


# RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2018



Latitude proof  
of Benatrade  
performance

Non pastoral  
protein brings  
clouds and silver  
linings

Passionate  
for fresh  
produce

A new year ahead—  
expectations and  
revelations

# From the Group CEO



## Happy New Year and welcome to 2018!

We hope you have had a great summer so far and have survived the weather extremes which have hit parts of the country over recent weeks.

As this publication goes to print the Ruralco team will be gearing up for this year's Southern Field Days at Waimumu in

Southland, which runs from 14 to 16 February.

It is a major event on the agricultural calendar showcasing the latest in rural technologies, equipment and ideas from around the world, and we will have a number of our key staff members from every area of our business attending.

These events are fantastic opportunities for us to meet with our farming folk and we are looking forward to catching up. Please come and find us and have a chat. We'd love to see you.

Southland is also the backdrop for one of our feature articles in this edition of Real Farmer as we take a closer look at a third generation Black Angus farming operation run by David and Juli Marshall.

The couple's Benatrade Angus Stud experiences tough and cold conditions thanks to the chilly blast of south-westerlies which come off Fouveau Strait, but it's led to them developing a reputation for breeding strong, reliable cattle with proven meat quality. Genetics play a strong part in their operation and they tell us about getting the right formula

to produce stock with good growth rates and the fat levels necessary to survive the sometimes harsh climate.

Another inter-generational operation is also featured in this publication – this time it's a Mid Canterbury horticultural venture producing asparagus and courgettes. John and Helen Cunliffe's property was originally a dairy farm when John's grandfather bought it in 1922, but John's father switched to cropping and the couple have since developed the small asparagus side of the operation to include courgettes, with most produce destined to supply the local market.

Much like the Southern Field Days we also aim to provide information on new trends and technology through our publications, and one of the most controversial and challenging for our agricultural industry is the introduction of non-pastoral protein. Once the stuff of science fiction, the development of alternative protein foods is now a reality and has become a hot topic of conversation. Agricultural reporter, Richard Rennie takes a closer look at what industry representatives are saying and how we should respond.

Happy reading and we hope to see you at the Southern Field Days.

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## RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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**ON THE COVER:**  
David Marshall, owner of Southland stud Benatrade Angus

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David & Juli took over farming the black cattle in 1994 to formally establish the Benetrade name

# Latitude proof of Benatrade performance

**Little lies between David and Juli Marshall's Benatrade Angus stud and the Antarctic, as the cold blast of south-westerlies off Foveaux Strait can attest. But the couple have turned the challenge of latitude into a key selling point from their quality Angus cattle.**

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY MEGAN GRAHAM

The sometimes tough and cold conditions experienced on the low-lying property only a few short kilometres from the strait is helping breed Angus cattle capable of "doing it hard" over tough seasons, continuing to grow well and even thrive to deliver premium quality and exceptional carcass yields. They have helped build the stud's reputation for breeding strong, reliable cattle with proven meat quality.

David can proudly count himself as the third generation Marshall to be farming the black cattle, taking over from his father James in 1994 to formally establish the Benatrade name.

The original founding herd arrived on the train one afternoon in April 1938 to his grandfather's property at Oporo.

David's grandfather had long held an interest in the black cattle even while working at his town job with the National Mortgage company in Invercargill and tending his small property at Oporo.

"The stud ran for a number of years unregistered, but they kept all their pedigree stock. Then in the 1950s Dad bought an incalf Angus cow out from Perth in Scotland, which was quite an effort and expense for the time."

Purchased at the annual Perth Angus sale, David says the cost of getting her here (£700) was about the same as she was worth.

"Unfortunately they lost the bull calf only hours after it was born, it died on the lounge floor, but the mother went on to introduce some fresh, high quality genetics into the herd."

After taking over from David's father in 1994 and establishing the stud, David and Juli began a new era in commitment and passion for the breed.

The family also have a long-standing involvement in the A&P show circuit, one that dated back to David's grandfather who hosted the young Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip during their coronation visit to the Southland A&P show in 1953.

Once he had established Benatrade David stepped into the show ring, and their daughter Natalie, now holding a doctorate in food science from Otago University was also a passionate show-goer. She went as far to compete in the Royal Australian Show herdsperson competition.

After selling to both the beef and dairy sectors in the past David and Juli are now focussing more upon selling bulls to

commercial beef breeders, buoyed by the strong prospects for the sector, and the continuing success of the Angus "brand" in retail meat sales.

The couple pride themselves on taking a personal interest in the needs and success of their commercial clients, following up on how the genetics clients have purchased from them have translated into growth rates, carcass yield and economic return once on the hook.

"We have been concentrating on trying to build the level of intra-muscular fat (IMF), that marbled fat you get through the meat, and a better shaped eye muscle. We have always bred for a good element of fat in our stock, the cold winds that come through here make pretty short work of genetics that are too lean and lacking in that area," says David.

This has seen them go as far afield as North Dakota to acquire genetics from stock capable of weathering some of the toughest cattle farming conditions possible, with winters down as low as -20C.

"It is not overly hard to get genetics capable of providing you with the growth rates you seek, but it is another thing to get genetics that can manage both growth rates and fat levels together. There is not a lot between us and the South Pole at times and with that cool south-westerly cows need a fat cover or they don't survive."

BELOW: The stud has a reputation for breeding strong, reliable cattle with proven meat quality





They have also sourced Australian Angus genetics, with one used last year whose sire topped the Australian bull sale for value last year.

The couple combine bulls with an AI programme that regularly has about 60 of the 220 breeding cows going to AB as they come on heat. The remainder will be serviced by a top couple of yearlings. This season one was purchased from Te Mania in North Canterbury and the other from newly founded Rockley Stud at Dipton.

They avoid “high milk” sires given their females take too much feeding as breeding cows and David still places great importance upon physical presentation.

“We look for a good head on them with a full nostril, big eye and milk expression. We also look for some width between the eyes and their frame has to be sound with good legs, feet and well sprung rib.”

David believes as important as the figures on growth rate, fat levels and birthweights may all be, it is vital that data be supported by a physically appealing, strong and well assembled animal.

Just as a decent off roader requires a good chassis, the Benatrade stock will often be found on the tough dry country around Alexandra or in contrast the wet tough country of Westland, their performance in both extremes has been founded on physical robustness as much as on carcass data.

David attributes much of the stud's genetic

success to his own “gene whisperer”, Lindsay Jones of Genetic Choice.

“Lindsay sources all our AI genetics and has a very good eye for cattle, he is good at matching the right cows to the right semen—if he tells us not to use something we don't, and if we should, we do.”

They stay focused on using the AI genetics to improve their own breeding herd, and David is emphatic about placing at least as much value on the dam's performance as the sires, something that can often be given less of a priority in the breeding equation.

ABOVE: With that cool south-westerly the cows need a decent fat cover or they don't survive

BELOW: David can proudly count himself as the third generation Marshall to be farming the black cattle

Tracking actual performance alongside the genetic data is also critical.

David's father James was an avid data recorder, and David can recall the stock weighing agent turning up with his trailered weigh gear every year to record bull weight in the mid 60s before weight recording was overly common. Today they record 200, 400 and 600 day and mature cow weights.



“What strikes me thinking back to those days is how as a breed we are not really seeing animals any heavier today. I remember the scales topping out at 2,240 pounds, just over a tonne, and having bulls that achieved that back then. I think today we may be growing bulls faster, but not necessarily any bigger.”

Looking to the future David and Juli ultimately want to have a closed herd, sparked in part by the recent concern over the mycoplasma bovis outbreak in South Canterbury, and the difficulties in managing the disease’s spread.

“We would like to be finishing our own steers for that high end quality meat market, and use carcass data from our own stock processed to pass onto our bull buyers.”

It is a sign of the couple’s faith in the beef sector and in their own ability that they are looking to solely focus on beef supply, winding back the dairy bull supply business entirely.

“We are really looking to have a low input system, delivering the lifestyle we both want and focus on profit rather than simply turnover.”

## Family takes challenges in its stride

The Marshall family are remarkable not only for their quality stock breeding, but also for an attitude to life and challenges that have proven tough but have not compromised their optimistic view of it.

David and Juli have four children, Natalie, Wade, Ben and Travis.

Ben and Travis bring another dimension to the family, with Travis and Ben having a global development delay and an unspecified genetic disorder while Ben also has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair.



Neither of the young men are able to communicate vocally.

The couple’s other son Wade is a professional rodeo rider, while Ben’s twin Natalie has recently completed her doctorate in Food Science at Otago University.

By the couple’s own admission bringing up two handicapped sons some distance from the support of town based services has been no easy task, and Juli spent many of the boys’ early years battling to find the ideal schooling system for them. Now aged 31 and 23, both live on the farm and love to play a role in its day to day operations, with Ben also spending three days a week in an IHC day base in Invercargill.

ABOVE: From back left Wade, David, Juli, Travis and Ben in front with dog Jock

BELOW: The couple combine bulls with an AI programme that regularly has about 60 of the 220 breeding cows going to AB as they come on heat

David says despite their disabilities the boys take a strong interest in the farm, and the couple have worked hard to keep them engaged and part of the entire Benatrade Stud business.

Juli also spends time off the farm in her role as IHC Southland Association chairperson.

Meantime Ben’s twin Natalie is also pursuing her lifelong interest in genetics and breeding. Having completed a doctorate in Food Science at Otago University, she is heading to Scotland in 2018 to work with Scottish cattle breeders to help shape the country’s future breeds that meet consumer eating preferences.

It is a nice arc back to her lifelong interest in cattle breeding, and one that leaves her Dad particularly proud.

Beef and the industry run strong through the family in every form—their youngest son Wade is a professional bull rider and also comes home from travels around the world to help out when needed.

He has recently spent time riding near Edmonton Canada while also working on an Angus-Simmental ranch and feedlot operation.

“Fortunately he was home a few days before I managed to break my leg which, was just as well, I have appreciated having his help back here,” says David.



# Ford



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# Heading down the slippery slope

As of 31 January 2018, we will be a touch over 60% of our way through the milking season assuming days of 1 August through to 31 May; however most farms would have produced around 65% of their milk production for the season and from now on in, we can expect a steady decline in milk production as the cows progressively wind down their biological production curve. WORDS BY CRAIG TROTTER, CENTRE FOR DAIRY EXCELLENCE

At the time of writing, much of the country has received good rainfall which will be a blessing for some and a saviour to others but frustrating for the cricket!

With appreciably another 120 days left of the milking season, our goal now turns towards ensuring that the decline in milk production is just like a turtle, slow and steady and with our attention slowly turning towards those (hopefully few) bumpy backbone cows in the herd which have a body condition score (BCS) of 4 or below, ideally by April, the earlier calving light cows will be dried off in order for them to reach BCS 5 prior to calving time. By now, clients will have the first results from pregnancy aged scanning to muse over and may be somewhat daunted by the number of cows to calve down in the first 2-3 weeks of calving, we are at the that beautiful stage of the season in which last August can be vaguely remembered and we may be looking at next August with a gut feeling of excitement and apprehension when we consider the results of the 6 week incalf pattern; it is over the next few months that we can make

real positive changes to ensure cows are well-conditioned (at least BCS 4.5 at dry off) so that they are ready to face the challenges of spring 2018. DairyNZ have some great tools and advice to read around BCS and drying off strategies which can be found in the link below: <https://www.dairynz.co.nz/animal/body-condition-scoring/bcs-strategies/> Preparing feed budgets in association with the financial versions to determine feed requirements and demand for supplementary feed inputs for August and September is always wise now. Most crops of fodder beet and kale alike have had a reasonable growing season to date and touch wood; we will have high yielding crops across the land in order for cows to winter well. If this isn't the case for your situation, finding alternative feed sources may well start today.

Ensuring cows are fed well over the next few months will ensure that we can hold steady the decline in milk yield for the continuation of the season as well as safeguard the condition that cows currently have and allow those cows

which are under conditioned to replace some through the late summer and autumn months. Most farms will have their latest round of herd test results handy; Discuss these with your vet and take the time to go through the results in association with herd test data to identify genuine cull cows and remove them to free up feed for your performers. Take the proactive approach to ensure that steps are put in place now so that more drastic decisions such as OAD milking or drying off earlier don't need to be made later! Take the time during milking to actively identify those lighter cows in the herd, mark them and consider your options around creation of a herd of lighter cows (below 4 BCS) which graze separately or perhaps in front of the main herd; if required, get an independent condition scorer to BCS the herd (most consulting companies and vets have DairyNZ certified scorers available) and to discuss body condition scoring and feeding requirements with your staff from now till dry off to ensure your herd are in the best possible shape to face the winter and resulting spring.

