

# RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2019

Shed restores  
history and  
future for  
Waiau family

Postman Matt  
and his very  
creative daily  
post runs

New director  
brings broad  
view on sector  
success

World class red  
deer stud, boasts  
John's resilient  
genetics

The Icehouse:  
It's a lot warmer  
than it sounds

# From the Group CEO



Welcome to our first edition of Real Farmer for 2019. We hope you have had a great start to the year.

This Real Farmer takes a closer look at some well-known Canterbury farming operations. First up, we visit North Canterbury's Northcote family at Highfield and hear how they

have restored one of New Zealand's oldest functioning woolsheds following the 2016 earthquake which saw the historic building severely damaged. Restoration and repairs to the landmark woolshed took time and expertise but the result has been well worth the effort, both for the family and the wider Waiau community.

Further south, Peel Forest Estate boasts a world class red deer stud, and some pretty impressive genetic development which has resulted in the ground-breaking identification of a group of genetic markers for Johnes's disease resilience. Yorkshireman, Graham Carr arrived in Canterbury around 30 years ago and is still just as passionate about the deer industry as he was on his arrival. He shares his story and his buoyant predictions for an industry he loves. Still in South Canterbury, and just down the road from Graham Carr's deer stud is Peel Forest postie, Matt Searles—another Englishman who has settled here. He delivers mail along

New Zealand's longest single road mail run, and documents his scenic mail run on his popular Instagram page, Mail to Messy. He and his Kiwi-born wife also run The Green Man at Peel Forest Café and the adjoining DOC campground and share with us their busy lifestyle in this picturesque part of the country.

We also get to catch up with newly elected Ruralco director, Kate Acland, of Mt Somers Station. Kate was drawn to standing for the Board because she recognises it faces the same challenges many rural businesses face and she saw it as a great opportunity to be involved in something else that is local—she is already involved in a number of farming ventures and organisations. She is looking forward to working with the other Directors and we welcome her to her new role.

We hope you enjoy these features and the many other informative articles in this edition of Real Farmer.

**Rob Sharkie**

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## RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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ON THE COVER:  
Michael Northcote  
from Highfield Station,  
North Canterbury

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# Shed restores history and future for Waiiau family

IMAGE: The Highfield Station Woolshed is one of the oldest functioning woolsheds in New Zealand

## Amongst the casualties of North Canterbury's devastating 2016 7.8 earthquake was a landmark woolshed that meant as much to the Waiau community as it did to its owners.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY LUCY HUNTER-WESTON

The distinctive Highfield woolshed, owned by the Northcote family sits alongside State Highway 70, the Inland Road between Waiau and Kaikoura, just a few kilometres from the Waiau township. It is one of the oldest functioning woolsheds in New Zealand, with a history stretching back to the founding days of not only sheep farming, but the country itself, having been constructed in 1877.

The big wooden structured T shaped 24 stand shed took a massive hit from a ruptured fault running under it, and the November 2016 quake shoved the entire building off its piles. The roof collapsed along the southern wall and the floor was extensively damaged, with the entire structure looking buckled and bent.

After three generations of storms, other earthquakes and heavy snow, this event may have marked the end of the shed's life.

"But I think after I first wandered through it and saw the damage, I felt I always wanted to fix it. My father had died two months before the 'quake and he was very passionate about the woolshed and there are a lot of memories and history tied up in it" says Michael Northcote.

It is a history that has also been recognised nationally, with Heritage New Zealand giving it its highest "Category 1" rating—classified as a historic structure that is of special or outstanding historical or cultural significance or value.

The Highfield shed is the oldest surviving woolshed in the Hurunui district, and one of the oldest in New Zealand.

It represents the country's era of early extensive pastoral runs, and also played an important role in Waiau's development as the venue for the Amuri district A&P Show for many years, used to display produce and provide shelter for show goers.

The shed was originally built to serve the wider Highfield run, this extended from the Conway River to the north, and over to Mendip Hills to the east. Back in 1892 it was the first shed to use machines, driven by a traction engine.

Michael admits the process of getting the woolshed repaired seemed more arduous than the process of actual repair, and a full year passed before things got moving to rebuild it.

"We were very fortunate—Heritage NZ made a generous grant to help the rebuild, and we took the FMG insurance amount for



replacement, and the family topped up the difference which was not too great in the scheme of things."

But it proved to be no minor engineering feat to restore the shed to its former glory. Michael ended up engaging a highly capable team comprising of Dave Pearson of DPA Architects, Win Clark, a Wellington structural engineer and Lindsay Smith of Heritage House Re-levellers in Christchurch. Over the year the shed had to be lifted, re-piled, repaired, strengthened and painted. Just lifting it broke some records for the

ABOVE: The Highfield shed is the oldest surviving woolshed in the Hurunui district, and one of the oldest in New Zealand

TOP: Michael runs Highfield farm comprising 700ha

number of hydraulic jacks the house movers had to use.

"Their previous highest number had been 25, but we needed 44 jacks, lifting the shed to the height of 1.8 metres.

"It was not the oldest and heaviest building they had lifted, it was more about its sheer size and getting the jacks in the right places to lift it cleanly."



The company inserted fifty big steel beams under the shed and over the course of three hours the whole structure was inched up.

"We cleaned out from under it with a bobcat and found a heap of interesting things, dancing shoes, old combs, cutters and many empty bottles."

Lowering the shed onto its 326 new piles was followed by tying the beams to the piles.

"We had joked that morning about not wanting an earthquake that day, and sure enough we got one, a 4.2 hit while there were about 10 of us under it. Some ran, some stayed and just turned white!"

Michael says the advice from Win the structural engineer and site foreman Simon Clark who had also farmed proved invaluable throughout, with good compromises between retaining the building's historic lines and incorporating modern materials that respected that.

Come early November and the family decided to hold an official opening for the woolshed, given its prominence in the district.

Over 400 people attended the Highfield woolshed opening party in what proved to mark a turning point for a community repairing itself emotionally and physically from such a damaging event.

"It was a great event, I think everyone was keen to see what sort of job we had done, and we put on a bit of entertainment. People

could come along and have a go at shearing, and compete at turning a hand driven comb. It was also a chance for us to repay the people who had been so supportive, and those who had done such a great job getting the shed back together again."

With its final coat of "Scoria" red paint applied by Day Brothers Painters, the wool shed is very much back to its original look, and one that draws many visitors spotting it from its prominent position near the main Inland Kaikoura road.

"We get quite a number of people through from the North Island, they may have been

shearers earlier in their lives and appreciate the shed's history."

The possibility of integrating a form of farm tourism using the shed as its centrepiece has crossed Michael's mind, but he admits he's got enough on his plate running the farm and overseeing the post-'quake work that continues to be challenging him.

"Overall though, I can't say I didn't enjoy getting it to where it is now. It is a local landmark that we have rescued, and it has overall proven to be a very positive experience from what was a pretty shocking event."

## Waiau success borne from farms' strengths

It is not every farming operation where two brothers can work together well, but Hugh and Michael Northcote have been doing just that for some time, helped by each having their own operation but working under the family business and adapting to the challenges the North Canterbury climate has presented in recent years.

Michael runs Highfield farm comprising 700ha, while further up the Inland Kaikoura road Hugh overseas the 4,000ha Whalesback.

"I think the beauty of it is there is some difference between the two operations, Hugh manages what is largely the breeding block that supplies us with lambs and stock for finishing and trading on the easier country here at Highfield" says Michael.

"We each have our own interests and operation, but the system itself is quite a complex dance between the two that works well."

While Michael spends considerable time on the phone dealing with stock agents for selling stock, the majority are sourced from Hugh's operation. Michael runs 2,800 ewes, selling all their lambs in an early November sale on farm,

ABOVE: Michael Northcote, with his son Tom  
BELOW: Michael runs 2,800 ewes, selling all their lambs in an early November sale on farm





ABOVE: Michael drafting lambs  
ABOVE LEFT: Looking across the Highfield Station landscape which appears much greener than past summers  
BELOW: The Whalesback weaners are bought across to Highfield Station in January

enabling paddocks to be shut up for silage and hay to be harvested for the winter.

"Then when Hugh weans in January the majority of his lambs come to us, which is about 3,500. Similarly, with the cattle, when all the calves are weaned in autumn they come down to us, so it makes winter a pretty intensive time for us and we really start planning now (early summer) for the feed demand that winter brings."

The brothers catch up regularly and lend a hand between farms as needed over the busy periods.

"Whalesback is a very good breeding property, with good summer country, while we tend to be a bit more prone to drought at Highfield, but lend ourselves well to winter stocking."

Winter crops play a vital role, including

kale and fodder beet which is capable of delivering some massive yields of up to 36t drymatter a hectare, but at a relatively high establishment cost.

"The biggest advantage it does offer however is being able to graze the same number of cattle on a relatively small area. Compared to kale the beet yields 2.5 times more dry matter a hectare."

The drought conditions that have hit North Canterbury in recent years have prompted Michael to look at expanding the irrigated area, currently at 200ha with water sourced from the Waiau and Mason rivers and delivered through a centre pivot system.

They initially started from 67ha 15years ago with irrigation, expanding over time from a source that has proven reliable over that period.

Lucerne also plays an increasing role in summer crop supplementation, balanced by the use of kale and beet over winter.

"We tend to farm for drought, and that works well between the two properties—it's the reason we have our own early summer on farm sale, allowing us to take the Whalesback stock when they are weaned later in summer.

"We are constantly looking for the best mix of stock, and ways to add value to that stock using the two properties."



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IMAGE: Kate Acland,  
newly appointed director

# New director brings broad view on sector success

**The Acland family is renowned for the energy and breadth of enterprises throughout Canterbury and beyond, and newly elected Ruralco director Kate Acland is bringing even more fizz to the family empire.**

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

Kate and husband David run Mt Somers Station, a title that is rapidly becoming more than just the name of a high country run, and very much a brand emphasising source, quality and sustainability.

Back in 2013 Kate and David oversaw one of the biggest shifts in the station's history as they converted 210ha into a dryland dairy operation running 1,000 cows.

Five years down the track they have stepped the numbers down to 860 cows, giving the operation greater self-sufficiency when the occasional dry year hits, running what is for Canterbury a relatively light 2.5 cows to the hectare. The station's altitude helps make it relatively safe summer country, while an extensive winter cropping programme helps take care of winter feed demands.

The dairy unit conversion was very much a family project, with Kate, husband David and David's late father Mark all working on it.

"We do tend to take a long term view of any project we are involved in, and accept you may not always get your money back in the short time frames often used for projects," says Kate.

Kate's primary sector interests also include her ownership of Sugar Loaf Wines in Marlborough. The wine operation represents a return to her original tertiary training where she gained a wine makers degree from Lincoln but then decided the business was not for her. But after time spent in Marlborough some years after completing it

she realised what she was missing, and set about establishing her own wine label.

Converting an old apple juicing plant into a winery has her now with a well established reputation for producing excellent Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Riesling and some Pinot Gris.

The business has gone from strength to strength and today exports over 90% of its product to all corners of the world. Kate has overseen a major expansion of the winery's volume over the years, with a total of 26ha of both owned and leased vines in the Marlborough region, with a visit up there every month.

As busy as these projects may sound, Kate is also playing a role in some of the family's other ventures that revolve around the Mt Somers Station "brand."

The family's lambs' wool blanket business is going well, with its sales of 1,500 blankets a year accounting for half the station's lambs' wool clip, with hopes to grow the sales to ultimately account for it all.

The family have a reputation for innovative use of wool, with David's brothers Hamish and Ben creating the well-known woollen ski and fashion brand Mons Royale that is based heavily on fine wool Merino.

David's late father Mark was also the founder of Lynn River, a market leader in safety products and gloves with many keen Canterbury gardeners sporting his "Showa" gardening gloves over the years.

A more recent enterprise has been the Mount Somers Honey venture, with 450 hives providing Manuka, Honeydew and Clover varieties, tapping into the growing interest in single variety pure honeys that are sourced with a distinctive provenance brand behind them.

The family's ownership of one, and soon to be two, country stores is also providing a useful outlet for the growing range of

products the Aclands are associated with. They have owned the Staveley Store since 2015, and are about to take up ownership of the Mount Somers store from its retiring owners shortly.

"There are some good synergies there, and personally I believe it's important communities have a store, they tend to form the heart of these villages, and so often you see first the pub close and then the store. We are looking to bringing a new set of eyes to the Mount Somers store."

Kate managed to find time in her busy family and business life to put her name forward as a director candidate for the Ruralco board last year.

On being selected she says she is keen to spend some time seeing how the co-operative runs, appreciating what a business looks like from the outside can be quite different to how it actually functions on the inside.

"Overall I believe Ruralco is on a very good trajectory and as a rural co-operative it punches well above its weight. It has enjoyed a great couple of years."

She says she was drawn to Ruralco knowing it faces the same challenges many rural businesses face, trying to stay relevant and profitable in the face of a rapidly evolving retail market, dominated with some large, heavy hitting operators.

"Putting myself forward for the board was a great opportunity to get involved in something else that is local. It is always a challenge with a young family being able to do that, and it is also another way of putting down roots in your community."

Kate finds the Ruralco board admirable for its breadth of experience and diverse opinions.

"I am hoping I can also bring some forward thinking and 'big picture' experience to the board table to reinforce the talent that is already there."

