

# Facial Eczema Risk and Incidence Report

Week 3

22 Jan 2021 - 28 Jan 2021

## Weekly Summary



Thank you to submitters for providing data for this report.

If you would like to contribute facial eczema spore count data please visit <https://labportal.gribbles.co.nz> and set up a user account to access our online portal. Instructions for using the portal can be found on our website <https://bit.ly/FE-Portal>. If you simply wish to view the FE spore counts in real time, please visit <http://bit.ly/FE-reports> (no user account is required).

## About Facial Eczema

Facial eczema (FE) affects most ruminants but especially cattle and sheep throughout most North Island regions plus the northern end of the South Island. FE is responsible for serious production losses estimated to be around \$200m annually with affected stock suffering liver and skin damage, which together contribute to ill-thrift, reduced fertility, reduced milk and meat production and, if left unprotected, in worst cases death.

During summer and autumn months warm, humid conditions together with dead litter in pasture support the growth of a fungus (*Pithomyces chartarum*) in pasture. Animals graze toxic pasture and once in the rumen the spores release a mycotoxin sporidesmin, which then enters the blood stream eventually finding its way into the liver. The toxin specifically attacks the cells of the bile duct resulting in the liver being unable to process and excrete waste products and phylloerythrin, a chlorophyll breakdown product. Infected animals display signs of photosensitisation and look distressed. The first signs are often reddening and swelling of skin exposed to the sun (i.e. around the eyes, ears, lips and nose) as well as restlessness, shaking and rubbing of the head and ears, and seeking shade.

## Prevention of Facial Eczema

With careful planning and implementing a sound FE management plan, farmers can take control of the risk of facial eczema. Prevention is the only recognised method of avoiding FE. Ensure all staff are aware of the associated risks and dangers of FE but ensure the plan is implemented when spore counts are rising but before clinical signs are identified.

## Predict Risk / Monitor Management Programme

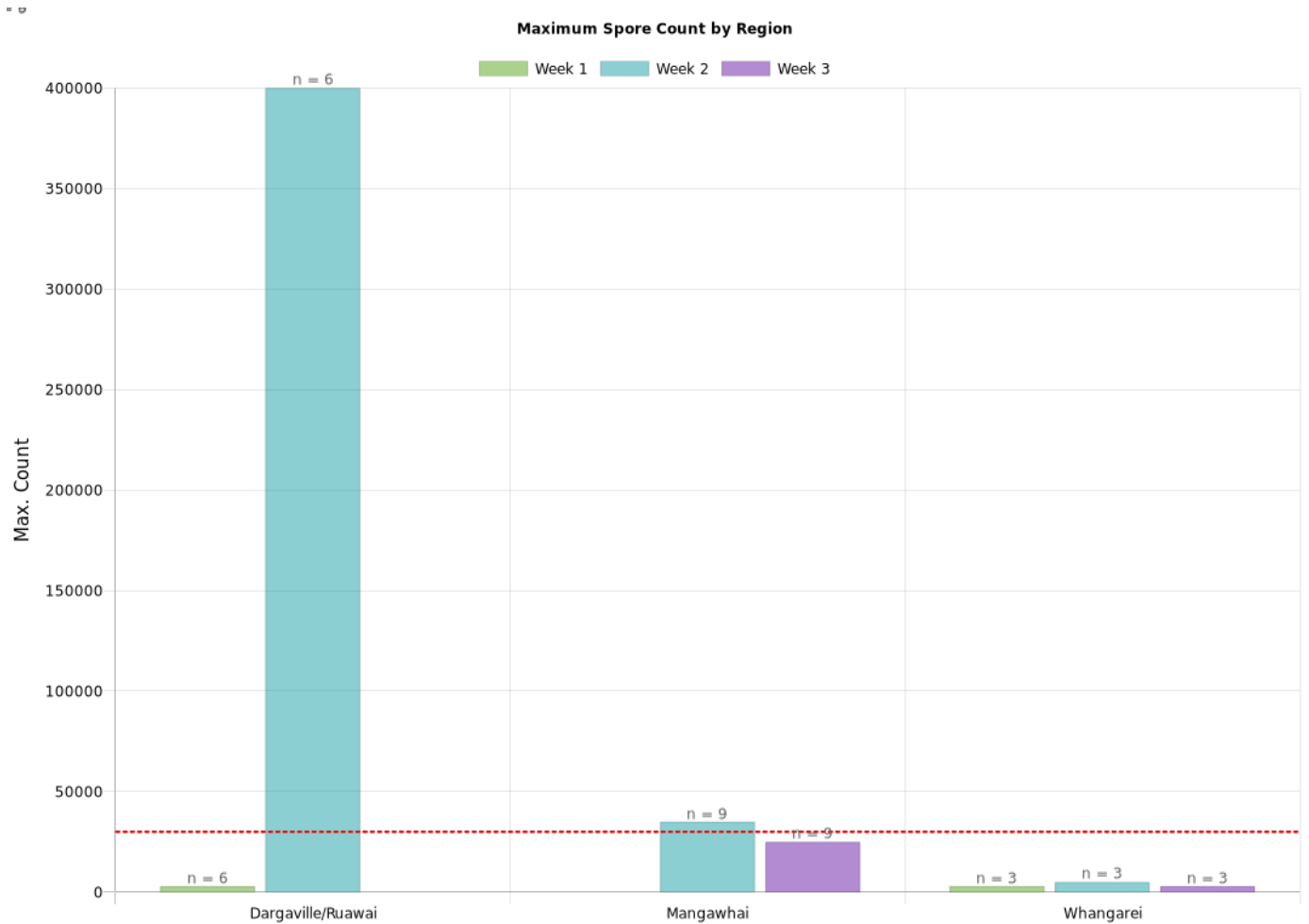
There are a variety of testing options that can assist determining if animals are at risk or to check that your management programme is working. It is recommended that 10 cows are selected to test for serum zinc and GGT 3-6 weeks after your management programme has started (Facial Eczema - Management for New Zealand dairy herds, Dairy NZ).