# Our Network Is Growing!

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# Ultimate Broadband is getting even bigger

The official partner in Canterbury for Rural Broadband Initiative 2 is planning an extensive network expansion. WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY ULTIMATE BROADBAND

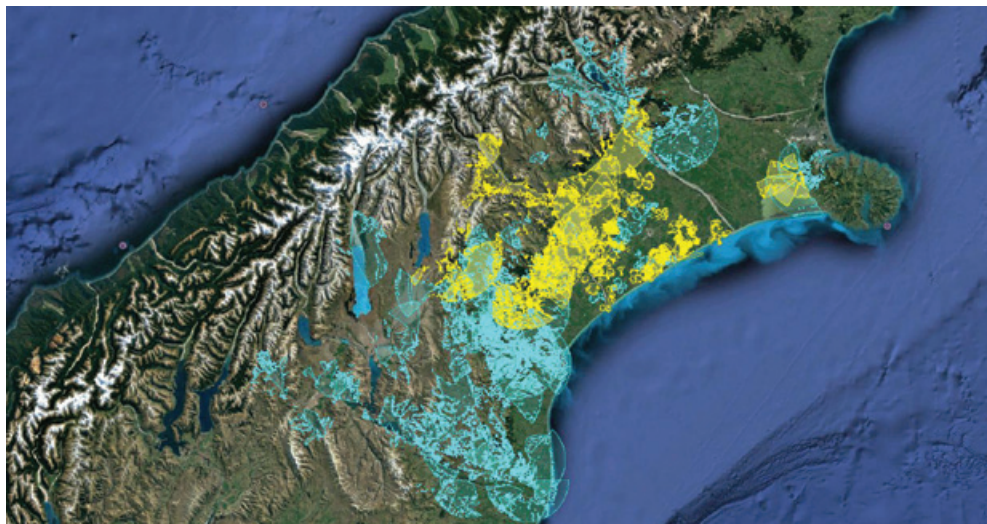


IMAGE: Ultimate Broadband new network in blue with the existing network in yellow

Local Christchurch based company Ultimate Broadband is gearing up for its biggest expansion to date and owner/operator Mike Smith is excited about the opportunities soon available to rural customers in South and Mid Canterbury. Ultimate Broadband has just been named official partner in Canterbury for the Rural Broadband Initiative 2—essentially a funding mechanism provided by government to expand Internet services in remote rural areas with poor or non-existent coverage. “It’s all about expansion and reaching more people” he explains. Ultimate Broadband will be expanding their wireless network to provide broadband at higher speeds and connect more customers. This \$2 million investment means that the company will more than double their coverage area—upgrading 86 current sites and building an additional 34 new sites.

In terms of new coverage zones the list is extensive. Sites are being built or upgraded in Tai Tapu, Selwyn, Hororata, Lake Coleridge, Ashburton Lakes, Rakaia Gorge, Upper Rangitata Gorge, Huntington, Wakanui, Greenstreet and one of the biggest sites in the upgrade will be located at Peel Forest. In South Canterbury the expansion extends from Hunters Hills down the coast as well as Mt Dobson, Fairlie and along to the Lindis Pass. Ultimate Broadband has been working with the rural community for over five years and Mike and the team are committed to providing the most efficient Internet solutions for their customers. Mike describes Ultimate Broadband as a hybrid Internet service provider—using a combination of copper, fibre and wireless technology to deliver the highest quality of service. They are Mid Canterbury’s leading fibre provider on the rural network and work with local operators Chorus, Enable, Alpine and EA Networks fibre. They are also

resellers of Rural Broadband Initiative 1—which is wireless broadband based on the Vodafone 3G and 4G network which often is the only option to connect customers in areas where Ultimate Broadband have yet to roll out their network expansion.

By using different options of connectivity Ultimate Broadband customers are guaranteed a more fixed consistent speed service with very large data allowances – in fact the majority of plans have no data caps. They pride themselves on designing networks to fit with customer’s specifications and Mike explains they are not just an Internet provider but will analyse your home and business as a whole. “We like to take it to the next step and develop a package to fit your entire needs and we’ve been doing that very successfully in Mid Canterbury.” This involves obvious home broadband connection but also connectivity to areas such as dairy sheds, monitoring systems, irrigation and security cameras. They can also connect farm workers accommodation and provide Wi-Fi in areas where staff need to be and cannot rely on the 3G/4G Vodafone network—all of these connectivity options can be delivered on one convenient plan. Additionally, any new customers signing up with Ultimate Broadband will receive a Wi-Fi assessment from their technicians as according to Mike poor Wi-Fi is the main reason for poor internet connectivity and most people don’t realise this. The majority of companies will simply connect broadband and often the customer isn’t getting great speeds or connectivity. A bigger

router or extra Wi-Fi access points often helps Internet function much more efficiently—while this can incur extra cost it leads to a much better service. For the majority of customers while a high-speed Internet service is a priority they also expect a high level of customer service when there is a problem. Mike and the team at Ultimate Broadband operate a 9–5 customer helpdesk and also a 24-hour message service that is regularly checked and generally any issues are resolved quickly and customers are regularly updated via Facebook. The company also now has the advantage of having its own broadcast frequency that means they can deliver better radio service with no interference.

In terms of timelines the network rollout has just commenced and Ultimate Broadband estimates it will be complete in 3½ years. For existing customers they will have the opportunity to switch to higher speed plans and ultimately the entire network will have the same level of performance. “The whole purpose of doing this is that everyone’s service level is increased and the funding allows us to build a bigger network,” Mike explains. Being official partners of the Rural Broadband Initiative 2 also allows Ultimate Broadband to cater to more corporate businesses in rural areas and deliver high-speed access in very remote areas where customers have very specific data and connectivity needs such as live streaming or video conferencing. “We can provide dedicated services to clients that typically are only available via fibre in urban areas”

Ruralco customers have an even better advantage with Ultimate Broadband now offering a dedicated plan for Ruralco Cardholders—offering uncapped data at just \$99 a month. While uncapped or no cap data may not seem a priority now Mike reminds customers that their usage will change over the next few years and your connection needs to be able to handle the latest technologies—he is confident that with this new expansion Ultimate Broadband can offer the best solution for your home and business. “We’re moving towards higher performance, better coverage, more areas covered, better value plans and Ruralco Cardholders will get an even better deal.”



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# Non pastoral protein brings clouds and silver linings

Plant based burgers, 'milk' sourced from pea protein and drinks made from algae. These are the meals once limited to science fiction movie food fed to intrepid astronauts awakening from their deep space hibernated slumber. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

But faster than many in New Zealand would believe, they are now a reality in supermarket chillers and shelves, smartly marketed, well researched and backed by millions in capital more likely sourced from Silicon Valley than farmer co-ops and food companies.

The type of threat this new wave of protein alternatives represent to New Zealand's traditional pastoral agricultural systems has been described as "existential" by science leader Professor Peter Gluckman, the Prime Minister's Chief Science Adviser in October last year.

Thought leader and business developer Dr Rosie Bosworth also cautioned in the National Business Review that New Zealand's primary sector risked becoming the "Detroit of agriculture".

**"Fonterra is working closely with AgResearch on a study aimed at unravelling the complexities of milk to find what components are unique..."**

This was on grounds its demand for limited resources would make it unsustainable as lab grown protein becomes more prevalent and cheaper with production growth.

She warned the sector has been complacent about the rise in the threat, and would struggle to compete with commodity produced alternative protein as it scaled up.

Sir Peter's warnings accompanied three possible courses of actions for the country. They included sticking with ruminant based farming but adopting new practices that may involve using genetically modified feed sources, switching to GM free plant sourced ingredients, or investing in the full supply chain to produce meat and milk alternative protein foods.

The alarm call prompted a rapid response from the country's largest dairy processor Fonterra in national media.

A spokesman responded saying milk from cows contains a complex mix of proteins fats and minerals that would be almost impossible to manufacture, ensuring a global, growing market for dairy with its nutritional strength delivering it as the premium nutrition choice.

Fonterra is working closely with AgResearch on a study aimed at unravelling the complexities of milk to find what components are unique, and can even contribute to the recently discovered "brain-gut" wellness axis.

This relatively new field of study has discovered the gut contains neurons similar to what the brain has, and through these communication networks links emotive and cognitive centres of the brain to intestinal function.

Ultimately researchers hope to prove dairy is a genuine "smart food" whose consumption not only delivers nutritive benefits, but also improvements in children's brain development, and maintaining cognitive awareness in aging consumers.

Researchers hypothesis only through the unique combinations of nutrients and minerals found in milk can this effect be gained, rather than created in a lab from a single plant sourced product.

However this has not assuaged concerns of some who have likened Fonterra's faith in dairy to wool stalwarts in the sixties when synthetics started to make their play in clothing and carpet use.

Dipton farmer Peter McDonald highlighted the sense of unease many farmers feel, in a column published earlier this year.

He said ignoring it and hoping it will go away is not an option, and pointed out how the wool industry backed out of industry investment, just as synthetic fibres started to gain a foot hold with increased investment.

Meantime synthetics have been around for several decades, and a generation of consumers have little, if any idea about wool's natural attributes and as a material it

continues to founder in its coarse form.

Nuffield scholar and Te Puke dairy farmer Richard Fowler made the synthetic food sector his subject of research in 2016.

He found a slickly marketed industry playing cleverly on inferences about traditional agriculture's weaknesses, implying it was inferior or more harmful to animals than what these companies offered.

He found an industry still very much in the capital raising stage, but also one that also presented a number of opportunities for the pastoral sector.

**"Ultimately researchers hope to prove dairy is a genuine "smart food"..."**

The intensive cut and carry dairy operations in the United States capture New Zealand's extensive pastoral systems in their negative slipstream, and synthetic milk companies play that into their promotion.

"The general consensus is there is little difference in carbon emissions between a pasture based farming model and an intensive confinement model, despite the best animal welfare standards in the world."

He said the New Zealand farming model risked being "lined up and shot" alongside other countries without a real trial.

Dairy Co-operatives Association of NZ Executive Director Kimberly Crewther said the dairy sector was fighting for its corner on three fronts. One was defending the use of the term "milk" and other dairy terms in product labels from non-dairy sources.

This had already resulted in a Vita Soy soy and coconut milk advertisement being pulled nationally earlier this year.

The second front was supporting research into dairy's unique nutritional properties, like the AgResearch work into milk's deeper nutritional importance.

The third area is ensuring the industry can stand up and be counted for providing a



sustainable, environmentally friendly food product that can command a premium on international markets.

Richard Fowler was concerned that despite international efforts to clean up the use of “milk” in describing some products, it would only be a distraction from a product requiring a better fight on a strategic front.

“It may be as simple as having a better understanding of our true water and carbon footprints. These don’t get talked about, but we need to find whether we really are better, worse or the same as these new food types in these areas.”

**“It is no different from Coca Cola deciding it is not just into soft drinks, and how it got into other drink types, including water.”**

He also challenged New Zealand industry processors to make a move into synthetic food investment, or at least engage with some of the big existing players. This may also provide business opportunities.

“It is no different from Coca Cola deciding it is not just into soft drinks, and how it got into other drink types, including water.”

He also saw opportunities for NZ farmers to provide the basic inputs the synthetic proteins still require.

Plant sourced products are requiring crops like peas and potatoes, and Landcorp has discussed crop options with Impossible Foods, the manufacturers of burgers made of plant source proteins.

The meat sector may be able to provide stem cells to the cultured meat sector in a “bet both ways” strategy.

A New Zealand company SunFed Meats is already claiming to be the country’s first non-animal protein company.

The company has kicked off producing non-chicken ‘chicken’ now available in stores in New Zealand.

Company founder Shama Lee has already raised \$1.5 million in an earlier capital raising exercise to commercialise her product and is now seeking additional partners to increase the company’s size 100 fold.

Her efforts were being compared to a higher profile United States company Impossible Burgers that through a similar technique has the technology to align the protein fibres from peas into organised patterns that give a better, more textured eating experience.

However SunFed Meats has also faced an issue likely to become common as the traditional protein sector digs in to fight for its patch, with challenges through the Advertising Standards Authority on its use of “chicken” in its marketing.

However her company also offers the prospect of another income stream for the

arable sector in regions like Canterbury. Lee has stated her intention is to build the supply chain backwards, now consumer demand has been proven, and utilise New Zealand grown yellow peas rather than imported peas.

Ex Beef + Lamb NZ Chairman Mike Petersen is now a NZ trade envoy and has seen plenty of evidence around the world on the strength of non-pastoral proteins.

“But when it comes to what we produce, we are high quality, high integrity food producers at the upper end of the animal protein market. That will carry us through, assuming we take up the challenge to present ourselves that way to the rest of the world.”

