



Nutrient Management  
Adviser Certification  
Programme Ltd

Nutrient Management Adviser Certification Programme

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024



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**September 2024**



## Strategic Goals



To set a credible benchmark for expertise in nutrient management.



To deliver value to advisers who become certified.



To work in an integrated way with other certification and assurance schemes to support the rural sector.

## About

The Nutrient Management Adviser Certification Programme is an industry-wide certification programme targeted at those who provide nutrient management advice to New Zealand farmers.

By ensuring that advisers have the right qualifications and experience, we can make sure New Zealand farmers receive the highest standard of nutrient management advice to enable sustainable, responsible and efficient nutrient use.

The Programme is administered by the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand.

The scheme relies on the support of DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb NZ, the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand and the New Zealand Institute of Primary Industry Management.

## Aims for the programme

- Ensuring farmers are confident in the advice they receive.
- Ensuring advisers and their employers are confident in the advice they give.
- Ensuring stakeholders (Regional Councils, food processors, banks etc) are confident in the advice farmers receive.

We work to achieve this by setting a credible benchmark for expertise in nutrient management and striving to deliver value to advisers who become certified.

# Snapshot

**11**

Years in operation

**218**

Current certified  
advisers  
(at June 24)

**361**

Advisers certified  
since inception

**635**

Adviser reports  
audited since 2017

**38%**

Reports audited A  
grade in 2023



# Chair's Report

## The year in summary

To meet the ever-changing needs of today's environment we are constantly looking at the make-up of the Nutrient Management Adviser Certification Programme to ensure farmers consistently receive the best possible nutrient management advice possible.

This year we took the time to hear from those who are currently certified about their experiences in order that we can ensure that the programme best meets the needs of those participating, as well as those who are utilising the services of a Certified Nutrient Management Adviser. We are conscious that Certified Nutrient Management Advisers represent over 80 different organisations, so we want to ensure that we continue to offer the best value across the spectrum.

Unfortunately, we had to raise the programme fees this year, the first time since 2017. We were particularly grateful for the support from our partner organisations (DairyNZ, Beef+Lamb and the Fertiliser Association) in helping us to keep our fees as low as possible.

We have also been working across the sector testing opportunities to co-operate with others on certification. We are very aware that currently there are a multitude of certification and assurance systems in place and we, along with others, are actively looking to avoid duplication while delivering best value to farmers or the best support to advisers.

We will continue to engage to test opportunities to work more collaboratively with others to support the rural sector.

*Mike Manning*

Mike Manning

NMACP Board Chair

## Who we are

The Nutrient Management Adviser Certification Programme is managed by a pan-industry Board of Directors and a Standard Setting Group.

Critical to the programme's success is the financial support it receives from DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb New Zealand and the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand.

The programme is strongly dependent on the long-standing nutrient management courses provided by Massey University. Completion of the

intermediate and advanced nutrient management courses at Massey is a pre-requisite for certification. We are particularly pleased to have Ass Professor Lucy Burkitt from Massey University as part of our Standard Setting Group to continue this ongoing relationship.

### Our Board of Directors

The Board is responsible for governance, direction and budgeting. It assures that the programme is delivering on its strategic goals.



**Mike Manning**  
Chief Science Officer  
Ravensdown Limited  
NMACP Director (Chair)



**Andrew Sanders**  
National Sales Manager  
Ballance Agri-Nutrients Limited  
NMACP Director



**James Allen**  
Managing Director  
AgFirst Waikato Limited  
Chairman AgFirst NZ  
NMACP Director



**Geoff Taylor**  
Strategy and Investments  
DairyNZ Limited  
NMACP Director



**Dr Vera Power**  
Chief Executive  
Fertiliser Association of New Zealand  
NMACP Director



**Jason Griffin**  
Extension Team Manager, North Island  
Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd  
NMACP Director

#### Administrator

Donna Mumm manages the day-to-day administration of the programme. Donna is the contact person for potential and current certified advisers and for any public enquiries about the programme.

## Our Standard Setting Group

The Standard Setting Group sets clear and transparent standards for the training and assessment of certified nutrient management advisers (CNMA). The Group also defines the scope of knowledge within which advisers are certified.



