

MARCH 2016

# Hawke's Bay Trends

THE STATE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT

TEMPERATURES

RAINFALL

RIVER FLOW

GROUNDWATER & SOIL

RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES

**HAWKE'S BAY** | Environmental Science  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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REGIONAL COUNCIL

## March 2016

March was a toned down version of February – warmer than usual and drier than usual but not to the same turbo-charged extent as the previous month.

All parts of the region had below normal rainfall and the Ruataniwha Plains especially, where totals fell short of half the monthly average.

River flows show a similar region-wide story of sagging below the long term mean. Groundwater results are more mixed but levels favour being below rather than above the norm.

Soil moisture sits reasonably perky after the month signed off with a brief thunderous deluge that stripped the leaves off my fledgling fruit trees which took about a month's effort to plant.

Temperatures remained nicely summer-like and our bathing water quality report waves goodbye on a mostly positive note.

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**Senior Scientist Climate & Air**



## SUMMARY

**The short summary – dry and warm, a tamer version of February.**

This is a summary of the regions rainfall, river flows, ground water, air quality and soil moisture levels.

Data and images provided by HBRC.

### ***April to June Forecast***

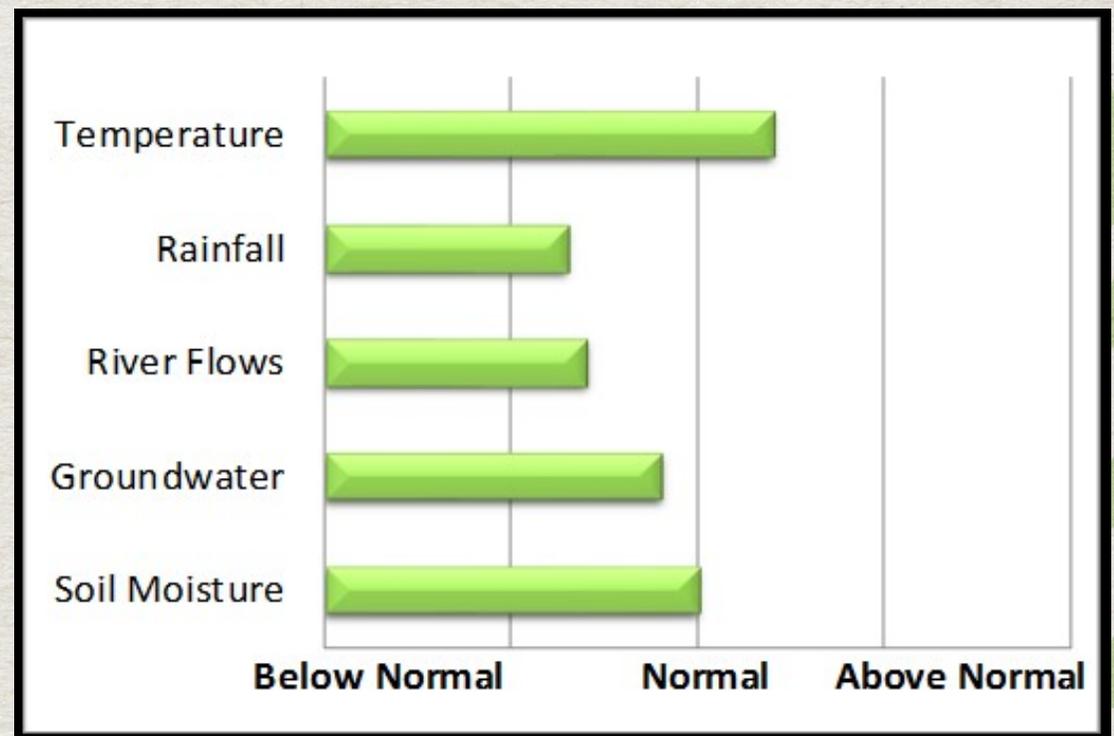
Temperature: Above average  
Rain: Near or below normal  
River flows: Near or below normal  
Soil moisture: Near or below normal

