

RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2018



Velvet
success for
Rupert family

Instore Days a real
treat for farming folk

Against the grain

United Wheat
Growers competition
showcases sector's
finest

Kiwi farmer on
top of the world

From the Group CEO



We've got a very interesting mix of feature articles in this edition of Real Farmer with all sorts of farming folk and farming operations being showcased.

First up, we profile the Rupert family's deer operation. It's a story of success and family succession with Martin coming to New Zealand from Holland 15 years ago with very little and building up a highly regarded deer stud with quality stock, genetics and velvet—and now Kiri Rupert and Josh Brook are preparing to take over the reins.

A little bit further up the road are Methven cropping farmers, Andrew Currie and Gaewynne Hood, who are one of only a handful of growers nationwide successfully growing and commercially producing the new-age grain, quinoa. The pair isn't afraid to try their hand at new crops, and a need to find a viable alternative to growing traditional vegetable seeds has seen them take on a crop traditionally grown at high altitudes in South America. Nowadays it is grown commercially in about 95 countries, but New Zealand hasn't joined the bandwagon. Andrew and Gaewynne share with us their journey thus far with this hugely popular product.

We also meet a Mid Canterbury farmer who has his sights set on conquering Seven Summits in Seven Continents and he's already ticked off five. Mike Read, along with his parents Kerry and Margaret, and

brother, Steve, operate a successful agribusiness growing blackcurrants and arable crops, but Mike has always had a desire to travel off the beaten track, and just five years ago set himself the very impressive mountaineering challenge to climb these significant peaks—including Everest earlier this year.

Staying in Canterbury, we also chat with the winners of this year's United Wheat Growers Competition, which showcased some extremely high quality crops grown by some of New Zealand's leading arable farmers under what were often less than ideal conditions. Once again results proved Canterbury remains the premier grain growing region with all five category winners coming from between Rakaia and Timaru.

Ruralco has been a staunch sponsor of this competition over the past few years, and remains committed to this event which showcases and recognises talent in what is typically a low profile sector of agriculture.

This edition of Real Farmer also acknowledges the winners of the various site awards at our Ruralco Instore Days last month. The event continues to grow every year and it's success is largely down to all of you who continue to support it. With attendance and sales on the rise, all bodes well for our 25th birthday celebrations next year.

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RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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ON THE COVER:
The Rupert Red Deer Family from Leamington Farm in South Canterbury

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Velvet success for Rupert family

Kiri and Josh are working closely with Martin and Rikie to develop the next stages of the Rupert Red deer brand

The success of a velvet producing deer farm is all down to great deer genetics and a family working together.

WORDS BY FRITHA TAGG, IMAGES BY STU JACKSON

Rupert Red Deer, in the foothills of Peel Forest, is the result of Dutch immigrants Martin and Rikie Rupert's lifelong search for better opportunities.

In 1977 Martin and Rikie, decided to leave their home in the Netherlands. They were both from large families with farming backgrounds although the farms were small scale. Martin was a farm consultant in the pig industry and Rikie worked in a bank.

They looked at several countries. The USA was highest on their list, but a change of president made them look at other options, and New Zealand was chosen. They knew others who had moved to New Zealand, so armed with plenty of enthusiasm and a couple of farming contacts, they immigrated to New Zealand, working on farms in the Waikato, learning the basics of dairy farming before going contract milking and then share milking. This was followed by 10 years on the West Coast of the South Island where they had purchased a small dairy farm.

The couple and their three-year-old daughter Kassandra, then moved to Thailand and spent two years with Volunteer Service Abroad where Martin taught farming skills to students. Their daughter Kiri was born in Thailand. After returning to New Zealand they sold the farm in Hari Hari and bought a farm in the Waikato.

After 10 years of dairy farming in the Waikato the family sold their farm and invested the money in a dairy conversion in Canterbury.



They retained a small runoff in the Waikato where they thought they might build a house. The land was deer fenced and their neighbour's farmed deer, so they decided to give deer farming a go.

Kiri says it was purely luck that the first deer were bought from Peter Fraser, a well-known deer breeder in the Waikato, and so the hinds had good velvet genetics.

During their visits to the dairy farm in the South Island they fell in love with the Peel Forest area, so they sold the run-off block and moved to Canterbury. Six months later they bought a 218ha deer farm and moved their original 100 hinds, which were already grazing in the South Island, on to their new home farm. These became the nucleus of their breeding stock.

"In the beginning," says Kiri, it was more about 'now we have these deer, what will we do?'

"The late Brian Wellington [Te Awamutu Station] was our neighbour in the Waikato. Brian was well-known in the deer-farming circles. Mum and Dad learnt a lot from him. He was a velvet producing deer farmer and he sort of showed them the way. There was a friendly rivalry with Te Awamutu Station as our farm developed and even today we trade deer semen with them."

Kiri says the family has had plenty of help and support in becoming established in the deer industry. It was a steep learning curve when they first purchased Leamington.

"Mum and Dad got right into it and the deer became more of an obsession. They started getting into competitions, wanting to produce great velvet. That has happened because they worked hard improving the genetics of the deer stock," Kiri says.

They looked for the best velvet genetics and used solid hardy English Red sires to improve their herd. They were determined to produce well-built stags with heavy traditional style velvet, which would in turn improve the genetics of their herd and improve velvet production. All deer are bred to produce correct velvet with a good temperament.

ABOVE: Daughter of Martin and Rikie, Kiri and Husband Josh are taking on more of the farms responsibility

BELOW: They look for the best velvet genetics and used solid hardy English red sires to improve their herd

The deer bred at Rupert Red Deer are all English Red Deer, bred for their velvet producing capabilities. There are 650 mixed age stags and 550 mixed age hinds.

The velvet is cut from the rising-one-year-old stags/spikers in their first winter, and they usually get two and sometimes three cuts off the spikers. All stags are kept until they have cut their two year old velvet, at which point they are assessed for their velvet weight, style and temperament and either kept in the herd or sold.

In 2009, Kiri went to Lincoln University to study for a Bachelor of Agriculture. During this time the neighbours property came up for sale and the family went through the process to buy it, but the sale fell through. "But we had done the homework. We knew we needed to expand and we were much more prepared in 2012 when we bought 'Scotland'. Buying 'Scotland' almost doubled the size of our farm."

At this point they decided to send all the hinds to Scotland (153ha) and keep the stags on the home farm at Leamington. This provided many benefits in terms of ease of management and reducing competition between mobs, but the most important advantage was it enabled them to more than double their hind herd. Compared to the stag herd, there is a large proportion of hinds, which enables a great degree of selection pressure in both males and females (a third of the hind herd is sold/turned over each year). Kiri says the resulting lift in velvet production has been remarkable.

"Our production increased considerably, and we were able to selectively breed for larger velvet and the velvet produced was better."

After completing her degree, Kiri, like many Kiwi students, went on her OE. She met up with husband Josh during her travels around



Europe and South America, and the pair returned to the farm about 15 months later. "When we returned home Josh and I were living in a house in Geraldine. He was working in town as an engineer and I was working on the farm. As my involvement increased, my parents decided to build a house on the bare Scotland block for them and we moved into the home farm house at Leamington."

"When we moved and started our family, Josh gave up his engineering job and started fulltime on the farm—and he has really enjoyed it. He's thriving. He won't go back to working in town, he's really taken to it."

Kiri and Josh are taking on more of the farm's responsibility. They have bought the livestock and plant, and will work closely with Martin and Rikie to develop the next stages of the Rupert Red Deer brand.

"From very early on, my parents became involved in the local deer velvet competition and over the years they began to win more prizes. As a result of that, they were able to sell breeding stock privately, and as the genetics improved these sales became more and more important. When Josh and I took on the stock, we thought we should make the most of their reputation, and started actively marketing the deer under the name Rupert Red Deer."

"At our inaugural sale in January 2018 we had about 200 people present. We offered 19 three-year-old sire stags for sale, all sold bar two with an average price of \$11,000 and the top stag fetching \$28k. These prices were very comparable to how other studs went that year."

"We want to focus on providing what the market wants rather than just velvet production. Many of our clients are also in the venison industry and they value information regarding body weights and growth rates. Velvet will always come first,



but body weight and a sound conformation are also very important," Kiri says. She says it is really easy to farm deer in the South Island where the cold winter kills off a lot of the parasites, and there is no facial eczema because of the colder climate. Kiri readily admits there are challenges with farming deer. She says it is important to understand the particular nature and foibles of deer.

"Learning how to handle them in the correct way is vital. They need much more patience than say cows or sheep and understanding their requirements helps make all farm work easier."

"When shifting a mob—the shortest way might not be the quickest way. You need to be able to anticipate what they might do and how they will react. It all comes down to experience and how you act around them as well."

FAR LEFT: Martin is still very involved on the family farm
LEFT: Martin Rupert emigrated from the Netherlands to New Zealand in 1977
BELOW: Deer have become an obsession for the Rupert family

"In the shed gentle and quiet is the best way. But in the paddock, we use dogs especially with the stags who need to know who is the boss and who is in charge."

As they improve the breed and breed out the 'wild' stags and with the use of DNA progeny testing, there is an automatic flow-on effect on the increase in velvet quality and quantity. Breeding out the wild element has also improved the ease of handling and safety of farm owners and workers.

"My mum and dad used to go into the shed with helmets, shin pads and a shield and now we have to literally push the deer out of the way. It is all very relaxed and once you are used to farming deer and understand the animal and behaviour, I think it would be hard to go back to cattle," she says.

This year Rupert Red Deer has plans to improve their first season fawning success, and part of that will be to buy another block of land suitable for them to fawn on, and the following year their plan is to increase stag numbers. To do this they will cut the number of cattle they run. The cattle are part of the pasture management programme. Kiri says deer are better on the land as far as nitrogen levels go and so this will improve their environmental footprint.

"We have just finished fencing off all the waterways and the next job will be to plant them. We want to enter the Ballance Farm Environment Awards later this year to help focus our environmental direction and to get feedback about what else we can do to improve our land use."



Rupert Red Deer will hold another public auction stag sale next year, which will give a better indication on how the improved genetics are going and hopefully the stags on offer will be what the market wants.

“Velvet genetics are heritable, so you can make big gains by good breeding. You see the result quite quickly. In two years you can see the result of breeding a good stag with a good hind. The resulting velvet is rewarding.”

“The good prices currently on offer for velvet looks to be sustainable now that there are more markets in mainstream health products in South Korea and China,” Kiri says. In the past the velvet market was largely the traditional oriental medicine industry, with a few big players controlling much of the supply chain.

Source of origin is very important to velvet buyers and the New Zealand market is strict when it comes to velvet identity. All animals at the Rupert operation are recorded. Kiri says good record keeping is vital.

“It is a big job to identify parentage. In the earlier days Mum and Dad used binoculars to identify which offspring belonged to which hind. Deer like to fawn alone with little interference, and they are not like cattle or sheep whose young stay firmly by their side. Therefore, there are no simple ways of working out which fawn belongs to which hind.”

“But now we have DNA progeny testing and we use a Gallagher TSI system. The ear tags in the stags are read and recorded before the velvet is removed and the velvet is given a DINZ cable tie tag to ensure the serial number corresponds to the stag which has produced the velvet.”

“All velvet sold has to have source of origin to ensure the buyer has confidence in knowing where it has come from.”

The biggest improvement in the deer industry is in the marketing area where



the new fully transparent sale of velvet to respected health food markets in Asia has meant there is more certainty for velvet producers in New Zealand.

There is only a small New Zealand market for deer velvet. Now New Zealand has Provelco—a marketing co-operative, which acts as an intermediary between velvet producers and the often tricky and predominantly Asian market. Provelco collects velvet from deer farmers. The velvet is pooled, graded and sold on the world market. Deer farmers get a percent when the velvet leaves the farm and another portion when the velvet is sold.

In the past, price fluctuation of velvet could be testing but in the past years there have been advances with marketing—both velvet and venison. Provelco is making good inroads along with independent companies and large corporates. Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ) have done a lot of work in terms of market access overseas,



but mainly it has been due to an increase in young wealthy professionals in Asia who want the traditional benefits of taking velvet, but they want to consume it in a modern way that meets all food safety standards.

“It is a very pro-active, tight-knit industry. After years of fluctuating market prices, it feels like the deer farmers that are left today are there because they are passionate, dedicated and very good business people. DINZ is a big part of that too, there are often field days and conferences to help upskill the members of the New Zealand deer industry. We can confidentially phone DINZ for information or help with any deer related issue,” Kiri says.

TOP: As they improve the breed and breed out the 'wild' stags...there is an automatic flow on effect on the increase of velvet quality and quantity
ABOVE: Kiri and Josh moved out to the farm and started their family
LEFT: The velvet is pooled, graded and sold on the world market

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In New Zealand most wheat is sown in autumn, as this tends to support better yields in our climate, so this article focuses on spring-sown barley and maize. However, the same general principles apply to autumn-sown wheat.

Start strong

“As with any crop, tending to your spring-sown cereal’s nutrient needs at establishment is critical,” says Aimee Dawson, Science Extension Officer with Ballance Agri-Nutrients. “Regardless of your base fertiliser application, using a starter fertiliser is strongly recommended. Ensuring germinating seed has a ready supply of nitrogen and soluble phosphate to support early root development and growth will set the crop up well.”

Actyva S and products from the Cropzeal range are good starter fertiliser options for cereal crops. Deciding between the two products will depend on your soil fertility, crop needs and application method.

Cropzeal has several products with varying ratios of nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K) and sulphur (S). Actyva S has only one formulation, which contains magnesium in addition to N, P, K and S. See Table 1.

Cropzeal is a blend. “Blends are not usually recommended for drilling due to the risk of seed burn, especially where muriate of potash is in the blend,” says Aimee. “Cropzeal can be drilled if you use a cross slot drill that separates the seed and the fertiliser in the soil or you drill with sufficient soil moisture. Drilling fertiliser alongside seed places nutrients right where they are needed. Broadcast fertiliser needs time to work into the soil or has to be cultivated in,” says Aimee.

Actyva S is a high-quality compound fertiliser made by Yara. “Compound fertilisers combine specific ratios of nutrients into a granule, which

delivers each nutrient evenly. This supports even growth and reduces the risk of striping,” explains Aimee. Actyva S is easy to drill, with smooth, free-flowing granules that are not prone to chips or dust (which can clog drilling equipment). It also spreads well. Tests on well-calibrated spreaders show YaraMila products can spread at bout widths over 30 metres.

“It’s about finding the best fit for your farm and for the value of your crop,” says Aimee.

Test for success

It’s important that your pre-establishment soil tests include the right nitrogen test for your crop.

Spring sown barley is fast growing and will need one third of its nitrogen at sowing. A mineral nitrogen test (also called a deep nitrogen test), preferably to 60 cm, will tell you what is immediately available to the crop, so you can see what needs to be added from the bag at sowing and in later side-dressings. Barley needs around 25kg of nitrogen per tonne of grain/ha from the soil and/or the bag.

For maize, an available nitrogen test is best to guide nitrogen side-dressings. Your maize will

need just under 13 kg N per tonne of DM or grain/ha for a silage or grain crop.

“Be realistic about potential yield to get the best return from your nitrogen investment,” says Aimee.

N on the side

Nitrogen side-dressings at key growth stages will optimise yield. Your barley crop will need the remaining two-thirds of its nitrogen applied by the end of the tillering stage (GS 20-29). Maize needs its side-dressing of nitrogen once plants have six fully emerged leaves (growth stage V6).