**Ants Roberts**  
Chief Scientific Officer  
Ravensdown Ltd



**Jim Moir**  
Associate Professor of Soil Fertility  
Lincoln University



**Jon Palmer**  
Sustainable Agricultural Adviser  
Waikato Regional Council



**Jane Chrystal**  
Policy Insights Manager  
Beef & Lamb New Zealand Limited



**Erica van Reenen**  
Managing Director  
Agribusiness & Environmental  
Consultant  
AgFirst Manawatu-Whanganui Ltd



**Adam Duker**  
Lead Adviser – Solutions and  
Development  
Dairy NZ Limited



**Lucy Burkitt**  
Associate Professor  
FLRC Environmental Sciences  
Group, Massey University



**Leo Fietje**  
Rural Consultant



**Grant Bickley**  
Science Extension Officer  
Ballance AgriNutrients Ltd

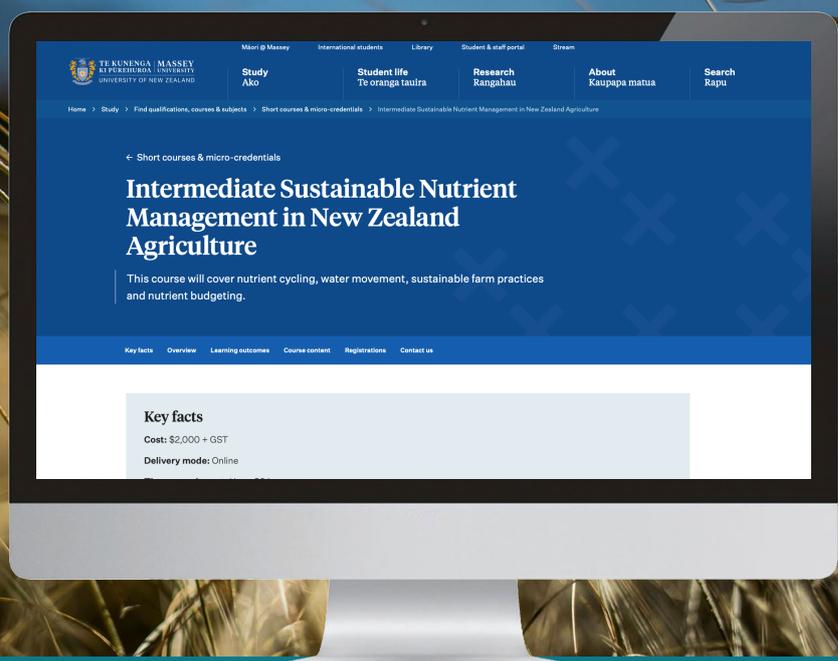
# How The Programme Works

## To become certified advisers must have:

- An agricultural degree, or equivalent experience
- Successfully completed the Massey University Intermediate and Advanced certificate papers in Sustainable Nutrient Management
- Completed five nutrient management reports or the equivalent over a two-year period, and at least one within six months prior to application for certification.
- Submitted two nutrient management reports for audit.
- Passed an online exam.

## Once certified, advisers must:

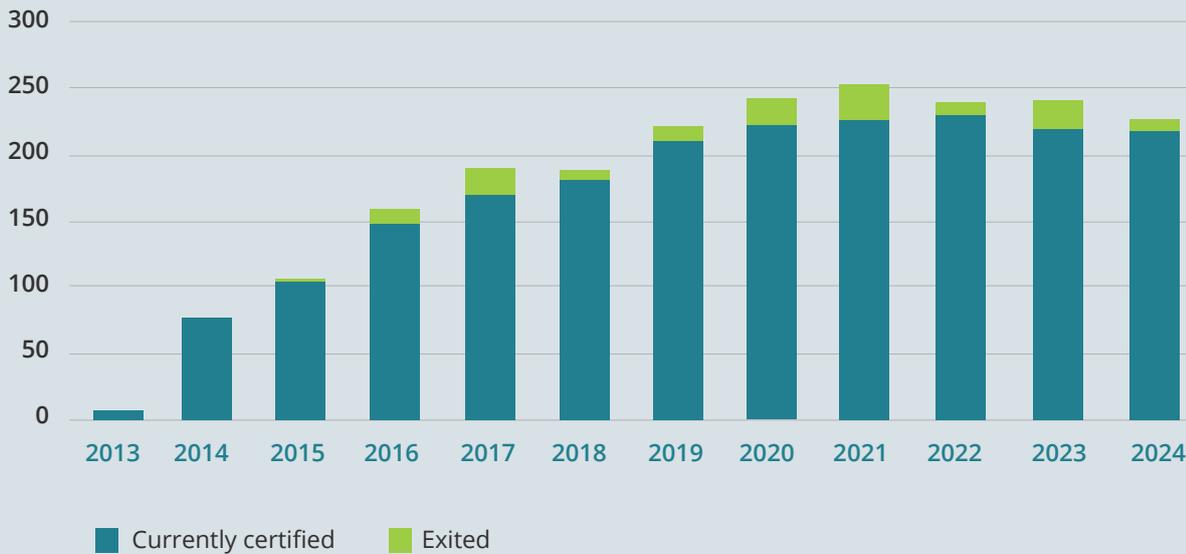
- Agree to be bound by our code of ethics.
- Undertake a minimum of 15 hours professional development, annually.
- Complete two professional learning modules.
- Submit nutrient management plans for regular audit.



