

RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

JUNE / JULY 2017



Dairy farming
meets hunting in
the Bay of Plenty

What crops could we
grow in the future?

Caring for calves
key to success

Record puts Canterbury
croppers at top

Farmstrong
plans for growth

From the Group CEO



Rallying support for those in need

Farmers are great at rallying together to support others suffering hardships. Most often we see it in times of droughts, floods and earthquakes when members of our rural communities band together offering their services, their time and their understanding.

Usually it occurs close to home, but in this issue of Real Farmer, we get to hear first-hand how a group of Kiwis travelled to Nepal to help after the devastating earthquake which hit the country a couple of years ago. Mid Canterbury farmer, Phil Everest and other members of a trekking group which had visited the region just prior to the earthquake, recently returned to the village of Khari Kholo on a re-building mission and were supported by a number of Canterbury businesses which supplied equipment and supplies.

Ruralco was one of those businesses and we are very pleased to be able to help and support our cardholders in their endeavours. One of our core values centres on co-operation because we are all in this industry together and when we work together, everyone wins. Our aim is to support our cardholders, their families and their farming communities and we do it through a variety of avenues. A couple of our more visible sponsorship projects include Arable Y's, a FAR initiative aimed at growing and supporting the next generation of arable farmers, and the Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge, a community-run event which

started small and now attracts entries from all over the South Island from competitors wanting to cycle, run and walk along a stunning piece of Canterbury coastline.

This issue of Real Farmer also features the story behind Eric and Maxine Watson's world record wheat crop yield, how they made their way into the Guinness Book of Records and why it is so important for the Canterbury arable industry. Staying with the arable theme, FAR CEO Nick Pyke also shares his thoughts on what crops we could be growing in the future and why the New Zealand cropping industry needs to understand its competitive advantages.

We also hear how Bay of Plenty couple, Pete Mannington and Gill Barrow combine dairy farming, hunting and family time on their farm which is nestled between the Kaingaroa Forest and Ureterewa National Park.

As always, there's plenty of good reading in this issue of Real Farmer and that's largely due to the contributions of many, and especially the generosity of our cardholders who continue to open their farm gates and let us into their world.

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RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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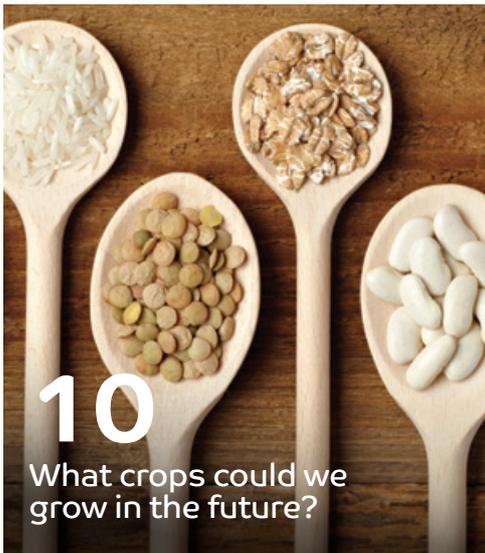
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What crops could we grow in the future?



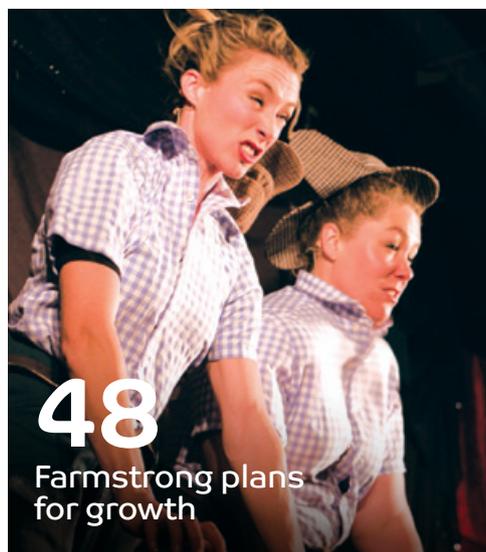
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Dairy farming meets hunting in the Bay of Plenty



Dairy farming, hunting and family time go hand and hand for Bay of Plenty couple Pete Mannington and his partner Gill Barrow.

WORDS BY KATE TAYLOR, IMAGES BY JAMIE TROUGHTON

They live and farm in the Galatea district—a big flat valley nestled between the Kaingaroa Forest and Urerewa National Park.