SustainN is a good option for side-dressing spring-sown cereals as it gives you the flexibility to apply nitrogen exactly when the crop needs it, even if rainfall looks uncertain. That five to 10 mm of water within eight hours of urea application is vital to reduce nitrogen loss to air from ammonia volatilisation. “Even under irrigation, you can’t always be certain of applying exactly the amount of water you need,” says Aimee. “Spring-sown cereal crops use large volumes of nitrogen, so the potential for loss is high. Given the minimal price difference between urea and SustainN, it’s good insurance.”

TABLE 1: NUTRIENT CONTENT OF CROPZEAL AND ACTYVA S FERTILISERS

	N	P	K	S	Mg
CROPZEAL 15P	13.2	15.0	12.5	0.8	-
CROPZEAL 16N	14.8	8.4	10.0	9.2	-
CROPZEAL 20N	18.6	10.5	-	11.5	-
ACTYVA S	15.0	7.0	12.5	3.0	1.2

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Beware of the ‘good deal for you’

The energy business has hotted up for winter in the rural market with the arrival of some new players in the retailing sector. Suddenly there are plenty of good deals flying around, aimed at farmers considering a change before the sharp end of their power consumption season kicks off.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



GST—IN OR OUT?

It is a simple enough point but one that is being played upon in some of the deals on offer. Meridian is the only company that includes GST within every line of its calculations, with other companies keeping GST separate, adding it in at the bottom of the bill's ex-GST total.

“Some offers used in comparison have added GST onto a bill that already has GST in it, doubling it up. It always pays to look extra hard at where GST has been added into any quote equation.”

WINTER VERSUS SUMMER

Depending on your farm or business type it is possible to choose a “flat” load charge or a summer-winter load charge. Typically for homeowners, a flat load charge works out the best, based on an even spread of the cost over the year. Be very cautious about comparing a flat load charge quote to a winter account for the farm, this will only give a misleading comparison, making the flat load quote look better.

“You really need to compare it across the whole year's consumption, otherwise you really are not getting a sense of where the entire cost will fall for you.”

DAILY CHARGES—NO DEAL MAKER

Daily charges do not form a significant part of a farm electricity user's bill, often amounting to only a couple of dollars a day.

For that reason they should not become the reason for dropping an electricity retailer for a better deal. Instead it is the per kW charge that matters when you are using thousands of kW hours' worth of energy a year.

Overall, it is important not to get hung up on what the discount is that a company may be offering on a new deal.

What matters is the per unit of energy cost price, and how much of a discount the energy supplier is prepared to offer on that.

If you have been made an offer that looks too good to refuse, then it may pay to discuss it with Ruralco's independent, local energy expert. They know energy costs inside out, and can offer an independent, realistic assessment of the deal, and point out where the fishhooks might be that could make getting out of it tough and expensive.

Contact Tracey Gordon at Ruralco Energy on 027 652 2133 or 0800 787 256.

Ruralco Energy Account Manager, Tracey Gordon, is cautioning Shareholders to take a deep breath, stand back and carefully scrutinise those deals—all the while remembering that if something looks too good to be true, then it usually is.

She is urging energy shoppers to carefully go through every aspect of the energy bill and identify where that ‘good deal’ will come from before making the jump to a new retailer.

The “Is it such a good deal?” Check List:

CAPACITY CHARGE

The biggest component of energy bills in recent years for rural buyers has been the dreaded Capacity Charge. This charge took a significant leap upwards two years ago, thanks to a shift in how it was calculated.

The shift resulted in the charge almost doubling from 30c/kWh to almost 60c, resulting in additional costs amounting to several thousand dollars for larger electricity users.

“But that capacity charge dropped back down by 31% from April 1. However some Ruralco clients are getting quotes from new companies

where they are not comparing like with like. Instead these companies are quoting prices comparing their current pricing to the older and higher capacity charges.”

The capacity charge is a straight through cost from the network for most retailers. Retailers offering a blanket discount across the account, will add the discount into the capacity charge to then take it off at the end, equalling a straight through capacity charge cost.

“So really look hard at where they are pulling that Capacity Charge cost comparison from when that quote is made.”

CHECK THE POWER SOURCE

With non-generating retailers getting into the market, it is also important to question them closely on where they are purchasing their power from, and the implications of pulling out of a contract you are not happy with.

“Often these companies will buy your load in your contract forward and be carrying that cost, so it may cost you whatever your load cost is to exit that contract, which makes it very expensive.”

What may look good over the coming couple of months may in fact be a poor deal over the longer term run of the season.



1. Dave Houlihan and Jason McKenzie / 2. Leigh Shera, Harry Shera and Andrea Chambers / 3. Gary and Robin Taylor / 4. Chris Bezuidenhout, Clint Marshal, Stuart Robertson and Geoff Bryant / 5. Rufus and Daisy passed out treats for the kids / 6. Kathryn Gray, Warren Maslin and Jack Allen / 7. John and Aileen Sandrey and Peter McMillan / 8. Hartley Curd and Hazel Barltrop / 9. Jane and Graham Elms

Instore Days a real treat for farming folk

Mid Canterbury farming folk have been treated to a fantastic display of all things agricultural at this year's Ruralco Instore Days. WORDS BY ANITA BODY, IMAGES BY GENEVIEVE BARKER & AMY PIPER

Site holders once again brought their 'A game', which was clearly demonstrated through the many engaging and informative displays on show, along with their knowledgeable staff who ably interacted and informed the hundreds of people who visited the two-day event at Ruralco in Ashburton.

It all contributed to the resounding success of this year's Instore Days according to Ruralco Group CEO, Rob Sharkie. "It's testament to the support of all of our members, suppliers and retailers. This year we had exceptional numbers in attendance and in sales, which we are all extremely proud of."

Rob said the high level of participation shown by the rural community was fantastic. "There was a really positive feel to the event this year, despite the hardships being felt by some, and this sentiment was echoed by our site holders and our staff."

Opening day saw queues lined up outside Ruralco's Gift & Homeware Store ready to snap up the pre-advertised specials—several of which were sold out by lunchtime. Out in the Farm Supplies store and under the big marquee in the carpark, a steady stream of cardholders were spoilt for choice with the event once again at full capacity with around

100 site holders taking part.

Every year the sites are eagerly sought after by suppliers, business partners and retailers. Participants are carefully selected to ensure farmers experience the best of the best by way of products, expertise and special offers.

Instore Days are a great opportunity for farmers to take advantage of various specials, especially for bulk items such as calf feed and milk powder. "There are lots of items like this which people have to buy, so many make the most of Instore Days to learn about the best products and prices available for their needs and then place their orders. Lots of people came in here with lists this year," said Rob.



1 2 3 4

1. Mark Maitland and Martin Kinney from Gallagher / 2. Cheryl Farrar from Milk Bar / 3. Natalie Stocker, Brittany Talbot, and Stevie Young from Seed Force / 4. Rebecca Curgenvin, Glenn McWhinnie and Megan Borland from Meridian

“There’s also a flow-on effect after the event, with lots of positive leads generated, which might not be realised for a few months yet.”

The event has grown dramatically over the last five or so years and the Ruralco team are confident they have hit on a successful formula which allows the event to go from strength to strength every year. “Our staff and suppliers give it their all in the lead up, and throughout the duration of Instore Days. We are also very grateful for the attendance and support shown by those of you who come along and we are looking forward to next year which will be our 25th Instore Days—it should be a biggie!”

2018 Site Holder Prize Winners

Many of this year’s Instore Days site award winners are looking to come back for the 25th birthday celebrations next year. A large proportion of the winners have been attending for a number of years and have grown and expanded, just as the two day event has since its small beginnings. Each year the Ruralco best site judges look at the

sites, how the site holders interact and connect with farmers, new innovations and points of difference the different participants might have. This year’s winners certainly know how to best serve our farming community and some also have first-hand knowledge of what it takes to take out the top prizes, with a few having been winners in the past.

Best Retail Supplier Site:

WINNER: Gallagher

RUNNER UP: Milk Bar

Gallagher is a progressive innovator of new technologies in the areas of animal management and is always guaranteed to bring its newest innovations to share with local farmers. This year was no exception according to Canterbury Territory Manager, Mark Maitland.

“We received plenty of good feedback and interest in our new TWR 5 scale which combines tag reading and weighing in one product and makes tracking growth rates and mob data even easier.”

“Instore Days are always a great opportunity to display new innovations and to connect with our end users. They provide us with great feedback and we have built up a great rapport over the years.” Mark said they were surprised and very pleased to receive the top award for Best Retail Supplier Site and said part of success could be attributed to the passion and confidence the Gallagher team have in their products which they found easy to share with farmers.

Runner up, Milk Bar (specialists in calf rearing solutions) is another business with a long association with Instore Days, although it was South Island Technical Sales & Consultant, Cheryl Farrar’s first time representing the organisation.

Locally based, Cheryl said it was a great opportunity to meet and interact with old and new clients and to share information and knowledge around the calf rearing solutions that Milk Bar products, like its specially designed Milk Bar Teat, deliver. “We were wrapped to receive the runner up’s award for our site. We tried to keep it simple and engaging for farmers. At the end of the day people can spend thousands on genetics and so it is really important their calves get the best start possible.”



1. Peter and Toni May from Silk Estate / 2. Jane Fowels and Gill Pidgeon from Compliance Partners / 3. Vinnie Neumann and Ben Wiltshire from Neumanns Tyres / 4. Ruralco mascots Rufus and Daisy got all the kids involved over the two days / 5. Aileen and Keven Burrows, Lizzie Redfern and Rob Sharkie

Best Business Partner Site:

WINNER: Seed Force

RUNNER UP: Meridian

Seed Force's Best Business Partner Site win has been several years in the making. Central South Island Territory Manager Stevie Young said they had been attending Instore Days for nine years but had never won an award.

This year's planning got underway a few months ago after a few of the Seed Force team came up with a plan to feature resilience pasture with samples grown specifically for Instore Days.

It proved to be an impressive interactive and living display, and a great talking point. "Farmers could touch and feel the difference between the different varieties," she said.

"Instore Days is more about education than securing deals and our Seed Force team was made up of experts able to answer questions and offer advice." While attending Instore Days was not solely about winning site awards, Stevie said it was certainly nice to take home a prize.

Meridian is no stranger to Instore Days or to winning site awards and although it has been a couple of years since the last prize according to Agribusiness Key Account Manager Glenn McWhinnie, the two-day event is all about connecting.

"It's a fantastic opportunity to talk to our customers and to see them face to face. We have tried to talk to everyone that has walked past (our site)." He says it's a major event on the Meridian team's annual calendar and the feedback and interactions are invaluable.

"We really value our Ruralco partnership and look forward to Instore Days—and especially next year's 25th anniversary!"

Best Card Supplier Site:

WINNER: Silk Estate

RUNNER UP: Compliance Partners

THIRD PLACE: Neumanns Tyres

Silk Estate's Toni May was especially surprised and pleased to win the Best Card Supplier Site, describing this year's competition as being of

an extremely high standard. "It must have been incredibly difficult for the judges to decide."

The business, Silk Estate Marquee Weddings by Toni May, has evolved as a specialised division of Peter May Marquee and Event Hire (Ashburton) which has a very long Instore Days history and enjoys a close relationship with Ruralco. "We like to support Ruralco at these events and we are great advocates of Ruralco. Our supplier status makes it so easy for our cardholder customers—we don't take a deposit because we don't need to with guaranteed payment. Our clients think that is great."

Toni said this year's Instore Days were one of the best they had ever experienced with good sales recorded over the two days and plenty of connections made for future business opportunities thanks in part to a promotion encouraging social media networking and to a competition offering free chair hire. Toni said both proved very successful.

Place-getters Compliance Partners and Neumanns Tyres also have strong and long lasting connections to Ruralco and both have been winners of site prizes in the past.



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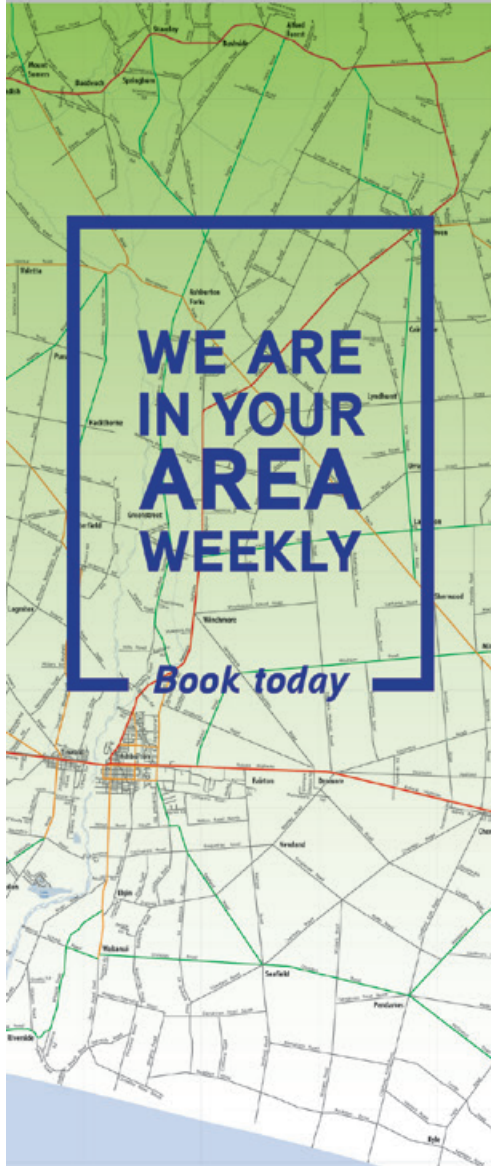
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New study sheds light on reducing nutrient losses on irrigated farms

There's no doubt that farmers have a lot of challenges ahead of them—particularly in keeping up with new environmental requirements and developments in technology. And it seems that almost every week some new research emerges which makes us rethink some of our farming practices.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY IRRIGATION NEW ZEALAND

The past few weeks are no exception as a new study by Aqualinc and the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand has highlighted how irrigation can be adapted to reduce nitrogen losses.

This has the potential to help farmers and growers significantly reduce their environmental impacts. The study showed that on 12 Canterbury dairy farms, an average of a 26% reduction in Nitrogen losses could be achieved through changing when irrigation was applied on the farms.

Many irrigators now have challenging targets in their Farm Environment Plans to reduce their nitrogen losses. And where

these targets are not yet in place, the new government has signalled they would like to see them introduced in the future.

The message for farmers from the study is that how you manage your irrigation in early spring and autumn has a big impact on your overall nitrogen losses. In wetter, cooler conditions there is more risk of nitrogen leaching through soils as pasture growth is slower, so you need to adjust your irrigation as result of this.

In practice we would recommend that farmers should look at not irrigating in September or April, as the nutrient losses may outweigh the benefits of some additional pasture growth. Very dry years would be an exemption to this rule and soil moisture monitoring technology will help you identify how dry the soil actually is. In October and March, we would recommend not irrigating as often as in the height of summer and allowing soil moisture levels to drop to around 40%—lower than the 50% level recommended in summer.

Given that the nitrogen loss reductions made in the study were significant, we would like to see further research undertaken on how to adjust irrigation for different annual climate conditions. Overseer modelling simulates conditions in

an average year, but we know that variations in rainfall and temperature affect growing conditions and irrigation use every year.

