

Belmont Regional Park – Grazing Licence Practice Guide

October 2026 – Version 2 – revised post hearing

Amendments are shown in *orange*

1. Purpose and approach

This guide sets out the grazing and environmental practices to be followed for the Belmont Regional Park grazing licence. It provides a practical basis for managing grazing within the licence area and will inform the Annual Operations Plan prepared each year of the licence.

The grazing system has been deliberately designed as a conservative, low-impact system, reflecting the freshwater, biodiversity, soil, recreation and public-park values of Belmont Regional Park. Grazing will be predominantly beef cattle, with limited sheep grazing in suitable paddocks. There will be no breeding cows or bulls, irrigation, effluent application, cropping or fertiliser application. Environmental effects will be managed through low stocking intensity, use of lighter cattle, active grazing management, exclusion of sensitive areas and virtual fencing to adjust grazing in response to site and environmental conditions.

This guide is tailored specifically to the Belmont grazing system. It reflects the core principles of industry good management practice (GMP), including understanding farm and water-quality risks, managing those risks appropriately, keeping records, and regularly reviewing management. It draws on the *industry-agreed Good Management Practices relating to Water Quality*¹ and the *Drystock Farms Menu*², applying the practices from those documents that are relevant to the Belmont operation.

2. Practice outcomes

The grazing operation will seek to:

- Protect freshwater, wetland and indigenous habitat values from the effects of stock grazing.
- Minimise sediment, nutrient and faecal contaminant losses from grazed land to waterways.
- Maintain soil condition and vegetated ground cover, and minimise grazing-related erosion, pugging and bare ground.
- Manage grazing within the capability of the land.
- Respond quickly to changing ground, weather or environmental conditions where there is an increased risk of adverse effects.

¹ *Environment Canterbury (2015). Industry-agreed Good Management Practices relating to water quality, Version 2, 18 September 2015. Developed through the Matrix of Good Management project with primary sector organisations including Beef + Lamb New Zealand.*

² *Waikato Regional Council and Upper Waikato Primary Sector Partnership (2016 reprint). Drystock Farms Menu: Practices to improve water quality.*

2.1 Summary of Belmont grazing practices

Good Management Practice		Belmont approach	Guide section
Grazing system	Stock class	<i>Lighter growing beef cattle; no breeding cows or bulls</i>	4.1
	Conservative stocking intensity	<i>Maximum annual average of 7 SU/ha, set below estimated productive carrying capacity</i>	4.2
	Grazing management	<i>Manage grazing rotations to maintain pasture cover and minimise soil damage</i>	4.3
Sensitive area exclusions	Sensitive-area protection	<i>Minimum 5 7 m grazing exclusion from waterways, wetlands, native vegetation and other identified sensitive areas</i>	5.1
	Critical source areas	<i>Identify and exclude or otherwise actively manage areas that generate or convey disproportionate contaminant losses</i>	5.2
Erosion management	Grazing erosion prone land	<i>Maintain vegetative cover and reduce grazing pressure on erosion-prone land</i>	6.1
	Tracks, gateways and stock camps	<i>Monitor runoff from high traffic areas and ensure it is dispersed into vegetated areas</i>	6.2
Stock water		<i>Reticulated water provided in suitable locations, so cattle do not need access to natural waterways</i>	7
Adaptive management		<i>Adjust stock numbers, grazing areas and exclusions in response to pasture, soil, weather and environmental conditions</i>	8
Planning and monitoring		<i>Annual Operations Plan, quarterly monitoring, mapping, records and corrective actions</i>	8-9

3. Virtual fencing

Virtual fencing is a central part of the grazing system proposed for Belmont. It allows grazing areas and exclusion zones to be set and adjusted without extensive new physical fencing and gives much greater control over where and when cattle can graze. This creates opportunities for low-impact grazing and environmental management that would be difficult to achieve in a conventional grazing system, particularly where sensitive areas are numerous, seasonal or change over time.

Virtual fencing is an increasingly well-tested stock management tool. Published trials of GPS-based virtual fencing systems have demonstrated high levels of cattle containment once

animals are trained³, including studies reporting more than 99% containment within virtual boundaries used to exclude cattle from environmentally sensitive areas⁴.