“It’s a good little community, just your usual small New Zealand farming district,” says Pete.

The nearest township is Murupara, which he says is nice and central between Taupo, Rotorua and Whakatane.

The couple is joined on a regular basis by Pete’s children—Hunter, 6, Tate, 4 and Kase, 2—who live in Rotorua and spend every second weekend and the school holidays on the farm.

“They’re pretty keen on life on the farm. They love the tractors and the motorbikes, especially Hunter, the oldest.”

Gill has lived in New Zealand for five years—originally hailing from a sheep and cattle farm in Devon, England. She worked on a dairy farm in Reporoa and then Te Puke, where the couple met.

“Gill started working for our neighbour and now she’s here on the farm. She has done her Ag ITO Level 4 certificate and I have Level 5 so we make a good team.”

Gill was destined for a farming career with her UK farming upbringing.

“I still have my own sheep back in the UK—they’re the Llyne breed from Wales. Dad looks after them and the lambs for me.”

She made the move to New Zealand with a dairy-farming friend in 2012. It was meant to



be for one year but she loved it so much she’s still here. Gill worked in the Reporoa area for four years, working on multiple dairy farms.

“I have learnt so much from working with different people and learning different techniques in different sheds as well. I also joined Reporoa Young Farmers while I was there and met some great people.”

She says there’s more opportunity in the New Zealand dairy industry to get ahead.

“You can be your own boss here quicker than in the UK.”

Gill has been in Galatea for two years and met Pete about 18 months ago. She has milked 100 cows this season, mostly Friesian and crossbred, on the 65ha platform.

Pete’s about to start his seventh season on the farm—his third as a 50/50 sharemilker. He’s the third generation of his family to work on the property and is passionate about the land and its history.

“I took over the running of the farm from my dad, Robin Mannington, who still owns it. It was Grandad’s ballot farm after the war then dad had it for 20 years. My grandparents broke it in and started milking cows on it—they had about 60 cows in those early days and had an old walk-through four-aside shed.”

Robin says he grew up on the farm after his father moved there as a returned serviceman in 1949 then he, in turn, took it over in 1980 when he was 26. “In those days younger farmers had access to the rural bank so it was easier to take over, although my father left some money in too.”

Production wise, Pete says they’re on target to do over 50,000kg milk solids this season.

“We carry all young stock on the farm all year round at the moment,” he says.

ABOVE: The operation isn’t far off being organic
BELOW: The Mangamutu Stream has been fenced off and they’ve planted half of it in natives

“We’re a bit of a self-sufficient operation. There’s just me and Gill on the farm. It used to be just me, but Gill has taken over the daily milking giving me time to do some contract work.”

The farm operates under feeding system 2.

Lucerne is grown as an extra supplement because the area is dry in summer and the farm doesn’t have irrigation.

“Just under 30 per cent of the farm has lucerne. It is baled when it’s not needed and gets me through. I have had drought years when I’ve had to buy in baleage when times are tight. We also use PK to guarantee production when it gets dry. They just keep things ticking over—PK and lucerne have proven to be quite a good mix in the summer.” He says the operation runs quite smoothly now, but irrigation is something that may be considered in the future.

“It’s a big cost and we have to weigh up why we’re doing it as well. We would have to run more cows just to balance the extra cost and then we’d have to upgrade the shed and other costs would escalate as well so it’s not high on the agenda at the moment. There are other ways to improve what we’re doing without putting large amounts of money into development.”

One change that is happening to boost production this season is to graze young stock off the property and increase the cow numbers from 100 to 150, which will in turn increase their target milk solids to 70,000kg.

“We have 30 yearlings coming in and have 25 we’re leasing off a mate for the season that



we will look to buy at the end of the season if it works."

"It will supplement the income if we can milk a few more cows and draw a bigger wage. This opportunity to lease extra cows will give me a bigger milk cheque and in turn leave me with the cash at the end of the season to buy them. We'll soon find out if it works or not."

Pete says the farm has a sump with an irrigator for effluent dispersal but may look at getting a tanker to fill up with a couple of days storage that can follow the cows around the farm instead of only spreading on specific paddocks near the shed.



No sprays are used on the farm and very little nitrogen fertiliser is applied. Bennett's Fertiliser near Auckland delivers chicken manure by the truck and trailer load and Pete's father has been using Hatuma Lime's dicalcic for more than 20 years.