# Certified Advisers

At the end of the financial year, we had **218 advisers certified**.

Progress on certification to date



Numbers certified in the programme have been relatively stable over the past few years, with newly certified advisers balancing the numbers of those departing from the programme. This reflects farm advisers' skills being highly sought after. As a result, there is always a degree of churn through the programme.

The programme has evolved to include advisers from a much greater range of organisations. Initially, certified advisers predominately worked for fertiliser companies, but now they comprise less than half the number of certified advisers. Currently advisers work in 81 different organisations.

These include:

- Agricultural consultancies
- Regional councils
- Farm management consultancies
- Fertiliser companies
- Food processors
- Rural service firms
- Farm levy bodies
- Government departments.



# Enhancing Capability and Confidence

Auditing of nutrient reports submitted by advisers was introduced in 2017. The intent was to provide assurance that nutrient reports are of high quality and ensure farmers have confidence in the capability of advisers.

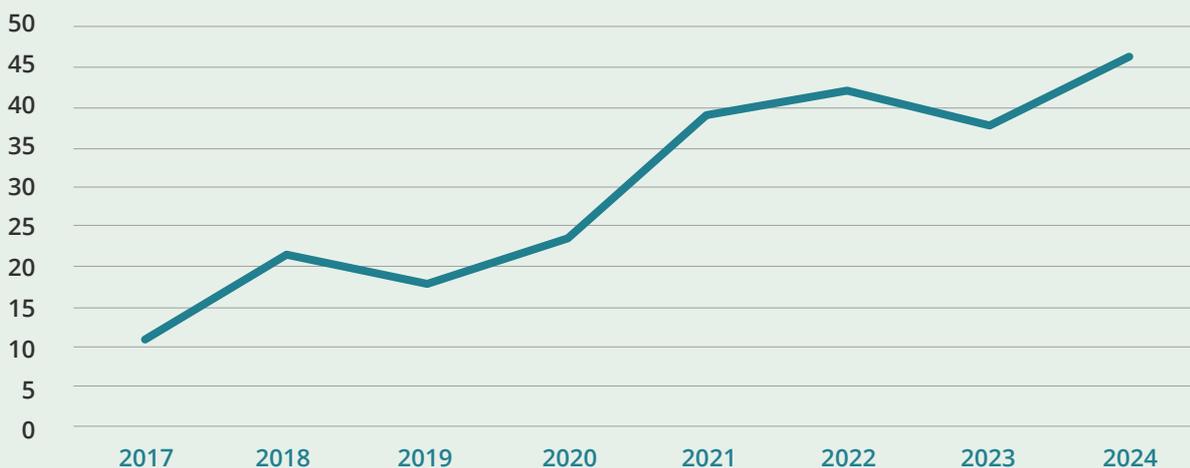
Advisers submit reports for auditing by an external auditor as part of certification, and as part of continuing professional development. The reports submitted are expected to show understanding of nutrient cycling in agricultural systems and to use the right information to give good advice.

The intention is for each adviser to have a report audited regularly. We have undertaken 635 audits since the start of the programme or about 100 audits per year. A key challenge is ensuring

there is a common auditing standard across the reports prepared for a broad range of purposes, such as, fertiliser advice, consent applications or farm assurances. Areas requiring increased focus include ensuring that the national or regional regulatory context relevant to the individual farm is clearly identified and in the case of reports prepared as part of farm planning assurance, that the nutrient budget shows a clear understanding of the nutrient flows on the farm.

The following graph shows the percentage of advisers receiving an A grade rating since the introduction of the auditing of nutrient reports in 2017 through to the current year.

**Percent Graded A**



## Professional Development

Advisers undertake a minimum of 15 hours of professional development each year and complete at least two compulsory learning modules. This ensures advisers can provide the most up-to-date and relevant advice. These learning modules have received strong positive feedback.