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# Managing fodder beet for productive animals

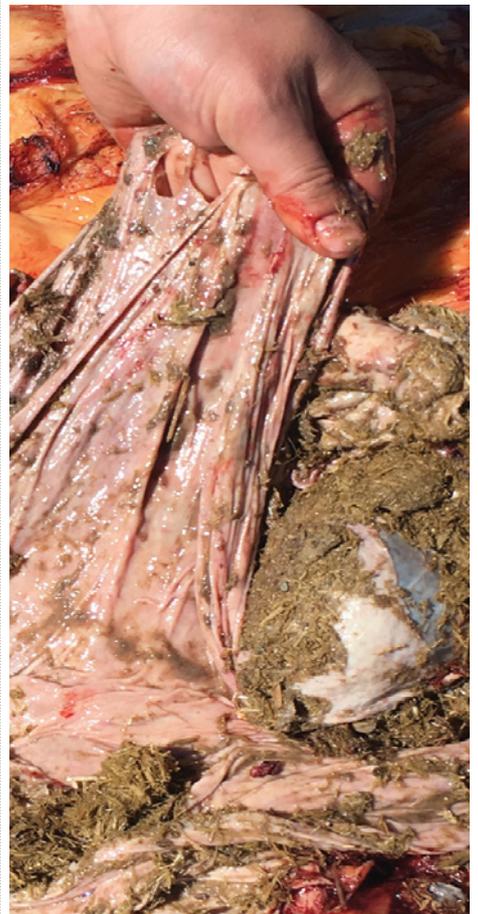


productivity of that animal. The ulceration and scarring of the rumen wall that occurs in an acidosis event, impacts the animal as it is removing the papillae which absorb nutrients. Limiting the supply of nutrients to the animal restricts the productivity of the animal.

It is common practise during the transition period and throughout the feeding of Fodder Beet to supply ad-lib straw or hay and feed silage prior to giving them Fodder Beet. This practise provides a dilution effect and helps fill them up so they don't gorge. While this provides some relief, it ultimately doesn't fully address the drop in rumen pH. Interestingly as an industry, we are not currently managing rumen pH either during transition or whilst continuously feeding Fodder Beet. Significant health benefits and improvements in feed efficiency, along with the ability to transition safely and at a faster rate are available if you introduce appropriate rumen pH buffers into the diet. Talk to your Ruralco Rep to discuss how you can improve the safety and performance with your Fodder Beet crop this season.

LEFT: The result of a acidosis event, as seen in a cow dung

BELOW: Scarring of the rumen wall



**The popularity of Fodder Beet has soared in recent years as it has many benefits and whilst Fodder Beet is a great feed it still has its limitations and management issues as all feeds do.**

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY LARRISA KINGSBURY OF RUMINATE

There are a number of factors to get right in order to successfully transition cattle onto Fodder Beet.

Successfully transitioning cattle is important, loss of life and rumen damage are very real possibilities if it's done incorrectly. Fundamentally Fodder Beet is a bowl full of sugar and water with very little protein, a major issue if you are growing or fattening cattle. Because of the availability of soluble sugar in Fodder Beet, this is both a great energy source but is also highly fermentable, which means it breaks down fast in the rumen. The highly fermentable nature of Fodder Beet is how we get acidosis.

Acidosis is when sugar or starch is broken down so rapidly in the rumen by microbes that the resulting volatile fatty acids are not removed fast enough from the rumen, resulting in a drop in rumen pH. The drop in pH can cause inflammation in the rumen wall, and negatively impacts microbes.

Acidosis can be both clinical and sub-clinical. Clinical acidosis is a result of the rumen pH being low for a prolonged period of time, this results in microbe death, and rumen ulceration. The resulting damage means that you have a very sickly animal that requires immediate treatment, or they're dead.

Sub-clinical acidosis is often seen in cattle where they will sit off the break, and have enough of a stomach upset (a result of an inflamed rumen wall) that it stops them eating for a period. Once recovered enough, they often gorge and the cycle begins again. This cycle of disturbed eating can result in poor growth rates, and prolonged rumen distress, which may result in the scarring of the rumen wall, seen here.

Prevention of both sub-clinical and clinical acidosis is important to ensure the lifetime

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# New technique for applying fertiliser via irrigators may benefit the environment



IrrigationNZ has recently released a new guide to assist farmers and the irrigation industry to adopt the use of fertigation—a new way of applying fertiliser which is likely to reduce nitrogen leaching, save labour on farms, and improve productivity.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY IRRIGATION NEW ZEALAND

Fertigation allows irrigators to be used to apply liquid fertiliser or liquid soluble fertiliser and applied at the same time as water.

Internationally, fertigation is increasingly being adopted as good environmental practice.

In September, IrrigationNZ organised a study tour to Nebraska. Twenty-five members joined the tour including farmers, irrigation designers, environmental consultants and irrigation scheme representatives. Farmers in the state were encouraged by authorities to use fertigation as a tool to help reduce nitrogen leaching and also save costs by reducing the labour involved in applying fertiliser and using less fertiliser.

Fertigation allows small amounts of fertiliser to be applied when needed. To give an example of the benefits Nebraskan farmers told us about they mentioned that they saved on labour costs and also didn't waste money by applying as much fertiliser in years they lost the value of crops through too much rain. Crop yields under fertigation were either similar or often better than solid fertiliser.

Our tour group were very excited about the opportunities to adopt fertigation here and some of the farmers on the tour are already looking into introducing fertigation.

Around 7% of New Zealand's agricultural land is irrigated—with most irrigated land located in Canterbury, Otago, Hawkes Bay and Marlborough, so fertigation could be a helpful strategy to manage nitrogen losses on irrigated farms in these areas.

Also, on the new technology front, IrrigationNZ has launched a new online training system for members which allows farmers and their staff to upskill themselves on irrigation for free without leaving the farm.

Prior to Christmas the problem many areas of New Zealand suffered from was having too much rain so if this trend continues over summer this will be a good way to occupy staff on wet days. The first module of the training system has eleven short videos which cover irrigation scheduling and additional modules will be added in future years. To find out more about the training system visit [www.irrigationnz.co.nz](http://www.irrigationnz.co.nz)

IMAGE: In September, IrrigationNZ organised a study tour to Nebraska. 25 members joined the tour including farmers, irrigation designers, environmental consultants and irrigation scheme representatives

Finally, IrrigationNZ is once again carrying out irrigation efficiency checks on farms in South Canterbury. This is the third summer we have carried out the testing, with previous programmes undertaken in Ashburton and Selwyn. The results were from the testing in Selwyn and Ashburton were used by farmers to adjust their irrigation management and identify and correct any system faults. The findings were also anonymised, and the overall data shared with a number of primary sector partner organisations. The programme is the first large scale independent testing of irrigation efficiency carried out in New Zealand. Farms between the Rangitata and Waitaki Rivers can register to join the testing programme online at [www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events](http://www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events).

# Environmental benefits of arable feeds

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY FAR



IMAGE: The talk, presented by Pablo Gregorini of Lincoln University and Ivan Lawrie of FAR summarised the results of a modelling study aimed at providing sound information to farmers

## Key points

- The environmental footprint of pastoral livestock production systems is determined by stocking rate and stock class, as well as dietary management.
- Diluting nitrogen intake with high-energy (higher starch and fibre content) supplements has the potential to reduce nitrogen leaching, but increase methane production.
- A range of supplementary forage, silage, grain and bulb mixes were modelled to see if particular combinations could improve environmental outcomes.
- Maize silage, whole crop cereal silage and grain supplements were found to have the potential to reduce both N leaching and methane production in pastoral systems.

One of the talks which attracted a large audience at FAR's December CROPS event, outlined the environmental benefits of feeding arable crops to dairy cows.

The talk, presented by Pablo Gregorini of Lincoln University and Ivan Lawrie of FAR summarised the results of a modelling study aimed at providing sound information to farmers wishing to reduce their herd's urinary N and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions while maintaining or increasing animal production.

## Background

Grass, forage and supplements supply energy and essential nutrients in the form of protein, vitamins and minerals. However, as these components vary between feed types, not all feeds are equal in their ability to support animal function. Energy and protein are the factors which impact most on ruminant production, and as such, they have received

a lot of attention under several production and evaluation systems. In temperate pastoral livestock production systems, the excess protein supplied by pasture has become the limitation. The nitrogen efficiency of dairy cows rarely exceeds 25%, which means that at least 75% of the N they ingest is excreted, mainly (over 60%) as urinary nitrogen.

Most urinary N (~ 82%) is deposited onto pastures, and of this, around 20-30% is leached and 2% transformed to nitrous oxides. In response to political and public pressures on dairying and dairy farmers, strategies are being explored to reduce the amount of N flowing through dairy cows. However, as some diets aimed at reducing urinary N may increase methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) production, it is difficult for farmers to balance environmental, productivity and profitability targets.

A modelling study was run to facilitate feeding decision making by dairy farmers aiming to reduce urinary N and CH<sub>4</sub> emissions while maintaining or increasing animal production. A total of 51 feeds available in New Zealand, including forage crops, silages, grains and bulbs were combined in diets consisting of two feeds varying the proportion of each feed from 10 to 90% in 10% steps. These combinations generated 11,526 dietary mixes.

## Results

The following table lists the most environmentally friendly silage, grain and supplement options for combining with a grass based pasture diet, identified in the project.

This work has shown that diluting N with maize silage and, or, cereal silage considerably reduces urinary N, and that

there is scope to formulate binary diets to reduce urinary N while maintaining or reducing methane production, with the potential to increase animal performance.

## Conclusions

Achieving animal production goals while meeting social and environmental constraints is complex. This modelling study tested around 11,000 combinations of 51 feeds and found that dairy farmers wishing to use binary diets to reduce their herd's urinary N, while maintaining or increasing milk production, have surprisingly few options. Most of these come from cereals and beets.

If their criterion is profitability and a pasture-based system, the suitable set of diets is even smaller, being limited to supplementing pasture with low levels of conserved forages with low N content (e.g. maize and cereal silage). There is no perfect diet though to optimise all objectives simultaneously; it is up to farmers to choose among the options that best suit their farming context and local environmental regulations.

## Acknowledgement

*Environmental Benefits of Arable Feeds* is a two year monitoring project led by FAR with funding from MPI SFF. Background information was made possible through outputs from "Forages for Reduced Nitrate Leaching" led by Dairy NZ with funding from MBIE and research collaborators Dairy NZ, FAR, Lincoln University, Ag Research, Plant & Food Research and Landcare Research).

**TABLE 1: Urinary N and animal production (Liveweight gain and MS during non-lactating and lactating periods, respectively) using diets including ryegrass herbage as the base, i.e. ≥ 50%.**

EXPERIMENTAL PERIOD	RYEGRASS/CLOVER PROPORTION	SUPPLEMENT	ANIMAL PERFORMANCE		
			URINARY N (G/D)	METHANE (G/D)	ANIMAL PRODUCTION (KG/D)
Non-lactating	0.6	Barley straw	219	305	0.6
	0.6	Maize silage	216	218	1.1
Early-lactation	0.7	Oat silage	212	330	1.7
Mid-lactation	0.8	Oat silage	249	372	1.5
	0.7	Oat silage	220	370	1.5
	0.7	Sorghum herbage silage	256	376	1.5
	0.6	Oat silage	192	368	1.5
	0.6	Sorghum herbage silage	238	376	1.5
Late-lactation	0.8	Barley straw	347	364	1.1
	0.6	Maize silage	246	303	0.9
	0.6	Oat silage	263	317	1.0

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# Still time for lime

Lime provides many benefits, and can be safely applied in still conditions right up to mid to late autumn. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRITION

"It's critical for dairy farms to avoid applying lime after autumn, as grazing cows in late pregnancy on recently limed pastures is risky," says Ballance Agri-Nutrients Science Extension Officer Aimee Dawson.

Applying lime from winter to late spring can increase the risk of grass staggers (hypomagnesaemia), caused by magnesium deficiency and milk fever (hypocalcaemia), caused by calcium deficiency.

Lime contains calcium and carbonate. The carbonate is the active ingredient that works on neutralising soil acid, but it is the calcium which can cause problems for dairy cows if applied too late.

## Too much calcium for a cow

"It's wise to leave as long a period as possible between applying lime and calving, especially on farms with a history of metabolic issues," says Aimee.

If pregnant cows ingest lime particles from recently limed pastures, they stop mobilising calcium from their own stores, as their metabolisms tell them they have enough in their diet. If, when they calve, they are unable to get enough calcium, they can get milk fever. At the same time, they suddenly require more magnesium to deal with the increased calcium in their diet. Magnesium is needed for the production of the hormone responsible for the reabsorption of calcium from bone. The increased demand for magnesium can lead to a deficiency and result in grass staggers.

Both magnesium and calcium can be supplemented directly to cows through troughs or dusting with magnesium oxide before and during calving, and lime flour after calving (refer to above image). But it is best to know how your fertiliser or lime applications may affect animal health to prevent exacerbating metabolic issues.

Aside from the risks of lime application from winter to late spring, it provides a number of benefits, and normally takes from 12 to 18 months to take full effect.

## Best lime time for pasture

"In terms of increased pasture production, after calving in spring is the ideal time to apply lime," says Aimee.