"We've found it's really good for the lucerne side of things," Pete says.

"The cows didn't suffer from any bloat. We can put them on there first thing in the morning and they don't have any issues."

Salt licks are the only added extra.

"We're not far off being organic really but we're not registered. That would be something I would love to do in the future, but I would have to get someone to come and help me do it... help me figure out what to do and how to do it. Basically the only issue we have is mastitis and we're learning how to deal with that organically."

He says the move against sprays on the farm has been driven by his father but is something he supports.

"Dad doesn't like them because it's not good for the soils in the long run. When we put a new crop in, we plough it straight in after the heifers have chewed down as far as they can. We seem to get good results," he says. "If we have healthy soils we have healthy stock."

Robin says he would like to see the farm certified organic in the future, but those decisions were now up to Pete.

"When I first took over it was pretty much conventional super phosphate like most farmers. Then one of the local fertiliser contractors brought in chook manure from somewhere and we started using it but

ABOVE: The farm is nestled in the Galatea district—a big flat valley between the Kaingaroa Forest and Urewera National Park

BELOW: The pair are looking forward to doing more work together in the future

we had a few problems in those days with too much moisture and it wouldn't spread properly. Pete's doing more of that now, especially with the Hatuma dicalcic, because it's easier to spread now.

"We went towards elemental sulphur at Hatuma because we were trying to get an even fertiliser that would be useful across the year and into the next year."

He says stopping the use of sprays on the farm started many years ago.

"When they first settled the farm back in the late 40s they put a lot of native grasses on. They suited the dry weather and will usually regenerate. There were a lot of guys spraying weed killers before cropping paddocks and they would have to plant the yarrow again. But we didn't."

The Mangamutu Stream runs through the centre of the property which they have spent time fencing and are slowly replanting.

"We planted half in natives last winter and they're all growing nicely. We're slowly working on it."

The environment around them is important as they're not very far from the Urewera National Park. It's hunting that's top of the list for pastimes in the bush.

"I go hunting at least twice a week for both deer and pigs. It's good to get the meat but it's also about the fun of the chase. My father took me when I was a kid—I was hunting when I was six or seven years old. I was right into it."

"He's a bit like me," Robin adds.

"I used to be all about the hunting before I took the farm over. I was out in the bush possum hunting for a few years and Pete has grown up hunting in the bush too."

Now Pete says he's started early with his own children too.

"They're not up to walking up the big hills yet but we've done a fair bit of spotlighting. Hunter has been with me when I've shot a stag and a few pigs and rabbits too."

Gill loves the hunting too.

"I've grown up with fox hunting in the UK. Grandad was a hunt master. It's a bit different to pig hunting in Galatea though," she laughs. "Especially the steep faces and the cliff edges where Pete goes and I'm stupid enough to follow."

She's training two young pig dogs at the moment—Bailey and Boss—and she's looking forward to putting them to work.

Pete and Gill try to go hunting a couple of times a week with venison and pork going in their freezer or to friends and family's freezers.

"I haven't actually caught anything myself yet but Pete has taught me a lot since I've been here and I'm right there with him when he shoots them. It will be my turn soon enough."

Gill says she loves the countryside in New Zealand and the rural lifestyle.

"I lived in town when I was at college in the UK and I couldn't do it again. I love having BBQs in the summer with friends around, weekends at the beach or hunting. Even the farming isn't as intense as the UK. All the cows are outside here so you don't have to scrape out the sheds or check the feed all the time."

Growing up on the farm was idyllic for Pete, although it also meant sacrifice by way of an hour and a half on the bus each way every day



to go to Rotorua Boys' High School.

He admits to not being the best behaved of boys at that stage of his life and spent a lot of time surfing. A year in outback Australia changed his focus.

"I was a jackaroo on a big place at Nyngan in New South Wales. I was 19 at the time. I had seen an ad on this website called Outback International looking for farm workers.

ABOVE: Pete's children are pretty keen on the farm life and share a love for hunting, like Pete

BELOW: Pete says they're on target to do over 50,000kg milk solids this season

I rang up and they gave me a job. I flew to Sydney and caught the train all the way out to the nearest town. It was pretty lonely and isolated at first... I was living by myself... but then I got to know people and joined the local rugby team."

Pete says the isolation meant being a jack of all trades on the station.