## It is Essential to Start FE Control Early

Ideally start prevention with zinc treatment and Fungicidal sprays, two or three weeks before the spore growth danger period for maximum protection.

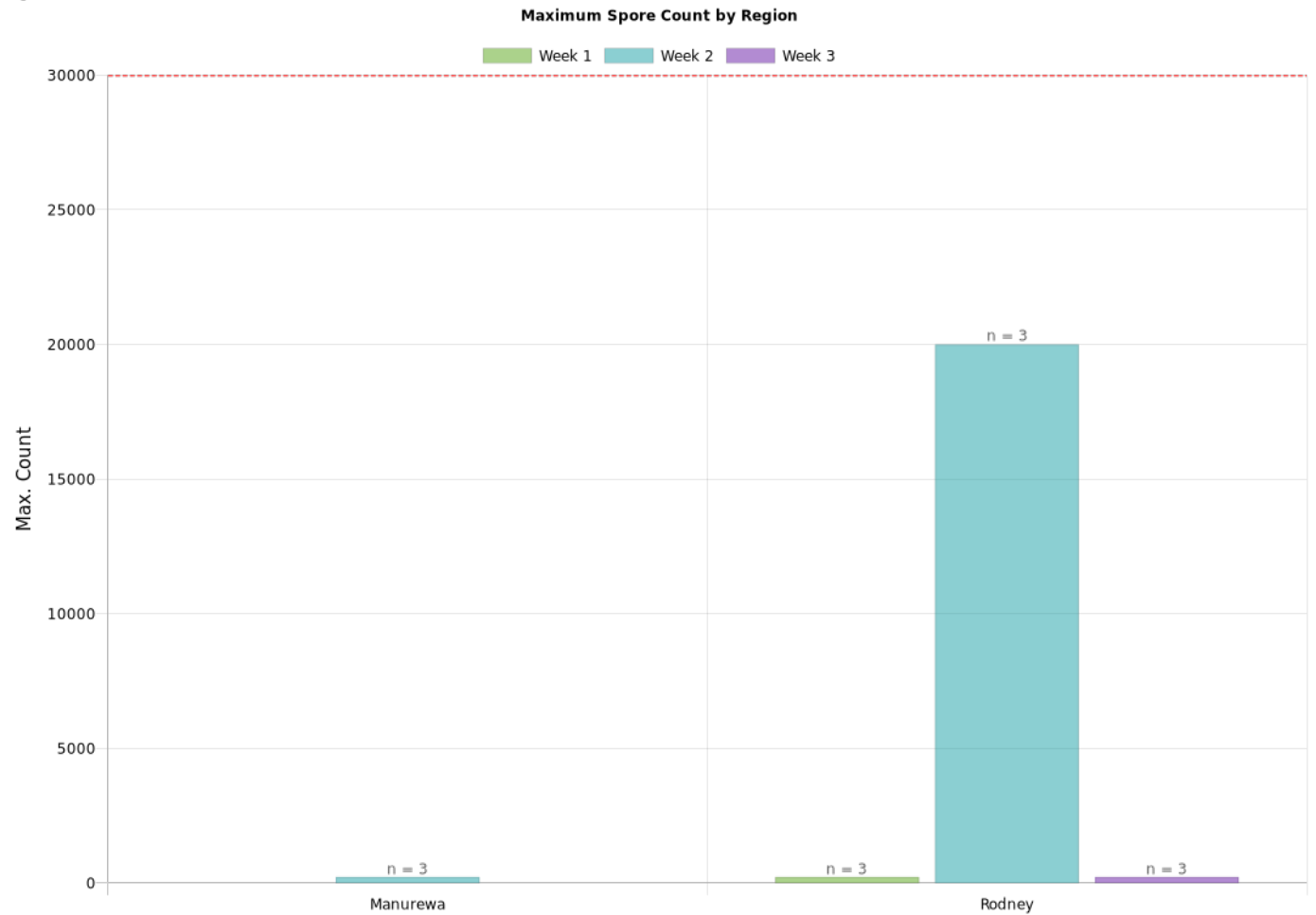
## Northland

When local pasture spore counts are trending upwards of 30,000 spores/g and weather conditions look favourable for sporulation, monitor your own farm's pasture spore counts week to week and implement facial eczema control and prevention strategies. Data recorded below is the highest count received in each region per week.



