater should be diverted away from stable yards to avoid contamination. Any leachate should be treated or irrigated.

## Tips to meet requirements

- Minimise stable water use by turning off water when not in use and using water-saving devices.
- Remove solid waste off-site (e.g. bedding and manure) to be used as mulch/compost.
- Disperse wastewater over a wide area – away from any subsurface drain or waterbody – and avoid sloping land and run-off.
- Apply wastewater over grassy or vegetated areas; this is effective for lightly contaminated water.
- Large facilities should ensure appropriate design of stable stalls and drainage area to ensure system can cope with increased volumes.
- Ensure responsible disposal of any chemical or medical waste and containers.
- Large stables (10 or more horses) should have a manure management plan – a proactive approach to address potential storage and disposal methods.
- Use untreated sawdust.

**Note:** It is illegal to allow any substance to enter water directly through the stormwater system or via contamination of land without ARC authorisation.

## For more information

Further information on the Auckland Regional Plan: Air, Land and Water (ARP: ALW) is available online at [www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz), or upon request.

The ARC has a range of fact sheets relating to farm waste discharge rules and best practice guidelines. Copies are available online at [www.arc.govt.nz](http://www.arc.govt.nz) or upon request.

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