"Most of the things that needed doing on the farm were done by people living on the farm. Being so far out we had to do everything ourselves. The boss was a bit of an engineer and he taught me a lot. All the fences were made of steel because the ground was so hard." He says they didn't just have big tractors.

"We had huge, huge tractors. A lot of the work was bush clearing with massive D8 bulldozers."

After Australia Pete worked for two years as a builder at Mount Maunganui and three years on a concrete pump truck before returning to work on the farm seven years ago when he was 23.

His time in Australia and before coming back to the farm taught him many skills which are invaluable to running his dairy operation and has also given him the ability to earn a supplementary income off farm, helping the couple achieve their long term goals.



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*1. Two years of ink is based on average monthly print volumes of about 150 pages (ET-2500, ET-2550, ET-4500).



Spring and cereals

Whether it is side-dressing or sowing, attending to your cereal crop's nutrient needs is a must in spring. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

Side-dressing autumn-sown wheat

Autumn-sown wheat will need a boost of nitrogen in spring to support crop growth once it emerges from its winter go-slow. Side-dressings are usually applied during the stem elongation phase at GS 30-31, GS 32-33 and GS 37-39.

Rate and timing is important to improve yield while minimising the potential for N loss and any related environmental (or financial) impact. Trials by the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) showed that optimal nitrogen application can increase wheat crop yield by an average of 40%. The same research (supported by Ballance Agri-Nutrients and the Sustainable Farming Fund) helped develop the Sirius Wheat Calculator. Accessible through FAR, this tool allows farmers to test how their wheat crops would respond to changing amounts of N and different application times. It also uses soil test results, weather data and irrigation information, to suggest windows for nitrogen application that will optimise yield while minimising the risk of nitrogen leaching.

Sowing spring barley

As with any crop, tending to your spring-sown barley's nutrient needs at establishment is critical. Ensuring the germinating seed has ready access to a supply of potassium, nitrogen and soluble phosphate to support early root development

and growth will get the crop off to a strong start. Regardless of your soil's nutrient status, using a starter fertiliser is strongly recommended.

Follow up side-dressings of N will be required at the tillering stage (GS 20-29) and during the stem elongation phase (at GS 31-32).

Right product for results

Farmers growing cereals (or high-value grass and vegetable seed crops) now have access to a new fertiliser option to meet their crop's establishment needs and/or incorporate into their side-dressing programme. YaraMila Actyva S is a high-quality fertiliser tailored specifically for New Zealand arable farmers. The company's commitment to consistency means you can be confident that what's written on the bag will match its contents: it's a quality product for quality results.

Actyva S is a compound fertiliser, so each granule contains the same proportion of nutrients. Its formula is a precise balance of phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, magnesium, essential trace elements (boron, manganese and zinc) as well as two forms of nitrogen - nitrate and ammonium. Nitrate N can be used by plants immediately. Ammonium N needs to be converted into nitrate N by soil organisms before it can be taken up by growing plants, so it provides a more sustained supply of nitrogen.

Unlike a blend (which can segregate resulting in uneven distribution of its nutrient content) Actyva S ensures every part of your crop gets all the nutrients it needs, resulting in very even establishment. The compound is particularly effective at evenly distributing trace elements, which can be difficult in a blend where they are a relatively small proportion of the total fertiliser volume.

Actyva S is suitable for broadcasting or drilling. When drilling, its hard, smooth, uniform granule flows well through the drill. Because it is not dusty or prone to chipping it is less likely to cause blockages. When spreading, it will distribute evenly up to a width of 32 metres. These handling properties reduce hassle and time during application.

If Actyva S has been used at sowing (for spring crops) or for the first side-dressing of your autumn-sown crop, then Sustain is a good option for subsequent side-dressings. Sustain gives you the flexibility to apply nitrogen exactly when the crop needs it, even if rainfall looks uncertain.

For more advice on nutrient needs for your cereal or high-value seed crops, talk to your Ballance Nutrient Specialist or the Ruralco Seed team on 0800 RURALNZ (787 256).

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Having peace of mind that your crop is protected by a timely, accurate spray application is Simply Spraying's promise to its pastoral and arable farmers in the Ashburton district. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY JASON MCKENZIE



Five years since they established Simply Spraying, owners Steve and Sally Sim have built up a reputation for offering timely, effective service that brings greater value to this clients' business by protecting their crops, ensuring the potential yields are maximised.

Simply Spraying has been operating a high clearance Househam machine in recent years and the company's capacity is about to expand with the arrival this spring of their state of the art Amazone Pantera self-propelled sprayer.