**“...her company also offers the prospect of another income stream for the arable sector in regions like Canterbury.”**

He too sees the alternative protein market as one presenting as many opportunities as threats.

The idea of a Canterbury dairy farmer also having some land dedicated to a pea protein crop is quite a realistic one, and one that could provide valuable income diversity.

“We should also remember, everyone talks about these disruptive products. But by far more disruptive are changes in routes to market, such as online ordering.”

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# A new year ahead— expectations and revelations

If you were to read nothing but mainstream media, you could be forgiven for thinking as a farmer you were one of the four horsemen of the apocalypse—an uncaring rider responsible for global warming, dirty waterways, industrialised farming and dodgy animal welfare.

ALISTER BODY, ATS CHAIRMAN

It could be enough to prompt you to open the gate, let the stock out, load the ute with your worldly possessions and disappear quietly into the night.

But the reality for farmers in New Zealand, and particularly in Canterbury, is far brighter than such a decidedly grim image.

In a very short time, in fact in less than a decade, New Zealand farmers have been assaulted with more change than their fathers or grandfathers could ever have imagined.

However, while I know change is always a constant, I also have a sense the farming sector has faced the big challenges of environment and sustainability well, and today is acknowledging, coping and adjusting exceptionally well to that change.

None of them are proving simple, with the complexities of global warming and water quality but two examples made even more complicated by New Zealand's relatively unique "outdoor" farming system that is required to integrate, and at times impact, on the physical environment upon which it sits.

But there has been outstanding progress in only a couple of short years. Few farmers now would look blankly when asked to discuss their Farm Environment Plan, and many have a strong working knowledge of the complex systems they play a part in like carbon and nitrogen cycles.

As a sector we have acknowledged that farming within environmental constraints has become a given.

Here in Canterbury, we as farmers are starting to feel the sharp end of the regional environmental plan, with consents to farm and furnishing Farm Environment Plans (FEPs). But my own personal experience with FEPs has been refreshingly enlightening and useful—having ours recently audited for our dairy operation was a constructive process and we have learnt how much of what is good for the environment is ultimately good for

farm operations, and even for our bottom line.

Our move to centre pivots from border dyke irrigation has boosted the efficiency of our water use. But it has also raised the challenge of concentrating nitrogen with the lower water input, highlighting the complexities of the systems we all have to juggle.

However we are also fast learning any resource or input that can be used less, or more efficiently, the better the outcome in every sense.

Ultimately there are still some tough decisions to come out of such plans. As an industry, and a region, it has been acknowledged some places may have to carry less livestock or even consider shifting to another land use altogether.

But the effort of all the farming sector to acknowledge the need for change, and to offer working solutions still remains the unsung theme for the past year or so, and one that should be played louder in the coming year.

Dairy farmers alone have managed to fence 26,197 km of waterways, ensuring almost 98% of waterways have stock excluded and this figure will continue to improve until 100% is achieved.

While it is easy for some to dismiss this effort to date, the speed at which it has been achieved is remarkable, and should give everyone farming or not, pause for thought.

No one claims this is the sole and final solution, but to take improvements to the next level involves a catchment by catchment approach, rather than a "one fence fits all" view of controlling farming across the country.

Here too things are starting to develop with groups less inclined than even two years ago to sit back throwing blame at each other, and instead sitting together at a round table to hammer out catchment specific solutions.

Good management practice by farmers is also going to come to the fore in the coming



year, with Canterbury as the founding region for this and is the first time they have been agreed across all agri sectors with all farmers working together to solve the problems.

I feel very confident the sector is poised to take water quality improvements to the next level with such approaches, leaving climate change and gas emissions as the next big item to deal with.

It is not an easy problem for the sector, but with the resources it has focused upon it, and the greater understanding of links between improved nitrogen use and its impact upon gas emissions, dealing with one problem is also helping better understand and solve the other.

The farming sector has made huge steps in acknowledging issues to deal with, and is now acting on them—we will continue to face critics. We will have to accept they will continue to claim column inches in the media, but our positive efforts will ultimately be acknowledged by the greater population, and the oxygen of criticism will be starved from those critics eventually.

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# Electricity audit delivers savings for Align Farms

Despite the diversity of dairy farm configurations throughout Canterbury, energy consultant Jim Miller of Millbridge Consulting can identify some consistent areas between farms' electricity use where dairy operators can and will make some significant savings to their bottom line. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



Jim has spent much of his career within the research, technical and commercial areas of the dairy industry and much of that work has been involved in energy analysis, efficiency and gas emissions management.

His relationship with Meridian makes him an ideal "go to" man for assessing shareholder farm efficiencies, and this was what he was called in to do for large dairy operator Align Farms.

The operation has four large dairy operations totalling 1500ha and milking 4000 cows. Procurement Manager Rhys Roberts welcomed the opportunity to have Jim conduct an energy audit on the properties when they re-committed to buying electricity from Meridian.

"Jim's visit and audit helped us identify a few key areas, and within that some low hanging fruit for savings that are relatively easy and low cost for us to act upon now, with a few others that will involve more capital expenditure but also deliver savings, at a later time," says Rhys.

One of the easy wins was Jim's advice to have all the farm dairies' hot water systems hooked up to a day-night timer.

"On average the dairies were using 11% of total farm electricity use (including irrigation) for water heating, but the ones with a switch already in were only averaging 7%. The switch allows the water to be heated at off-peak rates, which in the Ashburton area is from 11pm to 7am."

The payback was also convincing. A \$600 switch would save \$1000 in power in only a year.

A heat recovery system to utilise the heat pulled out of the milk at point of cooling also offered a three year payback for a \$15,000 installation cost.

The third easy fix was to put insulation jackets on all the farm silos. At a cost of \$3800 each, they save \$700 a year in electricity for cooling.

"In all those cases the payback is really quite fast, for not a significant amount of outlay."

Jim's audit also highlighted next level technology and installs that could be made to save even more electricity in the future. This included photo-voltaic systems, which cost about \$50,000 but have the potential to pay for themselves in six to seven years.

Jim also assessed the group's electricity contracts and charges, analysing their capacity charges based on pump sizes, and timing of electricity use for peak and off-peak application of irrigation, along with the dairy water heating.

"We have a couple of centre pivots that only need to run for five to six hours which used to just get switched on in the morning. Now they only run at night, evapotranspiration is lower so you use less water and less power at a cheaper rate, so that's a no brainer for us."

Even without spending a dollar and just taking advantage of Jim's reviewing of irrigation

connections and capacity charges, Rhys estimates the group has saved \$15,000.

By investing in relatively low-cost solutions will see total savings of \$40,000.

"And because you get the savings so soon, they almost become self-funding."

The audit process proved popular with the staff on each of the farms, and working with Meridian and Ruralco, Align has created a "low power" award for the farm household that uses the least through the year.

The winner receives a \$250 rebate on their house power, with the positive energy saving behaviour at home flowing through to good habits on the farm.

"We also now have a good tool for making comparisons between farms. Before we had a couple that were quite low per kg milk solids and per cow, and a couple that were above average, so there is a good benchmark now."

Jim says the areas where Align have managed to save money are relatively typical for Canterbury dairy farms.

"Those areas of heat recovery, silo insulation, hot water heating and variable speed vacuum pumps are the first areas to consider for most farms wanting to save electricity."

He says the adjustments in capacity charges through the Canterbury region means many farms have faced increases, and re-examining pump sizes and uses is another area where good savings are possible.

The area of milk cooling is one likely to be under closer inspection by many farms as they face incoming regulations on lowering milk to six degrees within two hours of milking's completion.

"Practices like using vat insulation may help a farm get over the line without necessarily having to spend a lot to get there."

After many years of dealing with dairy farm electricity use Jim says he has developed an assessment spread sheet that incorporates many of the quirks his farm visits have picked up over the years.

"With electricity no longer an insignificant cost for these large operators it is rewarding to see how much they are able to save, often for relatively little outlay, which has a rapid pay back."

**To learn more about energy assessments, discuss your audit options with Ruralco Energy Account Manager Tracey Gordon on 0800 787 256.**

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# Getting the most out of irrigation in challenging conditions

With summer settled in, irrigating farmers will now be trying to maximise every drop of water and make sure it's used as efficiently as possible.

WORDS BY ANDREW CURTIS, CEO OF IRRIGATIONNZ, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY IRRIGATIONNZ



To get through the next few months, irrigators will need to manage their water allocation very carefully and make some decisions about what their priorities are.

Checking your irrigation equipment is well maintained and performing to specifications will minimise down-time, leakage or delivery problems. Some systems may be 20–50% out and using more water than you need. Calibration checks can save a lot of water and are easy to carry out. IrrigationNZ has a free 'Check it—Bucket Test' app which can be used to check irrigators are applying water evenly. The app is available from Google Play or the App Store.

As the irrigation season goes on, regular maintenance checks are essential. Checking pressure and sprinklers is recommended. Re-nozzling might help stretch out water for longer but this should be done under the advice of a qualified irrigation designer.

Irrigation scheduling is also critical when your water supply is likely to be limited. With water meters in place, you should be keeping a close

eye on how much water is being used, and regularly reviewing soil moisture levels and crop requirements. Sitting down and planning your water budgets will enable you to work out how best to allocate water over the coming months. Farmers who operate a number of irrigation systems should think about using their most efficient irrigation systems more than their least efficient systems to help make the best use of their water allocation. You should also consider limiting irrigation during high winds or extreme daytime temperatures, to make every drop count. Investing in good soil moisture monitoring technology is also important. You should check this every day so you know when to irrigate and how much water to apply. Understanding which soils are the least productive and which are the most productive can help you identify which areas would benefit most from irrigation if water is limited. If you have stock, then placing your most productive animals on good pasture makes sense, while less productive stock could be put in areas without irrigation or with less pasture.

IMAGE: Carrying out a bucket test will help identify how much water your irrigator is applying and if the application is even

Finally involve your staff in a plan to manage your irrigation systems. If water is limited, make sure they understand that any leaks or operating issues need to be fixed as soon as possible. If you have new staff, it's important they know how to correctly operate irrigation equipment.

IrrigationNZ is carrying out a range of training this summer on irrigation management, soil moisture monitoring and irrigation assessment - visit [www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events](http://www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events) to find out more about our upcoming training events.

Irrigation plays a really important role in ensuring Kiwis can continue to have access to affordable local produce. IrrigationNZ is carrying out a summer campaign to highlight how important irrigation is to our food production and we invite you to share some photos of food you've grown with irrigation on the 'IrrigationNZ' Facebook page and go into the draw to win prizes.



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Euro Agri imports specialist European agricultural equipment and offers a full repair service and back-up parts service on all new and used machinery.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY EURO AGRI



IMAGE: Staff left to right: Rebecca McCloy, Philip Smart, Phil Webb, James McCloy, James Robinson, Murray Dalton, John McDonnell, Arran Linfoot, Reed Gibbons, Mark Smitheram. Absent: Hamish Wilson

The company is owned by Alistair & Shirley Clemens and James & Jo McCloy. James McCloy works as General Manager and has over 38 years in the agriculture industry and has used his comprehensive knowledge of New Zealand agriculture to import a wide range of leading European brands focusing on spraying, fertilising and cultivation. Born and raised in Methven, James is a qualified mechanic by trade and managed several agri related businesses prior to purchasing Euro Agri. All machinery on offer at Euro Agri has been selected to suit New Zealand conditions and provide maximum efficiency for farmers and contractors. Euro Agri is the sole New Zealand distributor for Bredal fertiliser spreaders, Househam sprayers, He-va cultivation equipment, Mzuri drills as well as being sole South Island agent for Multidrive.

Manufactured in Denmark, Bredal specialises in reliable and sophisticated lime and fertiliser spreaders and are also very suited to New Zealand conditions. The He-va cultivation range also is Danish made and again has been selected by Euro Agri due to its efficiency and wide range of soil preparation programs. Househam sprayers are the U.K.'s leading sprayer brand designing top quality self propelled and trailed sprayers and Euro Agri is the sole dealer of this range. Mzuri drills are built and designed to the highest standard in

the U.K. and are versatile to work with both strip tillage systems or traditional cultivation practices. Euro Agri also holds the exclusive South Island franchise for Multidrive—a range of dedicated load carrier and haulers. Additionally they supply Ag Leader systems— a range of GPS and data recording software and offer expert guidance on the system best suited to your farming requirements. Because Euro Agri deal directly with their European franchise partners they guarantee best pricing and quality assurance.