IrrigationNZ carries out training courses and we already recommend that irrigators adjust their irrigation in the spring and autumn to apply water less often to reduce nutrient losses. The new study provides evidence on the value of altering irrigation patterns in the shoulder season and the reduction in nutrient losses that this can achieve.

There are a lot of things to be considered when you plan your irrigation over the season. You need to understand irrigation system capability and requirements, how to use soil moisture monitoring, crop and pasture requirements, long-term and short-term weather forecasts and how to appropriately schedule irrigation.

The new study highlights how the careful management of irrigation systems can make a significant difference to a farm's environmental footprint, so it's definitely worth investing some time to understand how you can best manage your irrigation. IrrigationNZ covers different aspects of irrigation management in regular training courses, with our next sessions coming up in September in Ashburton and Lincoln—see www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events for details.

Against the grain



Andrew and Gaewynne Currie have begun producing the new age grain, quinoa

A penchant for trying new crops coupled with a need to find a viable alternative to growing traditional vegetable seeds, is the driving force behind Methven cropping farmers' Andrew Currie and Gaewynne Hood's foray into commercially producing the new-age grain, quinoa.

WORDS BY ANNIE STUDHOLME, IMAGES BY ANNIE STUDHOLME & AMY PIPER

Traditionally grown at high altitudes in South America, quinoa's rapid rise as a superfood has seen it take off worldwide. With the Andean countries unable to keep up with supply, it is now grown commercially in about 95 countries, including the USA, Ireland, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and Australia.

But despite its explosion in popularity, moving from a traditional health-food shop item to appearing on menus at cafes and restaurants up and down the country, nearly all of New Zealand's quinoa is imported.

New Zealand growers have been aware of the crop for decades, but to date, Andrew and Gaewynne are one of only a handful of growers nationwide growing it successfully commercially.

Andrew and Gaewynne farm just south of Methven. Andrew's grandfather first leased the property in the 1940s, later purchasing the farm next door and named it Avonmore as a nod to his Scottish heritage. Andrew's father initially farmed land down the road, purchasing Avonmore in the 1970s, only to be forced to sell up during 1980s crash following the removal of subsidies, economic downturn and consecutive droughts. The property was bought by a Wellington businessman, with Andrew's father retaining management, and six years later, Andrew was able to buy the property back.

Today, they farm 300ha having taken over his grandfather's block next door and purchased more land. While conventional cereal crops like wheat, barley and grass seed form the bulk of his farming operation subsidised by selling store lambs and silage production, Andrew dedicates between one sixth and one third of his property each season to alternative crops.

He credits his father for sparking his interest in going against the grain, growing experimental crops. "My father started growing canary seed in the 1960s. He tried an array of different crops and the canary seed stayed as a viable crop and we are still growing it today. Along with it, we also grow Hungarian millet and sunflower seed for the bird seed market."

While data is scant on many of the crops they grow, Andrew says he's got the benefit of time on his side. "As far as I know no one else grows millet for birdseed though we did sell some to the North Island this year where the conditions did not allow for maize to be planted; we've been growing it for a long time and over the years we have learnt how to manage it. Canary



seed is notoriously itchy, and gets into your skin so you have to avoid the dust. Millet is also very challenging; just occasionally an early frost (mid-March) can wipe out half your crop. The seed looks lovely, there just isn't much there."

The biggest issue with growing bird seeds, is that wild birds love them too, explains Andrew. "You can loose up to 50 per cent of your crop to wild birds. We have tried everything. We've had the most success buying dead rabbits and hares to feed the hawks at harvest time in a bid to keep the wild birds moving."

Many of the other problems they've experienced have come about because they simply don't have the range of alternative break crops, explains Andrew. "Because our neighbours grow vegetable seeds which requires isolation, it means we can't grow them as well. We need a viable break crop—many of them are so hit and miss. We don't make anything out of peas. We tried linseed and it failed. Rape is good, but we can't grow it because of the other vegetable seed crops around the place. Radish is sometimes a good alternative, but it contaminates the soil with seed which keeps coming back for the next five to eight years."

Andrew's ongoing search to find a viable alternative has meant he's tried countless different crops over the years. "Trying new seeds is not for everyone, but we love trying something different. We have tried any number of different crops; failed at some and succeeded with others."

That search, combined with an opportunity to cash in on the growing superfood bandwagon, led Andrew to meet with the manager of Farmer's Mill in Timaru, who suggested quinoa alongside a myriad of other possible crops including amaranth, spelt, chia, camelina and buckwheat.

"Buckwheat was never going to work because the price was through the floor, and we weren't able to source any spelt seed. If we didn't get frosts we could grow amaranth, but it doesn't like wind or frosts."

Chia—a powerhouse of energy and nourishment, the tiny black seeds were used by the Mayans and



ABOVE: Andrew Currie showing off his quinoa
TOP: Andrew and Gaewynne's particular variety is not ready for harvest until April/May, which can pose problems with weather conditions

the Aztecs. They are rich fibre, high in protein, and contain Omega-3 fatty acids, known for their anti-inflammatory effects, as well as enhancing brain and heart health—also got frosted.

He thought he'd found a winner in camelina. Similar to flax in appearance and properties, the intriguing ancient oil seed crop can be used for food, cosmetics and as aviation fuel. It comes packed with Omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin E and anti-oxidants, but although it grew all right, there simply wasn't a market for it. "When you read about it, it's great stuff. I planted a whole field of it (camelina) and the seed is still sitting in the silo."

That left quinoa. A South American staple for thousands of years, quinoa [pronounced KEEN-wah] is part of the amaranth family that looks like the weed fat-hen. It is considered a "pseudo-cereal", a name for foods that are cooked and



ABOVE: The final product is available through their own website and Ooooby in Christchurch
RIGHT: Rainfall requirements vary between the different varieties, ranging from 300–1000mm during the growing season

eaten like grains with a similar nutritional profile. It is actually more closely related to beets, chard and spinach than it is to any grains.

Boasting twice as much protein as rice or barley, quinoa is a great gluten-free alternative. Credited with being a complete protein it also contains amino acids, antioxidants, minerals, and Omega 3, among other goodies. "It's a whole food," says Andrew.

Cooked until it's light and fluffy—which takes 15 minutes—this nutty-tasting seed can be used as a substitute for rice, pasta or cous cous. It can be made into salads and fritters, added to soups and stir-fries, eaten as breakfast porridge, and used as a base for numerous sweet and savoury dishes.

Relatively easy to grow, it's traditionally grown from coastal regions to more than 4000m

in the Andes near the equator, with most cultivars grown between 2500m and 4000m. Rainfall requirements vary between the different varieties, ranging from 300-1000mm during the growing season. It does best with early rain, and drier conditions during seed maturation and harvesting.

Despite their farm only being 200m above sea level, Andrew thought it was worth a punt. He planted his first quinoa crop about five years ago, trialling a number of different common varieties. Not all proved successful. One variety trialled only grew a foot high and they struggled to harvest it, while others grew to shoulder height.

They started out with just 3kg of seed, planted on 1/3ha. Since then, they have since trialled five different varieties and are currently negotiating with a northern hemisphere breeder to get even better varieties, but admittedly that's still some way off, explains Andrew.

"Some of the varieties are more tolerant of the dry than others, but we don't irrigate it even though the farm is fully irrigated because I

am too worried about disease. It sprouts very easily before the seeds have even matured."

Because quinoa is a broad-leaf crop, rather than a grass, it can't be sprayed to take out the weeds, which means Andrew has had to learn to be selective with his crop rotation to minimise the weed burden.

As with a lot of these new crops, quinoa is spray free, which creates its own set of challenges, he says. "We can't afford to be a certified organic operation, but we do take a very cautious approach with chemical sprays. I like to think it's a more reactive approach. We walk the fields weekly watching for any changes. We don't spray it (quinoa) with anything. It is easy to kill it, for sure. We haven't found one (herbicide) that doesn't kill it."

Success relies heavily on getting the seedling plant established after planting in September; over the years they've had some failures. "We do it the old fashioned way before herbicides, letting a strike of weeds come away, clear them and then sow. It's paramount it goes in after grass. Once it's established, quinoa is pretty easy to grow, all it needs is a bit of fertiliser and then it's away."

Harvest is also challenging. Andrew and Gaewynne's particular variety is not ready for harvest until April/May, which can pose a problem with the weather conditions at that time of the year. "It's certainly not ideal," says Andrew.

"This year we have trialled planting it in the autumn to see how it fares. We know it's winter tolerant and not frost tender, but it's a question of whether or not it will set seed, and when. We are not exactly sure of the climatic conditions that we need. There are still so many unknowns, but we know we can grow it, and every year we are getting better at it."

Even in last year's extreme weather conditions [the farm was flooded in July and then suffered very high temperatures], the quinoa yielded better than expected considering so many other crops experienced a huge drop in yields. They harvested more than 10 tonnes this year.





ABOVE: The end result is a whole, unadulterated grain which has a rich and nutty flavour, that's ready to cook with minimal rinsing

BELOW LEFT: The other major factor is ensuring the quinoa remains 100 per cent gluten free

BELOW RIGHT: "We don't spray it (quinoa) with anything. It is easy to kill, for sure. we haven't found one (herbicide) that doesn't kill it"

The other major factor is ensuring the quinoa remains 100 per cent gluten free. At Avonmore Farm they take the risk of cross-contamination seriously. Next season they hope to have one machine devoted entirely to harvesting quinoa, not only to save on the whole day it takes to thoroughly clean down our current machine, despite the two previous crops run through the machine not being cereals, but to be confident there's no contamination.

"It would be devastating if someone who was a coeliac suffer bought some quinoa that contains gluten. We have had it gluten tested and it shows no gluten, but regardless, we are very careful to take every additional precaution to make sure," says Andrew.

Having successfully established they can grow quinoa, the next hurdle for Andrew and Gaewynne to overcome was finding a viable market for their product. "It's only in the past 18 months that we can say we have product, come and buy it, whereas before we were only getting a couple of hundred kilos. We had to be able to ensure we had that constant supply first."

However, unlike the bird seed market, where they had been able to rely on word-of-mouth sales and strong contracts with North Island birdseed company Tui, with quinoa, they've had to develop their own market from scratch. "It's been a steep learning curve for us, we are just farmers," says Gaewynne, who previously worked as a librarian for thirty years before joining Andrew on the farm.

It's been a monumental task, not to mention, an expensive one. They have had to learn about everything from website creation, Trade Me stores, Facebook and nutritional information labelling, to sourcing biodegradable packaging.

"It's nowhere near as simple as selling birdseed," says Andrew. "It's not like wheat—people are

not going to buy it by the tonne. We have had to learn how to market the quinoa. Here we are, we have a product that is sustainably grown, traceable right back to the paddock, not bleached and has low food miles—it's all good stuff. We just need to convince people not to buy the imported quinoa."

"We have talked to lots of restaurants and they've been really positive. We've also done markets just to get the name out there, but for the cost of the stall and being there all day, we haven't sold enough quinoa to make it worthwhile," Gaewynne adds.

The biggest problem is identifying just how big the New Zealand market is, says Andrew. Despite his requests, even Ministry of Primary Industry (MPI) has been unable to tell him just how much quinoa is imported into New Zealand annually, which he struggles with. As numbers of growers increase they would also welcome a growers group if it was possible to arrange.

That aside, the thing they are most proud of, is the product itself. Unlike many quinoa varieties, Andrew and Gaewynne's variety has very low levels of the naturally-occurring, bitter tasting saponins coating the outside of the seed which require washing and polishing. The end result is a whole, unadulterated grain which has a rich and nutty flavour, that's ready to cook with minimal rinsing. "When I make my porridge each morning, I don't rinse it," insists Andrew.

While they've tried very hard to keep the cost to consumers down, Andrew says he would like to think the shelf price will reduce over time as they get better at growing it.

It is currently available from their own website or through Ooooby, Christchurch, and is sold in 250gram, 500 gram, 1kg and 3kg bags. In time, they hope to increase the number of retail outlets stocking their quinoa. But rest assured, whatever happens, Andrew and Gaewynne are committed to delivering fresh, New Zealand grown quinoa right to your door for long term.



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Smart Calf Rearing

With calving well underway, successful calf rearing will be high on the agenda for dairy farmers around the country. DairyNZ's Animal Care Team Manager, Helen Thoday, says having the right knowledge and skills for the job makes the team's life easier and more rewarding, and ensures all calves receive the best start to life.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY DAIRYNZ

If you didn't get the chance to attend one of DairyNZ's recent Calving Smart workshops, or need a quick refresher, the following information will be helpful to you and your team in the weeks ahead.

Encourage regular breaks

It's tempting when we're busy to skip breaks, but this is often counterproductive. When we're tired, hungry or dehydrated, that's when mistakes can happen. Remind your team that it's important they take regular breaks to prevent burnout. A quick snack and drink of water between meal breaks can go a long way to recharging their energy levels.

Checking new-born calves

Cows and calves can get separated in the calving paddock. Calves can hide in drains, hollows, hedges, and long grass, or they may walk under break fences, so remember to take your time checking the paddock. It's useful to know that in cold, wet and windy weather, calves will tend to walk in the direction of the wind.

Picking up calves more than once a day

As many of you will know, there is only a short window of opportunity for calves to absorb colostrum and get the full health

benefits of this liquid gold. Ideally, your calves should drink at least two litres of fresh colostrum during the first six hours of their life to get the protective antibodies. Picking up calves more than once a day can make a huge difference to the amount of colostrum they get during that short timeframe. If the weather is bad, calves should be picked up more often.

You can test the level of antibodies in a batch of colostrum using a Brix refractometer, available from your vet, farm supply store or a home brew shop. Brix higher than 22 percent are best for new-borns.



Store colostrum in multiple drums (to reduce risk of loss), in a cool place, and out of direct sunlight and stir twice a day. A colostrum keeper can be added to each drum to preserve it, or you can preserve colostrum with potassium sorbate.

Bringing calves from the paddock to the shed

During busy times it's worthwhile taking a moment to review your processes and make sure all the good intentions set out at the start of calving are still happening. Below are a few good management practices you might like to remind your team about.

- Handle calves gently—they are babies;
- Do not overload the transport—all calves must be able to stand up and lie down easily;
- Be careful on slopes—calves move around easily;
- Go slow. No faster than walking pace to keep cow/calf contact;
- Treat the navel with iodine in the paddock and again when you get to the shed;

- Always make sure the trailer is clean and disinfected every few days;
- Identify any at-risk calves (calves from assisted births, injured calves etc.) and pass this information onto the person at the calf shed so they can be prioritised for colostrum feeding.

Better access to grain

As you would have observed, calves eat grain shortly after they drink milk. If all the calves in the pen can access the grain feeder at the same time, it helps encourage intake. Observe your calves to see how many go off to feed after drinking, and how many can fit around the feeder.

Most calf rearers like to wean calves when they are eating at least 1 kg/day. It's hard to tell what they are eating however, and recent studies show the grain intake can vary from 0.2–1.9kg per day. To help encourage your calves to eat grain, position your meal feeder so that it's easily visible to help them find it. Making it longer will also make it easier for them to all access the grain.