"The Amazone will offer an even greater level of accuracy and capacity to our clients," says Steve.

"Of all the machines we could have invested in, this one offers the greatest versatility for the varied crops our clients grow."

This includes features like automated wash out, 50:50 front to back weight distribution and an infinitely variable wheel track width that can take the wheel spacing from 1.75m out to 2.2m, make it suitable for everything from seed potatoes to specialist small seed crops.

Auto individual nozzle control and GPS tracking systems ensure an exact application across the entire spectrum of crops.

"This reduced overlap will be a big advantage for us when spraying some of the harsher chemicals in high value cropping situations like fodder beet and spuds."

Steve and Sally, who is an agronomist by trade, have a strong farming background and continue to run a mixed cropping and store lamb finishing operation alongside Simply Spraying. This farming

connection gives them a deep understanding of the seasonal demands and necessity of delivering applications in a timely manner.

Last spring Steve began employing Tom Firth who has added to that knowledge, bringing eight years of spray contracting experience as well as some UK-based agronomy experience with him.

"Having Tom on board means we have effectively doubled our collective experience – he relates to farmers well and understands what they're trying to achieve and is an important part of the business."

The company also specialises in slug control on high value crops, clovers and rye-grasses.

Steve and Tom work closely with local agronomists, following up quickly on their recommendations. They are also supply chemicals competitively, which creates a convenient and easy option for farmers, with the benefit of reducing the clients' costs through having to carry part chemical containers.

Being a Ruralco Supplier means Steve and Sally are filling a gap in the market for farmers in the Ashburton district who wish to use their Ruralco Card for payment, particularly those between the Ashburton and Rakaia Rivers.

"Being a Ruralco Supplier is also another part of the service for our clients. It's easier for them to

ABOVE: They supply chemicals at a competitive rate which means customers save money and reduce part used chemical containers

ABOVE TOP: This spring they will introduce the state of the art Amazone Pantera self-propelled sprayer

MAIN IMAGE: Steve Sim and Tom Firth

just put the payment on their account".

With the needs of his clients firmly in mind, Steve is also working on making collection and recycling of their used plastic chemical containers simpler.

This winter he and Tom are manufacturing galvanised steel crates for managing empty chemical containers prior to delivery to the Agrecovery Depot.

After lengthy consultation with several farmers to work out exactly what it was they wanted, considerable thought and effort was put into the crate design to make them cost-effective, easy to use and long lasting.

Steve and Sally see an exciting period ahead for their clients and the business, with new technology helping ensure they get the most out of the farmland they cover as dairy and cropping opportunities on the Plains continue to grow and develop.



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Quoted pricing



What crops could we grow in the future?

The cropping industry may be very different in future from what it is today. Currently the arable industry produces a range of grains and seeds, many of which are commodity crops. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY NICK PYKE, CEO, FAR

However, if we were challenged with questions such as: What is the real competitive advantage of cropping in New Zealand? What are the world food trends and environmental trends? or, If New Zealand had been colonised from Asia, what would we be growing now? how would we answer?

The New Zealand cropping industry needs to capitalise on its unique advantages and identify opportunities to grow new crops that maximise returns to growers, in turn supporting a sustainable industry.

Understanding our competitive advantage is a crucial part of this.

New Zealand has some key advantages over other food producing nations. We have a temperate climate supported by high quality soil, plentiful water, skilled farmers and ongoing technological developments. These factors place the cropping industry in an excellent position to produce new high-value foods for international markets, and provide an economically and environmentally sustainable farming option in New Zealand.

Four plant species, wheat, maize, potatoes and rice, make up 60% of the world demand for energy. The remaining 40% is divided among another 30,000 edible plant species. In New Zealand we grow fewer than 200 species of edible plants...less than 0.7% of the edible species grown in the world. A large number of these other species are not suitable for the New Zealand industry because they don't suit our climate, the product is not durable enough to export to markets in the world or they are commodity products and we could



not command a high enough premium price to justify growing them.

Internationally the yields and total production of the four major crops, wheat, maize, potatoes and rice, has increased in recent decades. This is mostly due to improved yield, but also to increased land area used for individual crops. However, the area of arable land per person dropped from 0.37 ha/person in 1961 to 0.19 in 2014, meaning more food needs to be produced off less land. Recent increases in arable land from deforestation are balanced with losses of areas of degraded soils.