*(source : NIWA)*

**For more information**

**[www.hbrc.govt.nz](http://www.hbrc.govt.nz)**

**P: 06 835 9200**



# TEMPERATURES

## Holding on to Summer!

### Mean Difference from Normal

Maximum Temperature: 0.7°C

Minimum Temperature: 1.5°C

Mean Daily Maximum: 21°C

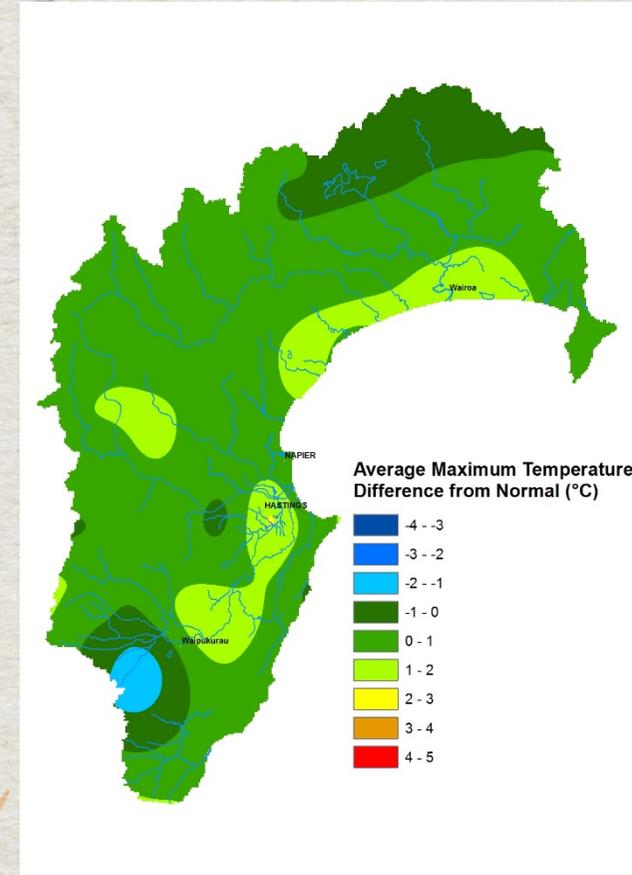
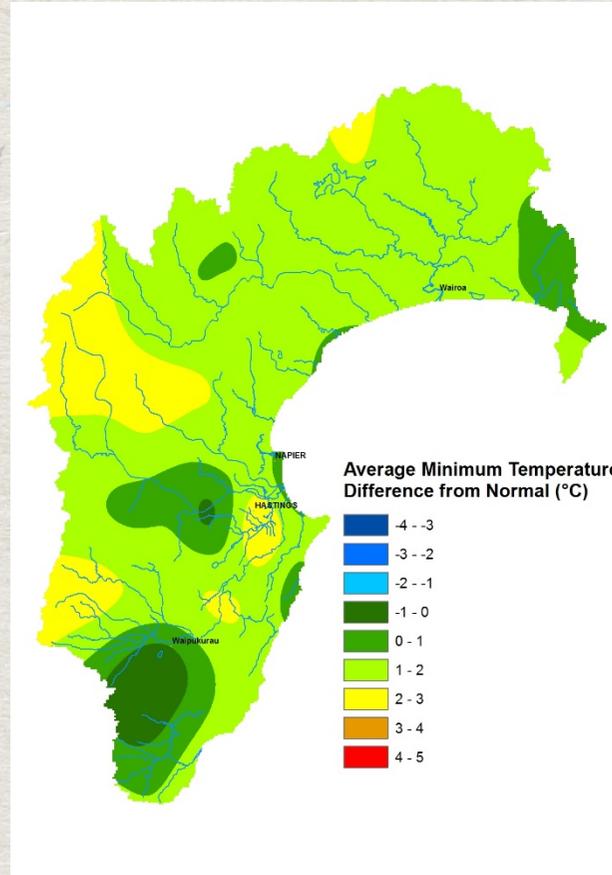
Mean Daily Minimum: 12°C