Biosecure calves

Good biosecurity practices can help keep calves and the farm team healthy. Your replacement calves shed should be a fortress. Having dedicated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the calf sheds is an easy form of biosecurity, and many farms find this easier than managing footbaths and scrubbing boots. Dedicated PPE can help you prevent spreading bugs from the rest of the farm to your calf pens. Here are some handy tips to keep your calves safe from disease:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water regularly, especially before eating, drinking or smoking;
- Prevent visitors from entering the shed—the more people that come through the shed, the higher the risk of spreading disease;
- Avoid moving calves between pens to limit the spread of disease;
- Bedding must be comfortable, clean, and dry;
- Keep feeders and other calf equipment clean;
- Feeding bobby calves once all other calves have been fed can reduce the chance of spreading bugs to other calves;
- For information on Mycoplasma Bovis precautions for calf rearing visit dairynz.co.nz/mbovis

Doing the right thing at the right time

Sometimes, when a calf is ill or injured, the humane thing to do is put it down. As soon as a calf is euthanised check for any signs of life and then reconfirm three to five minutes later. There should be no blink reflex, the pupils should be fixed and dilated, and there should be no regular breathing.

General calf health

Daily health checks are a good way to help you identify and treat any issues early. From a distance, check if there are any calves:

- Isolated from the group;
- That aren't interested in feeding;
- Behaving differently to the group.

Check calves over while they are feeding:

- Treat navels with iodine to reduce the risk of infection and dry the navel more quickly;
- Feel for abnormal/swollen navels regularly;
- Look for scours or dirty bums;
- Look for any with dull or sunken eyes, or walking unsteadily;
- Look for any not feeding as enthusiastically as the others.

"Calves that are well cared for have a reduced risk of disease and cost less to rear," says Helen. "They grow faster and go on to be stronger, well grown replacements that will continue to develop into valuable, productive adults. It is also more rewarding for people to manage healthy, playful calves."



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Ruralco setting bar high for equality



This year has proven to be a pivotal one for showcasing the needs for greater equality for women around the globe.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

The outrage and protest against the sexist, misogynist behaviour of leading entertainment figures spread to spark the #pushforprogress and #MeToo movements, and with that a seismic shift in what all women expect at home, school and in the workplace.

Research led by Ruralco Director Sue Lindsay has lifted the lid on the particular challenges New Zealand women face in society and in business.

Those results have tipped the age-old belief that women lack opportunities on its head.

Sue has worked extensively in the past decade to better understand the environment women have to contend with as they seek to build careers and professions. Interestingly, she has found that women feel it is less a lack of opportunity, but more a lack of leadership that often stymies the advance of equality in many workplaces.

Despite New Zealand having an enviable reputation for championing strong female role models, our business sector has not done itself many favours over the past decade in cultivating the feminine leadership that can foster the next generation of professional women.

Earlier this year Grant Thornton International's annual women in business survey revealed women in senior management positions in New Zealand were at an all time low, at only 18%, and well down from 31% in 2004 when the survey began.

Generally, those numbers are reflected in the agribusiness sector, one that brings its own particular challenges to women wanting to participate in it, both within and beyond the farm gate.

Sue was also pivotal in working with the 5,500 women as the creator of the BNZ's Women in Business workshop programme, one that included many rural and provincial working women.

Today her participation as a board member at Ruralco speaks volumes about the co-operative's own approach to diversity and equality.

She sits on a board comprised of 50% women, in an organisation able to claim almost half its senior executive team as female, and an even split across the entire co-operative's staff.

It is something she feels particularly proud of, and more so in a sector more often than not led by males.

But she also appreciates there is a long way to go beyond Ruralco to establishing similar balanced figures throughout the rest of the agri-sector, and indeed the economy.

Her work with women in the agri sector has helped many find their full potential by recognising their own strengths and better understand their priorities in what are often challenging environments.

They will often talk of experiencing the 'imposter syndrome', a sense they will somehow be found out to be undeserving of the role they have had the confidence to assume.

The insecurity they carry, and the inability of an organisation to adapt to the needs of women, leaves many feeling spurned.

They will often resign themselves to lesser roles and left with an exhausted sense that it's "just not worth it" to try and pursue their full potential.

The result is lowered expectations and further erosion in their sense of self-worth, along with organisations at all levels missing out of the invaluable contribution that women can make.

Research shows support and leadership from other women are two critical elements to help women make the greatest contribution. Leadership must create a supportive environment and women must become supporters of each other, rather than competitors.

She encourages any woman aspiring to get ahead in the agri-business sector to consider their mentors and role models, and to be confident about seeking them out for advice.

"You will usually find those people who have been successful are the ones who will acknowledge they didn't get there on their own. And as mentors they can come through a variety of contacts—it may be just a conversation over a coffee, or an on-going relationship."

While the statistics on women's involvement in leadership and governance remain low in New Zealand Sue is buoyed by what she is seeing at Ruralco with a culture of equality that is not contrived, or driven by a sense of compliance.

"It is really just a reflection of who we are as a co-operative and as people, and farmer shareholders should be proud to be part of an identity that is leading the change, not following."

Kiwi farmer on top of the world

Mike Read has set himself a very impressive mountaineering challenge and Everest is already ticked off the list.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY MIKE READ

Like many of New Zealand's great explorers and mountaineers, Mike Read definitely has a spirited sense of adventure. His journey to the peak of Everest can probably be traced back to over a decade ago when he went into a local travel agent wanting to book a trip to Nepal. As a 20-year-old Ashburton farm boy, one wonders why he didn't pick the standard OE trip to Europe, but he admits he had always wanted to go to Nepal. However, on that particular day Mike's plans were interrupted by the agent informing him there was a travel advisory in place against visiting Nepal. At that point most of us would have accepted the situation and settled on somewhere less exotic. Mike Read however is not like most of us. He saw a very large map in the travel agents and decided to cover his eyes and pick a spot on the map and travel to that very location. By now everyone in the office was watching the spectacle and Mike remembers the complete silence that fell once he had picked his location. He opened his eyes and saw he had landed on Mongolia, and that's where he went. And so began Mike's love affair with travel and venturing into the great unknown.

Mike spent forty days on an overland trip through Mongolia and after that life returned to normal. He spent some years as a successful real estate agent in Christchurch and several years ago he had the opportunity to return to the family farm in Ashburton. The Read family including Mike, parents Kerry and Margaret and brother Steve operate a successful agribusiness growing blackcurrants and arable crops and are about to diversify into apples this season. In 2013 he was sitting on the tractor one day and describes having a moment of enlightenment, "I just thought to myself that I could be sitting here on this tractor for the next fifty years and not go anywhere and I decided I better get out and see a bit of the world..." Obviously not a man to do anything by halves Mike says he started googling options there and then on the

Mike and his team reached the summit of Everest at 4:05am on May 19th

tractor and eventually came across Adventure Consultants, a specialised outdoor adventure company taking clients on mountaineering trips. He also discovered the Seven Summit challenge, a mountaineering quest where climbers reach the summit of the highest peak on each of the world's seven continents. Mike was very interested, "I thought to myself that seems a very cool way to get out and see a lot of the world," he explains. He spent a week training with Adventure Consultants on Fox Glacier focusing on ice climbing and learning about the equipment and techniques and admits himself he took to climbing like a duck to water!

A year later in 2014 Mike was ready for the first of the seven peaks. He travelled with Adventure Consultants to Russia and summited Mt Elburus, officially Europe's highest mountain. Elburus is regarded as one of the "easier" of the seven climbs and is often chosen by climbers as the first step on what is undoubtedly a physically and mentally gruelling challenge. In 2015 he decided on Denali in Alaska as his second summit, as the highest peak in North America Denali posed a massive challenge and isn't often chosen by climbers in the early stages of the Seven Summit quest due to its severe weather and inaccessibility. In 2016 Mike and a climbing partner spent some time in Africa climbing various mountains and also ticked off summit number three—Mt Kilimanjaro. With three peaks done Mike admits he felt confident of his climbing and technical skills but he wanted to see how he would deal with extreme altitude and climbing with oxygen. Climbing Everest is obviously very costly and he didn't want to make the final commitment to Everest without testing his physical endurance in the harsh conditions that Aconcagua provided. The year 2017 saw Mike reaching summit number four: Aconcagua in Argentina and the highest peak outside of the Himalayas. Once he had summited Aconcagua Mike set his mind on Everest—the most challenging and dangerous of the summits and focused on preparing his body and mind for the adventure of a lifetime.

In terms of training Mike concentrated on building up strength in his lungs and legs as those are the key things in getting to the top of any mountain. He spent several days a week running up Mt Somers, dragging tyres around the farm and practising technique on his own purpose built climbing wall at home. He also gained weight in order to offset the weight he would lose in the six weeks spent on Everest, in total Mike lost fifteen kilos during his time on the mountain.

Mike left Ashburton in late March this year to travel to Nepal and get ready to make his summit in the right window of weather in May—the climbing season on Everest is notoriously short due to the winds changing and some years there are only a few days when conditions are favourable. He spent two weeks trekking to Base Camp and then several weeks at Base Camp getting his body used to the extreme altitude—making trips further up the mountain and descending again in order to get his lungs acclimatised. "You spend a lot of time sitting



around in those weeks but even though you aren't doing anything your body is working really hard to get used to the altitude."

Aside from the physical demands of making the ascent Mike believes the right mental frame of mind is key to a successful summit especially when one considers the scary statistics of the climb. Historically one in fourteen climbers don't return from Everest, although the odds are better these days with state of the art weather forecasting and modern equipment utilised on the mountain. This century alone over 200 climbers have perished on the mountain and there were six confirmed deaths this season. Mike himself participated in the emergency rescue of a very injured Sherpa and on another occasion discovered a climber who had been abandoned by his team and was lying frozen to death in an open tent. It's definitely not an expedition for the faint hearted. Did he ever want to turn back? "no, never" he replies with certainty, "sometimes the hardest thing is just taking the next step as if you stand too long and think about what you are doing you can freak yourself out and panic."

On Sunday May 14th Mike and his fellow climbers left Base Camp in an attempt for the summit. They were accompanied by several Sherpas and also western guides. Five days later they were in the upper reaches of the mountain at the final camp before summit, Mike describes it as "an extremely inhospitable place". Often referred to as the Death Zone the upper reaches of Everest aren't designed for human habitation and the body starts to shut down all unnecessary functions and concentrates on staying warm and breathing. Appetite is suppressed, coordination is reduced and brain function is slowed making it a very dangerous place to be. Mike and the team rested for a few hours and started their final ascent at 9pm at night, there were about eighty other climbers making the climb that night but Mike and his team (including Mike's Sherpa Pimba) were the first to make the summit of Everest at 4:05 am on May 19th. According to Mike it was a euphoric feeling and he made the most of it for awhile but was always conscious of having to make the descent back down. "Of course we spent time up

ABOVE: Looking back at the Everest Summit
BELOW: Mike at the summit of Everest

there taking it in and enjoying the moment but I was still aware that I had to be switched on for that last descent back to Base Camp and that's when many accidents happen."

Now back working on the family farm, Mike jokes he is enjoying the flat land and proper home cooking. He has two further peaks to scale before he has conquered the Seven Summits. Both remaining mountains pose different challenges, Puncak Jaya in Papua New Guinea is located next to a gold mine with some very unwelcoming local tribes and Mount Vinson in Antarctica is obviously very cold and inaccessible. For now he is content farming and helping his parents and brother Steve who according to Mike "takes care of business while I go gallivanting around the world." Does he have any short-term travel plans? "I think I should try a beach holiday!" However, he admits the challenge of finishing the remaining two summits is hard to resist "I'll see what happens next year, maybe watch this space..."





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Triple drench resistance an emerging issue

Livestock monocultures and inappropriate drenching practices are contributing to the emergence of internal parasite resistance to triple combination drenches.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND



AgResearch's Animal Health scientist, Dr Dave Leathwick says resistance to triple combination drenches is always a consequence of management practices and decisions. To date, these have typically involved either running a single enterprise on the one property—such as lamb finishing or bull beef—or the excessive use of long-acting drenches.

As a single enterprise, lamb finishing is particularly problematic, with finishers buying in large numbers of animals on the open-market and bringing “other peoples’ worm problems” onto their own property.

Lambing finishing under irrigation is even worse and creates what Leathwick describes as a “worm factory.”

The risk is similar with dairy bull finishing, with the added complication of the emergence of drug resistance in *Ostertagia*, which is a particularly production-limiting internal parasite in cattle.

Leathwick says farmers with properties that have resistance to triple combination drenches in more than one parasite are faced with potentially having to significantly change their farming operations to deal with the problem.

“For these farmers, it’s going to be a serious issue and they are going to struggle with this.” He urges farmers to think about their management practices, as he has yet to see a

case of triple combination resistance that has not been entirely predictable.

“My message for farmers is if you are going to continue to ignore what the science says, there are consequences and they are inevitable. Drug resistance is not a random event.”

“We know many of the factors that lead to resistance and that if you do the right things, resistance need not be an issue.”

There are still farms throughout the country where every drench class is still 100 per cent effective against all worms, but farmers need to ensure they follow best-practice management around parasite control and drenching to retain that efficacy.

A good example is drenching lambs every 28–30 days from the start of December—irrespective of how well the lambs are doing.

Leathwick says in good springs, where there is plentiful feed and stock are doing well, farmers will often delay or extend the period between drenches. This just increases pasture contamination with worm larvae and the effect of this is felt in autumn when farmers are suddenly struggling to finish lambs and performance drops.

He says the strict 28-30-day drenching regime was designed in the 1970s to manage pasture contamination—not because the lambs

needed drenching at the time—and failure to follow it will often result in problems later in the season.

“If you follow it and follow it rigorously you have a much lower chance of having problems later in the year.”

Too often farmers will think of drenching in terms of a monthly event, but when one drench is at the start of the month and the second at the end of the following month, this can be up to seven weeks between drenches, which is just too long. It needs to be 28-30 days.

For the same reason, Leathwick doesn't recommend basing lamb drenching decisions on Faecal Egg Counts.

“It doesn't work. You will only end-up drenching in autumn and winter and in the mean-time you've lost production.

“The reason you drench lambs in spring and summer is not because the animals need a drench, it's to stop pasture contamination later in the season.”

He does however recommend occasionally collecting faecal samples a week after drenching lambs to see whether there are any eggs present and if so, get a picture of the larvae differential.

Leathwick says Faecal Eggs Counts don't provide the full picture. For example, a 500-egg count in a mixed-age ewe might be made up of *Cooperia* and Longtail parasites which have no or limited pathology. Compare that to a 500-egg count in a 35kg lambs that is made up of the production-limiting internal parasites *Trichostrongylus* and *Ostertagia* and it is a very different scenario.

“There are so many variables that some arbitrary level is not a good indicator of the need to treat.”

“A farmer with a good eye is better than a FEC at deciding whether an animal needs drenching or not.”

He says internal parasites are not always the problem in poor performing animals, but drenching is a good place to start.