The optimal soil pH for pasture growth depends on the soil type. For mineral soils the optimal pH is 5.8 to 6.0. This is when you have the widest range of useable nutrients for pasture growth, and the right conditions for organisms in the soil to thrive, which also makes nutrients more readily available to plants.

For improved peat soils, optimal soil pH is 5.0 to 5.5. Unlike mineral soils, soil pH in peat declines with increasing soil depth, so it is important to work the lime into the soil as deeply as possible. The optimal pH on unimproved peats is 5.0 (at a depth of 0 to 75 mm) and 4.5 (at 75 to 150 mm).

## Maintain the gains

"Once you've achieved optimal soil pH, you don't want to lose the improvements you've

made. Soil testing will tell you how much, if any, lime is required," says Aimee.

The overall amount applied over time is the important factor, not how often you apply. Applying more lime less frequently is just as effective as applying less lime more frequently.

"Lime takes about 12 to 18 months to fully react in the soil, so it has a long lasting effect. Generally dairy farms only need to apply 2 to 2.5 tonnes per hectare of lime every four to five years to maintain soil pH, but this will depend on your production," says Aimee.

When choosing lime, check its concentration of calcium carbonate. If you apply more calcium carbonate you'll get a greater increase in soil pH. A more concentrated product will do this, or you can use more of a less concentrated product. The carbonate content will depend on the liming works and the source of the limestone rock. A finer consistency lime will speed up the process, as it breaks down quicker, but won't give the long lasting effect of regular agricultural grade lime. As a rule of thumb, you require 1 tonne of lime per hectare to increase the soil pH by 0.1 units.

"By applying lime at the right time, you can improve your grazing while easily avoiding the risks to cows," says Aimee.

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IMAGE: Ashley Carr, Ann Persson, Graham Carr, Robyn Carr, Mark Tapley holding Charlie and Anna Tapley with three month old Oscar

# World class red deer stud, boasts Johnne's resilient genetics

Firmly established as the largest red deer stud in the world, set amongst impressive park-like surroundings dominated by expansive avenues of English oaks, elms, beech and lime trees, Peel Forest Estate is not only testament to owner Yorkshireman Graham Carr's long term commitment to the deer industry, but his passion for enhancing the environment and planting deciduous trees.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY ANNIE STUDHOLME

Graham Carr arrived in Canterbury around 30 years ago, knowing little about the deer industry. He first learned about deer farming in 1982. Intrigued, he headed down under to New Zealand to learn more where he was befriended by deer industry pioneers Mark Acland, Sir Peter Elworthy and helicopter pilot Sir Tim Wallis, who at that time was at the forefront of the live deer capture movement. Keen to leave a background in joinery and get into farming, Graham was convinced that venison, with all its health properties, was the meat of the future.

And despite the volatility of the industry, from the glamour days in the 1990s to the tough times of recent years, to their own challenges with Johnne's disease, little has changed to diminish his enthusiasm. Over the years, he has invested heavily into genetics, utilising the most up-to-date technology available.

"It's been a great ride," says Graham. "It's great to see the industry on such a good footing right now and we are hitting our straps at the same time. Going forward, the industry looks solid, with the opening of the American market really helping diversification. There is still a shortage of supply and an increase in demand. We are seeing an increase come through now with people investing more on genetics."

Deer numbers are still well down on where they were six years ago, says Graham. "With the price collapse and a big swing into dairy farming, deer farms tended to disappear. What's happening now is that deer farms have gone back to the back country, where they always used to be, and



now they are expanding. But we are not seeing a lot of new entrants coming in."

Along with being the largest red deer stud in the world, Peel Forest Estate is arguably the world's largest velvet producer, selling more than 20 tonnes annually. It has more than 10,000 fully DNA recorded, electronically ear-tagged deer run on 1,500ha of river flats and a 1,300ha steep hill country block. To compliment the deer, they also run 250 Angus breeding cows to aid in pasture management.

In addition to the main farm at Peel Forest, they run Lincoln Hills as a dedicated hind block where they've recently started a new venture milking deer for cheese production in conjunction with Talbot Forest cheese.

ABOVE: Office & sales complex at Peel Forest Estate  
ABOVE TOP: Master sires and Trophy stags flaunting their impressive trophy genetics

While Graham still oversees the entire operation, Peel Forest Estate employs eight full-time staff including a stud manager, stock manager and agricultural manager, who take care of the day-to-day running of the property.

Aside from velvet, annually they sell around 800 deer for venison, in-calf hinds, and more than 250 breeding sires and trophy stags privately or across their two sales.

Looking back, even Graham struggles to believe how far they've come and what they've achieved. "It has exceeded any expectations in



ABOVE: Graham Carr with stepson Mark Tapley who is product development manager for Peel Forest Estate

every way. I certainly never expected to get into the industry in such depth," he says.

When Graham first visited New Zealand, he could see the industry's potential, but dissatisfied with the feral deer available here, he looked to the United Kingdom and Europe to improve the gene pool. Selectively bred in game parks for centuries overseas, he was convinced the bigger frames and large antlers of the European deer could benefit the industry.

In 1987 he purchased Peel Forest Estate. Originally taken up by Francis Jollie in 1853, the Peel Forest Run once covered 25,000 acres. Jollie built the original main part of the homestead in 1860 using local white pine with matai and totara flooring.

At the same time as the house was built, primroses, bluebells and a holly hedge were planted along with a number of deciduous trees. Douglas fir seedlings were also imported in their own soil in glass Wardian cases to protect them from the salt air on the voyage over, which are now recognised worldwide as the single best example of Douglas fir outside of the west coast of the USA, explains Graham.

After Jollie's death in 1871 the property passed through a number of hands before it was

purchased by George Denistoun in 1903. Over the years the homestead evolved with a two-storied assembly of alterations and additions. It is one of the few Historic Places Trust Category 1 listed homesteads in South Canterbury.

Peel Forest Estate remained in the Denistoun family's hands until Graham purchased it as a 700 ha sheep and beef farm. "It was very English looking; I pretty much fell in love with it straight away," he recalls.

His timing couldn't have been worse. The deer industry was on a high, while sheep and beef were struggling with prices at all time low. He got just \$8 per lamb for his first draft, whereas a single hind cost him \$4,500.00. "It took a lot of lambs to buy one hind," he quips.

Determined to transform Peel Forest Estate into a world class deer stud, at huge expense Graham embarked on importing live deer and later genetics from Europe and the UK, but it wasn't without its difficulties. The first 16 hinds he transported to New Zealand gave birth in the middle of winter, leaving Graham to hand raise his first fawns as the hinds were unable to feed them.

The stud herd was originally established with captured deer from former President of Yugoslavia Marshal Tito's famous hunting reserve in Croatia and the Schulte-Wrede herd in Germany—which included Romanian, Hungarian and Czech bloodlines.

Those initial bloodlines had an immediate impact on the industry and have all played an important role in the stud, says Graham.

He didn't walk away from the English strains entirely though. In the early 1990s he stumbled upon an English herd called 'Furzeland' deer in Devon, founded by Dr John Henshaw, which had a reputation for being the most multi-pointed deer in the world, with 45-plus spikes.

Through years of ruthless culling, Dr Henshaw succeeded in giving the burgeoning red deer trophy industry the most dynamic and unrivalled pool of world class highly heritable trophy genetics by bringing together selected hinds from various parks in England, creating a breed that had prolific points, well structured symmetrical antlers, great temperament and were hardy.

Graham purchased the whole herd and through embryo, live shipments and semen collection brought the bloodline to New Zealand.

The first shipment included an exceptional multi-pointed spiker called Jamieson. Jamieson, regarded as the most prepotent master sire in New Zealand and North America, became one of the foundation Furzeland sires at Peel Forest Estate, and was key to the successful development of the purebred Furzeland herd in New Zealand.

Furzeland genetics' greatest strength is their ability to pass on their superior antler genetics as can be seen from the generations of extraordinary multi-pointed stags bred from the herd. Antler genetics are very heritable with 70 per cent inheritable factor, compared to growth rates of 30 per cent and in dairy cows milking ability of 5 per cent, explains Graham.

In the early days there was a lot of hype in the industry, and some huge prices were paid for good genetics, but it's different now.

The 2001 discovery of John's disease, a chronic inflammatory bowel disease found worldwide that causes wasting and death in cattle, deer, goats and sheep, was a huge blow to the stud, forcing them to stop selling stags. Having imported several purebred bloodlines too important to the industry to be lost, Graham called on the expertise of Professor Frank Griffin, Head of the Microbiology Department at the University of Otago, to help them fight the disease.

With access to the estate's comprehensive files on pedigrees of its herd and the fate of the animals over 10 years, together with extensive annual blood testing, Griffin was able to determine the susceptibility/resilience to John's between the estate's breeds and bloodlines. Further trials carried out by Dr Colin Mackintosh of AgResearch established that susceptibility or resilience to John's was heritable.

Stock at Peel Forest Estate have been and are continually being challenged by John's, which has resulted in radical test-cull, natural and genetic selection for John's resilience. The heritability of the John's resilient trait ensures their ability to fight the disease on client's properties.

"We have spent a lot of time and money getting to the bottom of the problem, which has finally enabled us to turn a big disadvantage into an advantage for not only our clients, but the industry as a whole. It [finding a group of genetic markers for John's resilience] was quite a breakthrough for us as a farm, and as a stud. It's a great advantage to be able to sell stock with John's resilience," says Graham.

Today, Peel Forest Estate's breeding programme focuses on four distinct lines being the Terminal B11, Forrester Maternal Sires and trophy stags, and powerful velvet genetics through bloodlines from famous English parks, Warnham and Woburn Abbey, with the purchase of the Windermere Stud back in 2012.

They follow a "simple system" using dedicated Maternal Sires (Forresters) to produce hardy, fertile replacement breeding hinds and dedicated Terminal Sires (B11s) to produce fast growing progeny and maximise productivity. Graham says these sires not only increase productivity through their superior genetics for growth rate and hardiness, but also have John's resilient genetics that further enhance profitability by considerably reducing stock and production losses.

The development of the Terminal B11 composite (11 years in the making) came in direct response from a need for Peel Forest Estate to improve the weaner's growth rates in the 1990s.

"We were using wapiti sires, but couldn't find any growth genetics as there was no recording being done then. We decided to have a go at breeding our own terminal sire and became the first farm in New Zealand to record growth rates and deer EBVs. Our bottom-line goal was to breed more heavier and earlier," says Graham.

They employed Dr Peter Fennessy of Abacus Bio Ltd, a science genetic evaluation company in Dunedin, who analysed the desirable genetic traits and developed a breeding strategy for Peel Forest Estate to create the Superior B11 Terminal Sire.

"We were after powerful genetics that were highly productive, totally reliable, easy to maintain and eventually had measured genetic merits. We selected the correct conformation and growth rate superior elk bloodlines together with early calving high libido eastern deer identified with superior breeding values. Bloodlines for hardiness and disease resilience were also a very important inclusion."

Commitment to technology continues to be at the forefront. Although devastating at the time, a fire which destroyed the estate's deer shed in 2011 was seen as a huge opportunity to take it to the next level, maximising the latest technology available.

Part of the new deer shed was specifically designed around weighing and drafting equipment, with the weighing equipment previously used replaced by Gallagher systems. It also has a state of the art custom built crush, large freezers to store our velvet harvest, weigh scales and auto-drafting, a surgery for its embryo transfer programme, as well as a place for staff to congregate.

Every deer at Peel Forest Estate has an electronic ear tag. They record every facet of the work that happens, whether it's animal health, weights, grouping, pedigree analysis, trait and activity recording as well as electronic drafting with the Gallagher HR5. It gives the estate a very accurate data collection system which then can be analysed on either the Gallagher APS office software, AgHub or HerdMASTER.

While property size and sustainability don't always go hand in hand, Graham has worked tirelessly over the years to protect and enhance the environment from the challenges intensive deer farming can present. The farm has previously been awarded both a Ballance Farm Environment and a Firstlight Award for total commitment to sustainability.

He's spent thousands of dollars re-fencing and planting the whole property. Reducing deer access to streams was important. With consent, some of the properties creeks were realigned, fenced and settling ponds created. Graham's proud that restriction in stock access

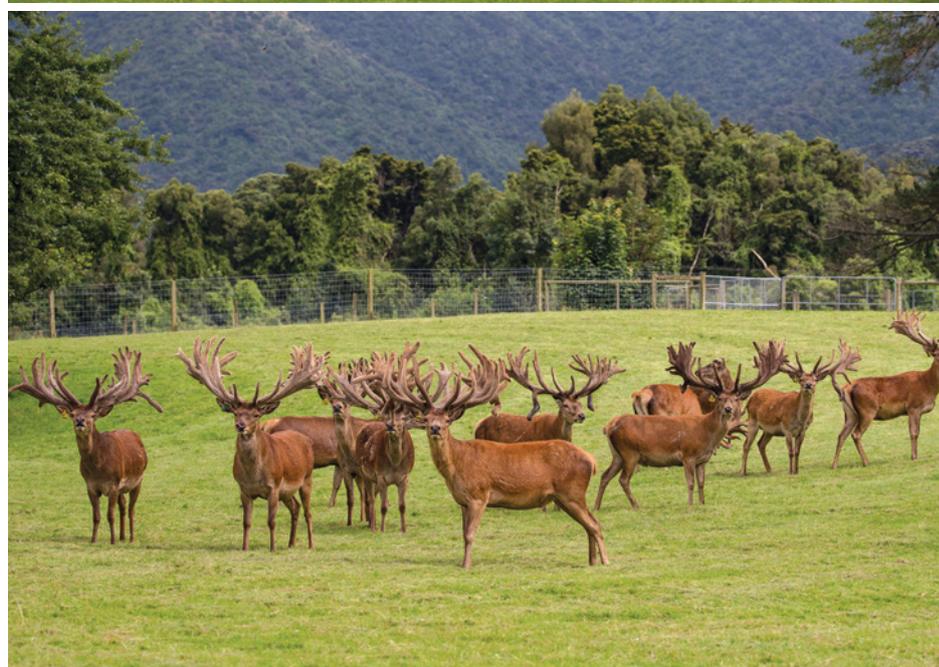
and planting around waterways had meant that despite intensive farming, water quality has been enhanced.