In New Zealand the cropped area, excluding forage crops, has been near static at approximately 150,000 ha for the last 10 years, although there are fluctuations in relation to demand. However, average yield increases in New Zealand are greater than the average world yield increases for many crops, which means that production has risen markedly of the same land area. These increases in yield are due primarily to improved agronomic management, but also to improved genetics.

Generally New Zealand has adequate water for crop production, but this is not the case in most countries of the world. It is estimated that by 2025, 60% of world's population will live in countries with water stress. Further to this, water for irrigation needs to increase by 11% worldwide to meet the demand for food, and it is likely that climate change will further increase demand for, and reduce the supply of, water in many areas. In many countries this will lead to increased pressure as to how water is used, and in particular, how it is used in food production. Southeast Australia, our nearest neighbour, is expecting a 40% reduction in water runoff, which would markedly impact on their ability to produce crops.

There are few agricultural exporting countries, where water extraction does not exceed supply. New Zealand is one of these.

The questions we need to ask are, why do we extract value, the water, before we sell many of our products? Are we ignoring a huge opportunity to supply products containing water to the world?

Over 33% of the world's soils are moderately to highly degraded by factors such as salinisation, compaction, erosion, acidification and pollution, and few major agricultural exporting countries have high quality soils. In New Zealand we have high quality soils and we need to look after them. Interestingly, irrigation can help look after our soils, with some soil quality characteristics, such as water holding capacity, increasing in trials comparing irrigated and dryland soils. Irrigation can also reduce nutrient losses, as plants can be kept actively growing allowing the nutrients to be utilised and not vulnerable to leaching if there is a large rainfall event. These positive attributes of irrigation in cropped soil, backed by good quality science, are unlikely to be quoted in the main stream press. Cropping is a responsible user of water and nutrients.

Our third strength is our people. New Zealand farmers are highly skilled and able to achieve high yields and high quality across a range of well over 40 different species of crops. This means that the industry should have no problems producing potential new export crops which are suited to our climate, or producing existing crops to new specifications.

What should we grow?

Food trends are changing rapidly. A few years ago the Impossible Burger, made from plant protein, seemed unlikely - now it is a reality, as are other unique plant based foods. Some recent work FAR is involved in has identified six possible areas that may have potential on our cropped land. These are; nutritional beverages, ancient grains, high value oils, plant proteins, durable water containing crops and some of our native species.

To progress, we need to select some promising options based on market needs and then ensure that the right business model is developed to capture the value along the value chain. It is probably easy to rule out some crops, but deciding on possible contenders is more difficult. What are the foods of the future?

Will we be exporters of fresh water containing products to a water short Australia? Will we have the best beverage hub in the world with a choice of animal milks, vegetable based juices, cereal based milks and a wide range of teas. Will we capitalise on our ability to produce and process plant and animal proteins so that the New Zealand Possible burger contains both animal and plant products?

The rapid pace of change in food production and food trends indicates we need to act now. We need the investment in production and processing research, transport, business models and marketing.

Now is a good time to act—next year may be too late.

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Ruralco Energy gives power to shareholders

Increases in distribution charges to electricity users in Canterbury make the need for independent, expert advice in one of a farm's most complicated cost centres more critical than ever this farming year. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



The recent change to electricity distribution charges that Transpower imposes mean larger electricity users in the Canterbury region face increases as high as 30% on the distribution portion of their annual fee.

While state distributor's fees cannot be negotiated around, Ruralco Energy's deep level of experience in electricity charging, contracts and options means shareholders have the ability to re-examine their entire energy cost profile, and get advice on ways to reduce other areas of the costs they can control.

The increase in distribution costs to Canterbury electricity users has arisen from April 1 thanks to an unusual weather pattern experienced over the summer of 2015-16.

Typically a hot summer followed by the usual cold winter results in peak summer irrigation cost being balanced by the boosted urban demand for power over the cold winter. However a milder 2016 winter meant urban demand was lower in proportion to the peak summer demand from irrigation load.

The result has been a greater portion of the transmission charge being allocated to the EA Networks region, and being passed onto irrigators. On average irrigators can expect an additional \$3,300.00 on their bill for the year.

Headed up by Tracey Gordon who brings many years of experience to electricity contract negotiations and pricing, irrigators have the opportunity to work with Ruralco Energy to completely review where they can make savings in light of this increase.