The team at Euro Agri offer full parts backup on all the machinery available and stock a comprehensive range of parts for spray and cultivation equipment for all brands. Owner James is very proud of the experienced staff in the workshop. The team consists of After Sales and Parts Manager Phil Webb, Service Manager James Robinson, Product Specialist Mark Smitheram, Service Technician Arran Linfoot, Engineer Murray Dalton, Apprentice Mechanic Reed Gibbons and Workshop Assistant John McDonnell. The service team offers full mechanical repairs on machinery and servicing

is also available on-site for all franchise brands. They also provide fertiliser spreader calibration to Spreadmark certification standards and manufacture hydraulic hoses and fittings. An engineer is available if needed and there is always someone on call 24/7 to assist with urgent repairs.

Euro Agri carries a comprehensive range of spare parts at all times and can freight parts New Zealand wide if required. They also stock Billerica spray nozzles, Hardi sprayer parts, Total agri oils, a full range of cultivation points and hardware and an extensive range of Claas combine parts. They have also just increased their parts back-up service by becoming an agent for Bareco parts. James believes with so many PTO driven machines in the region it is crucial to have access to a nationwide supply chain and the Bareco network provides that assurance. They stock an extended Bareco range of parts meaning the customer has no wait times when urgent repairs are needed. In addition Ruralco Cardholders will receive a 10% discount on all Bareco products as well as a 5% discount on all other stocked items.

James believes in the current economic climate it is essential to have the right equipment to maximise efficiency and yields and reduce costs and has built a highly experienced sales team ensuring the customer gets the equipment to suit their farming requirements. Product Specialists Hamish Wilson and Philip Smart are both vastly experienced in the farm machinery industry and are passionate about the brands they sell and are committed to client satisfaction and getting it right. "At Euro Agri we know the equipment we import is the highest quality and we enjoy going the extra mile finding the right gear for every customer, they can walk away knowing they have the best product for the job and that we're available 24/7 for support."



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# Autumn health check

Early autumn is an important time of year to evaluate animal health status. This ensures your herds and flocks are prepared for the autumn/winter period.

WORDS BY IAN HODGE, BVSC, MANZCVS., IMAGE BY AMY PIPER

During summer the trace mineral status can change dramatically. Having healthy animals in autumn gives them the best defense against health challenges as the season changes.

At the end of summer you can expect animals to have varying levels of the essential trace elements copper, selenium, cobalt and iodine. Parasite levels in animals will also be variable depending on the summer anthelmintic regime.

During winter, copper and selenium can become deficient. Soil and plant levels of sulphur, zinc, iron and molybdenum increase. These elements reduce the availability of copper and selenium in animals. In sheep, cobalt levels may be very low at the end of summer. During winter, cobalt tends to increase as animals eat more soil. Regular cobalt supplementation helps animals maintain good daily growth rates. Cobalt helps synthesise vitamin B12 which in turn helps derive energy from feed during winter and spring.

Liver biopsy is the preferred technique to assess copper storage. Your vet may also take blood to assess selenium and cobalt status. Liver biopsy can be done on live cows, sheep and deer. Taking liver samples from “keeper” animals may be more representative than cull animals. Liver biopsy provides more effective information about the likely copper requirements during winter and spring, and the best way to supplement.

Autumn is conducive to rapid parasitic larval growth and development. Animals can quickly become re-infected with infective stage larvae their own cohorts have deposited in faeces. This is especially the case when drenching intervals have been too far apart. When combined with the “autumnal rise” in parasitic activity (at least in sheep) this can become very significant leading to serious production limiting disease in winter and spring.

Preventive anthelmintic treatments are the key to controlling parasitism. An autumn program

suitable to your farming operation should be discussed with your vet.

Dairy cow pregnancy testing may now be complete for some herds. The final pregnancy test, six weeks after the end of the bull mating period, is critical. Knowing the stage of pregnancy for the whole herd will greatly assist feed and body condition management over winter and at calving.

Nitrate poisoning can be a significant issue in autumn. Soil temperatures may still be warm, light levels low, and growing plants readily take up nitrate from the soil, which then accumulates in plants. Testing crops for nitrate levels is very important. This includes autumn saved grass, green feed oats and brassicas. Every year we see totally preventable animal deaths from nitrate poisoning. You should preempt this this season by discussing nitrate poisoning risks, and by purchasing a nitrate testing kit from your vet.

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# Knowledge exchange in the agricultural industry

Effective knowledge exchange supports effective research design and the effective delivery and implementation of relevant research results.

WORDS BY NICK PYKE, CEO OF FAR, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY FAR

The word “exchange” means two-way communication. Research undertaken without good engagement with farmers can lead to outcomes that while interesting, may not be directly applicable to farmers. Conversely, relevant outcomes will not be implemented on farm if the potential solutions are not presented correctly.

There are a number of key principles which result in effective knowledge exchange in research in agriculture.

## Farmers working collaboratively with researchers to determine the research question

Often research organisations identify a problem or a research question and design research program that does not directly address the problem farmers are experiencing; meanwhile, farmers often identify problems or opportunities but don’t know how to take the next step to collaborate with researchers

and develop a research project to address the problem. Thus, a collaborative knowledge exchange process, either formal or informal, is an essential step in developing research projects targeted at real on-farm or industry problems or opportunities.

## Farmers as part of the research project team

Having farmers as part of the research team throughout the project is a very effective way of ensuring the research develops outcomes that can, and will, be implemented on farms. The MPI SFF program ensures this happens, with project teams meeting regularly throughout the project and, as a result, the outcomes from many of these projects are implemented on farm.

## Identifying the benefits to farmers

The research project needs to clearly identify the benefits to farmers as well as outline any

risks. Often the easiest changes to implement are ones which have a low risk of failure and a high chance of economic gain. While economic benefits often provide clear reasons for farmers to change, they are not the only drivers of change and they do not apply equally to all farmers or even to same farmer at different points in their career. Other drivers which should be considered are risk, improved sustainability, reduced labour input (or freeing up time at peak times of the year), social responsibility and things such as succession.

## The right message implementing change

To some parties the message may be very clear but to others some of these changes are very difficult to implement. Different farmers have different disposition to risk and this may change throughout their career. Thus, something that is low risk to one farmer may be a high risk to another. Due to their farming

## Delivery

The method used for knowledge exchange can impact markedly on the success. Not all people are the same, so a knowledge exchange practice that appeals to one farmer may not appeal to others. Thus, it can be important to deliver the message via more than one method. Seeing is believing, so field days are popular with many farmers, while others prefer fact sheets and regular electronic updates.

Farmers learning from farmers is often a successful model, as long as the farming systems of the lead farmer have commonality with the other farmers. The MPI SFF utilises this approach successfully in many projects.

The use of information from research is essential for the future of our Agri Food industry. This is reliant on effective two-way knowledge exchange. The research needs to address the right issues which need to come from farmers and others. The outcomes need to be delivered to farmers in a way they can implement them effectively on farm. If we are investing in research, we also need to invest in knowledge exchange to ensure the best research is carried out and the outcomes are applicable, beneficial and implementable on farms.

LEFT: Phil Rolston and Richard Chynoweth from FAR discussing seed production from alternative legumes  
BELOW: Nick Pyke Matilda Gunnarsson Biosecurity  
BOTTOM: Steve Thomas Michael Straight Nitrous oxide

business or location, some environmental changes may be easily implemented on some farms and not on others. Thus, having the right message to engage with farmers is very important.

Even a low risk-high benefit change will be hard to implement if the messaging is wrong. For example, if the desired change involves stopping farmers from doing something they have been doing for years, and this is the way the message is delivered, uptake is likely to be slow as people do not like being told they are wrong. Reconfiguring the message to package the benefits is likely to be more effective.

### The right time, right place

Effective knowledge exchange will occur when the discussion is held at the right time and place (this relates to time or year and time of career for the farmers). Aligning knowledge exchange around the time of year is very important, as there are times of the year when farmers are too busy to take on board new information. Also, information needs to be relevant to the activities occurring on farm. Similarly, farmers' ability to engage in knowledge exchange will alter depending on personal and family circumstances. It is very important researchers recognise the right time.

### Kept it clear and concise

Tease out the key points of importance for different farmer, researcher or industry audiences and deliver it succinctly.



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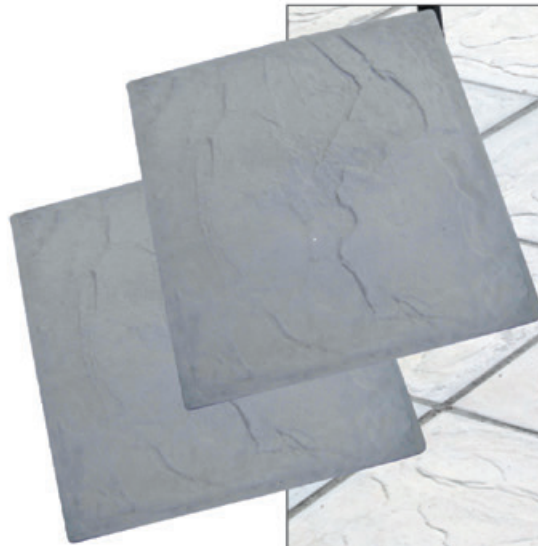
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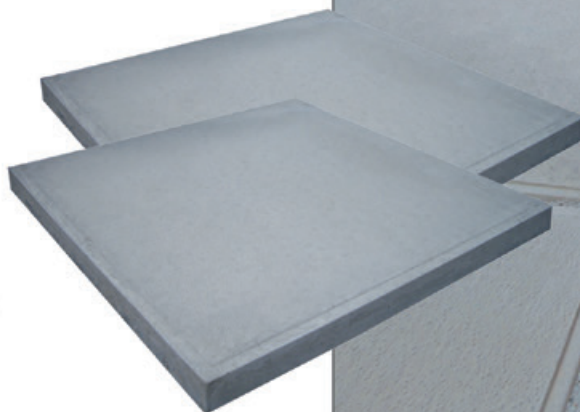
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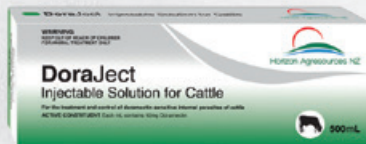


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# Proactive pest control pays dividends

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



IMAGE: Slug damage

Some insect pests you can deal with very effectively by monitoring and controlling their presence after they become apparent.

But when it comes to two of the most common pests that affect autumn sown crops and pasture, it's always better to be proactive rather than reactive.

Between them, grass grub and slugs can cause significant damage not just to seedlings but also (in the case of grass grub) to mature plants.

Cynthia Christie, development specialist for Nufarm, says in areas where these pests are known to be a problem, planning ahead for appropriate control before sowing is essential.

"Both slugs and grass grub fall into that category where proactive management usually makes a big difference to your end result. There's no real way to predict before new crop or grass is sown what the level of challenge will actually be, but you can never assume they won't be there."

"The price for getting it wrong is just too high, especially when you're looking at the overall investment required for sowing a paddock of new grass or crop."

Once a problem does become apparent, a lot of damage may have already been done that cannot be reversed, she says.

Increasingly, farmers prefer to mitigate this risk before seedlings have even emerged, using two tools in particular: suScon® Green for grass grub, and Slugout® for slugs.

suSCon Green is a tiny green polymer granule impregnated with chlorpyrifos which is control-released into the surrounding soil.

Drilled down the spout with seed, it will protect new pastures and some crops from grass grub for up to three years after application.

After 24 years on the market, suSCon Green remains the only controlled release formulation of its type available in New Zealand, and its length of activity is a major selling point for those who use it, especially compared to the alternative which is spraying for grass grub every year for three years.

"Controlling grass grub is not easy," Cynthia says. You're dealing with a pest that lives underground and is far from predictable in terms of timing. "Over the past couple of years in Canterbury for example, there were none around in autumn, when we'd normally expect them, but by June, they were everywhere."

Because of its length of activity, suSCon Green is ideal on farms where grass grub has either already been an issue, or is expected to pose a risk this year. She advises farmers check the label for correct application rate for the crop being sown, and to stick to those recommendations.

"There's no point dropping the rate back. You don't get the life out of the product. It's a bit like slug bait, coverage is everything."

SlugOut should be automatically used in all no-till situations, because not cultivating creates ideal conditions for survival. If cultivated seed beds are cloddy, farmers should monitor and consider baiting.

The reason coverage is also so important for slug control is that slugs can only detect their food from close up. They have a poor sense of smell so cannot sniff out their food from a distance, but instead are much more likely to crawl across it by accident.

The more slug baits per square metre, therefore, the better your chance of taking out slugs before they can take out new grass or crop seedlings, Cynthia says.

Industry research has repeatedly reinforced the importance of coverage (or bait points per sq metre) in obtaining effective control where high numbers of slugs are present, and this is where SlugOut comes into its own.