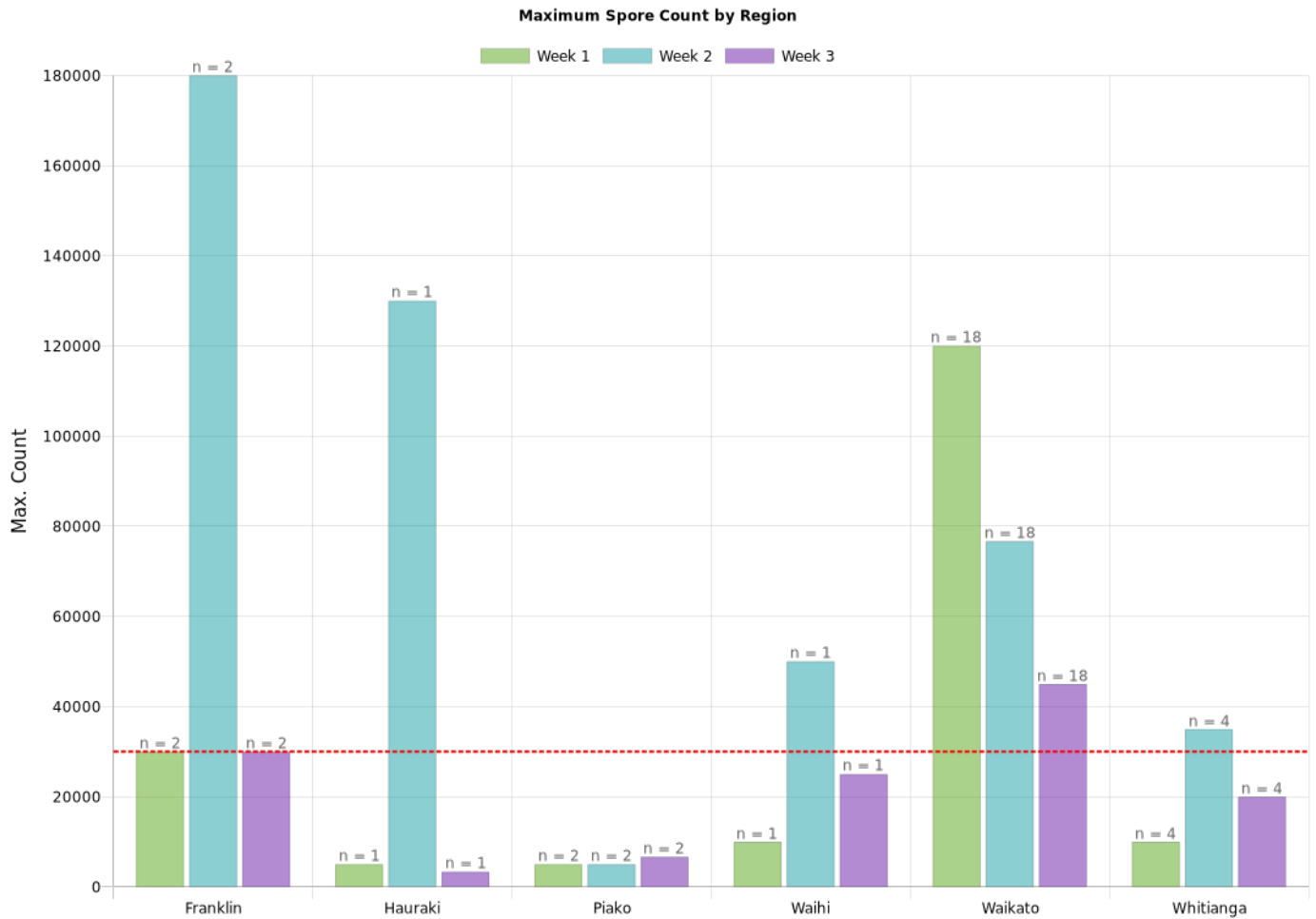
## Auckland

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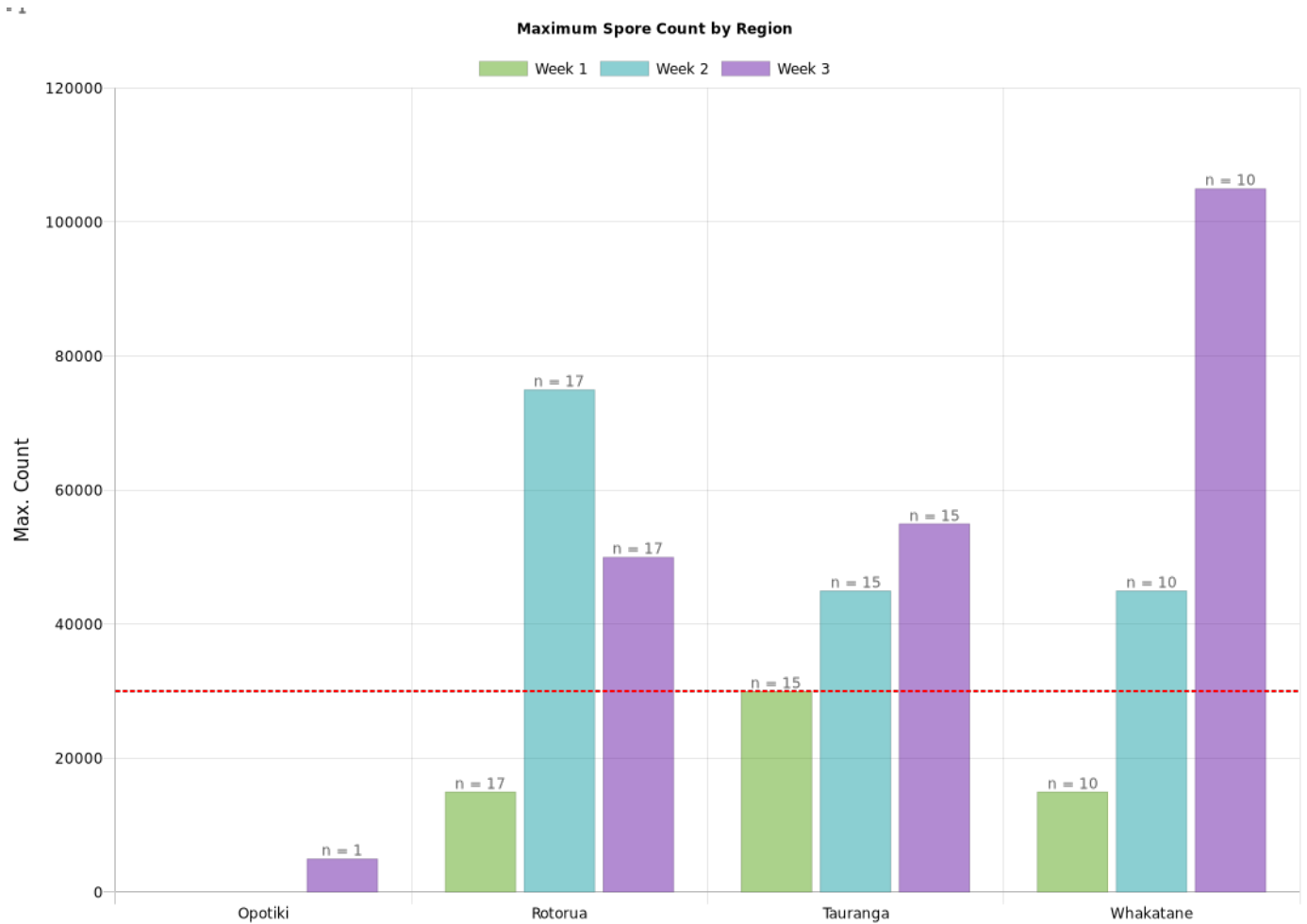
## Northern Waikato