The following performance requirements will apply to virtual fencing at Belmont:

- Cattle must be trained to the virtual-fencing system before reliance is placed on virtual boundaries in sensitive areas.
- Virtual boundaries must reflect the approved grazing area and required exclusions in the current Annual Operations Plan, including additional exclusions that may appear over time.
- Location and system alerts must be monitored so that boundary breaches can be identified and responded to promptly.
- Animals that repeatedly fail to respond to the virtual-fencing system must be removed from the grazing operation.
- A contingency must be in place for failure or loss of the virtual-fencing system. If reliable virtual containment cannot be maintained, stock must be moved to a physically contained paddock or moved off-farm until the system is restored.
- Virtual fencing does not remove the need for active stock observation and regular ground checks.

Many of the grazing and environmental practices outlined later in this guide rely on the flexibility provided by virtual fencing, particularly the ability to exclude sensitive areas, respond to changing ground conditions and adjust grazing pressure.

4. Grazing system

4.1 Stock class

Due to the dependency on virtual fencing, the grazing system will rely on the use of mainly beef cattle with an emphasis on younger and lighter stock rather than mature breeding animals. The licence is intended to allow sheep grazing, but sheep will only be permitted in paddocks where sensitive areas are either absent or already protected by physical fencing.

Age and weight classes of beef stock may vary to suit terrain, seasonal conditions and provide flexibility to buy or sell stock as required. Breeding cows and bulls will not be used. By reducing the average liveweight carried on the farm compared with a traditional breeding-cow system, the grazing approach reduces the risk of pugging, tracking, soil compaction and other stock-related soil damage, particularly during wet conditions.

A predominantly cattle-only grazing system differs from sheep and beef systems in the way pasture is utilised. Cattle generally do not graze pasture as closely to the ground as sheep, so where grazing is appropriately managed, a longer residual pasture sward can be retained. This provides greater ground cover and surface roughness, helping slow overland flow, intercept sediment and reduce the risk of contaminants being transported to waterways.

Cattle are heavier than sheep and therefore have a greater potential to cause soil damage, particularly in wet conditions. This risk is partly reduced by using younger and lighter cattle

³ Harland, A.J., Novais, F.J., Fitzsimmons, C.J., Church, J.S., da Silva, G.M., Londono-Mendez, M.C. & Bork, E.W. (2025). Evaluating virtual fencing as a tool to manage beef cattle for rotational grazing across multiple years. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 381, 125166

⁴ Campbell, D.L.M., Ouzman, J., Mowat, D., Lea, J.M., Lee, C. & Llewellyn, R.S. (2020). Virtual Fencing Technology Excludes Beef Cattle from an Environmentally Sensitive Area. *Animals*, 10(6), 1069.

rather than mature breeding cattle, but the main controls are the conservative stocking rate, active grazing management to maintain pasture cover, and the minimum 5 m exclusion from sensitive areas. These controls are covered in more detail later in this guide.

A system that allowed sheep to graze across the full licence area was considered. However, because suitable virtual-fencing technology is not currently available for sheep, they could not be excluded from sensitive areas in the same way as cattle. This would allow grazing and faecal deposition occurring within and immediately adjacent to waterways, wetlands and other sensitive areas, rather than maintaining the proposed 5-7 m minimum ungrazed buffer. Sheep grazing within these areas would also keep vegetation shorter, reducing the ability for riparian and wetland margins to develop into denser vegetation that can slow overland flow, trap sediment and provide habitat.

A sheep system would also provide less ability to respond dynamically to changing environmental conditions, such as newly identified wet areas, temporary critical source areas or areas requiring recovery. By contrast, the predominantly beef-cattle system allows these areas to be excluded or grazing pressure adjusted quickly through virtual fencing. On balance, while cattle require careful management because of their greater liveweight, the ability to spatially control where cattle graze, maintain ungrazed buffers and respond adaptively to environmental risk means the proposed predominantly beef system is considered better aligned with the environmental outcomes sought for Belmont. Sheep will therefore be limited to suitable paddocks where sensitive areas are absent or already physically excluded.