Highest Daily: 33.1°C

Location: Hastings AWS & Napier Aero AWS

Lowest Daily: -0.1°C

Location: Taharua



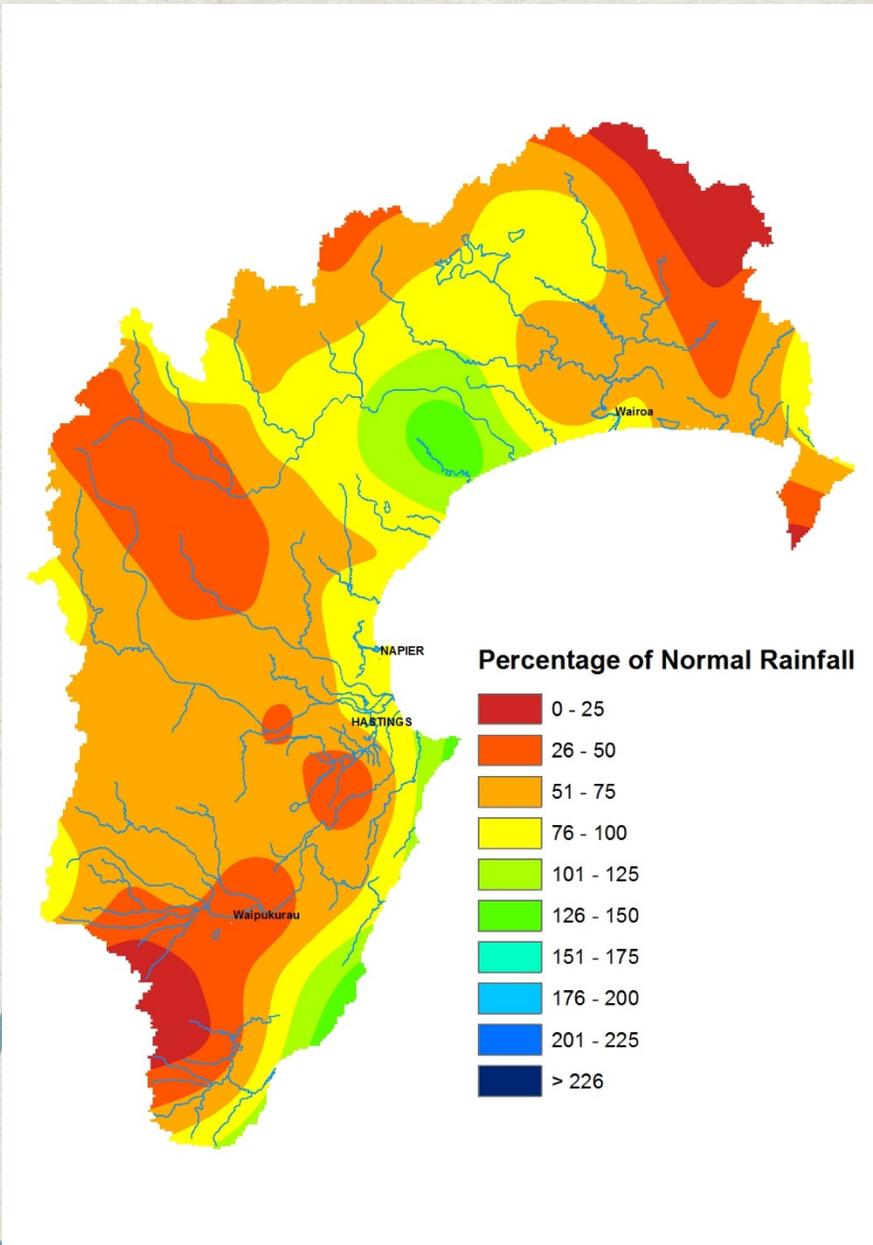
# RAINFALL

## Below normal, especially around the Ruataniwha Plains

Percentage of normal March rainfall  
(30 year average)  
For areas in the region:

Waikaremoana	72%
Northern HB	76%
Tangoio	73%
Kaweka	55%
Ruahine	67%
Heretaunga Plains	62%
Ruataniwha Plains	48%
<u>Southern HB</u>	<u>66%</u>