But undoubtedly his crowning glory is the many amenity plantings around the farm he's planted, which provide necessary shelter and shade for the deer to thrive as they would in their natural environment.

Blessed with a good rainfall, impressive avenues of deciduous trees, specifically English oaks, beeches, elms and limes now grace the property; providing a landscape more in line with an English country estate than the open sheep and beef farm he took over in the 1980s.

"I am just passionate about planting deciduous trees. I am slowly working away at getting all the laneways planted. There are kilometres and kilometres of trees now. Trees and deer, that's what I love," says Graham.

BELOW: Peel Forest Estate Homestead  
BELOW BOTTOM: Peel Forest Estate is arguably the world's largest velvet producer, selling more than 20 tonnes annually



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• Hot dipped galvanised

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

### EXTRAS

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

## TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



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# Hogget lambing drives future productivity

Managed correctly, hogget lambing has the potential to enhance the productivity and profitability of the future ewe flock – but the inverse is also true.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND



IMAGE: For successful hogget mating, ewe lambs need to be fed consistently well from weaning through until they are mated as two-tooths

Professor Paul Kenyon from Massey University says that not all farmers should breed from their hoggets and, for those that do, it should be a flexible policy depending on feed availability. “If you don’t do it well, they will fall out of the system later—you will ruin them for future years.”

## Correct feeding is critical

Feed is the most critical factor in successful hogget lambing. This means feeding them consistently well—from when they are weaned as ewe lambs, through until when they are mated as two-tooths.

As a rule of thumb, ewe lambs need to weigh a minimum of 40kg before going to the ram. For a hogget mated in early May, this means an average daily growth rate of 120gms/day from birth. She then needs to gain 20kg or 135gms/day throughout her pregnancy to meet her two-tooth target weights. Given the conceptus weighs 10kg, the hogget should weigh a minimum of 60kg the day before she lambs, and 50kg the day after.

The heavier the ewe lamb is at mating, the less pressure on winter feed resources to reach those post-lambing target weights, and so some farmers set a minimum weight closer to 45kg

Paul says that to meet the hogget’s energy requirements throughout pregnancy, she needs to be offered pre-grazing pasture covers greater than 1200kgDM/ha (about 3cm height) with minimum post-grazing covers of 1000kg DM/ha (2cm).

To achieve this within a farm system might mean having to reduce numbers of other stock classes—such as mixed-age ewes—or providing an alternative feed source, such as a forage crop. “Regardless of what option you choose, monitor the hoggets to ensure targets are met,” says Paul. “There are no magic bullets, but getting the feeding and liveweight correct are the major drivers of success.”

Hogget lambing can be an efficient use of feed resources. The extra herbage required to feed seven pregnant hoggets, over and above the existing feed requirements of seven non-pregnant hoggets, is roughly the same total feed demand as one pregnant mature ewe in winter.

## Sire determines birthweight

Paul says there is a misconception that overfeeding hoggets in pregnancy can result in large lambs and a high incidence of dystocia. B+LNZ-funded trials show there is minimal difference (around 300gms) in the birthweight

of lambs born to very large hoggets (80kg) and small hoggets (50kg). Rather, you’re likely to see more problems as a result of under-feeding, than over-feeding. Well-grown hoggets have fewer problems giving birth.

“They need to be well-fed throughout pregnancy—and not just in late pregnancy—to ensure they continue to grow structurally.”

Paul says 70–80% of birthweight is determined by genetics, so sire selection has the greatest influence on birthing ease.

## Legumes drive growth rates

Going into lambing, hoggets should be set stocked on relatively high pasture covers and those covers need to stay above 1200kgDM/ha. Legume-based forage mixes generate the fastest growth rates in both lambs and lactating hoggets. Trials comparing hogget lamb growth rates on different forages showed lambs on:

- pasture (stocked at 10/ha) grew an average of 303gms/day;
- herb mix (stocked at 14/ha) grew at 351gms/day;
- lucerne (stocked at 14/ha) gained 403gms/day.

## Early weaning

As hoggets typically lamb later than the mixed-age ewes, they have less time to recover body condition before they are mated as two-tooths. Paul says early-weaning could benefit hoggets by giving them more time to gain condition and liveweight, without compromising lamb performance.

## Speed up genetic gain

Hogget lambs are often regarded as a bonus, but Paul says they can be so much more. By selecting the correct sires, hoggets’ lambs can be your replacements, effectively speeding up genetic gain.

Coupled with the correct management, mating hoggets with superior sires has the potential to improve on-farm productivity in both the short and long-term.

Beef + lamb New Zealand has raft of information about hogget mating including podcasts, learning modules and fact sheets. Go to [www.beeflambnz.com/search?term=hogget+mating](http://www.beeflambnz.com/search?term=hogget+mating)



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# Good working relationships between beekeepers & farmers



ABOVE: Apiculture NZ Chief Executive, Karin Kos

**Honey bees play a critical role in the primary sector, pollinating key agricultural and horticultural crops, therefore it's important that beekeeping and agriculture work well together, because both—the farmer and beekeeper—depend on the health of bees.**

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY APICULTURE NZ

Beekeepers want to maintain strong and healthy bee colonies to pollinate and produce honey and in doing this they also make use of agricultural land as an important source of food for bees. New Zealand is fortunate in that its bee population is healthy and we want to keep it that way.

Good bee health is enhanced when there are well established working relationships between beekeepers and farmers incorporating factors like responsible use of

pesticides and having good health and safety and biosecurity practices in place.

Apiculture New Zealand (ApiNZ), the national representative body for the apiculture industry, has developed a number of tools to support landowner and beekeeper relationships. This includes practical land use agreements, health and safety plans for beekeepers and a Code of Conduct for its members outlining best practice with a section dedicated to landowner relations. "It is important that there are strong agreements and communication between the beekeeper and the farmer or landowner to maintain good relationships," said ApiNZ Chief Executive, Karin Kos.

"Farmers and landowners can then be sure they are protected on a health and safety and biosecurity front and beekeepers can have peace of mind that their bees and hives are kept safe."

Another ongoing discussion in the farmer to beekeeper relationship is the use of pesticides and insecticides on crops that bees are foraging on. If farmers plan their spray programmes for the right time, they should

pose no threat to bees, but communicating the programme to beekeepers is an important consideration.

ApiNZ has a section on its website dedicated to safe spraying practices, understanding that sustainable agriculture requires effective pollination and the responsible use of pesticides.

The advice includes encouraging farmers to leave spraying until dusk or dawn when bees are not working crops. Spraying during these times is better than during the day itself with generally less wind and spray drift. ApiNZ also recommends operating spray irrigators at night, as the cold water can kill foraging bees.

ApiNZ also recommends that farmers and spray contractor should also take special care with using spray tank adjuvants such as surfactants which are ecotoxic to bees. If in doubt, consult with your supplier.

"At the end of the day, it's up to the both the beekeeper and landowner to maintain proactive communications with each other," says Ms Kos.

Looking ahead, ApiNZ has been consulting with industry to introduce a commodity levy on honey. New Zealand's apiculture industry has grown significantly over the past 15 years and it needs to manage this growth, and importantly ensure a sustainable and healthy bee population.

The levy will secure funding in key areas such as bee health and biosecurity with the proposal going to an industry vote on 1 February 2019.

"A commodity levy will be very familiar to most farmers and will enable us to invest in our future, helping to protect our industry which will benefit all stakeholders, including the agricultural sector," says Ms Kos.

# Postman Matt and his very creative daily post runs

Peel Forest postie Matt Searles is a very busy man and delivering mail along NZ's longest single road mail run is only one of his many daily tasks.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY MATT SEARLES



ABOVE: Merino sheep on the move at Ben McLeod Station, as seen from the drone

LEFT: Balage cutting at White Rock Station, looking up the Rangitata Valley towards the Two Thumbs range

Along with wife Shelley he runs The Green Man at Peel Forest Café and manages the adjoining DOC campground. He's also a very talented photographer and somehow finds the time to document his very scenic mail run on his Instagram page 'Mail to Messy' featuring breath-taking images of his route up the Rangitata Valley to Mesopotamia Station. Summer season is a very busy time for the couple, "we're very much the centre of things here in Peel Forest, the bar and

café is a social hub for the local community as well as for tourists as we're a gateway for people travelling up the Rangitata Gorge" Matt explains. Historically a postal service has always operated from the café which is the final outpost for mail and parcels destined for the remote Rangitata Valley area. The café was originally a general store and Matt and Shelley still provide basic supplies for locals and tourists alike—providing locals with milk for tea, campers

with matches and tired kids with ice-cream—the café is definitely a lifeline for this rural community.

Englishman Matt has lived in New Zealand for over nineteen years. He met Timaru native Shelley in the UK and decided to return with her to Canterbury. They lived in the Kaituna Valley for many years and Matt admits the couple enjoy living in small remote communities while Matt's background in marketing, photography and web design allows him to work from home. They relocated to Peel Forest a few years ago to be closer to Shelley's family and took over the café and mail business in June 2018. "We'd always wanted to work on something together and we knew the prior owners well and I'd also done some relief mail run work. When the owners told us they were leaving we chatted about it and thought 'lets' give it a go". They rebranded the café as The Green Man at Peel Forest, took the contract from NZ Post to manage the mail and from DOC to manage the campsite, "we've both had prior hospitality experience so it wasn't a blind jump into something, we had an idea of what we were getting into but the businesses definitely keep us busy!"

Since taking over and rebranding the café the couple have been busy introducing new menus and products and extending opening hours ensuring the local community have somewhere to socialise. As well as locals, they also cater to functions and large groups as well as offering tasty food to the campers next door and host live music on weekends. "Something we've always wanted to do is offer people great tasty food with a social conscience so we stock lots of organic and Fair-Trade products and try to source as much local food as we can. Shelley has dietary requirements so she has inspired lots of dairy and gluten free dishes. In our experience sometimes when you are off the beaten track there isn't a lot of choice so we didn't want our location to be a barrier for choice. If you have a food allergy and you come here we always try to have a few good options on offer."

Matt delivers the mail from Tuesday to Saturday and the 100 km return journey up the valley usually takes about 2.5 hours with 15 potential stops on the route. As a mail run with one single road getting lost isn't a problem and also there isn't a lot of change in ownership of homes so he knows most of his customers even if he only occasionally sees them moving a mob of sheep. Couriers don't travel up the route so all kinds of deliveries are put into the safe hands of Matt to deliver up the valley. "I'm the end of the road for mail so I carry all sorts of things, from milk to ear tags to helicopter lubricants and even the odd child who needs a lift home after staying with friends. Today someone dropped in floor tile sample to send up to a resident and I've also got 16 litres of ice-cream to deliver, there's always something random in the van!"

As a keen photographer this most beautiful of mail routes provides Matt with endless opportunities while going about his daily routine. "It's very hard as a photographer to find the time to go out and take shots so being postie is the perfect outlet to capture the landscape. The route is a hidden gem and I really try and take pictures that capture the essence of the landscape and also document the passing of time through the seasons." Matt's work is displayed on his Instagram page "Mail to Messy" and the images are spectacular and have amassed a large online following including many of the local landowners who are proud as punch to have their back yard displayed through very beautiful imagery and are now used to the sight of the local postie with his camera. Matt also uses drone photography which he admits can be difficult in the windy conditions of the valley but on calmer days the perspective from the drone really can capture something special. "Even getting the camera a few metres off the ground offers a totally different angle, for example moving livestock can look spectacular from above, or the other day a baling contractor was keen to look at my photos as he thought on that



day he'd done perfect lines and thought the drone would have got the best shots."

Between the café, campsite, mail run and photography Matt is definitely always busy but surprisingly has a few more plans up his sleeve for the future. He'd like to start taking groups up the valley offering photography opportunities and providing a tasty picnic lunch courtesy of the café, "I've got a great body of work to show people what they can expect and obviously with the café we can provide great food for the excursions." He's also going to be displaying some of his work at an exhibition at the Susan Badcock Gallery in Geraldine later this year which will feature some original work not already featured on his Mail to Messy page, "I'm really excited about that and already thinking of the types of image I'll have on show and the shots I want to take."