4.2 Stocking rate

The stocking rate will be managed to a maximum annual average of 7 SU/ha, which has been deliberately set at a conservative level and is a key part of the low-impact grazing approach proposed for Belmont. It is an upper limit rather than a fixed stocking target. Stocking at any given time may be above or below 7 SU/ha depending on pasture availability, seasonal conditions, ground condition and environmental risk, provided the annual average does not exceed 7 SU/ha. For example, higher short-term stocking may be appropriate during periods of strong pasture growth, while stock numbers may be substantially reduced when feed availability is lower or environmental risk increases.

Stocking rates will be reviewed jointly by the licensee and Greater Wellington each quarter as part of the adaptive management approach. Stock numbers and grazing intensity will be adjusted where required, with any changes recorded in the Annual Operations Plan.

The 7 SU/ha annual average applies to the effective grazing area available to stock, after sensitive areas, restoration areas and other exclusions have been removed from grazing.

The 7 SU/ha limit was developed and tested in two ways. Firstly, the Land Use Capability (LUC) units across the proposed grazing area were assessed against published carrying capacities for the Wellington Region⁵. Based on the mix of LUC units present, the estimated average carrying capacity across the grazing area is 8.1 SU/ha, increasing to 9.8 SU/ha for a high-performing farm. The proposed 7 SU/ha is therefore below the carrying capacity expected under typical farming conditions. An LUC map and these calculations are provided in the appendix.

⁵ Page, M.J. (1995). *Land Use Capability Classification of the Wellington Region*. Landcare Research Science Series No. 6.

Secondly, the rate was compared with Beef + Lamb New Zealand data for comparable Western North Island sheep and beef farms⁶. As there is no equivalent dataset specifically for western Wellington, Taranaki–Manawatū data were used as the closest regional comparison. For 2024–25, average stocking rates were 8.4 SU/ha for hard hill country and 9.6 SU/ha for hill country. The proposed 7 SU/ha is therefore below the average stocking rate for both farm classes.

As a further comparison, the previous Belmont grazing licence allowed an annual average of up to 8.2 SU/ha. The proposed maximum of 7 SU/ha therefore represents about a 15% reduction from the previous limit.

The stocking rate has therefore been set to provide a margin below the productive capacity of the land, reflecting that the purpose of grazing at Belmont is low-impact land management rather than maximising agricultural production.

Lower stocking rates were considered but were not preferred because the grazing intensity needs to remain high enough for grazing to function as an effective land-management tool. If stocking is set too low, there is a greater risk of under-grazing, rank pasture development and uneven pasture utilisation, reducing the ability to manage vegetation and maintain open areas effectively. The proposed 7 SU/ha annual average is intended to provide enough grazing pressure to manage pasture growth while still remaining below the productive capacity of the land. The adaptive management approach allows stock numbers and grazing pressure to be adjusted through the year so that pasture management objectives can be met without compromising environmental values. This also reduces the need for alternative vegetation-management interventions such as mowing or mechanical control in areas where grazing is being retained for that purpose.

4.3 Grazing management

Grazing will be actively managed to maintain pasture cover, minimise soil damage and reduce overland flow, particularly during wet conditions or in more vulnerable parts of the farm. The following practices will apply:

- Use rotational or planned grazing rather than allowing cattle to remain in one area long enough to cause avoidable pasture or soil damage.
- Move cattle before significant pugging, tracking, bare soil or concentrated camping develops.
- Avoid grazing vulnerable areas when soil conditions are too wet to support cattle without significant pugging or soil damage.
- Where practical, use easier and more resilient country during higher-risk wet periods and reduce grazing pressure on steep land.

Further requirements for managing erosion-prone land and critical source areas are set out in Sections 5 and 6.

5. Sensitive area exclusions

The primary approach at Belmont is to completely avoid grazing environmentally sensitive areas and maintain a buffer around them. Virtual fencing will be the principal tool used to establish and maintain these exclusions, supported by existing physical fencing where present. This

⁶ Beef + Lamb New Zealand (2026). Western North Island Regional Delivery Plan 2026. Includes 2024–25 Sheep and Beef Farm Survey data for Taranaki–Manawatū.

approach applies to newly identified sensitive areas within the proposed grazing footprint; there is no proposal to reintroduce grazing to areas that are already excluded from stock.