For more information click on these resources on the B+LNZ website www.beeflambnz.com beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/PDF/worm-management

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ABOVE: Restoration of older trucks and buses is a particular passion for Keith
 MAIN IMAGE: Bus and Truck Body Work can also do insurance work of all types for customers including touch ups, repair or full restoration on all types of vehicles from buses to mini vans

Locally owned and operated Bus and Truck Body Works has been in business since 2004. The enterprise began when owners Keith Johnstone and Julie-Anne Wederell realised there was an opening in the market for panel beating and spray-painting of larger vehicles and machinery.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY BUS AND TRUCK BODY WORK ASHBURTON

"We really felt there was a need in the district to provide this specialised service. Especially with spray painting jobs our booths are specifically designed to accommodate larger vehicles for example trucks, motorhomes, farm machinery and buses." Keith and his team of five staff have several areas of expertise for Ruralco customers. All of the staff members at Bus and Truck Bodywork have different specialisations including panel beating, spray-painting, coach building, welding and engineering. They are currently working on two jet boats getting them prepped for next season as they have a staff member who has specialist marine engineering experience. As spring approaches the team are busy completing restoration work on farm machinery, such as spreaders and carry out seasonal repairs to heavy machinery for several of the local contracting businesses. Rust can be removed and the chassis can be sandblasted and repainted ready for next

season. Sandblasting services are available just across the road meaning once sandblasting is completed vehicles can be immediately brought into the spray booths on site. Bus and Truck Body Work can also do insurance work of all types for customers including touch ups, repair or full restoration on all types of vehicles from buses to mini vans.

Restoration of older trucks and buses is a particular passion for Keith. A qualified panel beater and spray painter by trade he has been in the industry for many years and still enjoys the challenge of working on the older vehicles. "Often when the next generation take over the family farm there will be an old truck sitting in a paddock somewhere and customers often want it restored. We can strip everything back and get it looking as good as new, I still get a buzz about bringing those old vehicles back to life" he explains.

Light engineering is another specialised service provided by the team. They have qualified welders and engineers on staff and can assist customers with repairs to truck decks, manufacture tool boxes for decks as well as any aluminium welding jobs. For recreational vehicles they can manufacture locker doors or modify seats or doors on buses as well as supply and fit Little Cracker fires in motorhomes.

Recently their expertise has been sought out for overseas jobs with the business completing a large specialist painting job for steelworks at Sea World on the Gold Coast and more locally they have just done the steelworks at a ski field down south. Their purpose-built work shop on Range Street is set up for high spec painting work with two large painting booths, one booth is heated while the other is a Bake Oven booth that according to Keith is essential, "the Bake Oven is ideal for achieving the perfect finish on our painting jobs and in colder weather we can still work through the jobs without getting delayed waiting for paint to dry." The elevated roof on the work shop means that even very large trucks and buses can be worked on and painted easily.

Bus and Truck Bodywork have customers nationwide who are happy to travel in order for their vehicles to receive top quality service and repair. "We get customers all over New Zealand who value our high standards and want to get it right for their caravan or motorhome or old bus, it's our high-quality workmanship that sees us getting so many repeat customers and we do always try and go the extra mile for the customer. We also enjoy seeing the customers' reaction when they see their old vehicle looking fantastic again."

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Event showcases sector's finest

This year's United Wheat Growers competition showcased some extremely high-quality crops grown by some of New-Zealand's leading arable farmers under what were often far from ideal conditions.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY AMY PIPER

The annual awards held in early June proved once again that Canterbury remains the premier grain growing region for New Zealand, with all five category winners coming from districts as far south as Timaru and north to Rakaia. Further strength has been added to the competition, with numbers increasing to 97 entries this year, up on last year's by 12.

Ruralco has been a staunch sponsor of the competition over the past few years, and remains committed to an event that recognises the talent within a typically low profile sector of agriculture in New Zealand.

Ruralco Seed Sales Manager Craig Rodgers says the competition is vital to showcase the skill and depth of the low-profile cropping sector. He also welcomed the 10% increase in entries for this year's competition over last year.

"As a sector the arable industry is performing well above its weight, and the growers in this competition do much to highlight the level of skill and passion they bring to the sector. The fact the winners this year are quite a different batch to last year's highlights just how deep that pool of talent in the arable sector is."

"The reward for us at Ruralco being involved is really about playing a part in showcasing the sector, and the farmers within it."

The competition consists of five categories and an overall Wheat Grower of the Year, this year won by West Farms near Ashburton.

The categories include Feed, Biscuit, Milling-Gristing, Premium Milling and the Protein Cup for the highest protein per hectare across all wheat samples. This year that award went to Chis Bell from Ashburton district.

Well known arable identity and recent recipient of the Arable Farmer of the Year award Syd Worsfold was one of this year's judges. Syd says irrigated crops were most likely to have had a better chance this year, given the type of season growers had experienced right from the moment the crops were in the ground.

"Initially we saw that very wet spring, where plants were not pushed for moisture stress, then from early October the dry weather really set in, we had about 60 days with no rain in the region and it was very hot,



1. Andrew West, United Wheat Grower of the Year and Biscuit Section Winner and Guy Slater, Premium Milling Section Winner / 2. Andrew West receiving the Biscuit Wheat Trophy / 3. Craig Rodgers from Ruralco, with Andrew West (Wheat Grower of the year) & Michael Tayler, United Wheat Growers Director / 4. Michael Tayler, United Wheat Growers Director / 5. A snapshot of some of the winners, Richard McCarthur, John Ellis, Andrew West, Guy Slater, Ian Tait, Daryl Hydes

stressing the young plants, even those that were irrigated."

This had ultimately pushed most crop yields back throughout the Canterbury region.

"In our case it took about 2t a hectare out of our yield this year."

The hot weather had also meant a significant amount of wheat was harvested before new year this year, something that was relatively rare. "I think I can only recall that happening twice in my time, and this was one of them."

Overall Wheat Grower of the Year and Biscuit section winner was Andrew West from near Ashburton. This award marks the second consecutive year Andrew has won, and the third year in the competition's history.

Andrew says no-one was more surprised than him to learn of his win, and he has his agent at Carrfields to thank for entering him.

"It was not an easy year for growing wheat, and growing a low protein biscuit wheat was particularly tricky. You are always trying to push yield, but the risk is with biscuit wheat if yield drops your protein comes up too high."

He says it was also a tough season for irrigation, with higher night time temperatures reducing dew levels, pushing up total water demand in the crop.

Andrew had two different varieties in the competition, with the winning crop a Carrfields variety, A473.

He says the competition is always worthwhile entering, helping build the profile of the arable sector.

"As a group we are a pretty modest bunch and don't make a lot of noise, it's a good thing to have the competition to highlight the skills we have, and show the next generation what can be done in the sector."

The Protein section was won by Chris Bell from Mid Canterbury, with his crop of Duchess from Luisettis. It is a variety Chris says has been popular as a milling grain and one he has been growing for several years. The unusual growing season helped push protein levels up and Chris says the yield was back slightly on what he may have expected, at about 10 tonnes a hectare.

"Winter was very wet, and I managed to get

my crop in between some heavy rain in early spring, then the hot dry weather shortened up the maturity a bit, and we were harvesting about three weeks earlier than usual."

He intends to grow more this year, with some already in the ground.

Coming alongside a place in the winter feed competition, Chris says he was particularly proud to also do well in the UWG competition. He appreciates the excellent advice he has received from his agents Luisettis, and the availability of sprays and treatments supplied by Ruralco in Ashburton.

"I am thinking I will be entering again this year, it's quite a competitive event and it is something well worth supporting."

The Premium Milling award went to Guy Slater of Slater Farms who has had crops planted on about 700ha of land throughout the Canterbury region. Guy claimed the award for his first time entry of the Luisetti 218 variety with a protein level of 13.0.

He had 17ha of the crop planted on land at Wakanui and has been impressed enough with



1. A good turn out for the event at The Landing in Timaru / 2. The competition organisers Craig Rodgers, United Wheatgrowers Director Michael Tayler, and George Walker / 3. Craig Rodgers, Ruralco Seed Manager

its performance to plant it again this season. With a yield just on 11 tonnes a hectare he was pleased with how it performed after a hard start, with extremely wet conditions quickly turning to 40 days of no rain over October-November.

“But the crop was pretty robust, and had good kernel weight, it is very similar to Duchess and we were pretty happy with how it went.”

He welcomed the opportunity to participate in the UWG competition, and the positive profile it gives the arable sector.

In the Feed wheat sector this year’s winner was Culnady Farm, won by the Millar family of Culnady Farm. David farms with his parents Doris and Hugh just out of Ashburton on 400ha, with Henry Hogg as their valued and long serving farm manager.

The award came the second year running, after the family claimed the Protein award last year. Not unusually the win came as a “complete surprise” after the family farm’s sample was entered in the competition by Carrfields.

David Millar says the crop had initially appeared to be just a typical crop and he was pleasantly surprised to learn of the win.

Judges said the Feed entries represented some very good yields given the challenging season, but the Culnady farm entry was an even, clean line.

“The variety was a new one from Carrfields and it was a first planting for us. It performed very well, it had nothing particularly special done to it. Considering the season, we were very happy with it, we’d be looking at planting it again.”

The Milling-Gristing award was claimed by the Pye enterprise with “Discovery”, a variety sourced through Midlands. Judges said Discovery made up the bulk of the lines offered in the category, with some outstanding test weights across all lines and exceptionally good colour.

Managing Director Dean Pye said he was encouraged by the crop’s success, and it was good to see prices across the milling category start to lift again after a period of tough returns. As a crop wheat forms only about 10% of the Pye’s 1400 ha cropping enterprise which comprises largely of process vegetables and vegetable seed crops.

The operation operates under the globally recognised Good Agricultural Practice (GAP)

standards, enabling them to export onions to Europe.

Dean welcomed the opportunity to participate in the UWG competition which he says provides a good means to showcase the high standard of growers and their crops in the sector.

United Wheatgrowers director and competition organiser Michael Tayler welcomed the continuing support of locally owned co-operative Ruralco in showcasing a sector that often flew under the radar in terms of recognition it received.

“We have an exceptionally high standard of arable farmers in Canterbury and as a sector there is a deep level of talent there for growing crops including wheat that are held in high regard by processors and seed companies,” he said.

Michael says the competition is proving an excellent platform for New Zealand grain farmers to demonstrate the exceptionally high standards their relatively small sector can achieve.

“We are identifying some really valuable niches within the sector that growers are proving very capable of working within.”

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Deer parasites getting urgent attention

Lungworms and ostertagia-type gut worms in young deer are a significant animal health issue on many deer farms. They're also the focus of a major industry research programme.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY DEER INDUSTRY NZ



High worm burdens cause a loss of appetite and a reduction in feed intake. As a result, young deer carrying internal parasite burdens may have much lower growth rates and increased death rates, when compared to deer with low worm burdens.

Slower growth can be costly. Slaughter animals may get a lower schedule price if they miss their target slaughter date. Yearling hinds may not be heavy enough to achieve good conception rates in the autumn. Then there's the cost of extra feed to get them up to weight.

It's an issue that's been complicated by lack of registered anthelmintics for deer and the over-use of pour-on drenches. These have been shown to be ineffective in commercial use.

"On the advice of their vets, many deer farmers are now using a combination of drenches comprising three different actives—a mectin, a white (benzimidazole) and a clear (levamisole). This combination is highly effective at reducing worm burdens and helps delay the onset of resistance," says Deer Industry NZ, Animal Health Manager, Lorna Humm.

"But there are big downsides. Because these combinations are currently not registered, a default 91-day withholding period applies. This means you can't respond quickly to market signals. Also it's messy, time consuming and

potentially risky having to mix separate drenches or to use a combination of an oral and an injectable drench.

"Overdosing with some drenches can be deadly. So great care must be taken during mixing the combined products and when giving them to animals. This situation is far from ideal."

Humm says farmers need access to a mixed arsenal when controlling parasites and preventing the onset of drench resistance. Effective anthelmintics need to be part of this, but a holistic approach is best, she says. To make this a reality, several studies are underway.

Combination drenches in two forms, an anthelmintic mini-bolus and an oral liquid, are being developed and tested. A saliva test to identify deer that are more resistant to parasites is being evaluated for its potential use in breeding programmes. Parasite life cycles are being studied, to improve understanding of how infective parasites are at different times of the year.

AgResearch Invermay research associate Jamie Ward told the 2018 Deer Industry Conference in Timaru that science has got a bit of catching up to do.

"Drenches have been used as a blunt instrument to keep deer growing well in the face of parasite challenge since the industry began, but that strategy is running out of puff."

On the genetic front he says deer produce the CARLA antibody in their saliva when they consume infective parasite larvae. The level of response varies between individual animals, has a modest but positive relationship with growth rates and is moderately heritable.

"For growth rates at least, CARLA has a positive impact," says Ward. "Given the strength of this and other evidence, I will be recommending that a breeding value for CARLA is included in Deer Select, the industry's breeding database."

Work by AgResearch on a mini-bolus to deliver an effective controlled-release, low-dose 'dry' anthelmintic, based on albendazole/abamectin is continuing. He says a new trial to test fine-tuned dose rates and targeting both lungworm and liver fluke is about to begin.

A registered liquid oral deer drench with a short withholding period would provide venison finishers with much more flexibility when it comes to keeping a lid on worm burdens during the final weeks and months before slaughter.

Work to develop and register such a product is being led by vets Dave Lawrence and Pania Flint. In a pilot trial carried out by Lawrence at Connemara Wapiti in Te Anau last year, two different oral triple formulations were shown to be 98% effective against gastrointestinal parasites.

A follow-up trial is being carried out in Manawatu this year under Flint's leadership and if the combinations tick all the boxes—for efficacy, residues and animal safety—NZ animal health company Nexan will, in association with DINZ, register and market a commercial product. A decision on whether the mini-bolus is fit for development as a future back-up product is expected later this year.

In the meantime, Lorna Humm advises deer farmers to plan their internal parasite control programmes with input from their vet.

"A parasite management plan (and indeed a wider health plan) links in with feeding, welfare and many other management issues. So take the time to draw-up a plan which is fully integrated," she says.

"The management of internal parasites is becoming increasingly complex. It is neither wise nor cost-effective to rely solely on drenches. Reducing the larval challenge and delaying the onset of resistance are important objectives when making pasture management decisions."

IMAGE: New combination drenches & management tools are being developed to make it easier for deer farmers to manage internal parasites & delay the development of parasite resistance



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Peak milk: Spotlight on minerals

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:


SealesWinslow

As cows approach peak production their nutritional needs are front and centre. Take special care of their mineral balance at this time and you'll be rewarded with solid performance across the entire season.

Some six to eight weeks after calving is the undisputed high point in the lactation calendar. By that time cows produce peak milk volumes and essentially provide a 'preview' of what's in store for the season.

Natalie Hughes, SealesWinslow Science Extension Officer confirms that peak milk is a bellwether for the entire lactation. "Higher peak milk levels indicate a higher total production," she says. "An additional litre of milk at peak milk can translate into potentially 200 additional litres over the entire season."

It's an attractive proposition, without a doubt. However, it also calls for a sound nutritional basis by way of a balanced diet. This is a particular challenge because the cow is in a unique situation; her enormous energy

demands can't be adequately met with dry matter intake as the rumen is still expanding. In fact, peak dry matter intake doesn't occur until ten to twelve weeks post calving. Meanwhile she draws on her own body fat reserves to make up for the energy deficit. In order to minimise the effects of this negative energy balance, she needs adequate levels of the key dietary components - dry matter, protein, starch and fibre.

With these factors in place, it can be easy to overlook the 'small' dietary components - minerals. And yet, they couldn't be more important. As Natalie points out, "increases in milk production go hand-in-hand with elevated mineral requirements."

Keep in mind that it's a very demanding time for the cow's metabolism. She's been through the stress of calving and has to contend with the dual challenge of reduced rumen capacity and peak milk production/peak energy demand. Needless to say, a targeted nutritional support makes an enormous difference; think about boosting the immune system, stimulating the appetite, maintaining low somatic cell counts and promoting

strong hooves. That's what minerals can achieve.

