

# Native vegetation on sheep and beef farms at local and regional scales

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Sheep and beef farms cover approximately one third of New Zealand and typically occur at lower elevations than, and in areas where public conservation land is sparse. Native vegetation on farms has inherent values as well as providing habitat and enhancing connectivity for other native species such as birds and invertebrates. It also offers benefits to farming through shelter, shade, erosion control etc. We identify the contribution that native vegetation on farms can make to improving connectivity between already protected areas at a regional scale. We do this by mapping the distribution of native vegetation across private land in the Northland Region. We also aim to describe the way that native vegetation can occur at a farm scale and relate this to environmental gradients. We do this by mapping the distribution of native vegetation at the farm-scale for several sheep and beef farms in the Canterbury, Gisborne and Northland regions. Native vegetation can occur as remnants, as regenerating patches after the removal of farming pressures or as scattered native plants (trees, shrubs, tussocks) through a pasture matrix. We discuss the importance of this native biodiversity at local and regional scales, and comment on how these different distribution patterns interact with farm management.