"At the recommended label rate of 10kg/ha, FAR cereal trials show SlugOut has 112 bait points per sq metre, which is much higher than other baits with the same active ingredient."

As well as high rates of coverage, metaldehyde, the active ingredient in SlugOut, has the further advantage of not killing beetles which naturally eat slugs, making it suitable for farmers who want to use IPM programmes.

Baits with methiocarb as the active ingredient result in secondary poisoning to predator beetles, Cynthia says.

Metaldehyde is not harmful to earthworms; poisoned slugs pose no threat to birds or small mammals.

To maximise crop establishment SlugOut should be broadcast at 10–15kg/ha 1–5 days prior to, during or immediately after sowing.

"For emerged or established crops, apply as soon as damage appears. Use the high rate if slug numbers are high."

For more advice on protecting your autumn sown grass and cereal from pest damage this season, talk to your Ruralco Representative.

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# The new all-rounder— introducing Governor

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



The latest perennial ryegrass from one of the country's best-known pasture companies sets a new standard for AR37 and AR1 ryegrass performance.

Governor is available for sowing this autumn and is the result of 20 years' research and development by the plant breeders and agronomists at Agriseeds.

While it is among the newest perennial ryegrasses available to New Zealand farmers, Governor owes part of its strong performance to cultivars that made a big name for themselves 10-15 years ago.

That's because its breeding combines the persistence of Bronsyn with the high dry matter yield and palatability of Tolosa.

Craig Weir, Agriseeds area manager for the upper South Island, says the result of this unique genetic mix is a robust, dense pasture that grows more grass when farmers need it most, during early spring and autumn.

"Governor is ideal for both dairy and red meat farmers who are looking for a reliable all-rounder in their pasture mix," he says. "Under grazing on commercial farms, it has shown outstanding survival in the face of

both drought and insect pest pressure.

"It combines this with excellent DM yield at those critical times of the year when high quality leafy green pasture is very valuable. These attributes make Governor the premium AR37 perennial ryegrass for NZ farmers."

If Alto perennial ryegrass has worked well for your farm system, Craig says, Governor will have an equally good fit, if not better.

Like Alto, Governor is a diploid perennial ryegrass, with fine, dense tillers which create a thick sward that can withstand the pressures of modern farming systems.

When it comes to persistence, the number of ryegrass tillers in a pasture can make a big difference.

"The more tillers your ryegrass produces per square meter, the more plants you have in the paddock to cope with the challenges of insect pests, drought, wet weather, weeds and/or overgrazing," Craig says.

"That's why dense diploid perennial ryegrasses are often recommended for parts of the farm where conditions are a bit harder. Selecting the right pasture for your soil, contour, climate, stocking regime and management system is the first step of any successful re-sowing programme."

On top of its strong genetic heritage, AR37 endophyte gives Governor a wide spectrum of insect resistance, with very good control of Argentine stem weevil, pasture mealybug and root aphid, plus good control of black beetle. It also provides a level of porina control.

Governor is also available with AR1 endophyte, and while it doesn't have the full insect control spectrum of AR37, AR1 provides excellent animal health and performance.

Other important benefits of the new ryegrass are a +5 day heading date, low aftermath heading and better rust resistance than either of its parents, or Alto.

Governor is best sown with Kotuku and Weka white clovers for dairying. Kotuku should be replaced by smaller leaved Apex, and Tuscan red clover can be added for sheep, beef and deer.

To find out more about the benefits of sowing Governor this autumn, contact Ruralco Seed today.

IMAGE: Governor perennial ryegrass the new all rounder



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# Endophyte upgrade for popular pasture option

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LEFT: Dairy cows performing well on Viscount NEA4



From this autumn, South Island farmers will have a new choice in sheep and cow friendly grass with insect protection from Agriseeds.

Viscount, the company's popular tetraploid perennial ryegrass cultivar, is now available with NEA4 endophyte.

NEA4 is the newest member of the NEA endophyte family, which is exclusive to Agriseeds.

It gives Viscount better protection from insect pests black beetle and root aphid, while providing excellent animal performance with very low risk of any animal health problems such as ryegrass staggers.

Viscount is one of the most recently developed tetraploid perennial ryegrasses

available on the New Zealand market, and has already made a name for itself as a top performing pasture.

It was bred to grow more high ME feed when it's really needed, during calving and lambing, as well as more DM overall.

It has a late heading date (+19 days); improved rust resistance; excellent palatability; clover-friendly upright growth for ease of harvest, and high quality with low aftermath heading.

Agriseeds central South Island agronomist Kris Bailey says feed grown in early spring, one of Viscount's strengths, is typically the most valuable of the entire season.

On dairy farms, for example, extra grass that coincides with calving in early spring has been valued at an average of \$0.42/kg DM in the DairyNZ Forage Value Index.

Upgrading Viscount to NEA4 endophyte will make it even better for farmers who want a straight tetraploid pasture to optimise production from dairy cows, beef cattle and sheep, he says.

Viscount NEA4 will also work well for those who prefer to mix their tetraploids with a diploid perennial ryegrass (e.g. Trojan).

"This has proven the ultimate tetraploid/diploid ryegrass combination—denser and more robust than a straight tetraploid, with much better palatability than a straight diploid.

"For farmers who want the easy grazing and improved animal performance of a tetraploid-based pasture, but who have struggled getting straight tetraploids to persist, this has become a very popular option.

"Both types of plant are mixed through the pasture, and the denser Trojan helps protect the very palatable Viscount from overgrazing."

On dairy farms, Viscount and Trojan combined provide an incredibly easy-to-manage pasture during periods of fast growth.

That's because this mix remains palatable even at relatively high covers (e.g. 3500-3600 kg DM/ha), unlike diploids, which become hard to graze well and evenly over 3200 kg DM/ha.

On sheep and beef farms, Viscount/Trojan makes a great all-round finishing pasture, with improved palatability, animal LWG and clover content.

Agriseeds has tested different tetraploid/diploid perennial ryegrass ratios, and as a result recommends sowing half the normal sowing rate of each cultivar.

That equates to about 15 kg/ha Viscount (half of 30 kg) plus 10 kg Trojan (half of 20 kg). Sown with appropriate clovers this mix gives the balance of palatability and persistence to improve profitability across many situations.

Interested in Viscount NEA4? For orders or more information, talk to Ruralco Seed or call into the store today.

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# Agricom launches Ecotain environmental plantain

This autumn sees New Zealand's first environmental plantain come to market. Ecotain, a product under the new NSentinel 4 brand from Agricom, works across a variety of environmental processes on-farm to decrease nitrogen (N) leaching from the urine patch.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY AGRICOM



ABOVE: Dr Glenn Judson, Agricom Science Lead  
LEFT: Ecotain pasture

Ecotain comes out of the Greener Pastures Project which combines research and expertise from Agricom, Massey and Lincoln universities and Plant and Food Research. In parallel with the DairyNZ-led Forages for Reduced Nitrogen Leaching (FRNL) programme, the Greener Pastures Project has a comprehensive series of peer-reviewed scientific papers to support findings on Ecotain.

Agricom Science Lead Dr. Glenn Judson says that depending on the factors at play on farm and the extent to which Ecotain is used, the reduction in nitrogen leaching is very significant. "In one of the research programmes, where Ecotain is used in what is likely the optimal way, there was a reduction in nitrogen leaching by as much as 89 per cent from the urine patch."

"We know that the urine patch is the greatest source of leached nitrogen. You have a cow, for example, grazing across a large area of pasture, about 140 square metres per day. When they urinate, they're depositing a high concentration of nitrogen into a very small area compared to the size they were grazing, and that small area is the urine patch.

"The plants and soil surrounding the urine patch can't absorb all that nitrogen, so it's easily leached away below the root zone and also into the water table. Research is showing us that controlling the nitrogen in the urine patch is the most practical way of reducing nitrogen leaching on-farm."

Research has demonstrated that not all plantains (current cultivars or breeding lines) are capable of reducing nitrate leaching from

the urine patch through the four aspects Ecotain can—dilute, reduce, delay and restrict. It increases the volume of cows' urine which dilutes the concentration of nitrogen, it reduces the total amount of nitrogen in animals' urine, it delays the process of turning ammonium into nitrate in the urine patch, and it restricts the accumulation of nitrate in Ecotain-growing soil.

From an agronomic perspective Ecotain can be easily incorporated into a farm system without compromising quality. Suitable as a 2-3 year crop option Ecotain provides autumn and winter growth that is critical for capturing N during wet conditions. It also contributes invaluable DM production, typically at times of the year when ryegrass struggles, particularly in summer and early autumn.

Ecotain can be used in pasture in a number of ways: as a special purpose crop where Ecotain, and often clover, are the only seeds sown, or in a grass/clover/Ecotain mixed pasture system. It can also be oversown into existing pasture. A pure sward of Ecotain is favoured for its high summer yield and cool season activity, suited to dairy farms where the amount and quality of summer pasture often limits milk production. Ecotain is highly complementary in a mixed pasture system, providing a good balance of seasonal production and summer quality, as well as being an excellent source of micronutrients such as copper and selenium.

To learn more about incorporating Ecotain into your farm system talk to Ruralco Seed today.

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# New Year. New changes at Dentistry on Parkside

Dentistry on Parkside will be undergoing a lot of exciting changes in 2018.



Michael and Mary-Jo Holdaway have been offered a residential scholarship to St Johns Anglican Theological College for 2018 in Auckland. Michael will be away for 10 week blocks.

Michael will return to the practice in December 2018, he will be continuing his role on the Dental Council while on sabbatical.



Whilst Michael is on sabbatical Dr Kevan Wong and his wife Jan have kindly offered to join the dental practice bringing their expertise and leadership to Dentistry on Parkside.

Originally from Timaru Kevan attended Timaru College where he played for the first XV, and was the head boy some years ago. He holds a bachelor of science degree and a degree in dental surgery from the University of Otago.



He has also been awarded his PhD from the University of London (implant dentistry). Kevan is no stranger to Dentistry on Parkside, having worked with Michael on many complex dental implant patients over the last few years, and is looking forward, together with his wife Jan, to spending some time in the South Island and getting to know Ashburton and the surrounding area.

He is looking forward to meeting and helping patients at Dentistry on Parkside.



Dr Arun Prabu Velusamy has been with Dentistry on Parkside since 2012. Arun's interests include

Surgical and General Dentistry. Arun is a member of the NZ Sedation Society and the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (GDP).

Arun and his wife Alar have 2 children and enjoy the relaxed lifestyle in Ashburton. In his spare time he enjoys keeping fit, playing cricket and skiing in winter.



Dr Payman Hamadani is leaving Dentistry on Parkside in January 2018 to further his studies in the specialty of Endodontics at Otago University, he will be fondly missed. We wish him and Mona well on their new adventure in Dunedin.



We look forward to welcoming Dr Phodiso Tuwane to the Dentistry on Parkside team in March 2018. Phodiso graduated from Otago University in 2014 with a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS), and has been practising in Gore for the past three years.

Call today to make an appt with the team at Dentistry on Parkside.

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Wednesday 8.00am – 5.00pm

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John & Helen Cunliffe are second generation asparagus growers on their fully irrigated Ashburton property



# Passionate for fresh produce

A decision almost half a century ago was the catalyst for a successful Mid Canterbury horticulture venture producing home grown asparagus and courgettes (zucchini) for the local market, neatly grown amongst traditional crops and specialist seeds.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY ANNIE STUDHOLME

For almost fifty years the Cunliffe name has been synonymous in Mid Canterbury with one of the world's oldest epicurean delights. John and Helen Cunliffe are second generation asparagus growers, producing the delicacy predominantly for the local market from their fully-irrigated property on the outskirts of Ashburton.

The 70 ha property, which was originally purchased by John's grandfather in 1922 after he was injured in the coal mines, was originally a dairy farm producing milk for town supply. When John's father took over, he ventured into cropping.

The arrival of Heinz Watties in Canterbury 1970s provided new opportunities for growers, with farmers producing asparagus for the flourishing canned market. At the time it was hailed as 'green gold'. Prices were strong and the money was good, so John's father branched out, planting one hectare, eventually building up the area to almost 5ha, and they've been "buggering around" with it ever since, quips John.

Having inherited the asparagus beds when he started running the farm about 25 years ago, John has been committed to sticking with it. But in reality, even though it's considered relatively easy to grow, provided it's planted in full sun and well-drained soils, growing asparagus commercially is not for the faint-hearted even though more modern varieties have led to better yields.