ABOVE: Feeding out Hereford cattle with the Potts Range in the background

MIDDLE: A sunny day at Forest Creek Station

TOP: The Upper Rangitata as seen from Mesopotamia Station

Some of the images are also displayed in the café as Matt and Shelley are keen to promote the wonderful area they call home and it's also a great way to engage tourists and encourage them to explore the wider Peel Forest and Rangitata Valley areas. "It really is big country in a little country around here and tourists are always surprised when they realise some of the shots are only a half hour drive away. We're very passionate about getting people out exploring and even reminding the locals how lucky we are to live in such a wonderful part of the world and Mail to Messy is a great way to do that."



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Stocker's have seen a lot of changes within the Dairy industry over the course of their 23 years of operation. Some of these changes have been in the effluent and milk cooling areas. With their product and team abilities, they can help provide the right solution to suit your farm and budget. WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY STOCKER SOLUTIONS



ABOVE: A major benefit to the GEA Slope Screen is the fact that it has no moving parts  
LEFT: This is the most reliable method in being able to meet the new cooling standards and gives farmers the peace of mind even in the heat of summer when ground water temperatures rise

With Stocker's being a part of the GEA dealership network, they have access to world leading and innovative products, some of which are manufactured and designed right in New Zealand.

Effluent Management has become a large part of dairy farm management, and creating the right system with the right treatment and products can be an art. Stocker's have a team that is well versed in Effluent management, from small scale farms, through to complete barn systems. GEA is also Farm Dairy Effluent System Design Accredited. Plumbing Manager Jason Muir states, "We don't just look at providing a product that will replace your existing product like for like. We look at your whole effluent system and management and look at ways in which to make it more efficient". From the start Stocker's can provide items that will take the raw effluent and transform it in ways to lessen the amount of by product. One of the main components that is helping them to achieve this is through the GEA Slope Screen. The GEA Slope Screen will take the effluent from your yard, separate the liquids and solids by a passive gravity fed system, and allows the green water to be recycled. By separating the solids out, it reduces wear and blockages in your pumps, and allows the green water to be pumped efficiently out to irrigators and reused for green water yard wash. It also allows

for easier effluent pond management due to less solid settling and surface crusting, which allows you to store more liquid. A major benefit to the GEA Slope Screen is the fact that it has no moving parts. This means maintenance is very easy, and the screen has a low cost of operation. With the screen coming in three sizes, there is a size to suit different needs and cow numbers. The 4ft and 6ft screens are manufactured in Hamilton, and the 8ft screens are sold under the GEA Houle brand and imported from Europe. With the 4ft and 6ft version being manufactured and produced in New Zealand they have been designed to suit New Zealand Pastoral based farming requirements, and budgets. Stocker's also has the benefit of having a display model in their workshop.

With recent changes in Milk Cooling for this season, Stocker's have also been busy around the district undertaking on farm milk cooling assessments. Dairy Manager Richard Neill states, "We have the advantage of being dairy repair specialists, and with the backup of having a plumbing team on board, we don't just look at the secondary snap chilling

potential. Our on-farm cooling assessment looks at your primary milk cooling ability first, and then secondary cooling." By using this assessment method, quite often Stocker's can alter pipework, and water intake and increase your existing cooler potential without the need for a snap chiller. The initial assessment logs your data to look at your milk cooling over 4 days of milking. A report is provided afterwards of temperatures for your ground water, silo milk entry, and silo, and follows it for the compliance period after milking has finished.

If a secondary method requirement is identified in the report, we can provide you with a bolt in system from GEA that will snap chill your milk immediately on harvest down to 4 degrees dependent on your setup. This is the most reliable method in being able to meet the new cooling standards and gives farmers the peace of mind even in the heat of summer when ground water temperatures rise. The bolt in systems from GEA can be retrofitted to any shed and fits in with existing equipment. The GEA aquaCHILL can also provide you with hot water recovery if chosen. It is also a class leading system for energy efficiency (EER) when compared to water or ice bank systems.

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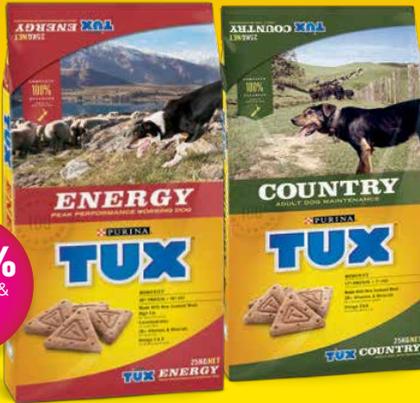
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# Proven tools available to protect yields from day one

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**Photo:** Grass grub damage in Canterbury sheep paddock.

Whether you're sowing autumn cereals, ryegrass or clover for seed, two small insect pests are ready and waiting to have a big feed at your expense in the weeks ahead.

Fortunately, there's a range of handy tools available to help maximise your yields, and now is the ideal time to work out which of these are best for your situation, before you sow.

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

Local arable specialist Jeff Hurst, from Nufarm, gets called out to trouble shoot affected crops every season, and says the trouble with both slugs and grass grub is that once you can see a problem, a lot of damage may have been done that cannot be reversed.

He's a big advocate of mitigating the risk early rather than trying to stop an infestation that has already taken hold.

This is especially important for crops where plant numbers at establishment have a significant impact on crop yield at harvest.

Where slugs have either been an issue in the past, or are known to be present, SlugOut has several benefits that make it one of the most favoured molluscicides in the industry, he says.

Metaldehyde, the active ingredient in SlugOut, doesn't kill predatory beetles which

naturally eat slugs, making it suitable for farmers who want to use IPM programmes.

Metaldehyde is not harmful to earthworms; and 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.

"Check slug populations before sowing, and always use SlugOut when direct drilling. It has high bait numbers for superior ground coverage and fast knock down (see FAR Crop Action 95), and is very cost effective."

What about grass grub? Jeff says growers have a range of choices available for managing this pest, depending on how long they need to protect their crops.

Drilled down the spout with seed, controlled-release suSCon Green granules will protect cereals and clover for their lifetime. SuSCon Green will protect pastures for up to three years.

"Controlling grass grub is not easy," Jeff says.

"You're dealing with a pest that lives underground and is far from predictable in terms of timing. We continue to see grass grub causing significant losses in cereals where preventative control is not in place, with feeding damage often occurring right through winter and into spring."

For shorter-term control, DEW 600 and Diazinon 20G are both registered for use against grass grub in newly sown cereals and grass and clover seed crops.

Diazinon 20G can be broadcast but is best applied down the spout with seed, and will control larvae for around six weeks.

DEW 600 can be used over clover and grass crops or pasture where grass grub is causing damage, and is the only liquid formulation registered for use over cereals for grass grub control.

DEW 600 needs to be applied immediately before or during before rain to ensure the chemical washes into the soil.

For more advice on protecting autumn-sown crops from grass grub and slugs this season, have a word with your friendly team at Ruralco.



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# Pasture condition and perennial ryegrass genetics

SEED

## PASTURE CONDITION SCORE

**5**



**Description**  
Whole paddock has dense sward of desired grasses and clovers

**Suggested Action**  
No action required. Would be happy if whole farm in this state

**4**



**Description**  
Parts of the paddock show signs of low level damage, less vigorous grasses and some weeds

**Suggested Action**  
Check fertility. Apply summer N to encourage tillering. Paddock probably OK for coming season

**3**



**Description**  
Majority of paddock has low level damage, weeds, and less vigorous grasses

**Suggested Action**  
Apply summer N. Undersow in the autumn with perennial ryegrass containing appropriate endophyte

**2**



**Description**  
Parts of the paddock have severe damage, a lot of weeds and bare ground

**Suggested Action**  
Either

- Sow in perennial ryegrass in autumn, or:
- Undersow with Italian ryegrass in autumn and plan to renew in following 6-12 months, or:
- In spring oversow chicory with fertiliser, or undersow paddocks with chicory, and plan to renew in 6-18 months.

**1**



**Description**  
Entire paddock severely damaged

**Suggested Action**  
Sow into summer crop in spring, and plan to sow in perennial pasture in the autumn

There are multiple ways to identify poor performing paddocks for pasture renovation including calculating the number of grazing days and utilising records from pasture walks. If these aren't available, condition scoring every paddock is another option to help determine your under-performing paddocks and identify those which may need to be renewed.

The aim of pasture condition scoring should be to score paddocks from 5 (best) to 1 (worst) using the photos and descriptions below to make quick accurate decisions. These are designed to assist with plans for short, medium and long-term pasture renovation and renewal strategies, depending on the farm system and feed requirements.

Once poor performing paddocks have been identified for pasture renewal, a decision on the requirement of a break crop should be made. If the paddock contains multiple hard to control grass or broadleaf weeds a break crop is recommended as this will provide more opportunities for application of herbicides to break weed cycles. Winter crops like Winter Star II annual ryegrass or Supercruise Italian ryegrass followed by brassicas or chicory are ideal for breaking weed and pest cycles, and providing opportunities to correct underlying paddock issues including drainage, compaction or soil fertility.

If paddocks are suitable for immediate pasture renovation, completing soil tests and correcting underlying fertility or structural issues (e.g. drainage or compaction) should be an immediate priority. If direct drilling, always aim for a double spray programme and include a knockdown insecticide in the final glyphosate application to control insects including Argentine Stem Weevil.

When deciding which perennial ryegrass to sow this autumn, the National Forage Variety Trial results (NFVT), DairyNZ Forage Value Index (FVI) and your local Ruralco Technical Sales Representative are great sources of information. A great perennial ryegrass option for sowing this autumn is Platform AR37. Platform continues to deliver exceptional results including outstanding dry matter production and quality both on farm and in independent national trials. Independent National Forage Variety Trials (NFVT) continue to confirm Platform's agronomic value with Platform AR37 retaining its place at the top of this year's National NFVT summary1.

Although Platform AR37 has demonstrated a great fit for dairy systems, don't be tricked into thinking this is another dairy only grass. Platform's dense fine leaves and cool season growth also make this perennial ryegrass suitable for progressive sheep and beef systems. Platform's feed profile is ideal for meeting the increased late winter/early spring feed demands on many New Zealand sheep and beef properties.

Visually, Platform is a dense, finely leaved type with a late heading date (12 days later than Nui). This late heading date places Platform between existing top cultivars Excess (+7 days) and tetraploid Base (+22 days). Platform's late heading date combined with a dense fine leaf structure has surprised plant breeders producing impressive feed quality results traditionally seen by tetraploid varieties.

Another benefit of Platform is that it's inoculated with New Zealand's market leading AR37 endophyte providing protection from major Canterbury pasture pest including Porina, Argentine Stem Weevil, Root Aphid and Pasture Mealy Bug. With increased Porina and Argentine Stem Weevil pressure in the South Island, Platform AR37 is perfectly placed to help get the most out of new pastures.

For more information on Platform AR37 and other autumn sowing options contact your local Ruralco Technical Sales Representative.

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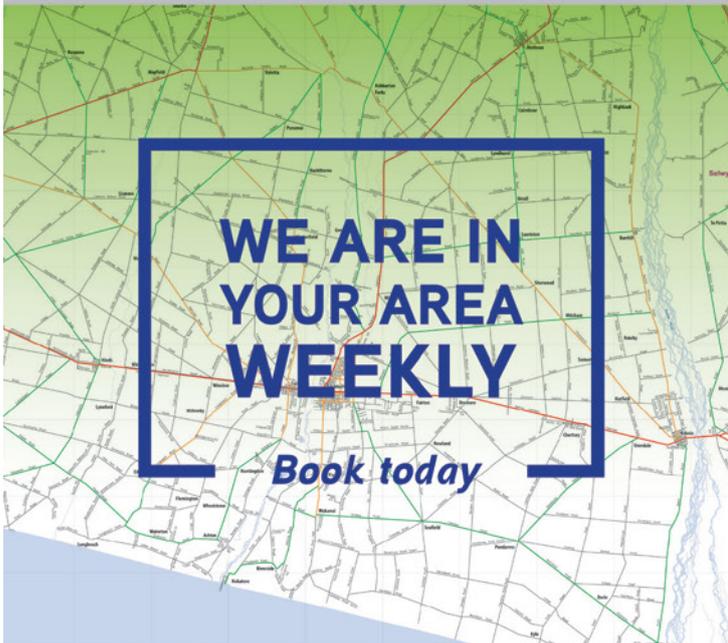
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# Late summer health risks

A review of ryegrass staggers, rumen acidosis, and parasitism.

WORDS BY IAN HODGE. GENERAL MANAGER TECHNICAL SERVICES, VETERINARY ENTERPRISES GROUP



## Ryegrass Staggers.

In late summer under the correct conditions of warmth and moisture, pastures can develop fungal growth on seed heads and in the dead matter in the base of the sward. Ryegrass is the most commonly affected pasture plant. The fungi produce toxins which attack the animals' nervous system leading to the disease we call ryegrass staggers. Affected animals stagger and tremble when disturbed, and often have a fine head tremor at rest. Affected animals may not graze as normal and will be affected by reduced feed intake. Prevention of ryegrass staggers involves grazing pastures with minimal seed head and dead matter, and avoiding grazing pastures obviously showing the black or grey discoloration of fungal growth on seed heads. Treatment of affected animals is difficult. There is no one single treatment. Allowing animal's access to safe pasture and supplement is very important. Some supportive treatments help. Monopropylene glycol and vitamin B12 can both help maintain a source of energy when animals may not be eating well. The condition improves with time and with continual access to safe feed. Importantly this condition must be differentiated from polio (thiamine deficiency). Any nervous conditions in young stock should be seen by a vet.