5.1 ~~Five~~Seven-metre minimum exclusion

A minimum ~~five~~ seven-metre grazing exclusion will be applied from the edge of the following features:

- ~~• Wetlands and wet areas;~~
- ~~• permanently flowing streams;~~
- ~~• intermittent streams;~~
- ~~• areas of established native vegetation and native forest remnants;~~
- ~~• restoration planting areas; and~~
- ~~• identified critical source areas where a five-metre exclusion is an appropriate control.~~
- Wetlands,
- Permanently flowing streams,
- Intermittent streams,
- Native forest remnant areas,
- Restoration planting areas,
- Identified critical source areas where a seven-meter exclusion is an appropriate control; and
- Any other areas considered environmentally sensitive

The 5 ~~7~~-metre exclusion is intended to provide both physical separation from sensitive areas and an ungrazed vegetated buffer. In grassed areas, the absence of grazing is expected to allow a taller and denser pasture sward (rank grass) to develop, increasing surface roughness and helping to slow and filter overland flow before it reaches waterways or wetlands. This will help retain sediment and associated contaminants within the buffer. In some locations, particularly where there are nearby seed sources or existing native vegetation, removing grazing pressure may also support natural regeneration of native vegetation within the buffer.

~~The 5-metre setback is considered appropriate as a minimum baseline because it is more conservative than the 3 m setback for waterways identified in the Drystock Farms Menu. A 10 m minimum setback was considered; however, in the context of industry good practice and the level of protection provided by a 5 m ungrazed buffer, a 5 m minimum was considered to provide a robust level of protection across the grazing area. Importantly, 5 m is a minimum rather than a fixed setback, and wider exclusions will be applied where site conditions warrant additional protection. Factors such as slope, land stability, existing vegetation and runoff connectivity will be considered through the sensitive-area identification and ground-checking process outlined in section 5.3.~~

The 7 m setback is considered appropriate as a minimum baseline. Scientific literature supports vegetated setbacks as an effective means of reducing sediment and other contaminant transfer in surface runoff, while also recognising that effectiveness depends on factors such as slope, soil, vegetation, hydrology and runoff pathways rather than setback width alone. The 7 m minimum provides an additional precautionary margin above the 3 m setback for waterways identified in the Drystock Farms Menu, while still allowing grazing to function as an effective pasture and land-management tool across the licence area. Wider setbacks will be applied where site conditions warrant additional protection, including where slope, land stability, vegetation, hydrology or runoff connectivity indicate that 7 m may not be sufficient.

These factors will be considered through the sensitive-area identification and ground-truthing process outlined in section 5.3.

~~Given the layout and terrain at Belmont, there are a small number of locations where cattle may need to enter an exclusion area for access purposes. This may include crossing streams or moving along existing tracks within the 5 m setback to reach other grazing areas, where there is no other way to practically reach grazing areas. These access points and routes will be predetermined, mapped and recorded in the Annual Operations Plan. Where movement through an exclusion area is necessary, cattle will be actively moved through and will not be permitted to stop, graze or congregate within the exclusion. The number of movements will be kept to a minimum and each movement will be as brief as practicable, with stock managed to minimise trampling, pugging and direct deposition to waterways.~~

Exceptions to the setback

Given the layout and terrain at Belmont, a small number of exceptions to the 7 m setback or sensitive-area exclusions may be necessary. The following limited exceptions apply:

Grazed exceptions

- Where topography, existing infrastructure or other physical constraints mean the full 7 metre setback cannot practicably be maintained, including bluffs, cliffs or locations where maintaining the setback would create an animal-welfare risk.
- Where an existing track falls within a setback and grazing is required to maintain recreational access or other recreational outcomes.
- Where applying the full 7 metre setback would create an isolated or impractical area of land that cannot reasonably be managed separately.

Stock movement exceptions

- Where there is no other practical access to grazing areas, cattle may be moved through a setback or sensitive area using predetermined access points or routes. This may include stream crossings, existing tracks, dam walls or other established crossings.
- Stock will be actively moved through and will not be permitted to stop, graze or congregate within the sensitive area or setback.
- Movements will be kept to the minimum necessary and be as brief as practicable, with stock managed to minimise trampling, pugging and direct deposition to waterways.

These exceptions and access routes will be identified through ground-truthing, mapped and recorded in the Annual Operations Plan.

5.2 Critical source areas

Critical source areas are small parts of the landscape that can generate or transport a disproportionately large amount of sediment, phosphorus, faecal contamination or other contaminants during runoff. They are typically places where water naturally concentrates or where stock use has disturbed the soil. CSAs may be permanent, temporary or seasonal, and some may only become apparent during wet conditions.