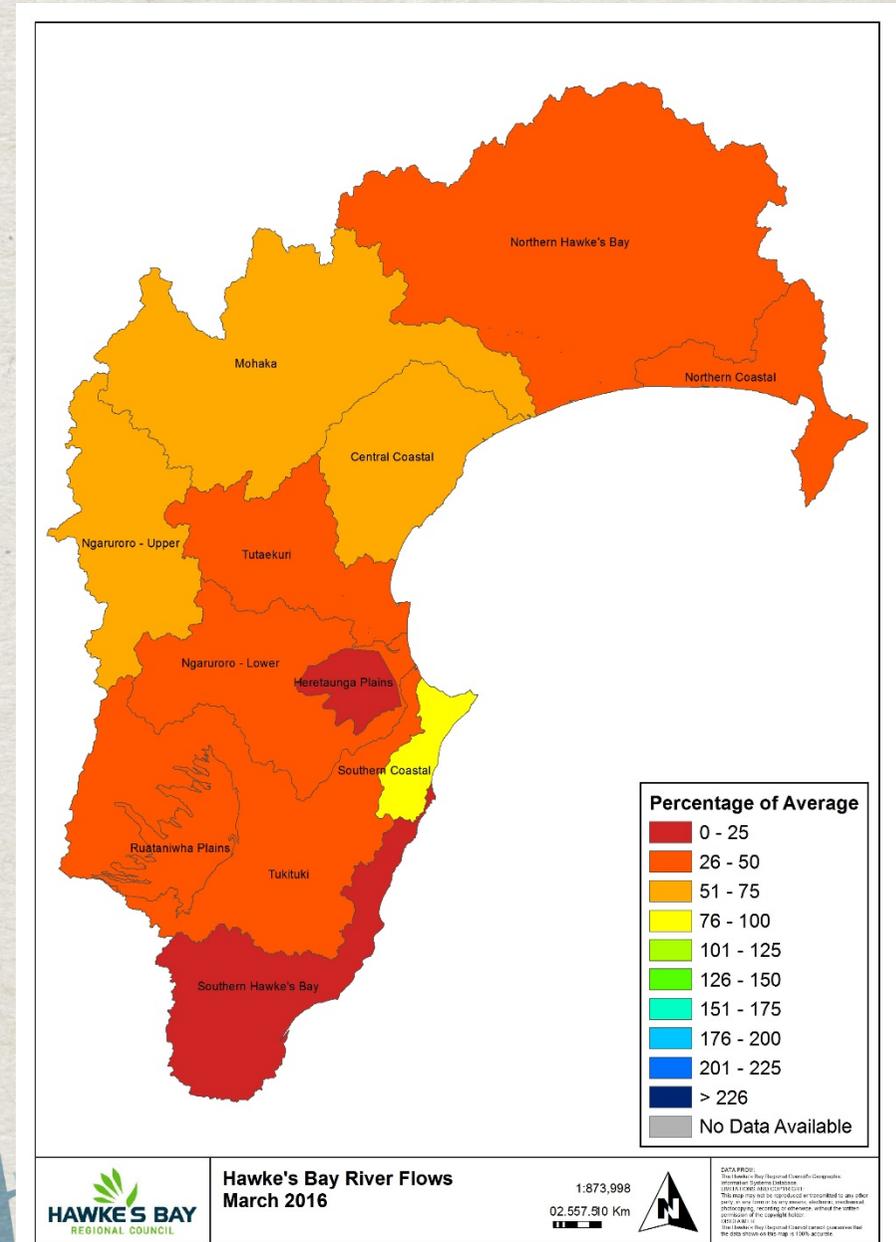
Hawke's Bay Region 65%



# RIVER FLOW

## Percentage of average March flows for areas in the region:

Northern Coastal	27%
Northern HB – Hangaroa River	27%
Northern HB – Wairoa River	26%
Northern HB – Waiau River	89%
Mohaka	60%
Central Coastal	64%
Tūtaekuri	28%
Heretaunga Plains	20%
Ngaruroro - Upper	53%
Ngaruroro - Lower	28%
Southern Coastal	92%
Ruataniwha Plains	30%
Tukituki	27%
Southern HB	0%
<b>Hawke's Bay Region</b>	<b>41%</b>



## Groundwater Levels

### *Heretaunga Basin*

Mostly normal water levels, some below normal in the unconfined zone.