## Rumen Acidosis.

Irrigated pastures boosted with nitrogen fertiliser can have high carbohydrate (sugar) and protein levels. The soluble carbohydrates are rapidly metabolised in the rumen, and

the proteins are rapidly assimilated. During the process of carbohydrate fermentation the amount of lactic acid in the rumen can increase and the high sugar content sucks water into the rumen. The microorganisms that live in the rumen die as the acid is produced. Eventually the acid "leaks" into the blood stream. The condition that develops is called rumen acidosis. Affected animals have reduced growth rates and look empty. They will most likely have diarrhoea and a reduced appetite. Rumen acidosis can be corrected by reducing the sugar and acid load on the animal. This is done by providing a source of fibre, such as hay, which causes the animal to produce saliva which then neutralises acid in the rumen. The fibre also has a role in stimulating the rumen to contract more forcefully. This results in better availability of nutrients to the animal. Some animals can be severely debilitated by this condition and require prompt veterinary attention.

## Parasitism.

In autumn, rising moisture levels combined with warm soil and dense pastures can result in high levels of parasite larvae in the sward. These parasite larvae will have arisen from eggs deposited on the grass previously by calves or lambs that may have missed a drench, or been drenched with an ineffective product. The larvae can become infective (the L3 stage) to the animals in the warm autumn conditions, sometimes as rapidly as ten days. Calves or lambs grazing these pastures will ingest these larvae which then develop in

IMAGE: Affected animals may not graze as normal and will be affected by the reduced feed intake

the gastrointestinal tract into adult egg-laying parasitic worms. These adult parasites damage the gastrointestinal tract leading to diarrhoea, weight loss and reduced appetite. Lungworm can develop in a similar way resulting in a husky cough affecting many animals. Parasitism can be complex and the diagnosis not often straightforward. Veterinary intervention may be required to make a definitive diagnosis. Diarrhoea is not always attributable to parasites.

## Flystrike, Pinkeye and Trace elements.

In late summer, lambs can become affected by flystrike, and pinkeye is common in sheep and in cattle. Flystrike treatment involves shearing the affected area, killing the maggots and treating the infected wounds. Pinkeye is a disease of the eyes. It is spread between animals by flies. The eyes are damaged by scratches from long grass and from dust. The bacteria and viruses then colonise the damaged eye. Pinkeye is very infectious. Please seek immediate veterinary assistance if you suspect your sheep or cattle have pinkeye. As autumn progresses it is important to ensure the trace element status of animals is adequate. In particular the copper status of cattle and the cobalt status of sheep. Selenium is important for all grazing ruminants. Careful management over the autumn will ensure good bodyweights, growth rates and health going into winter.



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# Carbon calculator helps farmers assess carbon footprint

**A new carbon calculator will be an invaluable tool for helping farmers to run their operations in a more sustainable manner.**

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

Developed by Lincoln University's Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU) and engineering consultancy Agrilink, the calculator offers farmers a quick method for assessing their carbon footprint and discovering how their activities could be affecting the planet.

Around 98% of New Zealand farmers are not aware of their farms' greenhouse gas emissions, and with the country discussing the possibility of implementing a zero carbon target, farmers face concerns about how this may affect them.

The calculator allows them to discover their impacts and supports them to make better choices, for their farms and the country, as they increase their efforts to run their operations more sustainably.

Carbon can be a very abstract concept, so the tool compares the impact of farm emissions to the environmental effect of long-haul flights between New Zealand and London, the distance travelled in a car, or the area that could be planted to offset their emissions.

It uses details such as farm size, stock number, fertiliser and fuel use to calculate methane and nitrous oxide emissions.

The results appear as total CO<sub>2</sub> equivalents.

Meridian Energy and Westpac NZ have provided financial assistance towards the development of the new product.

The greenhouse gas calculator was originally developed in 2008 to better inform the Food Miles debate.

It has now been updated to give farmers a quick approximation of their carbon footprint and is not intended to replace detailed greenhouse gas modelling tools.

AERU, established in 1962, has a core mission of exercising leadership in research for sustainable well-being. It operates as a semi-autonomous research centre at Lincoln University and provides research expertise to a wide range of regional, national and international organisations in the public and private sectors.

AERU's research focuses on economic, resource, environmental and social issues. It employs its own research staff and coordinates some of the external research of academic staff from other Lincoln University faculties.

The new carbon calculator is available at [www.lincoln.ac.nz/carboncalculator](http://www.lincoln.ac.nz/carboncalculator).

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# Ruralco standing behind this year's rural drink driving campaign

Drink driving campaigns have been running in Mid Canterbury for over 26 years during the summer season but this year the campaign has some very relevant and confronting statistics for the rural community. WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY ACADS



Compliance Manager at Ruralco, Pete Jacob, is hoping that getting behind the message will have an impact on people's behaviour this year, "Supporting this campaign was very important to us, at the end of the day these statistics are our shareholders, their families and employees and we're really hoping our readers will sit up and take notice."

The summer campaign is part of the Community Alcohol Action Plan managed by Ashburton Community Alcohol and Drug Service (ACADS) and the planning team is made up of ACADS staff and Council Road Safety Co-ordinator, Jeremy Lambert.

ACADS is a local NGO tasked with creating awareness around drug and alcohol issues and ACADS Health Promoter, Tania Scott, decided to take a very local perspective on this year's message.

"We're very passionate at ACADS about the harm alcohol can do and I think that's why our campaigns here have been successful in the past. We always see a dip over Christmas in crashes, but it's these new statistics we've found that people really need to be aware of here in Mid Canterbury."

Tania worked alongside Council based Mid Canterbury Road Safety Co-ordinator, Jeremy Lambert, and it's thanks to Jeremy's data that our rural issue of drink driving has come into focus.

"When we surveyed people locally, there's a common misconception that fatalities happen to younger boy racers speeding on SH1 during the holidays. Of course, that is an issue, but this research has uncovered something that people need to talk about here in Ashburton."

The four facts of the campaign reveal some shocking and unique drink driving statistics specific to Mid Canterbury.

Nationally speed is the principal factor in fatalities but in Ashburton alcohol is the main cause. In our district males between 36–45 are involved in the most alcohol related road crashes as opposed to the national average of men in the 20–30 age bracket.

"The findings reveal that actually in this district it's older men who've had no prior history of bad driving are having accidents or fatalities and it's normally alcohol related, these are our local fathers, sons, husbands and managers so it's a huge cost to our local community," Tania explains.

Another focus point of this year's campaign is people's perception that drink driving is acceptable on quieter country roads.

"The focus groups we did highlighted the fact that people thought even if they were intoxicated, they would be safe driving

home on country roads. We know this isn't the case as in the district we have a much higher incidence of alcohol related crashes on our country roads as opposed to state highways or urban areas."

The final statistic in this year's campaign is the reason why the campaign is running a little later this year. Mid Canterbury doesn't have it's peak number of crashes over the Christmas period, this occurs in February and March, typically harvest season in the district.

"This year our campaign is going to run right through summer as when you consider all the statistics it does paint a picture, people over harvest time are tired and fatigue and alcohol as we all know are a bad combination. Also the country roads are busier and most likely another factor in our high number of crashes."

Tania and her team will be busy this summer season getting their message across. As well as a media campaign, items such as bar mats, bumper stickers and large vehicle signage with their message will be on display throughout the district. They will also have a presence at the A & P shows promoting their safer and sober driving message.

Visits to supermarkets showcasing alcohol free options are also on the schedule of events.

"We'd really like to encourage the idea of providing alcohol free options at festive occasions or shouts this summer. Around here people don't have the option of taxis or courtesy vans so your only choice is either to sober drive or host yourself. We'll also try and connect with family members of the men in this age bracket. Mid Canterbury has an issue here that's not really talked about so we'd like to change that."

Pete Jacob at Ruralco also believes employers need to take responsibility, "It's a problem that we hope our local employers will take notice of and hopefully people start thinking before they get into their car and make a very serious life changing mistake."



# The Icehouse: It's a lot warmer than it sounds

**Customer Growth Partner, Gareth Bayliss, shares his insights on The Icehouse, debunks some common misconceptions and writes about how the business growth centre is a hotbed of activity helping Kiwi businesses grow!**

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY THE ICEHOUSE

"I saw something on Facebook and want to know how I can apply for some investment in my startup."

"Oh, The Icehouse? I heard that you invest in tech start-ups aye?"

"Icehouse, as in the incubator for start-ups?"

These are a few of the responses I have heard when in conversations with people in the past months, and this got me thinking: how does New Zealand perceive The Icehouse?

In my role as Customer Growth Partner, I travel a lot and often speak to the person next to me. After my last flight where I had to explain that "The Icehouse does a lot more than support start-ups". I got to thinking about who The Icehouse is and what we do.

The investment side of The Icehouse does some stellar work with some amazing businesses, but it is a misconception that this is all we do. In fact, this wasn't where The Icehouse started.

Founded 17 years ago with the initiative of a couple of visionary people including the ex-CEO of Heinz Watties Australasia, David Irving, The Icehouse was created as a "business growth hub" to support established Kiwi business owners to grow their business or deal with the growth they were having in their businesses. What happens when a business goes from 2 staff to 25 rapidly? Or the turnover of a business goes from a few hundred thousand to a few million? Things can fall through the gaps;

poor decisions can be made, and business owners can become overwhelmed. There is no future thinking, just living in the moment and dealing with the day to day issues of running a successful business. Something must give, and this all too often is a drop off in turnover, sleepless nights, strains on the business, the owner and more importantly personal relationships.

Small to medium sized businesses are the backbone of a strong economy. In 2001, when The Icehouse was founded, it was apparent that there was a need to support these business owners to sustain the growth they had and plan to build on it. Their success is New Zealand's gain, and this remains to this day.

From this "need" the Owner Manager Programme was developed (with the support of long-standing partners the BNZ and The University of Auckland Business School. This programme was a big success. Business owners travelled from across the country to a location outside of Auckland



ABOVE TOP: Janice Tan, Business Development Manager at AB Food Industries Limited and alumni of the Owner Manager Programme  
 BELOW: From left to right: Gareth Bayliss (Customer Growth Partner), Elena Sevastianova (Delivery Support Executive) and Chris Heard (Owner, Bauhaus and attendee of the Owner Manager Programme) at The Icehouse Conference 2018  
 OPPOSITE: Tim Nowell-Usticke, Managing Director at Wineworks and alumni of the Owner Manager Programme



done it for them. We have assisted them on their journey to success.  
 With all these businesses having gone through the Owner Manager Programme and the next the next years intake already signing up to our three programmes in 2019, there ain't no stopping us!  
 With all these businesses having gone through the Owner Manager Programme and the programmes for 2019 already filling up, there ain't no stopping us!

"Success breeds success" and this is evident at The Icehouse. We have more ways to support businesses along with the Owner Manager Programme. Owners who have attended the Owner Manager Programme (Icehouse Alumni) realised that now they were upskilled it was important to invest in their teams. It may have been to improve the functionality, effectiveness of systems, leadership of the managers, or core skills such as finance, sales skills etc the owners know that investing in their teams helps to breed success. Now, 17 years on since the first Owner Manager Programme, The Icehouse now has five effective workshops, leadership programmes, ability to work with larger organisations in an internal customised function and a huge network of the best business coaches New Zealand has to offer. If you are looking to grow your business The Icehouse should be your first point of contact.

Don't just take my word for it... ask someone! I feel honoured to work with our trusted Icehouse Alumni every day and I am yet to receive poor feedback. Are you a business owner who hasn't heard of us? Ask your fellow peers and I guarantee we will have worked with one of them.

Our programmes and workshops for 2019 are filling up fast, with the first Owner Manager Programme already at capacity. Don't miss out on an opportunity to see your business grow and succeed in 2019! Learn more by contacting me at [g.bayliss@theicehouse.co.nz](mailto:g.bayliss@theicehouse.co.nz) or +64272021702.

I'll finish as I started: "The Icehouse: it's a lot warmer than it sounds" in fact it's a hotbed of activity helping Kiwi businesses grow!

*This article was written by Gareth Bayliss, Customer Growth Partner at The Icehouse. As a Customer Growth Partner, Gareth enables businesses to grow and succeed through building long term, value-add relationships. From topic specific workshops to transformative business development programmes and customised business coaching, Gareth helps to provide our clients with the skills, clarity and support to achieve their business goals.*

to start working ON their businesses rather than working IN it. Being forced to spend time away made them re-focus. For three days a month for five months they turned up, reluctantly turned off their phones and started to develop a strategic plan for them and their businesses.

Spending time in the classroom with like-minded owners from different industries helped the attendees to realise that they weren't alone. Running a business can be lonely and now they had 24 business connections or "mates" who had the same stresses as them.

The success was instant. Good business is good business in any industry, and through "looking from the outside in" these business owners started to make good decisions and grow their business faster than their competitors, think strategically rather than reactively and start to see their business flourish.