At Belmont, CSAs may include:

- stock camps, gateways, tracks, troughs or other high-use areas where runoff can flow directly towards a waterway;
- areas of active erosion, slips, bare soil or stock-induced pugging; and
- other locations where concentrated overland flow provides a direct pathway from grazed land to a waterbody.

Identified CSAs will be excluded from stock where practicable. Where a CSA involves necessary farm infrastructure, such as a track or gateway, stock concentration and runoff will instead be managed to minimise the risk of contaminants reaching water.

Known CSAs will be reviewed as part of the quarterly monitoring process. Any new or changing CSAs identified through monitoring or ground checks must be recorded and, where necessary, incorporated into virtual-fence exclusions and the Annual Operations Plan.

5.3 Mapping of sensitive areas

Environmentally sensitive areas will first be identified through a desktop review of existing Greater Wellington information, including mapped wetlands, potential wet areas, streams and other relevant environmental layers. Following this, ~~Greater Wellington Park Rangers and Environment Restoration Advisors~~ appropriately trained Greater Wellington staff will undertake paddock-by-paddock ground-checking to confirm the desktop information and identify any additional sensitive areas that meet the criteria set out in section 5.1 and 5.2. Initial mapping and ground-truthing of sensitive areas will be completed before grazing commences.

This ground-checking will draw on the ~~complementary expertise of both teams. Environment Restoration Advisors bring experience in farm environmental planning and identifying waterways, wetlands and wet areas, erosion risks, native vegetation and other features requiring stock exclusion or additional management. Park Rangers bring detailed knowledge of Belmont's terrain, grazing areas, access, vegetation and site conditions. Together, these skillsets provide a strong basis for identifying and verifying environmentally sensitive areas on the ground.~~ experience and training of Greater Wellington staff in identifying wetlands, waterways, native vegetation, erosion risks and other features requiring stock exclusion or additional management. Staff undertaking this work will have access to support from relevant Greater Wellington technical specialists where required.

~~Where a feature requires more specialist assessment, this can be referred to suitably qualified Greater Wellington technical staff. For example, Greater Wellington's Knowledge and Insights team includes staff with expertise in wetland delineation. Formal wetland delineation can be time- and cost-intensive, so it will only be undertaken where necessary. In practice, where there is uncertainty about whether an area is a wetland or another sensitive feature, a precautionary approach will be taken, and the area will be included within the sensitive-area exclusions rather than requiring formal delineation before protection is applied.~~

The purpose of this process is to identify areas that should be excluded from grazing rather than to make formal regulatory determinations of the precise boundary of every feature. A precautionary approach will therefore be applied. Where an area displays characteristics of an environmentally sensitive area, or there is uncertainty about its status or boundary, it will be included within the grazing exclusion - an "if in doubt, stock are out" approach.

For wetlands, existing Greater Wellington wet-area and wetland mapping, aerial imagery and other relevant environmental layers will be used as the initial screening tools. Ground-checking will draw on staff wetland-identification training, specialist support where required, and

practical guidance such as *Greater Wellington's Spotting a wetland on your land – Identification Guide*⁷ and the *New Zealand Wetland Plant List 2021*⁸. At Belmont, seepage and spring-fed areas displaying indicators such as persistently wet soils, characteristic landscape position and wetland vegetation will be treated as sensitive and excluded from grazing.

Following the mapping of sensitive areas and any other exclusions, the effective grazing area will be calculated by Greater Wellington staff and provided to the licensee. The mapped exclusion areas will also be provided to the licensee for incorporation into the virtual-fencing system so that grazing boundaries reflect the approved exclusions. The licensee will use this area to determine appropriate stock numbers within the agreed stocking-rate limits, with the effective grazing area and stock numbers recorded in the Annual Operations Plan and reviewed and updated quarterly as part of the adaptive management process.

Initial mapping and ground-truthing of ESAs will be completed before grazing commences, with mapping subsequently reviewed and updated through the quarterly monitoring process.