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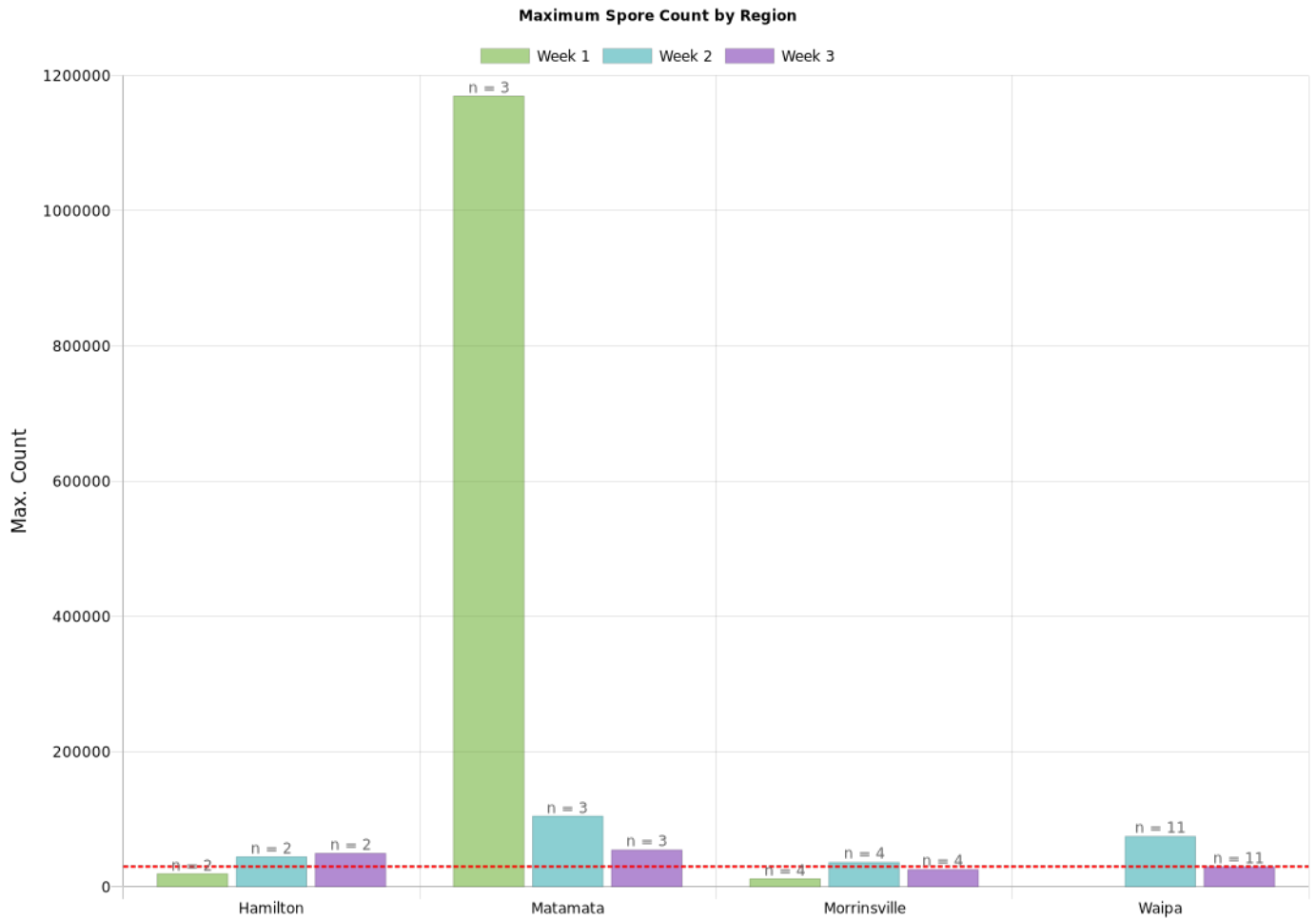
## Bay of Plenty