Cultivated since Greek and Roman times, it's long been prized for its versatility, unique herbaceous flavour, distinctive shape and nutritional values, but its notoriously expensive to put in (around \$10,000 per hectare). Seeds are planted, with crowns dug and planted out the following year.



On average it takes three to four years after planting until you get your first decent crop, with many producing for more than 10 years before having to be replaced. "It will grow forever, but the economies of it don't work." In addition, asparagus has a short growing season from the start of October through until Christmas, with the ferns taking up precious space for the rest of the year. John says after the final harvest, they leave the plants to their own devices until the following spring when they are given a nutrient boost with their own "special organic brew" and lime before the growing season starts again. The ferny fronds are left until they've died off as they produce nutrients which are transported to the plants. "They are much like

ABOVE: The packaged Cunliffe Asparagus ready for the local market

daffodils in that respect. You leave the stalks on; if you cut them off, you'll kill the crown." Weed control work is also undertaken before or after picking; any spraying over the crop is avoided during picking.

While asparagus is not as weather dependent as some other crops, it can also have an impact. Asparagus doesn't like it too wet, or too dry. A wet winter last season meant extra weeds to contend with, while an unseasonably hot December meant the crop finished early despite irrigation. It's also very sensitive to cold weather during picking time, but the rest of the year it doesn't worry too much, explains John.



Above all though, picking remains the crops' achilles heel. Each spear has to be cut by hand. It's laborious, expensive, and back-breaking work, and there is really no easy way to do it although some of the larger growers have moved to buggies instead so workers lie facedown above the crop to cut spears.

It's Helen's responsibility to oversee the picking. "She's the hard task-master," laughs John. They used to rely on backpackers, but now the Cunliffe's have a team of foreign pickers who return year-after-year. "If you have to get fresh staff every year, it's difficult," says Helen. "The hard part is finding people that care about the crop. We are now having to pay \$18 an hour, but we are still getting the same price for the produce. If we were paying them by the spear they wouldn't weed at the same time."

During picking season they pick on average for four-five hours daily starting at 7am to avoid the heat, before returning to the custom-built on-farm packing house for the asparagus to be washed, cut and graded into to 250 gram bunches before being shipped off to local markets like New World and the local Green Grocer. Potentially customers can be getting their hands on the succulent, tender spears less than 24 hours after its picked.

Like many specialist crops, asparagus has had its fair share of good years and bad years,

explains John. After starting off on a high, disappointingly the elevated prices didn't last. A price drop combined with an oversupply saw a downturn in the industry that continued right through to the 1990s. Prices crashed and with rising labour costs many growers no longer found it viable which resulted in many pulling out nationwide. In 2015 Heinz Watties moved to importing cheaper Peruvian grown asparagus for canning.

At its height there was more than 2,500ha grown nationwide, whereas now that number has plummeted to around 600ha. In the past few years Leaderbrand South Island (LBSI) has been driving expansion in Mid Canterbury, putting in substantial new plantings at Chertsey, harvested in conjunction with an established asparagus block near Lincoln.

"We've seen many growers come and go over the years. When we first started growing it only a few people had ever really tried it fresh. It was above the threshold of affordability for most. People didn't know what it was like because they perceived it as expensive. It was only when it was cheap that people were prepared to give it a try."

Today, the delicacy is much more popular with asparagus-lovers literally counting down the days to its spring arrival. Over the three-month asparagus season each year, Foodstuffs, which owns New World and Pak'n Save, estimates consumers devour more than 2,000 tonnes of the seasonal green spears, blanched, smothered in hollandaise sauce or wrapped in a savoury tart.

John and Helen currently have about 3ha of asparagus and they are contemplating planting more. "It's another option for us. While you might not make any money out of it, it's good for cashflow because you are paid as the costs come in. It's not as though you can leave it in the silo and hope the price will go up. It is what it is," says John. "You have to be passionate about it. The support we've had from two or three shops in town has also been a big part of it."

The risks are probably also lower, because you've removed a lot of the risk, but it is

ABOVE: Helen overseeing the foreign workers picking  
BELOW: The asparagus spears ready to be picked





farm is in small seeds."

Crops they grow for seed under contract include spring onions, radish, and spinach, and in the past they have grown the likes of cabbage. While they are all high risk and high cost, John works on the theory that "surely they can't all fail in one year". "A lot of it comes down to farm size. With a big farm you can lose focus on the little bits, but with a small farm you have to focus on the detail."

He minimises costs by doing everything himself from spraying to harvesting, and even cartage. It also means he doesn't have to rely on contractors. He also enjoys the machinery side of it, and while he doesn't have the biggest or the newest gear, John's in his element when he's out there tinkering. "I am a sucker for toys; they might be old, but I do love them."

While John and Helen are showing no signs of slowing down, the realities of farm succession with a "postage stamp" size farm makes it difficult to sort out. The couple have three children - Peter works as a auto-machinist, while Jessica is in her last year of studying property management and valuation at Lincoln University, and Laurabeth is a staff manager at McDonalds, returning to the farm when she can to help out. It's something that will need to happen in the future, but in the meantime, there are crops to tend to, says John.

higher cost with the wage bill continually climbing, he adds.

Once the asparagus harvest is finished, the Cunliffe's attention turns immediately to their 3ha of courgettes (zucchini), most of which is sold locally through MG Marketing, the leading supplier of fresh produce, ending up on supermarket shelves throughout the South Island. They are the furthest south major grower nationwide.

Planted annually, courgettes are frost tender. "You put them in when you think the frosts have finished and they finish when the frosts start again," explains John, who first started experimenting with them when he was about 21-years-old. "It was just something to entertain me. We thought there was a market there and we were young, silly and enthusiastic, and it just started from there."

While it not only provides them another income stream and further diversifies the business, it also offers their pickers with guaranteed work following the asparagus harvest with picking occurring daily from January through to May. It also works in well with the crop rotation as they aren't disease prone and don't really take anything out of the soil, he says.

When John first followed his father into farming, he focused on producing homegrown quality vegetables, but with a love of machinery and increased irrigation (the farm is 100% irrigatable from surface water and deep wells), as time has gone on he's increased the cropping area, branching in to the lucrative small seeds market

growing them in rotation with the more traditional autumn-sown wheat and barley.

"I was always interested in cropping. Initially we did a lot more fresh market produce and then started growing specialist small seed for South Pacific Seeds and found it really interesting. Now about 40 per cent of the

ABOVE: John and Helen show no signs of slowing down  
BELOW: Helen processing the asparagus



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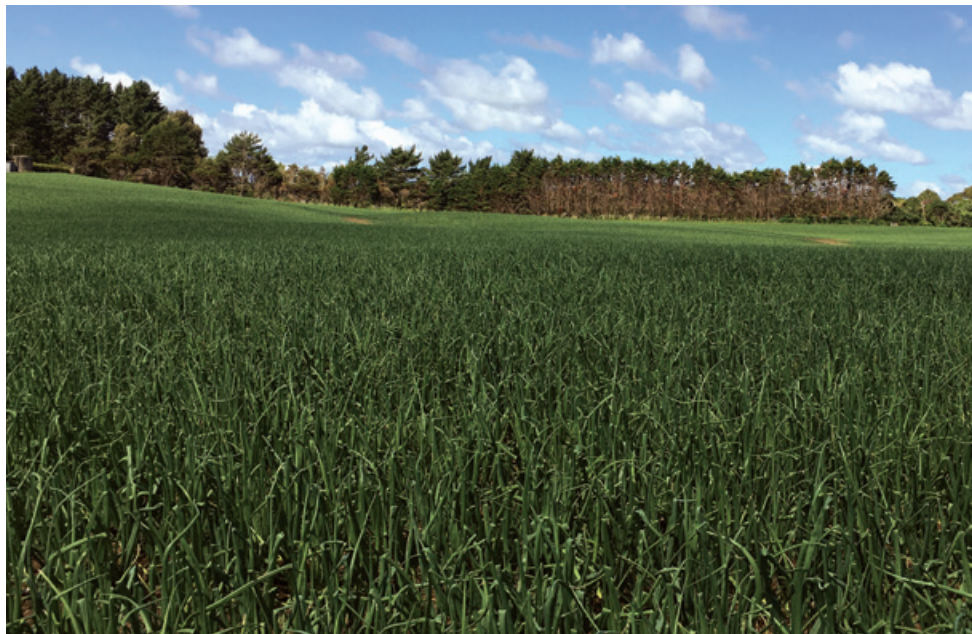
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# Global demand for healthy food good for horticulture

New-Zealand horticulture is a high-value industry contributing to New-Zealand's economy, and growing fast. With an industry value of \$5.6 billion (excluding wine), we export 60% of what we grow, i.e. \$3.4 billion in value to 124 countries.

WORDS BY MIKE CHAPMAN, CEO OF HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND



Fresh fruit exports in 2016 increased by an impressive 35% over 2015. Outstanding performances were seen by:

- Kiwifruit at \$1.7 billion, up nearly \$500 million or 42% on 2015—kiwifruit exports are now worth more than New Zealand's wine exports (\$1.55 billion)
- Apples at close to \$700 million, up \$130 million or 23% on 2015
- Blueberries rose 50% on 2015 to \$36.5 million
- Cherries rose by 30% to \$68 million.

Onions dominated the fresh vegetable export sector with a sizable increase of 38% from \$81 million to \$112 million. Overall, the vegetable export sector rose 4%. In the vegetable export sector, 60% of the value is a mixture of fresh, frozen, dried or a vegetable preparation (this area is dominated by peas, potatoes and sweet corn). Much of our vegetable sector supplies New Zealand's domestic market with both fresh and processed product and is valued at approximately \$2 billion.

Globally, people are seeking out healthy food and lifestyles and increasingly they are making food purchasing decisions based on values. These values might include wanting to know where the food comes from and that it is sustainably and ethically produced. This is good for the New Zealand horticulture sector as we have a good story to tell.

Many of our growers are inter-generational family businesses with a lot of collective knowledge about cropping systems and the environment. Caring for the environment is in their DNA and they are invested in delivering their businesses to the next generation in an even better state. No-one is more aware than our growers that environmental sustainability is paramount as it relates to freshwater and horticulture.

New Zealand growers are also early adopters of science and technology to match changes in consumer demands. There has been considerable investment in all aspects of production, and some of our packhouses are driving efficiencies and improving quality with cutting-edge technology and innovative working practices.

With the ideal climate and soils, efficient people and systems, and an ideal location with proximity to key markets, horticulture has huge potential.

New Zealand's horticulture industry gets top dollars for its produce overseas. There are a number of reasons for this. One of the most important is that we deliver what the consumer wants and therefore, what the consumer will pay for. Equally important is that we are market leaders with our new varieties of fruit and vegetables. Gold kiwifruit developed in New Zealand is a prime example of that.

ABOVE: Baby kiwifruit canopy  
ABOVE TOP: Jazz apples  
LEFT: Onions ready for harvest

The basis for developing new varieties is research and development (R&D)—to not only breed the new variety, but to also develop innovative ways in which to grow it. The Government's continued commitment to R&D will only enhance New Zealand's ability to innovate.

Forming collaborations and joint ventures internationally is also important for continued innovation. In some cases, New Zealand may not be the leading country breeding new varieties, but may become involved when the foreign companies leading the programmes invest in New Zealand. So keeping the door open for companies that will bring innovation to New Zealand is vital as well.

This is important, as innovation and research will keep New Zealand in its market leading position and benefit the entire country.

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# Cheat sheet for autumn wheat

Autumn-sown wheat tends to achieve higher yields than spring sowings and fits well into most crop rotations. Good nutrient management will help maximise this opportunity.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

## Test for success

Soil testing should inform your fertiliser strategy. Table 1 shows the optimum soil test levels for autumn-sown wheat. "As with any crop, soil tests should be taken at a depth of 150 mm," says Ballance Science Extension Officer Aimee Dawson. "Wheat has a relatively low requirement for phosphorus and it appears you do not get a growth response if Olsen P levels are above 15. However, it is recommended to keep phosphorus levels in the 20–30 range to support the crops or pasture that will follow."

Potassium (K) is essential for plant structure, straw strength and flower quality. "It may not be economically viable to increase levels into the optimum Quick Test range," says Aimee. "The key thing to remember is that your wheat crop will remove large amounts of potassium, particularly if residues are harvested as hay. You will need to address this after harvest to ensure potassium doesn't limit the performance of subsequent crops or pasture."

Sulphur is required for growth and protein development. It can be applied at sowing or with the first side dressing of nitrogen.

Magnesium (Mg) deficiencies are rare in cereals and little magnesium is removed in crop production. Micronutrient (trace element) deficiencies are also uncommon but can

be investigated with spring herbage tests if suspected. Manganese can be lacking in areas around Barhill, Canterbury and boron, iron, copper, zinc and manganese deficiencies can occur if soil pH is managed outside the optimum range.