After a successful three years with the Owner Manager Programme, it was evident there was room to assist Kiwi business owners in other ways—financially. As described by Operating Partner Icehouse Ventures and Manager at Ice Angels, Jack McQuire, The Icehouse found another way to support NZ businesses:

"With the aim to invest in and empower NZ start-ups, a number of initiatives were formed; angel networks (Ice Angels, Arc Angels), funds (Tuhua, Eden, & First Cut) and an accelerator (Flux).

Fundamental to the success of these offerings meant our decision to only work with companies where we invest capital and add value beyond our cash investment. We do so by learning from experience from existing investments, introducing relevant investors, directors, industry experts, employees and customers in our network, and any other support entrepreneurs need as they scale from pre-seed to Series A.

Although Icehouse Ventures' and The Icehouse's day-to-day focus is different, we are one business with a shared focus: to help Kiwi businesses grow.

Over the last 17 years, a huge variety of business owners across NZ have been involved in the Owner Manager Programmes. At The Icehouse, we call ourselves "industry agnostic" because we can add value to any business in any industry. We have been lucky enough to work with a huge amount of NZ's best organisations, from Pic Picot and his quality peanut butter; Janene Draper at Auckland's Farro Fresh; Mount Riley Wines in Marlborough; Aaron Jay at Hortus who is changing the way vineyards are managed; to manufacturing companies such as MWF in Christchurch or Orange Homes in the construction industry. We've also worked with Hamish Whyte's innovative furniture company Furnware; Overland's excellent shoes; and Jucy's revolutionary rental car company. We have helped them all to flourish. We haven't

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# The confidence to act

Because of the Christmas period timeframes this article is a commentary on the farm sales marketplace written in early December. WORDS & IMAGES SUPPLIED BY PROPERTY BROKERS



IMAGE: Mark Lemon, Rural Development Manager

Very quiet are the two words that best sum up the late winter and spring period. This was a consequence of uncertainty, and with uncertainty people tend to do nothing. Confidence is a fickle thing. It can and does have major implications in the farm sales market with the extremes of booms of demand, to periods where there is little activity. With periods of little activity buyers tend to look for a softening in land values for them to act, or even "Blood on the floor" for some to act.

There were a number of factors that contributed to this uncertainty. Some of these were Mycoplasma Bovis, environmental concerns, government policy concerns and a reset in the banking sector.

## Mycoplasma Bovis

The ongoing challenge of this outbreak is like a heavy cloud hanging over our farming community. It has posed some serious challenges to those unlucky enough to be caught up within its clutches. Increased risk

adds to uncertainty. Farmers have responded with hygiene measures and other protocols to reduce risk.

## Environmental

The requirements of the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan through Plan Change 5 are now having an impact. There is still some work to do as to how lower nutrient loss levels may be achieved, and how they will impact on the viability of the farming business. Much research is going on in this space with some evolutionary work being done. There is still some way to go on this path but I am sure we will look back in years to come with pride on what has been achieved.

## Government Issues

Who knows what is going to surface from all the reviews and working groups that have been commissioned and are due to report back. Tax, resource use charges,

environmental levies on nutrient losses and gas emission has all been mentioned. Rhetoric on the campaign trail is usually tamed by the realities of government. Will the purists or the pragmatists prevail, a leadership defining situation.

## Banking

With the banks it has taken some time to ascertain their position. There is willingness to lend with the key requirement being strong cash flows. The removal of overseas buyers from the market and more active local buyers of recent years largely unsighted, has had an effect on the buying pool, particularly for the larger dairy farms. With almost all farm mortgage funding coming from the trading banks, any changes in their stance are keenly felt in the marketplace. Dairy sector debt has grown from \$34 Billion to \$41 Billion in the last three years and with "Group Think" saying they are over exposed to this sector, it has seen a lurch to ultra-conservatism for any new dairy sector lending. What is sorely needed are other sources of mortgage lending capital. In the past Life Insurance Companies held many of farming's first mortgages. Similarly first and second mortgages were sought from solicitors on behalf of clients. Now Kiwi Saver and Super Funds are the new equivalent in the savings sphere, and managed funds in the investor market, but they are noticeably absent in the mortgage space. Would a sound first mortgage farm loan return as well as many of these funds? A look at the returns published for the Kiwi Saver funds suggest they would. It is time for some other mortgage finance to appear, time for the fund managers to look wider for their investment options. Vendor mortgages might also need to reappear for transactions to take place in this period of restricted bank lending.

The fortunes of farming are forever cyclical. Down cycles in rural real estate have followed product prices and climatic conditions, the anomaly with this slowdown is that these are not the drivers of the uncertainty. This time they are politically driven either directly by Government action or through their policy requirements to Local Government, or by the banking sector via the "oversight" from the Reserve Bank.

"Confidence, or lack of, doesn't come out of nowhere. It's the result of something."

A lack of confidence can lead to paralysis. The Government and local authorities must be very careful in their requirements. Add the banks into that list also.

"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

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# Top of the crops

## Donald Love Contracting proudly serving farmers of Mid-Canterbury for 25 years.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY DONALD LOVE CONTRACTING

Donald Love Contracting may be celebrating 25 years in business this year but Donald's connection to windrowing goes back to his teenage years, "I've been windrowing since I was thirteen and honestly it's far more than a job to me." A farmer himself, Donald and wife Kay started out in 1993 offering a hedge cutting service and then introducing windrowing services in 1999.

The business has gone from strength to strength and now offers a comprehensive range of windrowing and also baling services. Baling was introduced in 2011 as the couple felt it would complement the business and give seasonal staff the option to work longer seasons.

Donald and Kay manage the business along with son Robert who also owns and operates Plains Contracting offering cultivation, forage harvesting and drilling services.

Donald and Kay firmly believe that a reason the business has flourished and grown is their passion for customer service and satisfaction.

"Customer service has always been our focus from the outset," Donald explains. "Another point of difference between us and some of the other operators is when you deal with us you are dealing with the owners of the business, so we take responsibility ourselves for the job from start to finish."

Both Donald and Kay are always easily accessible by phone, and Donald or manager, Robert, make a point of going on site to check jobs are going smoothly. "The customers like seeing us out on jobs just like any other staff member."

They also have a well-trained team of staff many of whom have built up relationships with clients over the years and have expert knowledge of customer requirements.

The business operates in Mid Canterbury predominantly and this allows them maximum efficiency in getting jobs completed on time, and it also means they are very familiar with the land and terrain of the district.

"We don't stray too far from our district and that means once jobs are booked in ahead of time we can get there and get the job done with no surprises. We try not to over commit on jobs and plan carefully so we have just the right amount of staff and machinery on the ground," Donald explains.

A passionate machinery enthusiast himself, Donald operates a well-maintained high spec machinery fleet, there are four MacDons in operation this season, one of which is the latest model and there's also a new baler on board.

"Our oldest windrower is just coming into its third season so I'd like to think our customers are getting the best gear that's available for their jobs."

The business has a wide variety of fronts to suit every type of crop, all come with trailers so they can be easily transported and changed if necessary, depending on the crop requirements.

This year they've decided to offer a slightly larger seed grass mower (4.6m as well as 3.7m) as Donald believes there is demand for this option.

IMAGE: Providing outstanding customer service is the future focus for Donald Love Contracting

"With machinery getting bigger every year, a wider mower fits nicely into our range of services and we do always try to listen to our customers and cater to their needs."

In terms of maintenance and breakdowns, the business has a mechanic/engineer on staff to minimise machinery issues, and they also work closely with local franchises to ensure all their machinery is operating to the highest standard with minimum disruption to clients.

This year Donald Love Contracting will celebrate 25 years in business, and although they acknowledge it is an important milestone, they promise for customers it will be business as usual. "We're here for our customers just like any other year and I'm hoping we'll be around for a lot longer than that!"

In terms of future plans their focus remains keeping customers happy by providing outstanding customer service.

"Windrowing is operating very well at the moment, and I'd like to grow our baling area. We're not the biggest guys around, but we do like to get it right for our customers, and our loyal customer base is a testament to that," Donald explains. "After a wet season and when you are dealing with such high value crops, it's important people think about who is looking after their crops. We've a proven 25 year track record, and I think that's definitely worth considering."

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# Keep your cows cool this summer

No one likes being too hot, and our cows are no exception.

WORDS & IMAGES SUPPLIED BY JACQUELINE MCGOWAN, DAIRYNZ

Some of you might be surprised to know when temperatures start to feel nice and pleasant for us, it's actually already too hot for our cows. Research has found that cows are most comfortable in temperatures between four and 20 degrees Celsius. So, their comfort zone is actually around 10 to 15 degrees lower than us. This means when temperatures start to get in the mid-20s, let alone near the 30s, our cows are increasingly at risk of experiencing heat stress. Cows affected by heat stress may be irritable and lethargic, as well as produce less milk as

they consume less feed, so it's important to keep them cool when the mercury starts to rise.

With that in mind, now is a good time if you haven't already to come up with a plan to keep your cows cool this summer.

We often focus on ensuring we have a plan from a feed perspective, but it's equally as important to keep in mind the impact heat can have on our cows wellbeing.

While we can easily grab an ice-cream, icy cold bevy, slap on a hat and avoid the sun, it can be a bit more challenging for us to keep our cows cool.

## Tactics to minimise heat stress

Those of you without trees on your farm maybe thinking, 'what can I do?'

Trees are obviously a great long-term option, and I know some of you have begun planting for shade and shelter, or thinking about it, which is great. But the reality is they can take a long time to grow.

In the meantime, if you don't have any, or limited, trees on your farm there are a few simple, practical things you can do to help alleviate the effects of heat on your cows that don't require a huge investment, or time.

## Farmer tips to prevent heat stress

North Canterbury dairy farmer James Daly is no stranger to farming in hot and dry conditions.

James has been farming in Cheviot, which typically experiences scorching summers, for the last four seasons.

He says there are "lots of little things" farmers can do to keep their cows cool.

"The main thing is to make sure they have plenty of water available. That's the most crucial thing. I've put in extra troughs for that reason."

He also recommends checking water pressure to troughs to ensure they fill up quickly.

On scorching days, he also milks later to avoid the heat of the day.

"It doesn't hurt to milk a bit later, so you're avoiding milking at 2/3pm during the heat of the day."

His farm has a bit of natural shelter, but he is looking at doing a bit more planting in the near future to provide his cows with more shade.

"If we know it's going to be hot, we also put cows in sheltered areas. We try to do that as much as we can, but it often depends on the amount of feed available in those paddocks."

He says sprinklers in yards are another good option, and they are looking to install these in the near future.



Consider changing your milking time to earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon so your cows aren't having to walk to and from the milking shed during the heat of the day. You may even like to consider going to once-a-day milking.

If possible, try putting your cows in paddocks closer to the milking shed during the day so they have less distance to walk, and allow them to take their time. No one likes exercising in the heat, I know I don't.

Installing a temporary shade cloth at the milking shed or over paddock facilities can also provide much needed relief for your cows from the sun's rays. Sprinklers over the dairy yard to wet the cows' coats, and fans, are another option you may like to consider.

Your cows will be consuming more water to keep cool, so extra troughs in paddocks, at the milking shed and along races won't go amiss. Also, I know it should go without saying, but remember to check troughs regularly to ensure they're clean and check flow rates are

high enough that there isn't a risk of them ever running low as lactating cows require more than 100 litres of water a day.

As many of you may know, feed with a high fibre content can increase the heat of fermentation in the rumen, increasing the heat load on the cow. If high fibre supplements feature in your cows' diet, you might like to consider feeding them at night when it's cooler.

These are just a few short term options you may like to consider to keep your cows cool this summer. But I'd encourage you to also start exploring your long-term options, especially given climate change forecasts suggest our summers are to become longer, hotter and drier.

Trees are an obvious choice and the 'Trees for shade' guide our website is a great starting point for coming up with a plan. The guide is available at [dairynz.co.nz/trees-on-farms](http://dairynz.co.nz/trees-on-farms).

For more information on how to mitigate the risk of heat stress to your cows visit [dairynz.co.nz/heatstress](http://dairynz.co.nz/heatstress).



ABOVE: Jacqueline McGowan is a DairyNZ developer in the animal care team

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# The facts about nitrogen in horticulture

There is a lot of misinformation in mainstream media about food production and its impact on the environment and it is hard to get balance across, which is something “team ag” needs to work on. The constant vilification of the rural sector takes its toll, particularly when a lot of what is being said is untrue and unsubstantiated.

WORDS BY MIKE CHAPMAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND

It is important to note, the primary industries are working together to address both the real and the perceived impacts of food production on the environment. At Horticulture New Zealand, we are sitting down and talking to key Government Ministers and their officials from the relevant government agencies to look at the best ways to clean up waterways and address climate change. This is how the best policies will continue to be made.

Nitrogen and its impact on waterways seems to be one of the “issues du jour” and it is essential to deal in facts, backed by science.

Nitrogen loads are used as the measure for water quality effects and the load from vegetables is just three percent of the Waikato and Canterbury nitrogen loads.

It is the load of nitrogen that is discharged to nearby waterways, not the average leaching concentration, that may have an effect on water quality.

Fruit and vegetable crops need essential elements, which they take up from the soils they grow in. Some of these are also vital for human health and we get them from the

foods we eat. This includes nitrogen, which is an essential component of all proteins in the human body.