The New Zealand electricity market has had some significant shifts in ownership and alliances in recent months that may offer shareholders some valuable opportunities to lower their power costs.

Ruralco Energy has furthered its own alliances with energy suppliers, including solar energy panel and system supplier Kea Energy. Such partnerships are only undertaken after careful scrutiny of a company's integrity and quality, giving shareholders peace of mind without having to undertake the due diligence themselves.

Meantime emerging opportunities include the possibility of gas supply to dairy farms in bottled form, providing a highly efficient, cost effective option to traditional electrical heating systems.

Evolutions in electricity supply technology including solar systems, battery storage and mini-hydro options also present shareholders with some innovative options. Ruralco Energy has the skills and understanding to sort through

them all to determine what will ultimately add real value to their farm's bottom line.

Those changes in technology are also being matched by the rapid advance on the Plains and Central Irrigation Schemes.

On the face of it these gravity fed schemes may make deep well supply seem redundant, and with it the need for the pumps in those wells. Talking with Ruralco Energy will help users make more informed decisions about the future of those pumps, and whether there will be a need for some on-going expenditure to leave them on line for occasional use, or not.

The New Zealand electricity market has long been rightly viewed as a complicated one where billing and contracts can prove hard to understand. Ruralco Energy has worked hard with all electricity companies its shareholders purchase power off to try and make accounts simpler and easy to follow.

Determining the type of contract for the sharply seasonal nature of irrigation electricity is also a complex one, with the wrong choice likely to add thousands to an operation's cost centre. With margins tight across all irrigation operations including dairying and arable, having some expert, unbiased advice to call upon can literally save thousands once that contract is locked in.

To help educate shareholders on these complexities and pitfalls Ruralco Energy also invests in well crafted, informative communications about upcoming changes and developments within the electricity sector through the newsletter "Short Circuit".

It proves an invaluable means of explaining issues and signalling upcoming changes to shareholders that may require some explanation of a sector often frustratingly difficult to understand.

Tracey Gordon's extensive network of contacts within the sector means she and the team have a "heads up" on looming issues like the impact of lower hydro lake levels on future power prices, or negotiations over Tiwai Smelter power pricing, that may impact upon the prices shareholders pay in coming weeks, months or years for electricity.

Operating under Ruralco's co-operative structure and ethos means Ruralco Energy is 100% committed to helping shareholders make more money from their farm businesses by helping them with a vital but complex component of that business.

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Local company goes national with agri-tech aids

Thanks to Ashburton based AutoSparks subsidiary company Advanced GPS Ag and RDS Systems Ltd, farmers and contractors throughout New Zealand now have access to some of the most advanced GPS, on-board weighing and drill control technology available.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



AutoSparks was founded by Tony and Megan Houston back in 2004 with a single auto electrician, and quickly expanded beyond being just an auto electrical workshop to also today include a full mechanical service workshop with four mechanics on board.

Last year AutoSparks was invited to become part of Auto Super Shoppes group and have been part of Battery Town for many years. For Tony and his team, the work is as broad as it is varied, including servicing trucks and commercial vehicles from the wider Ashburton district, along with tractors and farm machinery that are becoming increasingly complex and reliant upon good electrical systems to perform. In recent years, the AutoSparks business has also proven the launch pad for another company bringing farmers and contractors to the cutting edge of agri-tech efficiency.

With the growth in precision agriculture and the control systems it requires, Tony identified an opportunity over a decade ago and began installing Topcon Agriculture spreading and spraying control systems for contractors.

The equipment has proven to be robust, rugged and most importantly easy to use with simple access to the modes required most often.

Tony and the team continue to supply and install the Topcon Agriculture systems to spray and spreading contractors, whilst Tony's subsidiary company Advanced GPS Ag distributes the equipment through a national network of dealers.

Canterbury farmer and contractor Ben Tait is

a long-time user of Topcon equipment in his spreading, spraying and seeding operations.

He says the Topcon systems have given him the confidence to operate any hour of the day when conditions are suitable.

Ben puts the accumulated savings from guidance and accurate rate controls down to as much as tens of thousands of dollars a year saved for his company, and his clients.

AutoSparks has also now taken over on board weighing technology company RDS Systems Ltd, providing another link in the farm data chain. Loader scales for tractors and telehandlers bring accuracy and efficiency to an operation, boosting profitability.