**TABLE 1: OPTIMUM SOIL TEST RESULTS FOR AUTUMN-SOWN WHEAT**

SOIL TEST	OPTIMUM LEVEL
pH	5.8-6.2
Olsen P	>15
Quick Test K	6-10
Sulphate sulphur	10-15
Quick Test Mg	10

## Prepare the way

"To maintain Olsen P levels you will need to apply 3 to 4 kg of phosphorous per tonne of grain. If your Olsen P levels are below 15 then you will also need capital fertiliser. Remember that because you need to change nutrient levels to a greater depth, you will need more product than you would for pasture," advises Aimee.

For example, in a 75 mm sample of a sedimentary soil, you need 5 kg P/ha to raise the Olsen P 1 unit. In a 150 mm sample of the same soil, you would need 10 kg P/ha to achieve the same 1 unit rise.

Product choice depends on the timing of sowing

and nutrient levels. Around 300-400 kg Superten per hectare at sowing is generally sufficient or you may opt for a product from the Serpentine Super, Sulphurgain or Superten K range if your magnesium, sulphur or potassium levels are low.

## Nitrogen needs

Nitrogen boosts leafy growth and drives grain yield. "It must be applied to coincide with periods of rapid growth such as stem elongation," says Aimee. "This makes Sustain is a good choice, as it allows you to focus on that critical growth window rather than application conditions." Sustain Ammo is an option if wet winter conditions have affected soil sulphur levels.

Mineral N testing helps you use the right amount of nitrogen. The formula to follow is:

Fertiliser N (kg N/ha) = (23-25kg N x Grain yield (T)) – Mineral N (kg N/ha)

For autumn-sown wheat:

- Apply two-thirds at GS 30/31. If large amounts of nitrogen are needed, split the application between GS30/31 and GS32.
- Apply the remaining third at GS39

"Yield estimates influence both base fertiliser and nitrogen applications. Be realistic to get the most from your investment."

Talk to Ruralco Seed and Ballance Agri-Nutrients about your autumn sown wheat today.

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# Dairy Connect: Farmers supporting farmers

If you're thinking of trying something new on-farm, or are facing challenges and would like to talk to someone with experience, Dairy Connect will put you in touch with a support farmer who best suits your situation.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY DAIRYNZ

Launched in 2011, Dairy Connect puts dairy farmers seeking information about a topic in contact with another farmer who has experience in that area. Dairy Connect farmers want to encourage others in the industry by sharing their experiences, both good and bad. Many of our support farmers have themselves benefited from mentors and are keen to return the favour to those who are seeking more information.

More and more farmers are using the service. DairyNZ's Dairy Connect co-ordinator Kate Haultain says numbers have increased year on year, with 170 connections made in 2016/17 and more than 450 farmers now available as support farmers.

"We've got farmers who are willing to provide support and advice on a range of subjects, from animal management, staff, pasture and feed through to environment, business, adverse events and personal wellbeing," says Kate.

Dairy Connect was started and is funded by DairyNZ, and is available to all farmers including owners, sharemilkers, managers, contract milkers, and farm assistants.



ABOVE: Matt & Chloe Walker

## 'Battle wounds' and 'wisdom' shared

Matt and Chloe Walker used DairyNZ's Dairy Connect service to gain the support of a more experienced farmer.

Back in 2012, Chloe and Matt were running start-up companies in Wellington and considering a move to Matt's parents' dairy farm near Taupo. However, after getting married in February 2013, and a change in the dynamics of their respective start-ups, they decided to take the plunge earlier than planned.

The Walkers left their city jobs and started afresh on the 133ha farm four seasons ago, with Matt taking up a role as farm manager. They had little on-farm experience but were quick to apply what they had learned in city jobs to their new careers.

"I was a little bit apprehensive at the time to move into a rural community and a provincial

town, but we've since embraced it and love every minute of it," says Chloe, who was born in Auckland and grew up in Wellington.

Matt grew up on the family farm but left to study and work in the IT sector.

The couple were eager to set and achieve ambitious goals in farming. They sought out the experience of another farmer through DairyNZ's Dairy Connect service.

"We come from start-up entrepreneurship backgrounds, and we've always been in business incubators which have mentors and programmes that support progression," says Chloe, who also now works as business development manager for Taupo District Council.

"We were really keen to work out how we could find a similar mechanism in the dairy industry, particularly in sourcing guidance and support around progression and business growth."

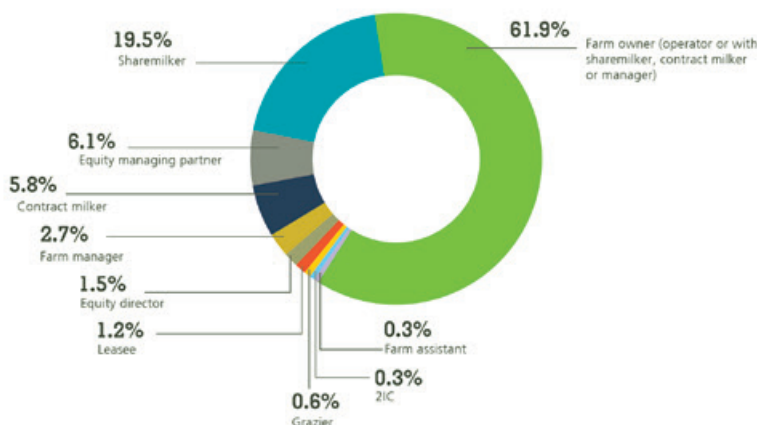
The couple were paired with Matt Pepper, a former regional sharemilker of the year winner who owns a farm and has several sharemilking contracts.

The timing of the connection was ideal.

"We were looking at a sharemilking job at the time, so it was a good time to seek support in terms of the next steps in our career, how quickly we could grow and what the right channel would be," says Chloe.

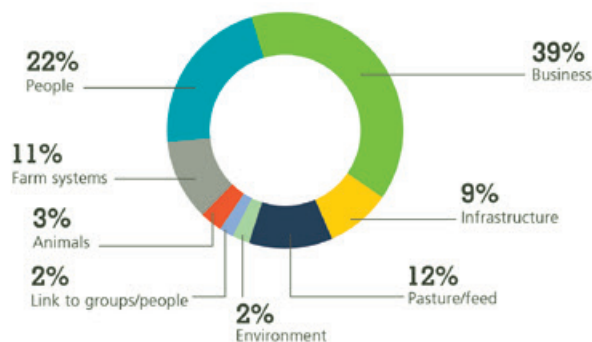
"It was fantastic to be able to link in with Matt. We had a couple of phone conversations and he came out to our farm where we spent a good couple of hours with him. We're going to continue working with him in a support capacity as we grow.

## WHO ARE OUR SUPPORT FARMERS?\*



\* Support farmer representation at April 2017.

## TOPICS REQUESTED THROUGH DAIRY CONNECT



\* Twelve-month period (April 2016 to April 2017)

## HOW IS CONTACT MADE?



"It was invaluable to talk with somebody who has been there and done it. It's not the formula—it's the experience, the battle wounds, the wisdom that they can pass on, the pitfalls, the things that work and the things that don't."

Following the conversations, the couple made a mutual decision with the farm owner that the sharemilking role wasn't the right one for them. Instead, they took up a second contract milking position on a nearby farm.

"Matt has such a wealth of knowledge and is committed to supporting the next generation," says Chloe. "It's great to see there are people wanting to give back and volunteer their time. We hugely value it."

### New co-ordinator making great connections

Meanwhile, sourcing practical information just got easier for farmers in Canterbury/North Otago with the appointment of a new co-ordinator for Dairy Connect.

Stepping into the role is Sara Crawford, a dairy farmer from Wakanui in Canterbury. Sara is tasked with connecting farmers who are looking for information on a topic with those who have experience in that area.

Forty-four farmers in Canterbury/North Otago have volunteered to provide information on topics such as building feedpads, transitioning

to once-a-day milking, and succession planning. Sara is passionate about the dairy sector and excited about her new role, which she will carry out part-time while farming.

"I was blown away to land this role and I'm grateful for the opportunity to facilitate the sharing of information between farmers. It's pretty awesome that farmers are offering their time to support other farmers," says Sara.

"The dairy industry has provided us (Sara and husband Jared) so many opportunities and it's great to be able to help other farmers achieve their goals by providing access to practical information and advice."

Sara and Jared are in their eighth season as dairy farmers. Neither were dairy farming when they met—Sara had studied to be a chef and Jared was a qualified plumber.

Sara started as a farm assistant near Hamilton. After managing a farm in Matamata, the couple shifted to Southland in 2014/15, where they continued to manage before becoming lower order sharemilkers. This season they moved to Canterbury and are contract milking 1750 cows, which involves managing six full-time staff and two part-timers.

Sara and Jared are goal-oriented and have used the resources available to them as dairy farmers.

They've been through Primary ITO, taken specialist courses and claimed honours in the

New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards. Sara is also regional support for Dairy Women's Network Canterbury.

"The progression opportunities in the dairy industry, especially for me, have kept us interested," says Sara. "We got a lot of help as we progressed. Now we're helping our staff and it's just so rewarding."

"If we'd known about Dairy Connect when we were starting out, we'd definitely have used it."

In her new role, Sara will promote Dairy Connect, handle queries and ensure farmers seeking information or advice are matched to the right person.

Dairy Connect is a simple service to use. Farmers who are seeking information on any topic can contact their local Dairy Connect coordinator via email or phone.

For more information visit [dairynz.co.nz/dairyconnect](http://dairynz.co.nz/dairyconnect).

### Dairy Connect co-ordinators

If you have a query, contact them today.

#### Kate Robinson,

Waikato and Bay of Plenty  
[kate.robinson@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:kate.robinson@dairynz.co.nz)

#### Jacqui Porter

Northland  
[jacqui.porter@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:jacqui.porter@dairynz.co.nz)

#### Natalie Butler

Taranaki and Lower North Island  
[natalie.butler@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:natalie.butler@dairynz.co.nz)

#### Linnet Burns

Southland, South Otago, West Coast and Top of South  
[linnet.burns@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:linnet.burns@dairynz.co.nz)

#### Sara Crawford

Canterbury and North Otago  
[sara.crawford@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:sara.crawford@dairynz.co.nz)

BELOW: Jared & Sara Crawford



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# The shop where pet lovers, love to shop

**Pet Central is a Christchurch family owned and operated group of Pet Stores.** WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY PET CENTRAL

Our stores are located at Shirley, Moorhouse Ave and Main South Road Hornby in Christchurch. We are very excited to announce that Pet Central Timaru will be joining the family in February 2018 at 8 Elizabeth St, Timaru (in the old Resene site). We also have an online store which is open 24/7 for convenient shopping which can be found at [www.petcentral.co.nz](http://www.petcentral.co.nz). We offer a convenient, Express Auto-Delivery service whereby you get your pet foods delivered to your door in a timeframe that is convenient for you.

It all started in 2005 when owner Linda put a dog door on Trade Me. This door sold in a flash and Linda soon realised that there was going to be a huge demand for pet products online. From this, Cyberpets was born. Cyberpets traded as an online store for a few months and then took a big leap by signing a lease in a small shop on Manchester Street. There was much anticipation on opening day of the great things that would follow, but after an hour of being open the only thing that was sold was a single pig's ear – this brought home the reality of retail. After persevering and a lot of hard work, the lease expired and the time came to make a decision – do we close the

doors or take a leap and grow? We chose to take the leap and expand. We moved to a much larger store at Home Base, Shirley. Our store began to grow rapidly, and one thing led to another. We soon added Moorhouse and then Hornby to the mix and changed our name from CyberPets to Pet Central.

As a group we are totally focused on animal welfare and have very strong ethics when it comes to looking after your pets. Pet Central does not believe in having puppies in pet stores and the kittens that we rehome come from our supported rescue group Christchurch Cat Rescue. We are very strong in supporting our community, including our animal rescue groups. Our team are all passionate animal lovers and have fantastic knowledge on the products we sell. Our team aim to be the first stop before the vets (much like a pharmacy before going to the doctors) as we all have extensive

ABOVE: Pet Central staff (from left to right) Sarah Burgess, Jenn Yolanda and Hannah Tyrrell outside the Hornby store

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# Hazardous Substances Regulations—what's different?

Under HSWA, we've seen the creation of the Health & Safety at Work (Hazardous Substances) Regulations 2017 bring the requirements for workplaces that work with hazardous substances into a single place under Worksafe NZ. WORDS BY COMPLIANCE PARTNERS



From 1 December 2017 there were some changes to the way that we need to manage our hazardous substances both on farm or in our business. This article is a snapshot of those changes—more information can be found at [www.worksafe.govt.nz](http://www.worksafe.govt.nz).