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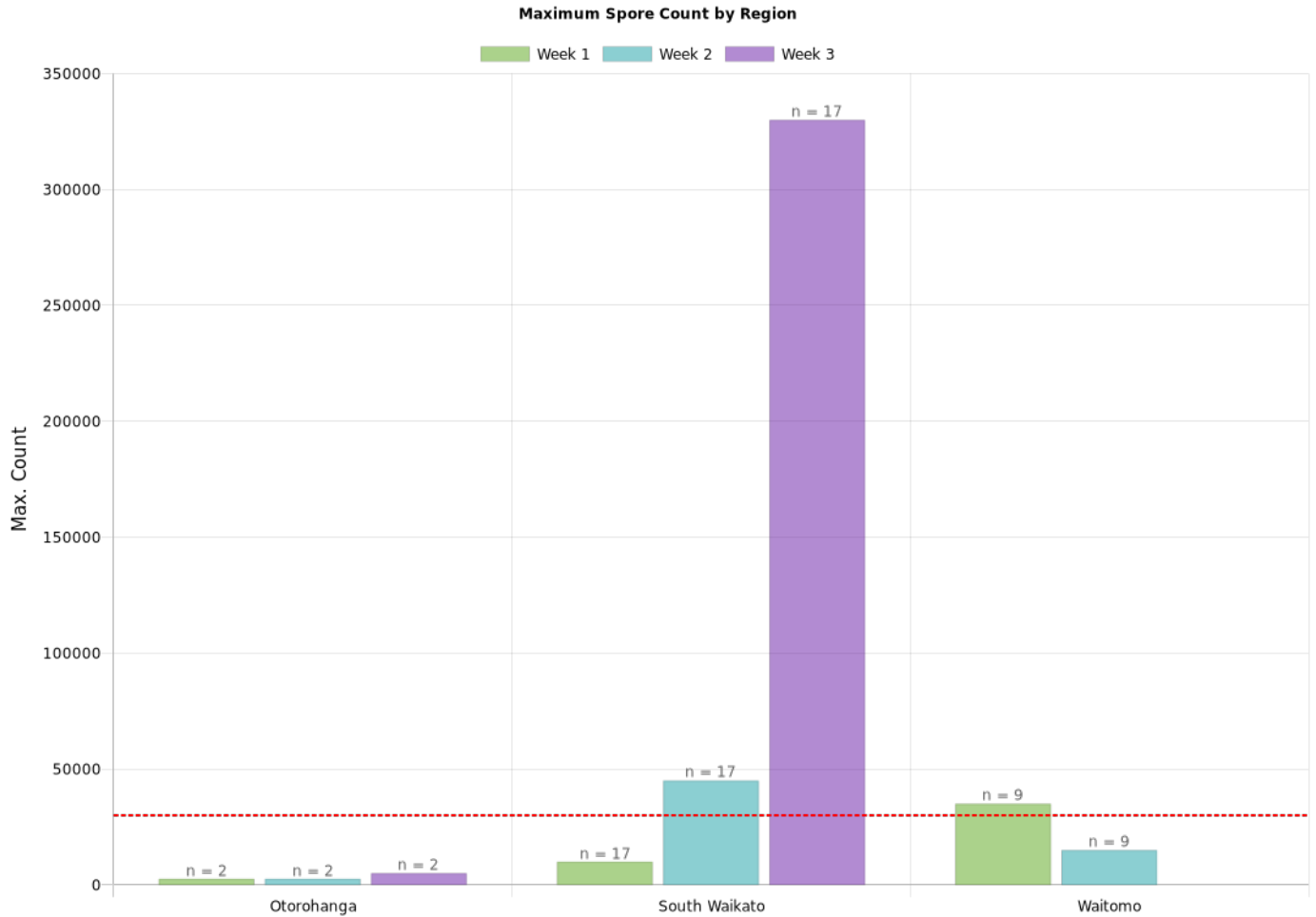
## Central Waikato

