



Ministry for the
Environment
Manatū Mō Te Taiao

Nitrate leaching from livestock time series 1990–2017

Title

Nitrate leaching from livestock time series 1990-2017

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Description

We report on trends in nitrate-nitrogen from livestock that has leached from soil per year across New Zealand since 1990. Nitrogen is an essential nutrient for plant growth. It occurs naturally, but in agricultural systems more nitrogen is commonly added to soils as fertiliser or as urine or dung from livestock. Not all the additional nitrogen can be used by plants and microorganisms, so some nitrate-nitrogen may leach (drain) from the soil. Livestock urine is the dominant source of nitrate-nitrogen leached from soil. Leached nitrate-nitrogen can enter groundwater and waterways, potentially causing ecological harm. The amount of nitrate-nitrogen leaching from the soil varies around the country as a result of different land uses, climates, and soils.

Source

Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research

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