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## Tasman Farms aims to improve

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Tasman Farms, a dairy, beef and sheep farmer in Tasmania majority-owned by the New Plymouth District Council, says it is confident of lifting its performance this year.

The owner of 19,000 hectares of land in the northwest of Tasmania said although its final result had yet to be confirmed, it was confident earnings before interest and tax would be at least \$13 million, compared to \$6.6m in 2010.

Operating earnings before livestock revaluations had increased to more than \$7m, compared to a \$2m loss in 2010, the company said.

Tasman Farms, 72 per cent owned by the New Plymouth District Council through its investment arm, has a majority shareholding in the Van Diemen's Land Company, established in 1824, which is well-advanced on a A\$13m (\$17m) on-farm upgrade programme.

Tasman Farms said it had achieved record milk production for the 2010-2011 year of more than 5.1m/kg milksolids, an increase of 27 per cent on the previous year from the same dairying area.

Average milk price for the year is also up on last year, currently forecast at A\$5.45/kg compared last year's A\$4.25/kg.

The likelihood of an improved final payment from New Zealand dairy giant Fonterra would further enhance the result, the company said.

A shift in milk supply pattern from the operation's change to autumn calving and increased farm production had allowed the company to benefit from Fonterra's pricing premiums.

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