However, as the cow's demand for minerals increase, levels in pasture decrease. "Zinc, for instance, drops well below the optimum from May until November," cautions Natalie. "While selenium levels are boosted in spring due to strategic fertiliser application, it's still below optimum."

Given the mineral deficiency in pasture, the answer lies in adequate supplementation to plug the gap.

Natalie recommends using a trusted quality product such as SealesWinslow's MicroMax. It's an easy-to-use water trough treatment formulation that reflects nationwide research and meets New Zealand's specific trace mineral deficiencies.

It's an effective way of achieving the mineral balance that's necessary for a strong peak performance. Moreover, it'll ensure that your herd is in optimum health.

For further information head to your local Ruralco store or visit www.sealeswinslow.co.nz



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COBALT drives appetite, is essential to counterbalance the negative energy balance and helps achieve a high peak production.

ZINC is important for the immune system and helps develop the protein 'plug' at the end of the teat to maintain low somatic cell counts. Zinc also hardens the hooves, protects them from wet conditions and mitigates lameness. It's not readily stored in the body and needs daily supplementation.

SELENIUM is required for disease resistance, milk production and reproduction. It also plays a role in retained foetal membranes. "Clean cows" post calving mean reduced animal health bills and better cycling later on.

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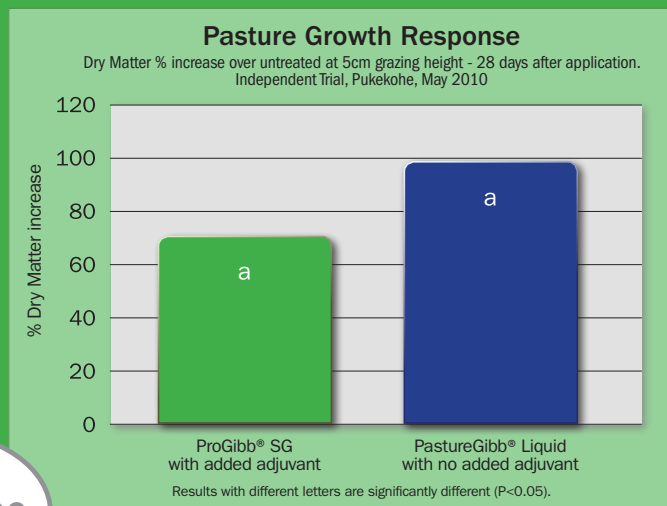
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Maximising your pre-plant spray out

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



It may seem a bit early to be thinking about how much dry matter yield your spring sown forage crops or pasture will produce this season. After all, they're not even in the ground yet!

But in fact you can start insuring those DM yields for a more end profitable result straight away.

The secret lies in picking the right inputs so that newly emerged crop or grass seedlings take off without a check right from day one, with minimal competition for sunlight, nutrients and moisture.

Most spring sown paddocks are chosen for crop or new grass because the soil is damaged and/or the paddocks contain too many weeds and not enough high quality grazing.

So it's vital as many weeds as possible are eliminated before new seed goes in the ground, says Nufarm territory manager Jeff Hurst.

He's seen his fair share of spring sown paddocks over the years, and says this first step towards good paddock preparation applies to every situation, regardless of

whether you're going from winter feed to crop or new grass; grass to grass; crop or winter feed to spring crop, or grass to winter feed.

High performance WeedMaster TS540 plus Pulse is the foundation of any pre-plant spray programme.

It stops existing perennial weeds from outgrowing crop seedlings during the critical establishment phase, and it speeds the breakdown of the turf and roots of old, existing pasture.

As well as grass weeds, WeedMaster TS540 controls a wide range of broadleaf weeds.

However several common broadleaf weeds, including clovers, yarrow, dock and buttercup, are not well controlled and require their own specialised herbicide strategy.

As a result, where necessary, mixing WeedMaster TS540 with certain companion herbicides – known as 'spikes' – is becoming more common.

Companion broadleaf herbicides currently available include Archer, Charter 750WDG, Sero 750WG, Nail EC and Kamba 500, Jeff says while they each have different uses, they are all powerful partners for WeedMaster TS540.

Jeff has some important practical tips for anyone who wants to get the best out of these products this spring.

"The most common questions we're asked relate to control of specific weeds and plantback and grazing withholding periods."

Here's his checklist:

1. WHAT CROP OR PASTURE SPECIES DO YOU INTEND TO PLANT IN THE Paddock(S) SELECTED FOR SPRING SOWING, AND WHEN?

Common examples include ryegrass/clover, fodder beet, forage brassicas and spring sown cereals. This can influence your choice of companion herbicides.

2. WHAT ARE YOU SPRAYING OUT?

Is it old grass, or are you preparing to spring sow seed into a paddock which has already been cropped and grazed?

3. WHAT EXISTING BROADLEAF WEEDS ARE PRESENT IN THOSE PaddockS?

Different weed species can require different herbicides for best results. Your RuralCo representative can help you identify which weeds are present and which companion herbicides will control them, if necessary.

4. WHAT PLANTBACK PERIODS APPLY TO YOUR INTENDED CROP OR PASTURE?

The increasing popularity of fodder beet as a spring sown forage crop means plant back periods are more important than they used to be. Some herbicides remain active in the soil for months, and fodder beet is very sensitive to certain herbicide residues. Chicory and plantain can also be affected by companion herbicide residues months after application. Nail is the only companion herbicide in this range with a nil plantback for all crops, including fodder beet, chicory and plantain.

5. WHAT GRAZING WITHHOLD PERIOD APPLIES TO YOUR COMPANION HERBICIDES?

For example you can graze, cultivate or drill three days after treatment with WeedMaster TS540 for perennial weeds but Charter for example has a seven day grazing WHP while Kamba has two weeks and Archer, Sero and Nail have none.

To help farmers get the best out of their spring spray-out, Nufarm has developed an informative chart, matching companion herbicides with their relevant weeds, and showing application rates, grazing WHP, rainfast periods and plantback periods for subsequent crops.



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 The average *empty rate* (*not in-calf*) for the **Nutrimol 4n1** herds was 12%.
 In comparison, the average *not in-calf* rate for New Zealand herds was 17%.
 The average *total length of mating* for the **Nutrimol 4n1** herds was 10 weeks.
 In comparison, the *total length of mating* for New Zealand herds was 10.7 weeks.

*To read more about the spring 2017 mating results call for a copy of the Nutrimol 4n1 *It's Business Time* brochure.

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Preventing mastitis is better than treating it

Mastitis is costly. A case of clinical mastitis costs approximately \$150–\$200. That includes lost production, drug costs, labour and milk discard. Once cows have had mastitis they are more likely to get it again either as a new infection or a repeat case.

WORDS & IMAGE SUPPLIED BY IAN HODGE BVSC., MANZCVS. TECHNICAL MANAGER, VETERINARY ENTERPRISES GROUP.



Mastitis can be difficult to treat, especially in older cows. Not all antibiotics work well against mastitis infections. This is often a cow problem rather than an antibiotic problem. In fact, older cows (8 years plus) that have had two infections in the same quarter in the same season should probably be culled.

This season everyone should be vigilant for the signs of Mycoplasma Mastitis. Affected animals could present with very swollen udders with mastitis in all four quarters. The milk often looks like “whey with sand in it”. Cows may be

systemically unwell. If you notice joint infections, ear infections or breathing difficulties in any animals call your vet without delay.

The cornerstone of mastitis prevention is good post-milking teat disinfection. In a study PureMilk carried out in 2010 only 12% of farmers nationally were correctly mixing and applying teat spray. In my travels I regularly see teat spray being mixed and then sprayed into mid-air! No one has taken the time to check the automatic or manual teat spraying process. Such a waste of time and money.

Teat spray should be mixed according to the manufacturers recommendations. For excellent coverage remember the “every” rule; every side of every teat on every cow after every milking. Milking machines can cause mastitis. They can fail to milk cows out correctly, damage teat ends, deposit bacteria on teats and in teat canals, and push (infected) milk droplets up into the udder.

Commonly vacuum levels are set too high. This makes cows uncomfortable and causes teat end damage especially with higher-risk liners. Most milking machines do not need a high vacuum. Vacuum fluctuations can be a big problem, especially as cows reach peak milk flows.

Pulsation ratios are very important. If incorrect, pulsation can also cause teat damage and affect milk out. Modern pulsation systems can be affected by a number of shed factors and the ratios need to be checked regularly.

The cluster removal process is critical. Automatic cluster removers are now very common but are often set up incorrectly. Most are very easy to adjust.

Milking liners are critical. They also affect teat health and milk out. The design of the available liners varies a great deal. Some are designed for high milk flows and for cows with bigger teats, and some are smaller, and narrower. A very common problem is to have a liner that allows vacuum to travel up into the mouthpiece combined with a light cluster and high vacuum. This is a situation that can result in poor milk out, teat damage and mastitis.

Cluster alignment has a big part to play in milk out and cow comfort. Poor cluster alignment can rotate teat barrels and slow milk flow.

To minimize the chances of mastitis being a problem for you this spring you should make sure your milking machine is a low risk: Check cows are milking out properly (ten milk squirts from one quarter after milking are too much), check teats are not congested, check teat ends are smooth, check cups are coming off smoothly and check teat spray coverage obeys the “every” rule.

This season focus on milking comfortable cows, using minimal antibiotics by having a low clinical case rate and producing the lowest somatic cell count milk.

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Not in-calf rates are still high

New-Zealand's not-in-calf rates are still sitting around 17% and the question is, can anything be done to improve the situation? WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BELL BOOTH

Results from a nationwide study involving 55,000 cows that had been treated daily with the prebiotic Nutrimol 4n1, shows treated cows with a 74% 6 week in-calf rate compared to New Zealand's 66% 6 week in-calf rate. We will look at some of the background issues surrounding poor 6 week in-calf rates and the findings of a couple of recent studies.

Non-cyclers can be a problem because they either have had a 'silent heat' which is undetectable or they are 'anoestrous', no heat. Often non-cyclers are cows that have calved late or, as young cows they require an additional 10 days to start cycling after calving. Either way, if these scenarios are left unattended, milk production will be impacted during the next season.

Identification of non-cyclers by the planned start of mating (PSM) should be high on the dairy farmer's priority list but planning a strategy to increase the 6 week in-calf rate before mating is probably a better idea. The evidence suggests cows that maintain a good body-score between calving and mating and don't suffer from a range of animal health problems or metabolics during calving, are more likely to cycle on time.

Bell-Booth, the manufacturers of Nutrimol 4n1 and the IntenSE range of water-soluble specialist trace element products for dairy cows, have been helping dairy farmers lift cow performance in the mating process. The first focus has been to ensure cows calve-down well by addressing specific trace element and mineral deficiencies well before birthing. The second focus has been to encourage early hormone production so that more cows cycle by the PSM. Any improvement in heat-strength

has been assisting farm staff to detect cows more easily, that means they only put up animals that are ready for servicing. The last stage of the process is around assisting cows to hold after insemination so that a greater percentage of the herd is in-calf earlier.

In 2017 Bell-Booth undertook a study involving 104 dairy farms that milked 38,000 cows. The study highlighted herd reproductive outcomes from the previous spring mating. This year, Bell-Booth ran an extension study to investigate the reproductive results from 143 dairy farms, 55,000 cows, to assess the performance of Nutrimol 4n1 treatment. The herds represented in both studies, had implemented a 130-day, Nutrimol 4n1 spring-treatment. Analysis of the fertility data of these farms, comparing the outcomes from two challenging mating seasons (particularly unfavourable weather in both seasons), indicated a two-point improvement in the 6 week in-calf rate from 72% in the 2016 study to 74% for spring 2017 mating. The improvement from 72% to 74% is a solid gain but also highly significant when

compared against the backdrop of a national average 66%*. The 6 week in-calf rate is an important target as it not only impacts on milk production through days-in-milk, but also provides cows with the recovery time required between calving and the planned start of mating. It improves the opportunity for the cow to get back in-calf, early next season.

There is no money in carry-over cows. However there is money to be made by improving six week in-calf rates and reducing not in-calf rates. The results from both studies indicate the addition of daily Nutrimol 4n1 to the cow's diet forms part of a sensible mating program. With an investment of less than \$8.50 +gst/cow for the full 130 day 4n1 plan, it is money well-spent in helping get more cows in-calf early.

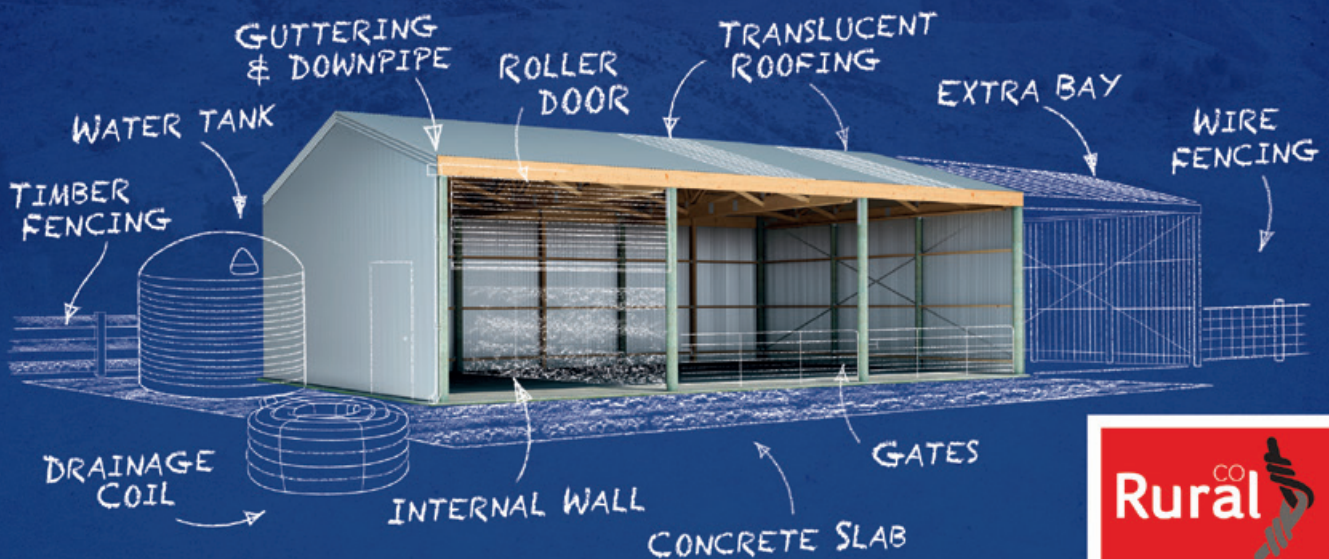
The Nutrimol 4n1 formulation was designed and is manufactured in New Zealand, by Bell-Booth Ltd. For more information, please contact your local Ruralco store.