## Hazardous Waste

From 1 December the requirements for labelling and inclusion of waste product comes into effect—any waste must be included in your inventory and be labelled appropriately.

## Inventory

This is a key new requirement where you must keep a list of the hazardous substances you use, handle, manufacture or store at your workplace. This includes any hazardous waste substances. You will need to put one together, and it must include:

- The product/chemical name and UN number (if available);

- The maximum quantity you are likely to ever have on site;
- The location of the substance;
- Any specific storage or segregation requirements;
- Safety Data Sheet.

The inventory must be readily accessible by emergency services or if requested by an inspector or certifier. The inventory can be electronic (i.e. a spreadsheet or database) but must still be easily accessible and backed up (printed copy or on a memory stick). Any quantity of hazardous substance means you must have an inventory. However, you do not need an inventory for substances that are consumer products to be used in quantities, and ways, consistent with household use.

## Safety Data Sheets

You must have an SDS for all hazardous substances you have on your farm—these are

provided by the supplier. Your supplier must give you a SDS when the substance is first supplied (including if it is the first time in the previous five years) or when the SDS has been amended.

## Labelling

You must ensure that the original container's label remains in place and legible. All labels must be in English. If you decant or transfer a substance into a smaller container then this new container must be labelled appropriately (unless it is a small amount into a container to use). You must also ensure adequate signage at your site.

## Training & Information

This requirement was already in place, but the new regulations do state that workers must be informed of any work involving hazardous substances taking place in their area. They also need to know where to find information about each hazardous substance, and about safe handling and storage. They also need to be aware of what to do in an emergency. This training must be site specific and recorded.

## Emergency Management

You need to continue to have HSNO emergencies as part of your emergency plan. If you have an Emergency Response Plan there are some additional items that need to now be included.

## Certified Handlers

These replace Approved Handlers from the previous regulations. A certified handler is now only required for a smaller group of substances—explosives, fumigants and toxic agents and Class 6.1 A and 6.1B (acutely toxic). Certified Handlers are no longer required for Classes 2 through to 5, 6.1C, 6.7A and 8.2A.

## Storage for toxic and corrosive substances

(Class 6.1A, 6.1B, 6.1C, 8.2A, 8.2B): There are new requirements for the storage of these classes over certain thresholds. If you do hold above these quantity's you will need to create a hazardous substance location (HSL) with certain controls and you will need to obtain a location compliance certificate. You should seek further advice on this storage.

If you have any questions or you aren't sure how the changes affect you, think smart before you start and give Compliance Partners a call on 0800 BIZSAFE and we'll get this health and safety business sorted.

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### FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised

### STANDARD SIZES

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- 2100 x 1225mm
- 2440 x 1225mm

### EXTRAS

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

## TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



### STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS frame 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

### 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

## TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



### STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS frame 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

### 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

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### FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised

### STANDARD SIZES

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# What to feed and when to wean

Hey, Mum, you can't wean me yet. I'm far too young.

WORDS AND IMAGE BY DEER INDUSTRY NZ



Deer farmers are keeping a close eye on the condition scores of their hinds and the growth rates of their fawns as the summer rocks on.

Red deer and Wapiti evolved in the high latitudes where long cold winters are offset by the rapid growth of lush forage during late spring and summer. Deer are therefore programmed to grow when this feed is available—the very time on many New Zealand farms when ryegrass-based pastures have gone to seed and browned off in the summer heat.

With NIWA predicting a warmer than usual summer over all New Zealand and a higher-than-even chance of below-average soil moisture levels in Canterbury, the challenge for deer farmers will be to provide their lactating hinds with enough quality feed. This is vital both for good fawn weaning weights and to ensure hinds have a condition score of three or better—the minimum needed to ensure good conception rates at mating in autumn.

Deer Industry NZ (DINZ) says it's notoriously difficult to assess changes in condition of deer by

eye. So it says many deer farmers get groups of hinds into the yards every week or two from late January, to body condition score them by hand.

The organisation has also developed a library of fact sheets and several on-line tools as part of the Passion2Profit programme, to help farmers maximise productivity from their deer. A number of these apply directly to summer feeding and management.

The 'Drought feeding and management' Deer Fact sheet can be obtained as a hard copy from DINZ, or on the DINZ website: [www.deernz.org](http://www.deernz.org)

The Deer Fact advises that with careful attention to nutrition it is possible to meet production targets even under drought conditions. It emphasises the importance of having a drought plan and "to take decisions early and in progressive bites as the situation unfolds. Feed breeding stock to a level that will ensure a good fawning the following season and young stock so they reach slaughter and mating weights on time."

Knowing how much to feed is always a challenge. The Deer Feed Calculator at [www.deernz.org/](http://www.deernz.org/)

deerhub/feeding is a useful tool but, when most of the nutrition is coming from conserved feed and supplements, things get more complicated. To make it easier to balance rations and to choose what supplement to buy, DINZ has recently developed an on-line feed cost comparer.

DINZ P2P manager Innes Moffat says it will "tell you whether you will get better value from feeding (say) peas or lucerne hay. Enter a cost per tonne, or adjust the figures if you have test results for the feeds, and compare the value of different feed options. The tool is pre-loaded with a range of feeds and standard nutrition values." Find it at [www.deernz.org/deerapp](http://www.deernz.org/deerapp)

P2P animal health project leader Lorna Humm and colleagues have also produced an advisory article that discusses the pros and cons of early weaning during a drought. It's an excellent starting point for anyone thinking about how they should respond to the dry if it continues into February.

She says farmers in the Mid-Canterbury Advance Party at a pre-Christmas meeting agreed it was very dry and that there was emerging competition for high-quality feed between lactating hinds and their fawns, and for fawns after weaning.

"Levers to pull" to protect next year's production were discussed, including the idea of early weaning of fawns. Other options across the whole farm system included weaning lambs earlier, selling store lambs or trading cattle or purchasing fewer trading lambs."

Early weaning refers to weaning at 75-85 days, instead of the normal 90-plus days. Before 75 days is too early, as about two-thirds of a fawn's diet is still milk.

Humm says early weaning allows quality feed to be targeted at the stock class that requires it the most and produces the biggest financial return for every kilogram of dry matter eaten. Namely the weaners.

"Feed demand by hinds is reduced by 12-20%. Because they are no longer lactating, the hinds use 100% of their feed intake for maintenance and putting condition back on. They are capable of doing this very rapidly."

In essence, Lorna says early weaning can be good for both fawns and hinds, "but to be successful you need to be cautious and plan everything carefully. If you haven't weaned early before, start at 80 days. Your weaning and feeding practices need to be top-notch."

If there is a wide spread of fawning dates in a mob, greater caution is needed. But as a rule of thumb, on typical farms, well-grown fawns born on the first cycle can be weaned from mid-February if they have access to quality feed which they are already familiar with. First-fawning hinds typically have fawning dates 10 days later than mixed aged hinds, so need to be weaned later, as should second or third cycle fawns from mixed aged hinds.

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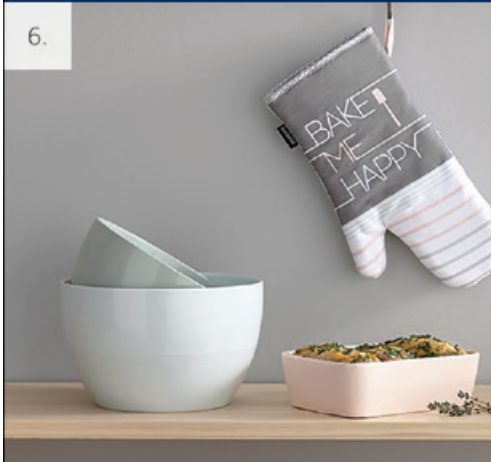
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The following Vodafone email services will be closing:

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es.co.nz	pconnect.co.nz	vodafone.net.nz
ihug.co.nz	quik.co.nz	wave.co.nz

## Great Ford deals for Ruralco Cardholders



Do you like the look of the number one selling vehicle, the Ford Ranger? Or what about their latest mid-size SUV—the Ford Escape? Ford have vehicles to suit all your requirements, and special discounts are now available at participating Ford dealerships when presenting your Ruralco Card. Contact your local Ford dealer to find out what they can do for you!

## Personalised energy advice just for you

When is the last time you took a close look at your electricity accounts? When did you last review your energy plans? Are you getting the best pricing solution for your farm? Ruralco Energy is here to make managing your energy accounts easy by continuing to work with our partners—Meridian, Genesis Energy and Kea Energy - to ensure you get the best offers available to suit your individual needs.

Contact Ruralco Energy Account Manager, Tracey Gordon today to get an energy price comparison on your accounts.

## More places to shop with your Ruralco Card!

Perfect for the Christmas shopping period, shop at these three new suppliers nationwide with your Ruralco Card and make the most of their regular sales while conveniently charging it to your account.



## Purchase your new silo and split the payment

Use your Ruralco Card at Dan Cosgrove when purchasing a new silo and split the payment over three months interest free! Dan Cosgrove silos are manufactured in NZ to suit NZ conditions for NZ farmers and are compliant with NZ standards and seismic codes. Call Ian McGregor on 027 595 9000 to find out more.

## Complete nutrition for your dog

Give your working dogs a complete and balanced diet with Pro Plan Performance with OPTIPOWER, plus save on buying bulk for your farm. Buy 5 20kg bags and get 1 free or buy 12 20kg bags and get 3 free.

So, give Ruralco Farm Supplies a call today to make the most of the free bag offers.



## New Ruralco Suppliers

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### Rangiora

#### Farm to Farm Tours

Up to 2% discount

### Te Anau

#### Mobil Te Anau

12¢ per litre discount

## Upcoming events

### Southern Field Days, Waimumu

14–16 February

### Wanaka A&P Show

9–10 March

### Mayfield A&P Show

10 March

### Methven A&P Show

17 March

## Are you, a family member or friend getting married?

The Ruralco Registry provides a simple solution for taking the guesswork out of gift giving and is now online at [www.ats.co.nz/theregistry](http://www.ats.co.nz/theregistry).

Choose from a range of distinctive gifts and quality brands that are sure to be treasured for a lifetime, including:

- Beautiful linens for the bedroom, bathroom and dining room
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- Plus on-farm practical items

We offer a complimentary gift wrapping service and delivery of your gifts to an Ashburton address at a time that's suits the couple (and can arrange nationwide delivery on request, conditions apply.)

Plus – to help you celebrate your big day, we will gift you a voucher to the value of 10% of your registry spend! Simply contact us to arrange your appointment with one of the Gift & Homeware team.



## New Pasture Packs to lift pasture performance

Ruralco Seed are pleased to introduce new pasture packs this autumn. The new packs are designed to lift production on dryland farming systems.

Contact the Ruralco Seed team today for details on each pack and to discuss the options that are best suited to your farming system.

New

Ruralco SEED

### Supercharga Italian Pack

PERSISTANT PERFORMER

ASSET WE ITALIAN RYEGRASS  
RELISH RED CLOVER  
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\$219.90 INC GST  
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New

Ruralco SEED

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INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE

ECOTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANTAIN  
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\$209.90 INC GST  
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New

Ruralco SEED

### Endura Dryland Pack

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RELISH RED CLOVER  
NOMAD WHITE CLOVER

\$299.90 INC GST  
25KG/1HA PACK

## Heading to the Southern Field Days?

14–16 February 2018

Join Ruralco at the upcoming Southern Field Days at Waimumu. Visit us at site 291 to chat with the team and have a cuppa—we're looking forward to seeing you!

Don't forget your Ruralco Card!

PLUS fuel up at select Allied and Mobil fuel stations in Otago and Southland and save 25¢ per litre off pump price. Valid for four days from Wednesday 14–Saturday 17 February 2018. No limits. T&C's apply.



# Out and about

## Christmas Shopping Day



1. Brad and Emma Haskett / 2. Penelope and Graham Young / 3. Sarah Reith and Libby Taylor / 4. Barbara Murdoch / 5. Sandy Sim and Ann Letham / 6. Wayne and Karen Gregory / 7. Ruth and David Keeley



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FEB 2018

# Red Tag Deals

Ruralco's Red Tag Deals have been going for one year, and to celebrate purchase any February Red Tag Deal and you're in the draw to



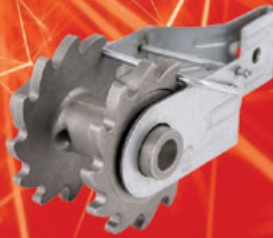
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