

MANAGING NATIVE BIODIVERSITY ON FARM

WHAT IS NATIVE BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life found in an area – including a variety of animals, plants, fungi and even tiny micro-organisms. The greater the number of different living things, the greater the biodiversity. For example, a farm with tūī, long-tailed bats, and tōtara has greater biodiversity than a farm with just tūī.

Native biodiversity refers to the species that occur naturally in New Zealand – such as tūī, kowhai, wētā, and kiwi – rather than those that have arrived accidentally or deliberately with humans – such as gorse, deer, rats, possums. Most of New Zealand's native species are only found here and nowhere else in the world.

"The native plants, the native animals, the native insects, the native fish. They give us a sense of identity in Aotearoa New Zealand, a sense of place."
- Danielle Shanahan, CEO of Zealandia.

WHY IS NATIVE BIODIVERSITY ON FARMS IMPORTANT?

Pastoral farming accounts for 50% of land use in New Zealand, so farmers play a key role in taking care of and restoring our natural environment. Many see taking care of the land as a big part of what it means to be a farmer.

"Farmers are already active stewards of a lot of native ecosystems. By rehabilitating those ecosystems, they also generate a whole lot of benefits in terms of landscape resilience and improved water quality."

- David Hall, Climate Policy Director at Toha

Consumers are also increasingly demanding and valuing farm products that are produced sustainably. Farmers in New Zealand have the unique opportunity to lead the way by managing biodiversity within a productive farming system and ensuring that future generations continue to farm and enjoy a thriving native landscape for years to come.



AT A GLANCE

What is native biodiversity and why is it important? And how do you manage biodiversity on your farm? The Farming with Native Biodiversity project created free digital resources for farmers wanting to better manage on-farm biodiversity.

WHAT DO FARMERS SAY?

"We're farmers, we're producing food, we're literally living in that environment, we're not disconnected from what's going on out there in the world. So, you plant a tree, you see it grow, you're involved in that process. That makes living on the land even better if you can help to improve it."

- Adam Thompson, farmer and owner of Restore Native plant nursery

"One day we would like our kids to have the opportunity to take over the farm, so ensuring that the farm is profitable and sustainable is important to us. We want to continue to work with nature rather than against it, allowing native plants and animals to thrive within our successful sheep and beef farming operation."

- Farming with Native Biodiversity pilot participant

"Generational stewardship is important for farmers, as caretakers of the land, to provide a better environment for future generations."

- Damien Roper, farmer in South Taranaki

HOW DO YOU MANAGE BIODIVERSITY ON FARM?

The Farming with Native Biodiversity (FwNB) project developed several resources to help farmers learn about native biodiversity and start better managing biodiversity.

Our Farms, Our Future podcast

The six-episode podcast series 'Our Farms, Our Future', explores what native biodiversity is, and why it's important on farms. The podcast is hosted by Tim Dangen, a beef farmer in West Auckland's Muriwai, and 2022 Young Farmer of the Year. In each episode, Tim has a yarn with an expert to ask all the questions farmers want to know about native biodiversity and managing on-farm biodiversity. You can listen on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

Farming with Native Biodiversity E-learning

The FwNB E-learning covers nine topics ranging from an introduction to biodiversity, to controlling introduced species, and maintaining healthy waterways. The modules are a mix of written material, videos, and interactive activities like quizzes. Each section ends with a one-page document that acts as a conversation starter to learn more about that biodiversity topic.

Farming with Native Biodiversity Workshop Resource

The FwNB Workshop Resource is designed to be used with catchment groups, to help with biodiversity planning on a landscape scale. The toolkit guides catchment groups to understand more about native biodiversity and develop goals for their catchment.



NEED MORE HELP?

- Get in touch with a Sustainable Farm Advisor/Sustainable Dairy Advisor
- Reach out to the NZ Landcare Trust Coordinator in your region
- Talk to your local catchment group
- Get assistance from local and regional council staff

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