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## Southern Waikato

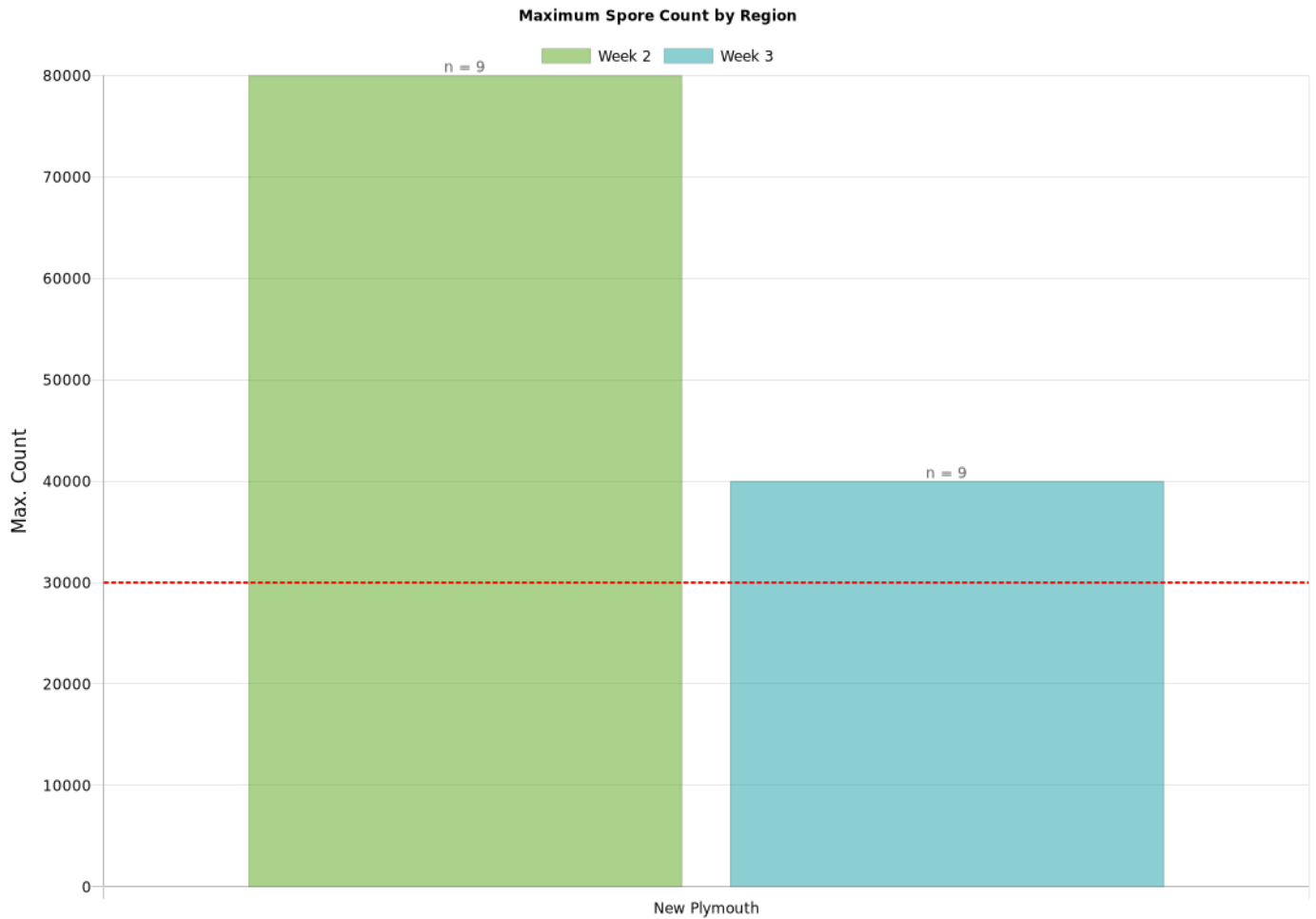