Horticulture New Zealand has commissioned research to improve the management of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment in commercial vegetable growing. We have modelled and measured leaching from a range of vegetable growing systems, including those grown in market gardens, intensive vegetable rotations growing leafy greens for domestic supply, and in arable style rotations, including process vegetables and fodder crops. What we conclude from this is that when we grow crops in winter, whether they are to feed people or animals, there is a higher risk of leaching due to the rain. This risk of leaching needs to be managed.

In New Zealand, only 50,000 hectares is used in commercial vegetable production (just 0.2% of New Zealand’s total land area), predominantly for domestic supply. These vegetables are of vital importance to the health of all New Zealanders. The environmental impact of growing our food

IMAGE: In New Zealand, only 50,000 hectares is used in commercial vegetable production (just 0.2% of New Zealand’s total land area), predominantly for domestic supply

is very small on the quality of New Zealand’s waterways overall; but it can have local water quality effects. That is being managed, and growers have systems in place, such as sediment traps, buffer strips and extensive riparian planting, to protect waterways.

Our growers are predominantly intergenerational family businesses who want those businesses to keep providing a good living for their future generations. Their business is providing healthy food to New Zealanders, while maintaining the health of their land. Horticulture New Zealand is committed to working with growers to support their implementation of good management practices to ensure good environmental outcomes for all.

We need to keep telling our story and keep presenting facts, backed by science, so regulators and consumers understand how we produce their food in the safest and most sustainable ways.

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# Capacity charges likely to leap

Electricity users and particularly irrigators face a major hike next year this summer in their account's capacity charge, with many facing the prospect of several thousand dollars extra in fee charges due to Transpower's charges increasing in Mid Canterbury.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



In the world of seasonal electricity demand it seems what goes down must inevitably come back up and that is the experience this year. After a significant slide in the capacity charge this billing season, it has peaked at a new height.

Ruralco has had numerous enquiries from clients about the prospect many face of at least an additional \$5000 charge, one that electricity distributors are hoping to be able to work to try and ease through the co-operative efforts of users.

The grid operator Transpower is tasked with delivering electricity to "exit points" on the national grid, from where lines companies distribute power through their own local network. The total cost to Transpower to distribute electricity to the Upper South Island group of lines distribution companies is about \$100 million.

The average yearly cost for Transpower to distribute electricity to over the past ten years has been \$4 million to the Mid Canterbury region, but that cost allocation has become highly volatile in the past three years.

For the 2017–18 financial year it was \$9 million, dropping to \$4.3 million for 2018/19, but surging up to \$14.5 million next year. This

has come after the years before experienced almost flat cost levels.

The impact of the \$14.5 million charge is that the capacity charge component of a power bill which is about 35c a kW at the \$4 million cost will leap to 49c per kW per day.

The reason for the increased volatility is the shifts in summer versus winter electricity demand across the Upper South Island, and weather patterns' effect upon electricity use in the region.

Historically winter energy demand always outstripped summer. Consequently the region peaked in winter, and winter users paid the bulk of Transpower's cost. With the growth in irrigation the region is now seeing summer demand match winter demand, albeit depending on the prevailing weather for summer—summer peaks will only occur when irrigation demand is high.

Because summer and winter demand are almost at parity, when summer peaks do occur, irrigation customers are now being allocated a share of the costs that previously only affected winter customers.

This effect is also exacerbated by variances in weather—in a year when a winter is mild and consequent power demand is low will

push a greater proportion of the distribution cost onto summer users (irrigators) if their summer is particularly dry.

EA Networks commercial manager Jeremy Adamson cautions it can be easy to question the charge increase based on immediate weather conditions.

Late spring had many irrigators able to stop and take advantage of some good rainfall, with prospects of more to come.

"But the capacity charge has a significant time lag to it. The increase that will be charged come April 1 next year is actually based on the season from September 1 2017 to August 31 2018. Transpower need to wait until the measurement period ends before they can calculate the allocation and pass on the charge at the start of the next financial year."

An option being explored to try and take some of the "peakiness" out of irrigation demand is using "voluntary load control" on connected irrigation.

If 50MW can be shaved off the 140MW peak EA Networks experiences at peak times, the capacity charge costs would be smoothed and lowered.

"What is being proposed is working with irrigators on a voluntary basis to offset high transmission costs in the future if they want to avoid higher future costs," says Jeremy.

Irrigators could determine how much, if any, they can stop their systems over the summer period, on what days and over what times.

Text messages would be sent to co-operating irrigators to alert them to turn off their system.

A reminder to reduce all non-essential irrigation load would be sent on those days, and an alert to reduce loads immediately if the network sees a peak event arising.

The upside of the voluntary scheme is to reverse the \$10.2 million regional capacity charge cost faced now, and could set the scene for an automated "smart" system to control participating irrigation equipment in the future.

Having said all this, if current high rainfall continues then it is likely that the increased charge next year will naturally reverse the following year.

Ruralco is urging our customers to talk to the Ruralco Energy team about what your options may be when it comes to opting into a voluntary system – every farm's irrigation demands differ, and some systems may be more suited to it than others.

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# Re-inventing pastures for farms of the future



**Recent advances in sensor technology and DNA-based plant selection are helping plant breeders in Canterbury re-invent pastures and forages to help farms of the future operate sustainably and profitably.**

WORDS BY BARENBRUG AGRISEEDS

Current research includes identifying cultivars with significantly better nutrient use efficiency, improved climatic tolerance, higher nutritional value and stronger pest resistance.

“We’re looking ahead towards the farm systems of 2030, because we believe pasture-based agriculture has a strong future,” says Graham Kerr, marketing manager for Barenbrug Agriseeds.

“The more we can make pasture do, the more options farmers will have in years to come.”

NZ farm systems are already evolving to meet the needs of climate change, social licence to farm, food safety and environmental sustainability, he says.

It’s with these factors in mind that the company is investing in new technology to make its plant breeding process more efficient.

Instead of 12 years, for example, which is how long it currently takes to breed, test and commercialise a new perennial ryegrass, soon it might only take six to eight years.

This season, Barenbrug Agriseeds is field testing prototype LiDAR scanning equipment

developed by AgResearch as part of an industry wide programme.

The LiDAR machine estimates plant dry matter yields without hundreds of leaf samples having to be hand cut, dried and weighed.

More recently, solar powered, pole mounted sensors developed by Farmote Systems have been deployed at the Barenbrug Agriseeds research station to test their potential for recording daily plant growth rates.

Graham says the company is also evaluating cutting-edge genomic selection tools like those that have already improved livestock breeding in New Zealand.

By using genomics for more efficient plant selection, it’s hoped to accelerate the current rate of genetic gain in ryegrass DM yield.

Increased confidence and accuracy provided by genomics could also speed the cross-breeding and selection process currently required to achieve improved plant performance.

These tools don’t replace but complement traditional field testing, which is still

needed to ensure on-farm performance of cultivars.

The advanced new processes are part of the company’s continued focus on pasture innovation, Graham says.

On a dryland red deer property at Mt Somers, meantime, innovation in Barenbrug Agriseeds’ plant breeding has already led to innovation on farm.

Over the past five to six years, Duncan and Lorna Humm have harnessed the high cool season yield and quality of Shogun tetraploid hybrid ryegrass to help significantly improve weaner kill weights for the chilled venison trade.

“On our old pastures we used to struggle to hit the chilled season. We thought we were doing quite well if we were killing by the end of October but we’ve shifted that window back. Now we can kill a lot earlier, and at better weights,” Duncan says.

Shogun isn’t the sole reason for this change, but it’s definitely played an important role, which is ironic considering when they started using it they were ready to give up on ryegrass entirely.

“Our biggest problem was persistence. We would try the latest and greatest grasses and they would just get smoked by grass grub. We thought if we could get three to five years out of Shogun as a straight finishing pasture, we’d be happy.”

Instead it’s become their pasture of choice, now being sown with a wide range of clovers plus chicory to create more diverse swards and enhance their agroecology.

Unusually, it’s persisting longer than expected in their system. Their oldest paddocks are still producing well.

At certain times—autumn, when hinds are mated; and early spring—it comes under pressure, but once the weaners are finished, it’s set stocked for fawning and effectively rested.

“We’re a big believer in having high covers for fawning, so those paddocks are allowed to get long and toppy over summer. I think that’s one of the keys to its persistence here. Also we’re getting such massive yields off it, which we’re feeding to the stock, that we make sure we feed it, too, with fertiliser.”

For more detail, contact Ruralco today.



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## Ashburton Ladies Christmas Golf Teams Tournament



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# NZFLOW is the way to go!



ABOVE: NZFLOW is owned and operated by Steve Beek, who is an instrumentation engineer

LEFT: Based in Christchurch but servicing the wider Canterbury area and beyond, NZFLOW Ltd offers specialised knowledge and service to consent holders within the water industry

**Established in 2014, NZFLOW Ltd is owned and operated by Instrumentation Engineer, Steve Beek. Originally from Bristol, UK.** WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY NZFLOW LTD

Steve started his career, in the early nineties, as an apprentice maintenance technician with Bristol Water. Whilst working on the city's reticulation networks and treatment facilities, and upon successful completion of his training, Steve was awarded "Apprentice of the year" in 2000. An opportunity later that year saw Steve entering the pharmaceutical industry as an Instrument Technician for global pharmaceutical giant, Astra Zeneca. Responsibility for the calibration and maintenance of process instrumentation within the company's many pharmaceutical plants, afforded Steve a wealth of experience and further solidified his expertise in pressure, temperature, flow, and pH monitoring.

Upon emigrating to New Zealand in 2008, and after a successful tenure as an Instrumentation Sales and Service Engineer, NZFLOW Ltd was born. Based in Christchurch but servicing the wider Canterbury area and beyond, NZFLOW Ltd offers specialised knowledge and service to consent holders within the water industry. Flow meter sales, consultation, servicing, installation and compliance driven verification is their main focus but working to exceed their customers' service experience is the foundation upon which their business has been built.

"We aim to be as transparent as possible. From the initial consultation right through to the jobs completion, you aren't just a consent number on a database and we work hard to ensure you aren't treated like one."

As a business owner himself, Steve understands that you need to "wear many hats" to ensure your business, and livelihood,

continue heading in the right direction. In the process of building NZFLOW Ltd from the ground up, he realised early on that he couldn't necessarily do it all himself and that, to be honest, he didn't want to!

Outsourcing and collaborating with other experts has allowed him both the time and space to focus on what is important to him within the business; flow meter technology, telemetry, and building relationships with his customers. As both the owner and operator of NZFLOW Ltd, his main aim is to remove the stress of managing water consents by providing a service package that:

- Gives a full and transparent picture of the equipment you have on site;
- Monitoring your water consents and when they are next due for a compliance verification;
- Ensuring the health status of your monitoring system;
- Ensuring your peace of mind during the start and end of an irrigation season.

"The farming community has a lot of demands and expectations placed upon them by regional council and, for some, keeping up with the technology can be a headache! Water consents are just one example of this, but unfortunately the impact of their mismanagement can and will have drastic effects upon a business and its ability to irrigate. At NZFLOW Ltd, we work hard with and for our customers to mitigate such outcomes."

Steve's company only recommends the use of tried and tested manufacturers when sourcing flow metering and logging devices,

for their customers, as their experience has shown that cheap alternatives just don't stand up to the harsh New Zealand conditions within which they are installed. They have also found that many of the lesser known brands have led to some very frustrated customers who have found themselves having to replace their assets at their own cost. At NZFLOW Ltd they give recommendations unique to their individual customer's needs and budget by drawing on their breadth of knowledge in the water industry and the various offerings from a range of manufacturers. They give sound advice and provide a monitoring solution which is fit for purpose, every time.

"NZFLOW Ltd is not aligned to any one brand and has the knowledge and experience to give a full picture of the choices available".

If you would like to know more about NZFLOW Ltd and what they offer, or you would like to book a service visit, you can visit their website [www.nzflow.co.nz](http://www.nzflow.co.nz). Alternatively, you can call Steve on 022 351 9569 and he will happily direct you toward the next steps.

"We are all about being transparent, approachable and knowledgeable on every step of your journey with NZFLOW Ltd. Customer service is at the forefront of everything we do, and we get great satisfaction from helping our customers. We look forward to working with you in the future."



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# Co-op News

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## Personalised energy advice just for you

When is the last time you took a close look at your electricity accounts? Is your energy provider offering you the best pricing solution for your farm? Do you need help reviewing your energy plans?

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## You can now use your Ruralco Card at Mitre 10 in the North Island!

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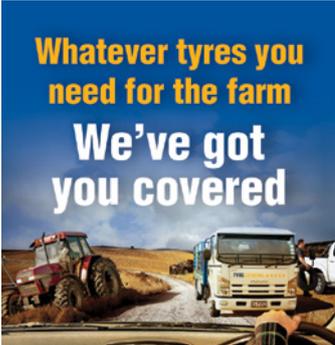
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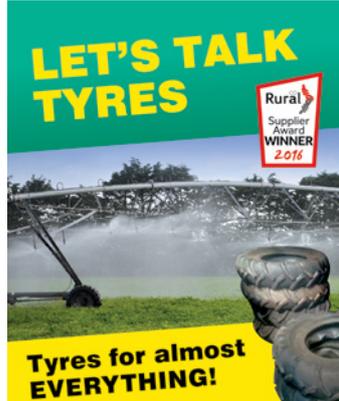


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