Any newly identified sensitive areas will be recorded through the monitoring process and added to the relevant mapping and exclusion layers. These updates will be reviewed ~~at least~~ **as part of the quarterly monitoring process** and reflected in the Annual Operations Plan so that grazing boundaries and management controls remain current. **A sensitive area map will be made publicly available.**

6. Soil and erosion management

Grazing will be managed to protect soil structure and minimise erosion. Where soil damage, erosion or vulnerable land is identified, the following additional controls will apply:

- Maintain sufficient vegetative cover to protect exposed soil and slow runoff.
- Keep vulnerable gullies, steep erosion-prone faces and active slips out of grazing where necessary.
- Rest damaged areas from grazing where needed to allow vegetation to recover. Re-sow or otherwise stabilise areas if natural recovery is not adequate.
- Use land capability and current ground condition to inform grazing management on more vulnerable areas

6.1 Erosion-prone land

Erosion-prone areas require more conservative management. The industry-agreed GMP guidance specifically identifies active management of LUC Class 7e land to ensure suitable soil-conservation practices are in place. At Belmont, this means Class 7e land will be managed conservatively, with grazing pressure reduced or grazing excluded where ground condition or erosion risk warrants it. An LUC map for Belmont is attached in the appendix.

6.2 Tracks, gateways and stock camps

- Manage runoff from tracks and gateways so that it is dispersed to vegetated areas rather than discharged directly to streams, wetlands or drainage lines.

⁷ <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2021/10/Wetland-photo-ID-guide.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/site/assets/files/0/74/640/2122-hbrc259-new-zealand-wetland-plant-list-2021.pdf>

- Use cut-offs, shaping or other simple runoff controls where track runoff is causing erosion or creating a direct connection to water.
- Where practical, relocate or reduce use of gateways, stock camps or other high-use areas that are creating repeated soil damage or contaminant runoff.
- Where repeated stock traffic is causing soil damage, gravel or rock hardstand may be used where practicable to stabilise high-use areas.

7. Stock water

A reticulated stock-water system will be used so cattle do not need to access natural waterways for drinking water. Troughs will be strategically located away from waterways, wetlands, boggy ground and other areas of high runoff.

- Locate troughs on stable ground and, where practical, away from gateways or other locations where stock already concentrate.
- Troughs and water infrastructure will be checked regularly for leaks or overflow that could create wet ground, pugging or runoff pathways.
- Virtual fencing will be used to manage stock access around a trough if concentrated use begins to damage soil.
- Hard stand may be installed around troughs if required.

8. Monitoring and adaptive management

The grazing operation will be managed adaptively. The condition of the land and effectiveness of exclusions are more important than maintaining a fixed number of cattle.

8.1 Routine checks

Greater Wellington and the grazier will routinely check in their quarterly visits:

- stock numbers and the effective grazing area;
- virtual-fence compliance and any repeated boundary breaches;
- condition of ~~five~~**seven**-metre exclusions and whether wider setbacks are needed;
- pasture cover and signs of overgrazing;
- pugging, tracking, bare soil, slips or erosion;
- ~~new or expanding wet areas, seeps, channels or CSAs~~ **new or expanding wetlands, intermittent streams, CSAs or other potentially sensitive areas;**
- **approved setback exceptions and stock-access routes, including whether they remain appropriate;**
- condition of tracks, gateways, troughs and other high-use areas; and
- whether stock distribution is creating pressure in particular parts of the park.

Additional checks will be undertaken where significant rainfall, stock-control issues or other events indicate an increased environmental risk.

8.2 Response triggers

The following conditions will trigger a management response:

Trigger	Required response
Significant pugging or bare ground developing	Reduce stock density, move cattle, rest the area and/or create an immediate virtual fencing exclusion.

Trigger	Required response
Stock entering a ~~waterway, wetland, native vegetation or other exclusion~~ an ESA or setback outside an approved exception or access route	Check the virtual boundary immediately, correct the boundary/system issue, and manage or remove non-responsive animals.
New wetland, ~~seep~~ , intermittent stream channel or CSA or other potentially sensitive area identified	~~Ground-check and add an exclusion within virtual boundaries.~~ Ground-check and exclude where appropriate. Where there is uncertainty, apply the “if in doubt, stock are out” approach. Update mapping and the Annual Operations Plan as needed.
Erosion, slip activity or direct sediment pathway develops	Exclude or reduce grazing pressure and stabilise/manage the site as appropriate.
Feed supply or pasture cover below expectation	Reduce stock numbers, adjust rotations or remove stock rather than overgraze.
Track/trough/gateway runoff is directly connected to water	Redirect runoff, repair the site and/or alter stock use or access.