**www.6weeks.co.nz/national_reproductive_performance_results_2012-2017*

TABLE 1: FINDING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE TWO STUDIES:

	NUTRIMOL 4N1-TREATED HERD RESULTS, SPRING 2016 MATING	NUTRIMOL 4N1-TREATED HERD RESULTS, SPRING 2017 MATING	NZ SIX WEEK IN-CALF RATES ACROSS 2016 & 2017*
NUMBER OF COWS IN STUDY	38,000	55,000	
AVERAGE SIX WEEK IN-CALF RATE	72%	74%	66%
AVERAGE NOT IN-CALF RATE	11%	12%	17%
TOTAL MATING LENGTH	10 weeks	10 weeks	11 weeks

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Benefits evident with a move from AR1 to AR37 Endophyte

Hinds farmer Ben Stock had been a long time ONE⁵⁰ AR1 perennial ryegrass user before making the switch to ONE⁵⁰ AR37 for increased pest protection and added persistence.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY AGRICOM

On his 242 ha fully irrigated property Ben runs 750 cows and chooses cropping options that are proven and reliable within his system. With the majority of Ben's platform in ONE⁵⁰ he has not been disappointed in its performance.

"ONE⁵⁰ fills the feed gap really well for the majority of the season. It takes a hammering during grazing and always bounces back," explains Ben. "I find grazing management really easy, the stock like it and I have no problem hitting residuals."

ONE⁵⁰ is a diploid cultivar bred from north-west Spanish genetics, along with plants screened and selected in Northland. ONE⁵⁰ has shown very good persistence and tolerance to dry and hot summers. With a late heading date (+20 days), ONE⁵⁰ AR37 is ideal for dairy farms where high production and improved late spring feed quality are important.

Moving from ONE⁵⁰ AR1 to v AR37 has been a real positive for Ben. The AR37 endophyte offers the best available pest protection for a ryegrass, and in the Hinds area the advantages in yield and persistence Ben is seeing is largely coming from AR37's ability

to combat root aphid and Argentine stem weevil. AR37 endophyte has the highest level of protection available against root aphid. AR1 is primarily a deterrent to the adult stem weevil, whereas AR37's primary action is in the killing of the Argentine stem weevil larvae.

To ensure maximum production it's important that quality clovers are incorporated into the pasture mix. Ben combines his ONE⁵⁰ AR37 with Tribute and Mainstay white clovers. Mainstay delivers outstanding production for a large-leaved white clover and is ideal for high fertility finishing pastures, while Tribute, New Zealand's largest selling white clover, delivers the ideal combination of production and persistence.

Like many in the dairy industry, Ben favours late heading ryegrasses; typically because they are very high producing throughout the majority of the season. He also finds the seed head minimal, which is of benefit when it comes to grazing management.

Fodder beet has also found a good fit in Ben's system and his ONE⁵⁰ is largely spring sown following beet. Offering good

yield and an opportunity to renovate poor performing paddocks, fodder beet is excellent break crop. Using fodder beet prior to sowing new grass allows Ben to deal with any weed burdens and reduces the opportunity of a reversion of grass weeds in new paddocks, which can be a risk if renovating grass to grass.

Like Ben, a huge number of farmers are finding success using ONE⁵⁰. Based off NZPBRA statistics Agricom's ONE⁵⁰ perennial ryegrass was named as New Zealand's largest selling perennial ryegrass at the end of 2017. This is the second consecutive year ONE⁵⁰ has gained this title, along with holding it in 2012 and 2013. These NZPBRA statistics are generated from a rolling three years of sales where sales volumes are submitted by seed companies for their cultivars to contest becoming the 'Standard' in the following year's national trials.

"I've been using ONE⁵⁰ now for eight years and I have no reason to change," says Ben.

IMAGE: Farmer Ben Stock with Ruralco On-farm Account Manager Melinda Driscoll at his dairy shed yard

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Property Brokers and Ruralco paving the way

Property Brokers are thrilled to officially now be recognised as Ruralco's preferred provider for Real Estate services. WORDS BY CHRIS MOORE, SOUTH ISLAND GENERAL MANAGER, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY PROPERTY BROKERS



Property Brokers and Ruralco have a long history of working together and Property Brokers are now very pleased that this relationship has been formalised and we are able to offer Ruralco Cardholders genuine benefits when utilising our services.

Property Brokers has over 40 branches across the country. We stretch from the Waikato in the North Island, right through to South Otago in the South Island, and our agents right across the county are all working with each other to ensure your property is shared with as big a database as possible. We are also members of the New Zealand Realtors Network which gives us nationwide coverage and access to a huge referral network of buyers and sellers throughout New Zealand.

Like Ruralco, we are a proudly provincial company and our Rural team is focused on making a difference to Rural New Zealand. We do this by providing the absolute best

service to our customers and clients, and by acting in accordance with our values on every transaction that we are a part of.

These values are at the heart of who we are as a company and are what connects us to provincial New Zealand. In fact, we take these values so seriously that we are willing to put a guarantee on acting in accordance with these and we call this our True Team promise.

Our True Team promise is a commitment to you that when you work with us you don't just have access to the one agent, you will also have a team of equally committed sales people, marketing experts and support staff from right across the country, working to get you the best result. This is all encapsulated within our values, which are:

- When we shake your hand we mean it;
- We help and value our clients and each other;
- We do the little things that make a difference;

- We are passionate about our communities and want to see them thrive.

We have a fantastic proven track record and this is evidenced by the fact that we are the leading Rural Real Estate provider throughout Central, Mid and South Canterbury, with 38% market share across these areas on properties over 20 hectares that have sold within the last 12 months.

We are also the leading company when it comes to dairy farm sales throughout Canterbury, also with 38% of the market.

There are a number of keys to success when it comes to Real Estate and one of the main ones is of course the calibre of people that will be working for you. I can assure you that our Rural team is made up of specialists who have a fantastic skill set, unparalleled rural knowledge and levels of experience unrivalled in the industry. All of this combines to ensure that your agent will be doing everything within their capabilities to ensure that you get the best possible result for your Rural property.

One of the other keys to success with Real Estate is marketing. Property Brokers have our own inhouse marketing team and this allows us to produce high quality information booklets for properties, it allows us to design and implement high quality marketing plans that will ensure your property is exposed to as many potential buyers as possible. Again, the focus of this is about ensuring everything we do, we are doing in order for you to achieve the best possible result.

In recognition of our true commitment to both Ruralco and Ruralco Cardholders, as part of our agreement with Ruralco, all Ruralco Cardholders will get to benefit from this arrangement. This benefit comes in the form of a 10% discount off standard commission for all Ruralco Cardholders upon listing and selling your property with Property Brokers. We are also offering a 5% discount on marketing fees when Ruralco Cardholders pay for their marketing using the Ruralco card.

We look forward to strengthening our relationship with all Ruralco Cardholders and are genuinely excited about the benefits that this relationship has for all parties involved.

IMAGE: Chris Moore, South Island General Manager

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Time to get the basics right!

It's the perfect time of the year to make sure we have our employment basics right. Figures from earlier this year from the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment (MBIE) show that 28 percent of farms they visited did not keep correct records—resulting in \$11,000 in fines. The main issue remains to be a lack of accurate record keeping.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY COMPLIANCE PARTNERS

Tougher rules introduced in April 2017 mean that if employment standards are breached, then the employer will find themselves on the stand-down list. This list, introduced last year, is a result of the Labour Inspectorate and Immigration New Zealand working together. It means employers face consequences beyond the immediate fine. Employers on the stand down list have committed a clear-cut breach of employment standards, and as a result are prevented from sponsoring new visas to recruit migrant labour for up to two years. There have been 160 employers placed on the stand down list since it was put in place on 1 April 2017.

Labour Inspectorate regional manager Natalie Gardiner stated that "Part of being a good employer is ensuring that everyone on your farm is getting all their minimum employment entitlements. By keeping good records, you offer protection to both yourself and your employee should anything go wrong or come under dispute—and you are on your way to a best practice employer. Meeting all obligations also helps New Zealand retain its reputation as an equitable place to work and do business, with consumers here and abroad increasingly demanding fairness on the farm."

So, what are the records, or minimum employment standards, MBIE are looking for?

1. An up to date, signed, employment agreement. All employee's must have one of these that properly reflects the work that they do. This means that you don't have someone who works every week on the same day on a casual agreement and includes that guy who only comes like every odd day. They all need an agreement.
2. Wage records are of utmost importance. You need a good roster that allows for days off (preferably 2 at a time) and all employees should complete timesheets either electronically, or on paper. All employees should receive payslips that should clearly document any deductions (including house if you provide a house as part of their salary package). You need to keep good holiday and leave records—both leave taken and accrued, in days and in monetary records.
3. Pay every worker minimum wage for every hour worked. This is simple to work out if they're on a salary—take the hours they worked last week, multiply it by the current minimum wage of \$16.50 and that is what they should have earned gross in their week. If they haven't, then you will need to top them up and note that on their payslip. A good idea is to take their weekly salary amount, divide it by \$16.50 and this will give you their max hours for the week. If it might get close, then make sure you roster accordingly, or be aware that you'll need to pay them more that week. The law no longer allows farmers to 'average' it out over the year between the quieter times of winter and the busier times of spring. Every hour must be at least minimum wage.
4. Public holidays are another area that farmers often slip up on. You must pay your workers for their entitlements of time and a half for any hours worked on a public holiday. So, if their normal work day is 5.30am–5.00pm and they work, they will get time and half for the 11.5 hours (so 17.25 hours), and they will get 11.5 hours put in lieu (make sure you record this!). If they only work part of the day, say 6 hours, they get paid for 9 hours only but 11.5 hours go into time in lieu.

Take it as a given that MBIE will visit more farms going forward and any which are found not meeting their employment obligations can expect to face serious consequences. If you have any questions or if you aren't sure if you're doing the right thing, then give Compliance Partners a call on 0800 BIZSAFE and we'll get this payroll business sorted!



The future of cropping...

It is now three months since I took over the position of FAR CEO from Nick Pyke and it has been a rather hectic timetable of stakeholder meetings, business operations and generally getting to grips with the key issues facing the arable sector.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY ALISON STEWART, FAR CEO

Each week I have become increasingly aware of the diversity and complexity of arable cropping in New Zealand. For 20 years, FAR has been supporting growers with research aimed at increasing productivity whether it be from the testing of new cultivars, the development of better agronomic practices, or the delivery of new pest management strategies. This has supported the growth and reputation of the arable sector and provided productivity indices that are equal to none.

More recently, FAR has expanded its research focus to address biosecurity risks and environmental compliance. We are

working closely with a range of industry and government agencies to manage pest incursions such as velvetleaf and pea weevil, and are currently engaged in GIA negotiations with the government over the development of a biosecurity plan for the arable sector. This latter initiative is by no means an easy task given the multiple crops, multiple pests, multiple pathways and multiple agencies that need to be considered. While our crop diversity provides a level of resilience to our farming systems, it unfortunately makes biosecurity negotiations a highly complicated process

with an outline of key relationships and responsibilities looking somewhat akin to a map of the London Underground. No matter the challenge, it is important that we work together across the whole industry and across other industries to achieve a consensus on how we can protect New Zealand's primary sectors from future biosecurity threats.

Similarly, the arable sector has been working in close collaboration with other sectors to address a wide range of environmental challenges including greenhouse gas emissions, water quality and soil erosion.



While the arable sector may feel comfortable with its current environmental footprint relative to other sectors, it is still an area that warrants serious attention. There are some crop management practices that will come under increasing scrutiny, and we need to front foot these with effective mitigations that secure our continued license to operate. It is important that the Arable Sector can back up any claims of environmental benefits with solid research data. Generalisations can easily be debunked resulting in potential reputational risk. The arable sector has the opportunity to become an increasingly important component of the New Zealand agri-landscape as we move towards a new era of diverse farming systems founded on the principles of optimised land use for economic, environmental and social benefits. However, this will not happen by accident and needs to be carefully planned and built on a strong business foundation.

There is a lot of hype around plant proteins and future cropping opportunities, but caution is required. There are already well established plant protein industries in many countries with prices dictated by the global soybean commodity market. It is perhaps naive to think that a small New Zealand plant protein sector could capture any more value in this new market than it already has with its current commodity crops, such as wheat and barley. The aim of FAR's Future Foods Initiative, which has been running for two years, is to identify those market opportunities that will provide New Zealand growers with differentiated products that could capture a premium price. Creating a solid business platform to facilitate future investment is a key component to success that is currently being addressed. Notwithstanding the need for new higher value crop options, there is also a need to review the suitability of our current agronomic practices given increasing

ABOVE: The arable sector has the opportunity to become an increasingly important component of the New Zealand agri-landscape
ABOVE LEFT: There is a lot of hype around plant proteins and future cropping opportunities

consumer demand for sustainable, natural, traceable production systems. Agrichemical use is in the headlights again and growers will have to consider alternative pest management options if they lose access to certain key chemicals. It could very much be a case of 'back to the future' with growers learning how to integrate traditional cultural practices (solarisation, cover cropping, biological mulching etc) with new technologies such as biosensors, biopesticides, automation, robotics and big data. The role of FAR in this development will be crucial, not as the primary technology developer but as the trusted advisor to support the effective integration of new practices into our cropping systems.

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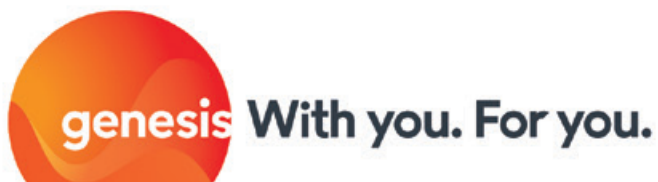
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ENERGY



Regional fuel tax should be put on hold

On 1 July 2018 the first regional fuel tax (RFT) allowed under law came into force in Auckland and confusion reigned.

WORDS BY MIKE CHAPMAN, CEO OF HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND.

The law was passed only a matter of days before on 26 June 2018, and how it would work in practice for growers and farmers in the area—and beyond once other regions adopt the tax—was unknown.

Horticulture New Zealand had heard Ministers, and Members of Parliament who had been on the Select Committee considering the law, publicly say that it was never intended to capture off-road, or behind the farm gate, fuel use. Yet once passed into law and with its regulations now published, it does capture this use and growers and farmers must engage in a complicated online rebate system to get back the RFT they shouldn't have had to pay in the first place. HortNZ is trying to get the gap between what Ministers said they intended and the reality of the law closed. Why? Because unlike a lot of farms, for horticulture we are talking about considerable numbers of vehicles and machinery used to produce healthy food for New Zealanders, both in Auckland and beyond.

In the Auckland region there are more than 400 growers—feeding the Auckland population of 1.5 million people. For one grower alone, the stock of mainly diesel-powered vehicles and machinery used off-road includes around 100 tractors, as well

as self-propelled harvesters, self-propelled sprayers, two and four-wheel motorbikes, generators, irrigation pumps, and flood pumps, using about 1 million litres of diesel off-road per year.

HortNZ contends the process has been so rushed to meet Auckland Mayor Phil Goff's announced 1 July deadline for a RFT that the full democratic process was unnecessarily truncated and the end-users are the losers. This tax is designed to improve Auckland's transport system, and therefore must exclude vehicles not used on those roads.

The New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), which will administer the RFT on behalf of Auckland Council, hasn't dealt with how users will claim a rebate adequately. The online rebate system will not even come into force until October 2018, yet growers will have been paying RFT on off-road fuel use since 1 July. What we have seen so far, only from persistent asking, is a rebate system that is overly complicated and is in fact, designed for fuel excise duty (FED), not RFT.

