

Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme Update

To sign or not?



Farmers in Hawke's Bay are making some big decisions as they consider signing up to take water from the Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme.

The Scheme is one element of a long term water management strategy for the Tukituki Catchment in Hawke's Bay. It is aimed at delivering intergenerational environmental, cultural, social and economic benefits to a region where climate change forecasts predict a significant drying and warming trend.

With approximately 70% of the minimum threshold of water uptake required to build the scheme in the contracting phase, a range of farmers and horticulturists are signing up, reflecting a range of land uses.

Water opens the door to new opportunities

The Ruataniwha Water Storage Scheme will allow the everyday farmer to make his farming business more robust, according to Central Hawke's Bay farmer Graham Anderson. The farm operates on three separate blocks, one of which is already irrigated and he's signed up to irrigate a further 200 hectares of his farming operation on his home block. Mr Anderson understands signing up for irrigation is a step change for those who haven't irrigated before but he believes irrigation enables farmers to operate a more planned business.

"I believe irrigation is a key risk management component on a farm. It takes the climatic risk out of the equation," says Mr Anderson. And he says that's not just for high value crops but also it provides a safety net in a pastoral system.

Graham Anderson says the discounts available to farmers signing up early make the numbers work a lot easier and gives them time to find the best use of water. "Under good pasture management you will grow 50% more grass



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Graham Anderson.



Proposed irrigation site (CHB)

with water, even if you do nothing differently."

But Mr Anderson believes the water opens up new agricultural opportunities as it provides security of supply which means farmers can consider other options such as cropping.

"We've done the numbers and the economics stack up for a simple system, and the water gives you options to hold stock or feed less supplements. Then you can look at other options to add value to your business."

For more information visit www.hbrc.govt.nz - keyword Ruataniwha

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