9. Annual Operations Plan

The Annual Operations Plan is the main mechanism for applying this guide to the areas being grazed each year. It will be prepared or updated before each grazing year and revised where material changes occur.

The Annual Operations Plan will record:

- the area available for grazing and any areas retired or temporarily excluded;
- ~~stock classes, expected stock numbers and maximum stocking intensity;~~
- **forecast monthly stock numbers, stock type and stocking rates for the coming year, including the forecast annual average stocking rate;**
- ~~quarterly stocking decisions and changes to the effective grazing area~~
- **actual monthly stock numbers and SU/ha reviewed quarterly, together with proposed monthly stocking rates for the following quarter and any changes to the remaining annual forecast;**
- ~~mapped virtual-fence boundaries and sensitive area exclusions,~~ **ESAs, 7 m setbacks and any approved setback or stock-access exceptions;**
- ~~known waterways, wetlands, intermittent streams, native vegetation, restoration areas and CSAs~~ **the current mapped ESAs;**
- stock-water arrangements;
- known soil/erosion risks and any specific management requirements;
- monitoring arrangements and responsibilities; and
- any material incidents, corrective actions or changes made during the year.

Records will be sufficient to demonstrate that environmental risks have been identified, managed and reviewed. This is consistent with the industry-agreed GMP approach to farm planning and auditable records.

Following each quarterly review, updated stocking information and the current ESA map will be made publicly available.

10.Roles and responsibilities

10.1 *Grazier / stock owner*

- day-to-day animal welfare, stock husbandry and stock movements;
- operating the virtual-fencing system and responding to alerts or breaches;
- keeping stock within approved grazing areas and out of exclusions;
- adjusting grazing to weather, soil condition, pasture cover and environmental risk;
- reporting environmental issues or newly identified sensitive areas to Greater Wellington; and
- implementing agreed corrective actions.

10.2 *Greater Wellington*

- overseeing compliance with the grazing licence and this guide;
- agreeing and reviewing the Annual Operations Plan;
- providing or confirming relevant mapping and environmental information;
- monitoring land condition and the effectiveness of exclusions;
- identifying areas to be retired from grazing or subject to additional controls; and
- working with the grazer to adjust management where adverse effects or emerging risks are identified.

11.Prohibited activities

Agricultural good management practice guidance often refers to a wider range of farm activities and associated risks. For clarity, the following activities are **not proposed** as part of the Belmont grazing operation and are therefore not addressed in this guide:

- grazing of livestock other than non-breeding beef cattle and sheep;
- irrigation;
- farm effluent collection or application;
- fertiliser application;
- broadscale pasture renewal; and
- cropping or cultivation.