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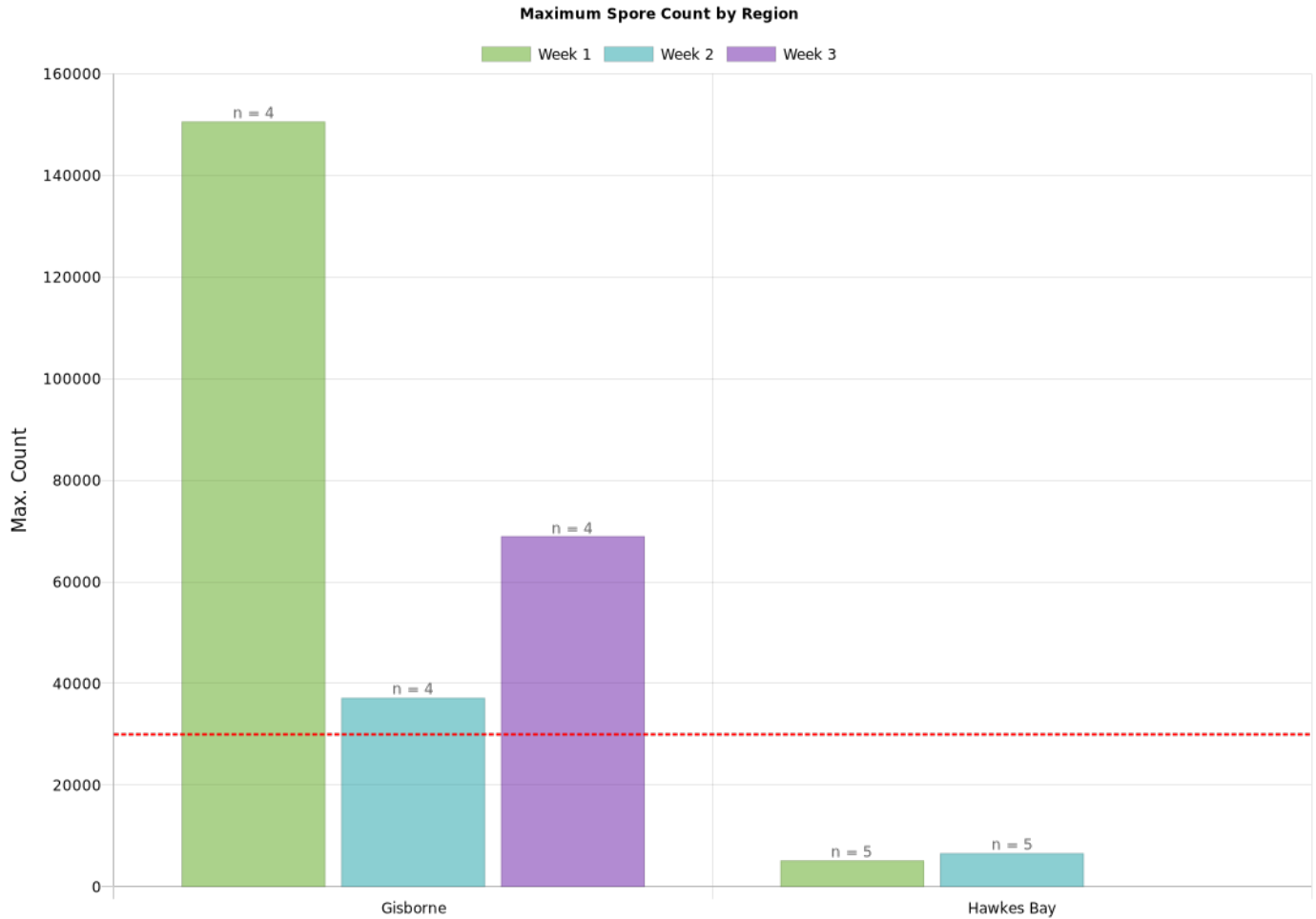
## Taranaki