### *Ruataniwha Basin*

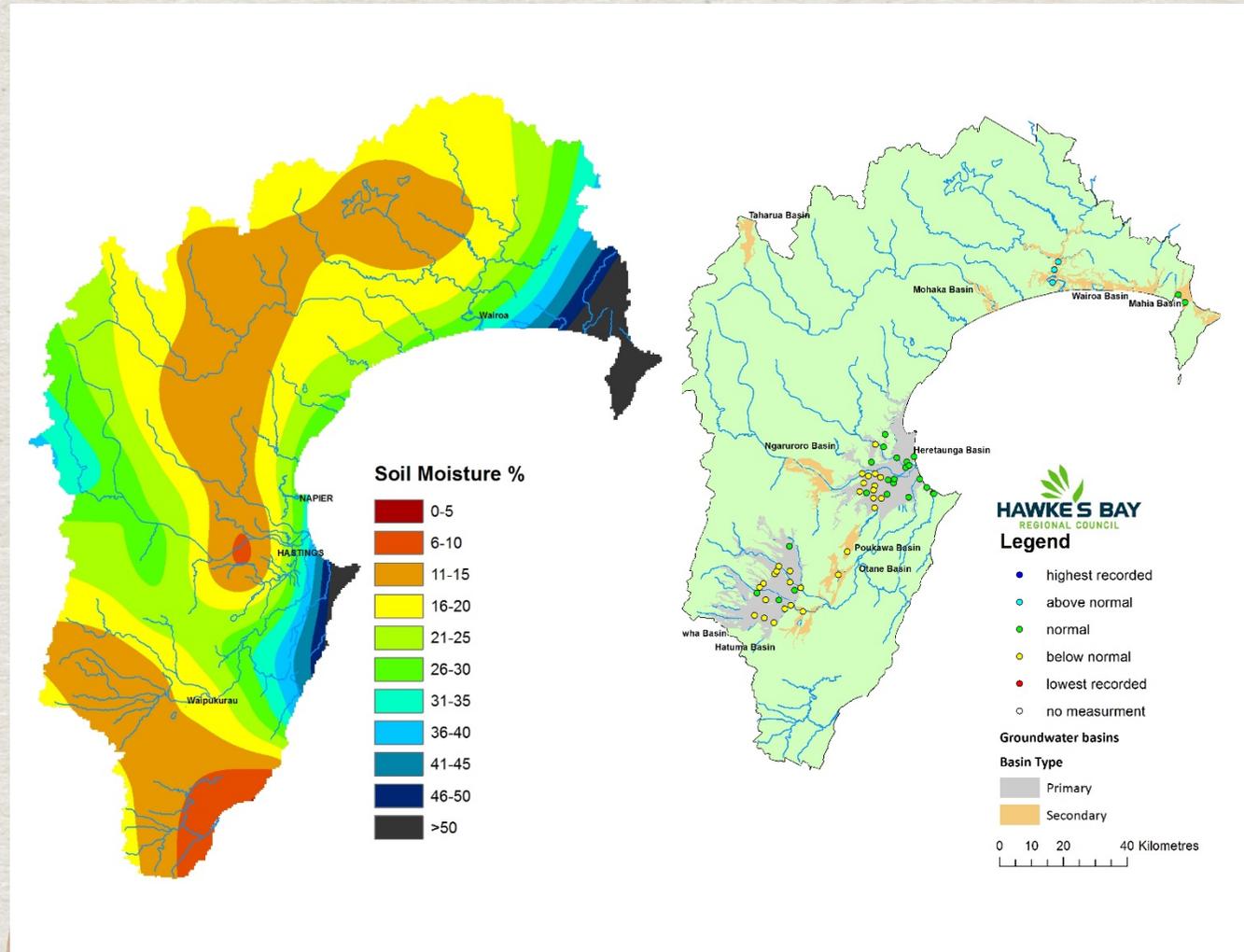
Mostly below normal water levels

### *Secondary Basins*

A mix of below normal to above normal water levels

### *Soil Moisture*

Near Normal

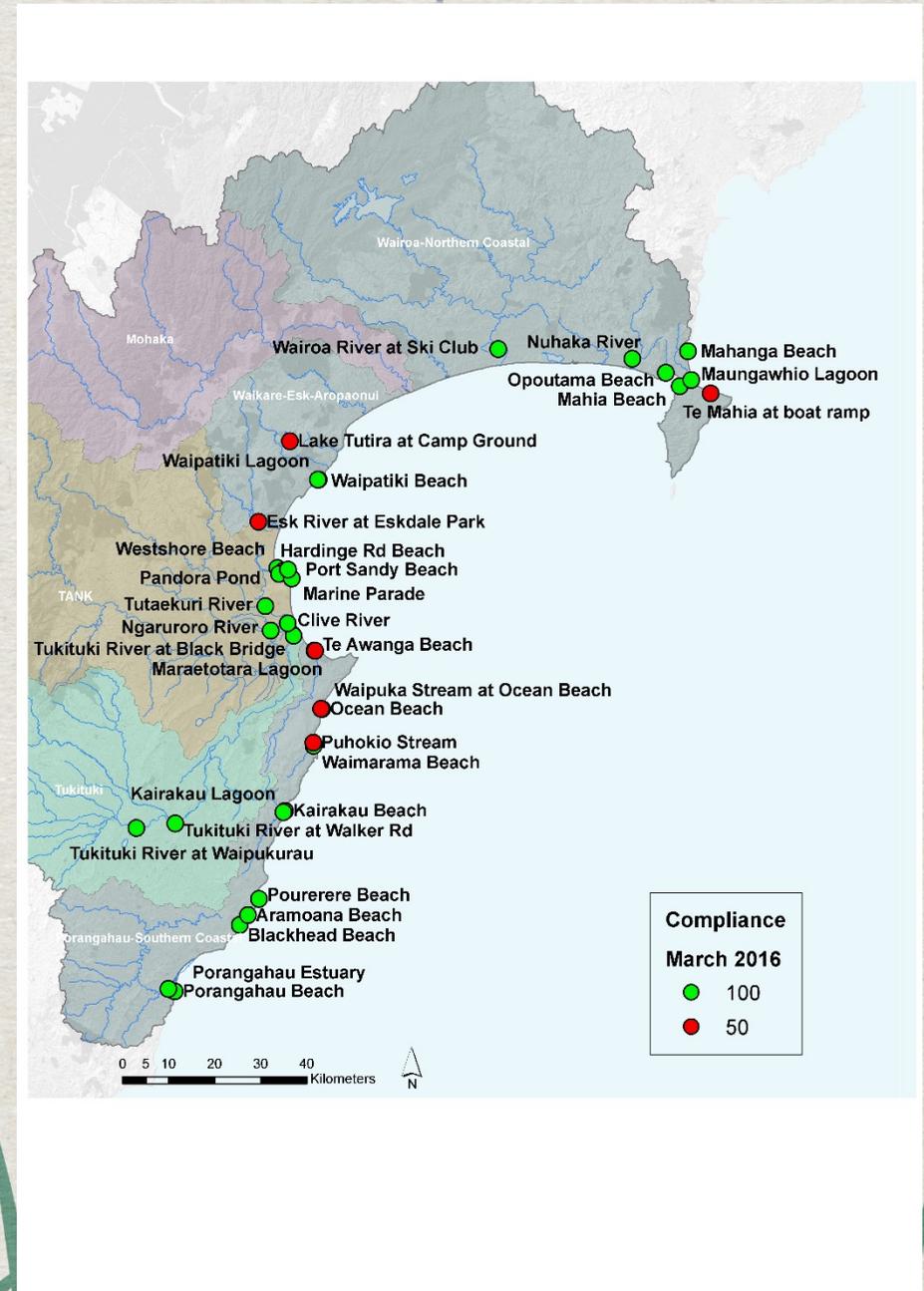


# RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY

## March 2016

The sample sites throughout Hawkes' Bay were sampled twice in March 2016, so the map indicates only 50% and 100% compliance. The programme duration is 20 weeks from the first Monday in November each year.

Phormidium surveys will continue throughout the year in the state of the environment rivers' monitoring programme.



## March 2016

Mild temperatures and rainfall throughout March, although patchy at times, allowed pastures to begin their autumn recovery. Feed levels are generally adequate to good. Areas in the southern half of the region are drier and reduced stock numbers have balanced the lower pasture covers in places. Ongoing rainfall and continuing warm conditions in April will be critical to build pre-winter feed covers to adequate levels in the drier areas.

Dairy farmers have experienced a moist and mild autumn with pastures and crops growing well. Most dairy farmers are reducing cow numbers to enable them to winter all stock at home. This means other farmers who have normally grazed some dairy cattle are having to look for alternative stock. This is challenging given current high prices and the impact on cash flow of having to purchase animals.

The warm summer with regular rainfall and adequate irrigation has lifted fruit size for apples with a bumper export crop expected from Hawke's Bay. The cooler nights in March have helped colour the fruit. The late start to the season and large crops mean that orchards will be flat-out harvesting throughout April.

Most of the white grape varieties have been harvested, and managed to avoid the rain. Harvest of the red varieties is underway.