So growers have to start a system, not knowing how it works. They'll be paying the tax plus GST for three months before they can claim the rebate, and that money will be sitting in a Government bank account earning interest. It's very rushed and hasn't really been thought through, in that you normally

IMAGE: For Horticulture, we are talking about considerable numbers of vehicles and machinery used to produce healthy food for New Zealanders

establish the full system, test it, and you roll it out to people and explain how to use it. None of that has happened.

This is an example of how not to treat stakeholders, that's for sure. The Government has spent seven figures developing a rebate system without ever talking to future users, or considering that they shouldn't have to pay the tax in the first place.

This will affect growers' businesses and costs considerably, to the point of hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Those costs will be passed on to consumers, making healthy food more expensive at a time when many households are already struggling.

HortNZ will continue to work with government officials who are designing the rebate system—but we have made it clear that we are still pushing hard for exemption for off-road vehicles. In the meantime, we believe the Government should put the RFT on hold until all of the details are sorted, and everyone is clear on how it will work.

It is not fair or equitable to have a tax in place before the system to administer it is up and running.

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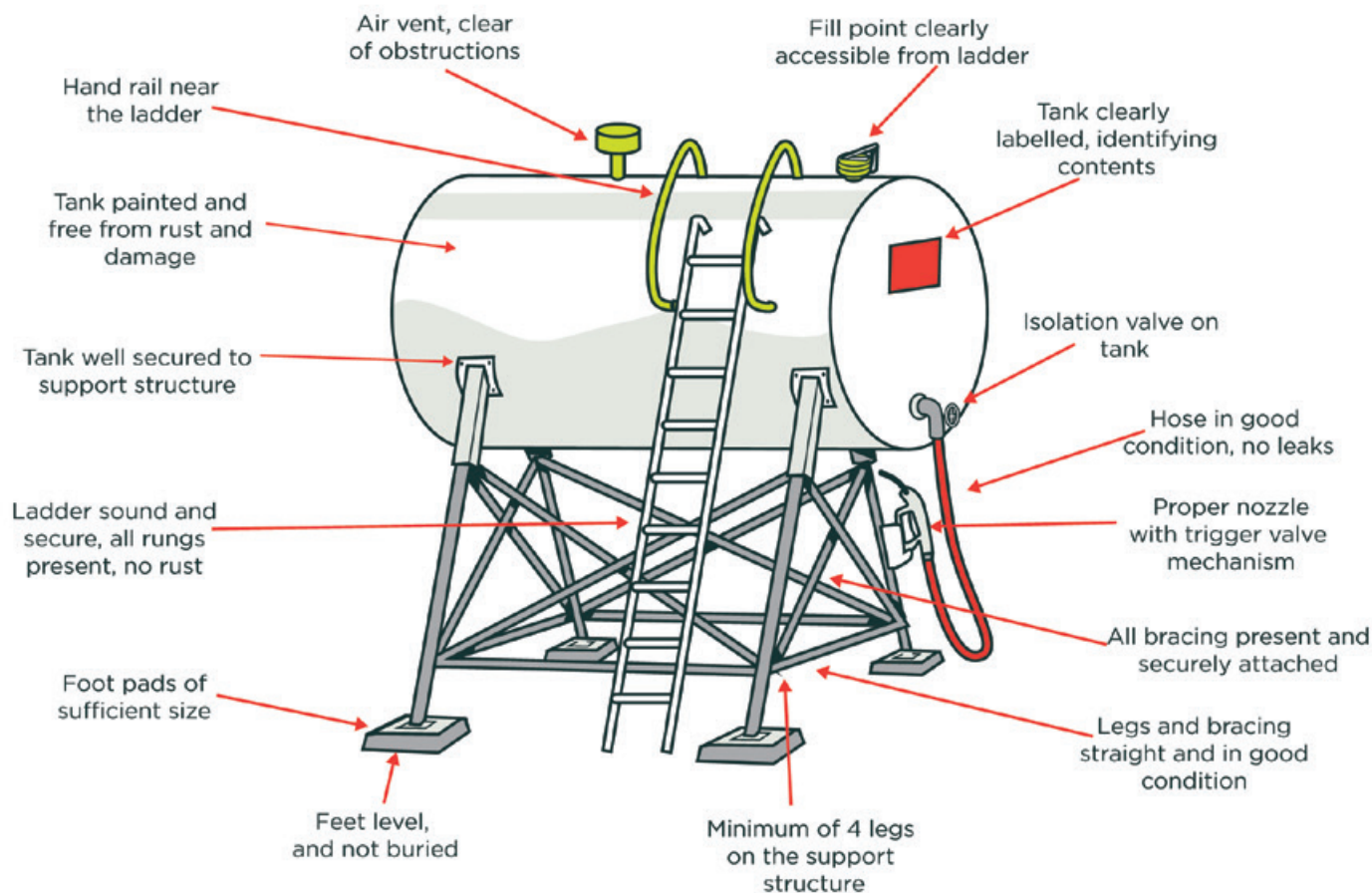


FUEL

The end for Tripod Tanks

After several accidents caused by the instability of tripod farm fuel tanks, the fuel distributor network will discontinue the supply of fuel to any tripod farm tank effective 1 May 2019.

WORDS BY DON JOSEPH, RURALCO FUEL SALES MANAGER, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY WORKSAFE



In 1996 official approval was withdrawn for the manufacture of tripod tanks. Under the health and safety at work act 2015, tanks cannot be legally sold, reconditioned or relocated effective immediately. Reason being, due to the design, they are at risk of collapse. This can cause harm for people and environment.

All above ground farm fuel tanks now, must meet design standards set out by the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996. Farmers must make sure their tank's design and construction complies with HSNO design standards and the tripod fuel tank does not meet these standards.

The intention at the time was farmers could use existing tanks until they reached the end of their working life, with the expectation they be removed from service at the appropriate time. Today, it is expected that most, if not all, tripod tanks will no longer be in use.

The reason for replacing the Tripod tanks to compliant above ground storage within New Zealand is for structural support. Farm fuel tank stand legs often bend, especially if hit by machinery. Any bending of the support legs decreases its strength and ability to support the tank, especially when the tank is full. Distorted support legs are a special hazard during refilling, because of

the different stresses exerted on the stand. Bends in legs or bracing suggest unequal loading on the legs.

It is important that above ground fuel storage tanks have their tank legs mounted on a concrete pad, or on concrete footings. The recommended minimum size for footings is 600 mm x 600 mm x 300 mm. Alternatively, erect the tank stand on a solid, well-drained foundation, like compacted ground that will not become boggy when wet. It is important to brace all legs properly to support the structural integrity of the tank and to prevent the support stand distorting or collapsing.

If you are replacing tanks, it is also a perfect time to ensure the fuel quality is maintained, installing high quality filters will ensure this and prevent expensive damage to common rail engines for example. Ensure also you keep your tank free water by draining from sump plug.

Ensuring that you plan for the correct fuel for summer and winter use (summer fuel may gel and cause engine problems if used at low temperatures) summer fuel has a higher level of wax whereas winter fuel would be fine year-round as it is low in wax.

Ruralco have looked at options available from several tank suppliers nationwide to



ABOVE: An example of a non compliant tank, which will have to be replaced

TOP: A diagram instructing on what a tank requires, in order to be compliant under the health and safety at works act 2015

enable ongoing compliant farm deliveries of tanks. Chat with the fuel team to organise compliant fuel storage for your business and advice on products to ensure you minimise fuel issues. For further information regarding these changes and options to ensure fuel supply please contact Ruralco Fuel on 0800 RURALNZ (787 256).

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EXTRAS

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- Jockey wheel
- Registration

STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS fame and bolt on channel drawbar - New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
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- 15mm plywood floor - Trailcom coupling 1 7/8" std - Stop tail indicator lights incl. plug - Std 12 month warranty - WOF supplied - LED lights

TANDEM AXLE TRAILER

FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised

STANDARD SIZES

- 2440 X 1225mm ID
- 2440 x 1500mm ID
- 3070 x 1530mm ID

EXTRAS

- Hydraulic over-ride disc brakes
- Stock crates
- Jockey wheel
- Registration

STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS fame and bolt on channel drawbar - New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
- New 14" 8 ply tyres - New 14" galvanised spoke wheels - 5 leaf 1000kg springs
- 15mm plywood floor - Trailcom coupling 1 7/8" std - Stop tail indicator lights incl. plug - Std 12 month warranty - WOF supplied - LED lights

TANDEM AXLE TRAILER

FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised

STANDARD SIZES

- 3600 x 1800mm ID
- 4200 x 2100mm ID
- 4800 x 2400mm ID

EXTRAS

- Hydraulic over-ride disc brakes
- Stock crates
- Jockey wheel
- Registration

STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS fame and bolt on channel drawbar - New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
- New 14" 8 ply tyres - New 14" galvanised spoke wheels - 5 leaf 1000kg springs
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TANDEM MOTOR BIKE FARM TRAILER

FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised

STANDARD SIZES

- 2400 x 1230mm (8x4)
- 2400 x 1500mm (8x5)

CRATE

- Lift out crate
- Sliding rear door
- Frame - 30 x 30 x 5 angle iron
- Mesh - 75x75x4
- Finish - Hot dipped galv

STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS fame and bolt on channel drawbar - New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
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New Lincoln University research initiative seeks better use of land

A new Lincoln University initiative is looking to come up with new creative, innovative, integrative and adaptive agricultural systems.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY LINCOLN UNIVERSITY



The initiative, called Designing Future Productive Landscapes, is a multi-disciplinary approach, which could span the University as it seeks to find alternatives to “current and narrow models of land-use options and practices”.

Its comprehensive research programme involves projects in hill country, dryland and irrigated landscapes and will be multi-disciplinary response, integrating skills and knowledge across farming systems, ecology, landscape design, social science and other disciplines.

It is responding to the need for new ways of using land more productively while ensuring New Zealand’s future prosperity and enhancing lives.

The land-use options and practices are seen to not only limit sustainability and the resilience of landscapes and the agroecosystems embedded within them, but also constrain regeneration of land, environment and culture.

Initiative lead, Professor Pablo Gregorini, said production landscapes underpin cultures and prosperity of societies worldwide.

However, a number of transformations and pressures are affecting landscapes here and around the world, diminishing biodiversity, reducing water and air quality, and accelerating loss of soil and plant biomass (amongst other factors).

“Given New Zealand’s economic reliance on food agricultural production and provenance, our global brand, prosperity and well-being are at risk.

“We want to create adaptive agroecosystems to re-connect our landscape, our livestock (agriculture) and ourselves, by restoring broken linkages among plants, herbivores and humans with diets that nourish and satiate, as well as heal our planet,” Professor Gregorini said.

“Our objective demands a multi-disciplinary response, integrating skills and knowledge

across farming systems, ecology, landscape design, social science and other disciplines.”

The initiative follows the recommendations of last year’s Transformation Board Report urging Lincoln to deliver positive changes in land, food and ecosystems.

It will involve students working in a ‘living laboratory’, ‘incubating’ ideas in the classroom that can be ‘hatched’ in the field.

The initiative involves academics from agricultural, landscape and Māori perspectives, and is the first of three to be announced this year.

Areas the initiative could address include reshaping and reimagining Māori productive landscapes that will support and sustain the mauri of te taiao (production landscapes) while continuing to grow the Māori economy.

It could also involve encouraging regional councils to develop approaches for identifying and designing distinctive ways to increase a landscape’s full range of productivity, and helping Government agencies to establish new baselines and benchmarks for monitoring landscape value and productivity.

Community and commercial sectors could also be involved to enable implementation, IP development and delivering associated social, economic and environmental value.

Potentially, the initiative could involve staff across the entire disciplinary range at Lincoln University.

Key collaborators could involve CRIs and other universities, in New Zealand and internationally, and ideas could be trialled on some of the University’s farms.

Initiative team member, Associate Professor Mick Abbott, said his main concern lay with how we can design future landscapes that better integrate the multiple ways we use and protect land for the benefit of ourselves, and the environment.

Fellow team member and Lincoln University Director Kaiarahi Māori, Dr Dione Payne, said an important aspect for her was protecting and sustaining the Mauri of te taiao.

Lincoln University Chancellor Steve Smith said Lincoln University is uniquely placed to lead the new initiative.

“In addition to the multi-disciplinary team, our network of farms allows to integrate research across a variety of landscapes.”

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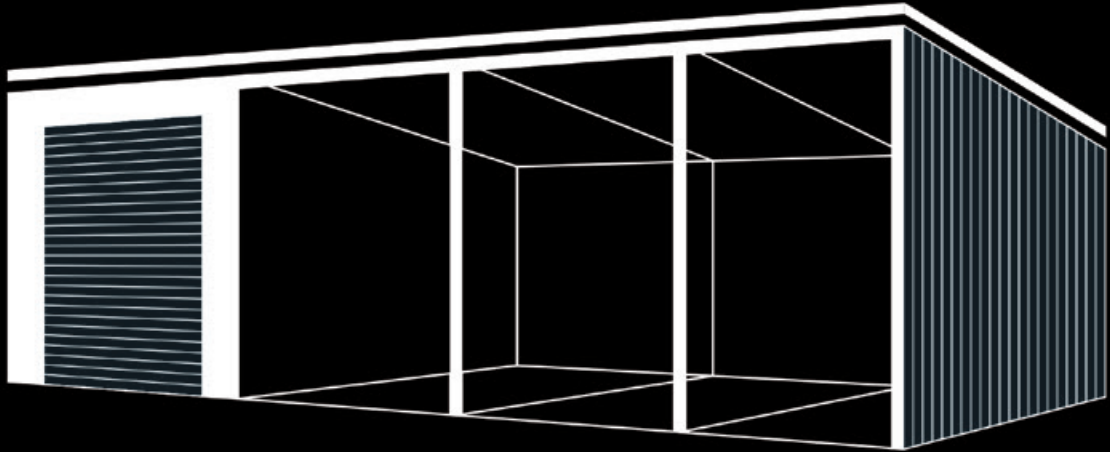


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01/06/2017	Mitre 10 Mega	X-950907	\$350.28	\$25.93	\$304.35	\$7,254.74
	Mitre 10 Mega	00108603	\$256.70	\$23.67	\$233.03	\$7,467.77
	Mitsons Saddlery & Feed	666.68	\$7.55	\$7.55	\$99.13	\$7,526.90
	Mitsons Tyre Services Ltd	644227	\$25.31	\$1.27	\$24.04	\$7,550.94
	Mit & Boto Ashburton	2264817	\$1,348.80	\$67.43	\$1,281.37	\$8,832.11
	Oil services	72150	\$528.91	\$52.89	\$476.02	\$9,308.13
		6954	\$344.07	\$41.01	\$303.06	\$9,611.19
		425957	\$814.49	\$69.86	\$744.63	\$10,355.82
			\$1,051.90	\$103.19	\$928.71	\$11,284.53
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Tracey Gordon

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Rate payment through Ruralco Card ceasing

As of the 1 of July 2018, The Ashburton District Council has decided it will discontinue to accept the Ruralco Card as a viable form of Payment.

This comes as a result of an internal review done by The Council. We apologise for the inconvenience.

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Dates for your diary

7 August

IrrigationNZ – Water Measurement Master Class
10:00am–3:00pm
Lincoln

9 August

Beef & Lamb NZ Progressive Ag Conference 2018
Gore

17–18 August

Beef & Lamb NZ—WoolOn Creative Fashion Event
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3 September

Fathers Day
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6 September

IrrigationNZ—Irrigation operator and manager training
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