### Currently available learning modules

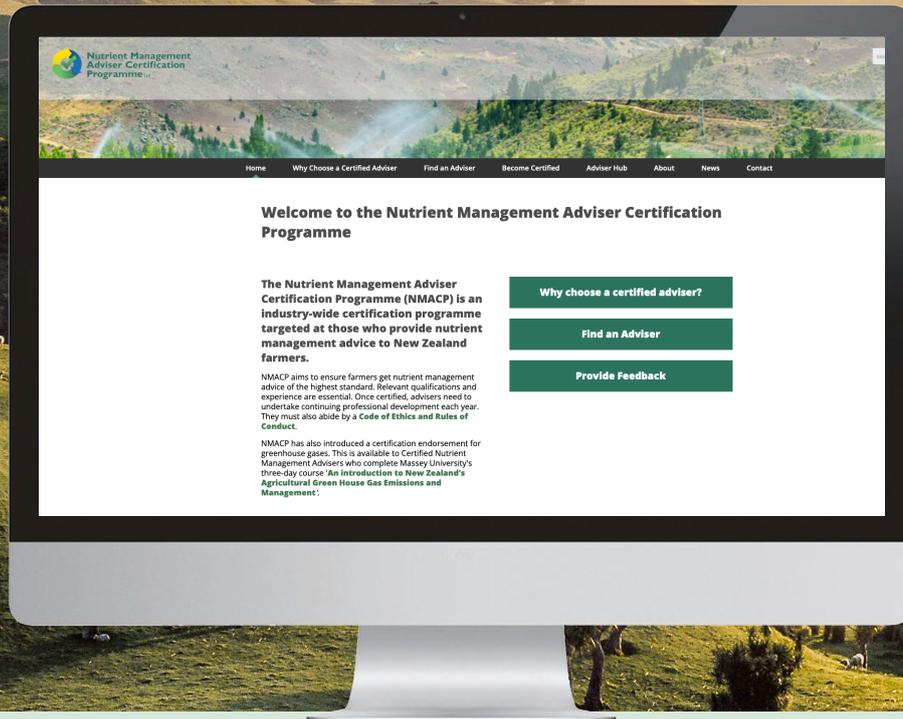
- Tiered Fertiliser Management System for soil cadmium
- Revised Code of Practice for Fertiliser Nutrient Management
- Nitrogen mitigation
- Sheep and beef farm systems
- Fundamentals of Irrigation:
  - Introduction to soil and water, and irrigation scheduling
  - Irrigation systems and nutrients
- Growth cycles and nutrient requirements of forage crops
- Mitigations to reduce P loss
- Code of ethics
- Growth cycles and nutrient requirements of vegetable crops
- Using S-map
- Trace element use on pastoral farms
- Lime use on pastoral farms

## Challenges for the programme

In the last few years there has been a high degree of regulatory uncertainty around farm planning and environmental protection at both national and regional levels. Such regulatory uncertainty has inevitably resulted in some farmers and growers delaying the progression of their farm planning, in turn impacting the demand for certified advisers.

Currently, there are a multitude of certification and assurance systems in place, risking duplication for advisers and confusion for farmers. The programme has been testing opportunities to work more collaboratively with others, to better support the rural sector.

# Communications



Our communications and marketing is designed to:

- Raise awareness of the programme.
- Improve engagement with the programme (across the primary sector and specific key audiences).
- Increase the number of advisers becoming and remaining certified.
- Boost the number of farmers choosing to use certified advisers for their nutrient management advice.

Our website is the key mechanism we use to promote the certification scheme. We use Google analytics to track hits on our website. This year we had 2,100 unique users visit the website, viewing a total of approximately 12,000 pages. The most popular pages on the website, other than the homepage, include the 'directory details' and 'find an adviser' pages.

We track which regions drive the most traffic to our 'find an adviser' website page as a measure of likely demand. The regions undergoing active plan implementation, or where there is active community discussion, are the areas with high demand. Canterbury, Southland, Waikato, and Otago continue to be areas of high demand.

## CNMA Survey results

This year we undertook a survey of Certified Nutrient Management Advisers designed to find out their views on the programme.

### Survey highlights included:

- Seventy-nine people responded with almost half (47%) having been with the programme for more than seven years.
  - Respondents represented a cross-section of organisations including 35% fertiliser companies, 34% consultancies, 7% food processors, and 6% agricultural support organisations.
  - Overall respondents were positive about the process of becoming certified with the main concern raised relating to the time involved in getting certified.
  - Advisers considered the learning modules met their needs with nitrogen and phosphorus mitigation and the new module on the Code of Practice for Nutrient Management receiving the highest ratings.
  - A significant proportion of those who responded suggested removing the GHG endorsement but replacing it with GHG learning modules.
  - Generally, those being audited were positive about the process, but some would prefer it to be less often.
  - Advisers rated communication at 77 out of 100.
  - Fifty-three percent of respondents thought the scheme was promoted well, while on the flipside several comments suggest there is very limited promotion within organisations.
- Improvements to the programme are being made as a result of the survey.**