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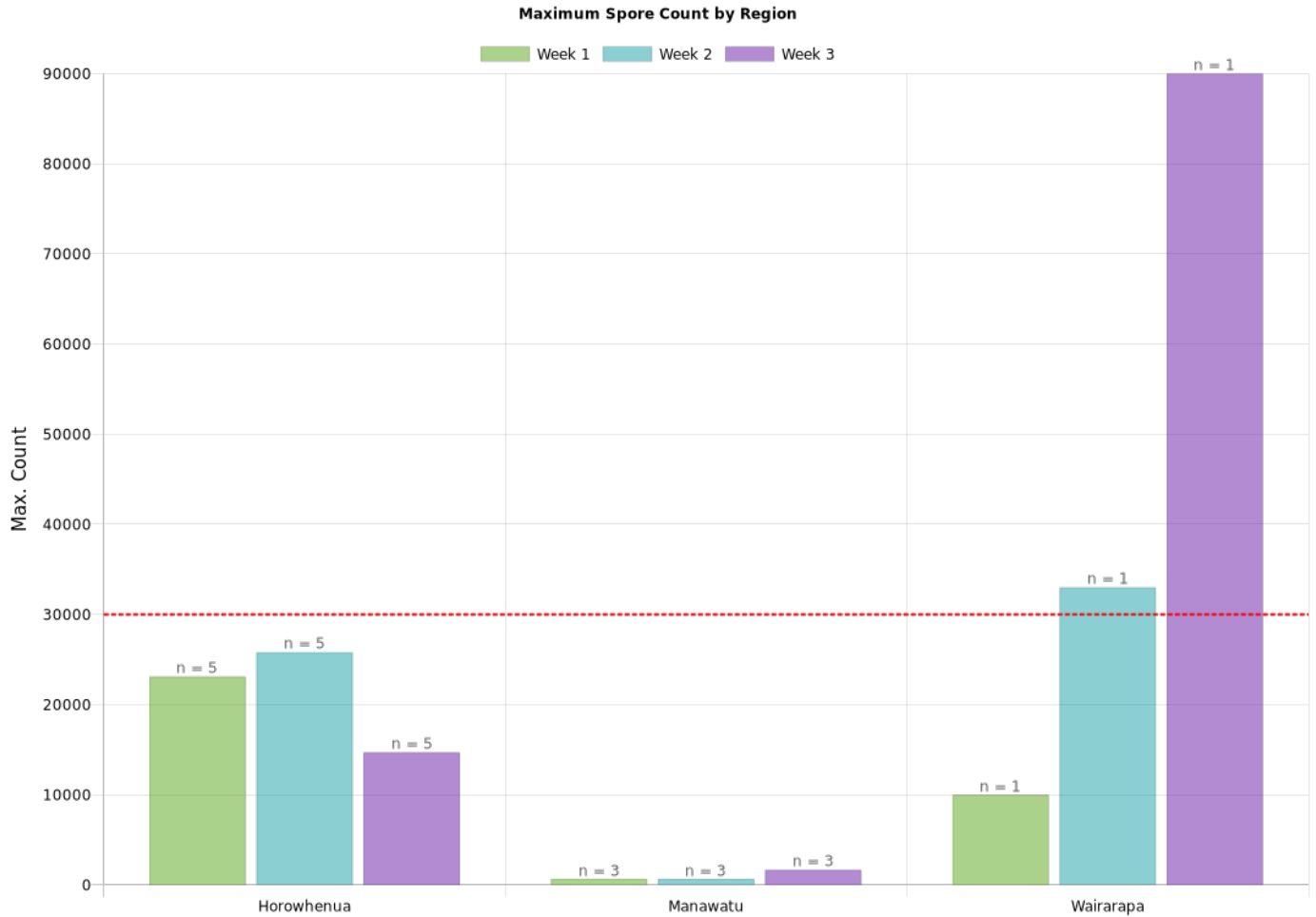
## East Coast

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## Lower North Island

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## South Island

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