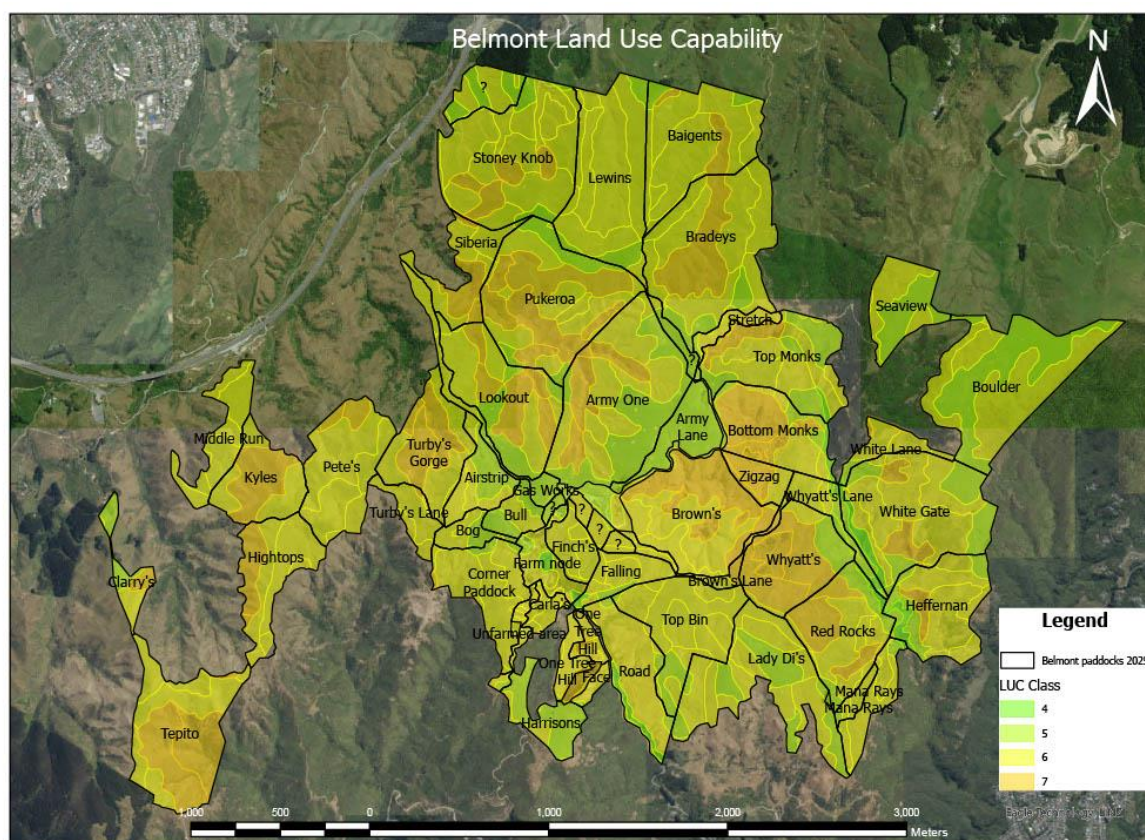
12.References

1. Environment Canterbury (2015). *Industry-agreed Good Management Practices relating to water quality, Version 2, 18 September 2015*. Developed through the Matrix of Good Management project with primary sector organisations including Beef + Lamb New Zealand.
2. Waikato Regional Council and Upper Waikato Primary Sector Partnership (2016 reprint). *Drystock Farms Menu: Practices to improve water quality*.
3. Harland, A.J., Novais, F.J., Fitzsimmons, C.J., Church, J.S., da Silva, G.M., Londono-Mendez, M.C. & Bork, E.W. (2025). Evaluating virtual fencing as a tool to manage beef cattle for rotational grazing across multiple years. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 381, 125166
4. Campbell, D.L.M., Ouzman, J., Mowat, D., Lea, J.M., Lee, C. & Llewellyn, R.S. (2020). Virtual Fencing Technology Excludes Beef Cattle from an Environmentally Sensitive Area. *Animals*, 10(6), 1069.
5. Page, M.J. (1995). *Land Use Capability Classification of the Wellington Region*. Landcare Research Science Series No. 6.

6. Beef + Lamb New Zealand (2026). *Western North Island Regional Delivery Plan 2026*. Includes 2024–25 Sheep and Beef Farm Survey data for Taranaki–Manawatū.
7. <https://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Documents/2021/10/Wetland-photo-ID-guide.pdf>
8. <https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/site/assets/files/0/74/640/2122-hbrc259-new-zealand-wetland-plant-list-2021.pdf>

13.Appendix

Stock unit calculations by Land Use Capability assessment



Land Use Capability (grouped units)	Total hectares (prior to 2026 retirements)	% of total	Average farm SU/ha by LUC*	Top producing farm SU/ha by LUC*	Potential SU based on Average farm	Potential SU based on Top producing farm
4w	10.1	1.0%	13	16	131	161
5c	116.6	11.3%	10	12	1166	1400
5s	68.8	6.7%	12	12	825	825
6c	235.7	22.8%	9	11	2121	2593
6e	377.5	36.5%	8	10	3020	3775
6s	12.7	1.2%	12	14	152	178
7c	86.7	8.4%	5	5	434	434
7e	79.8	7.7%	6	8	479	638
7s	46.3	4.5%	2	3	93	139
Total	1,034.2	100.00%			8421	10142

*SU/ha figures from the Wellington Region LUC Extended Legend; 5c, 5s and 7c values are estimated where published data were unavailable

	SU/ha
Potential stocking rate as Average farm	8.1
Potential stocking rate as Top producing farm	9.8
Proposed Belmont stocking rate maximum	7.0