The RDS technology also provides drill operators with assurance seed is being placed at the correct rate, regardless of the tractor's ground speed, with the Artemis E Drive drill control system and is a feature of drills built by local Ashburton company Allen Custom Drills.

The complete integration of feed, seed and fertiliser delivery systems has now been completed, thanks to the company also securing the rights to Digi-Star, the load cell technology company.

The load cell technology is proving increasingly popular among farmers wanting accurate data on

ABOVE: Mark McCully, Farm Manager in Canterbury runs a Topcon X30 and Cropspecs on a JD tractor with a Bredal ISOBUS Spreader

how much supplementary feed they are loading, and feeding, to their stock. It also enables fertiliser spreaders to better calibrate their equipment, and integrates well with the TopCon controlled spreading application technology.

Advanced GPS Ag Manager James Storey says the load cell technology is one of the most exciting growth areas for the business, and as farmers become more conscious of feed costs and minimising wastage the cells are almost a "must have" for any feed out or mixer wagon.

He says the company's dealer network around New Zealand means there is strong support regardless of where operators are based, and Topcon has a reputation for unrivalled customer support internationally.

In Ashburton AutoSparks has enjoyed a strong relationship with Ruralco as an approved supplier accepting the Ruralco Card.

"We have worked well together. People see the Ruralco sign and they know they can put the work on their account, making it simpler for them, and for us when it comes to the end of the month."

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Record puts Canterbury croppers at top





Eric Watson downplays his status as a world record holder for his latest wheat crop yield, but dig a bit further and it becomes apparent the long-time Canterbury crop farmer is quietly chuffed to have made his way into the esteemed Guinness Book of Records with his latest crop.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY EMMILY HARMER

Eric and Maxine Watson had the honour confirmed in April after the February harvest of 11.9 ha of Oakley feed wheat from Carrfields Grain & Seed after all the official boxes were ticked and signed off by Guinness.

Having their names in the book that includes all manner of records from the sublime to the ridiculous has the Watsons helping push the Canterbury arable industry another step up the ladder of excellence.

For their award marks the second world record to be set in the region in as many years with Warren and Joy Darling of Timaru setting new heights for barley with their crop back in 2015. Harvesting a 16.79t per hectare wheat crop left no doubt about the record's standing, having smashed the earlier 16.5t per hectare set in the United Kingdom.

But Eric's pride in the award goes beyond simply having the recognition in the famed book.

He believes the recognition awards like his generate for the industry is invaluable for a

sector that internationally barely rates in terms of its scale, but is punching well above that scale for its productivity and crop quality.

"The simple reality is we cannot produce on the same scale as countries in Europe or the United States. But we are proving New Zealand, and particularly Canterbury, has very high quality crops, both in cereals and in high value seed crops."

Eric admits he is comfortable growing most crop types, and there are few in his cropping career he has not had a season trying.

"They are pretty much of a muchness, but I do enjoy growing ryegrass. This year it proved quite tricky, the later maturing crop of it was not as great as I would have thought, while the earlier maturing varieties were better than I would have expected, it was a surprise."

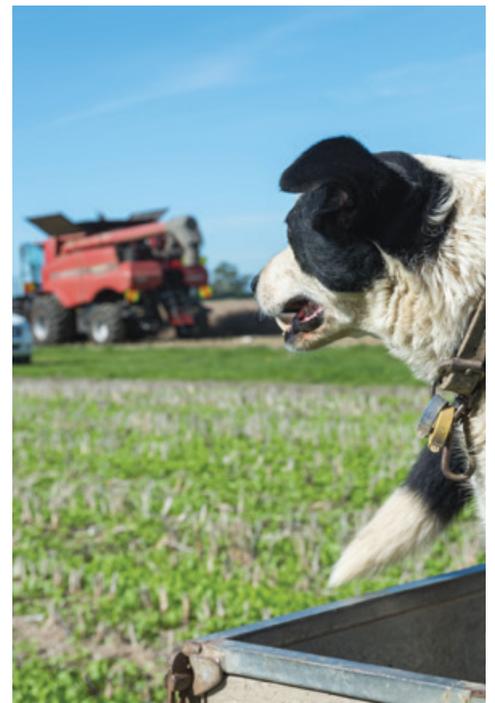
He regularly grows seed crops of pak choi, radish, red beet, corn salad and spinach. He attributes the region's success in such high value crops to the "sweet spot" of the 44th southern parallel that sits just south of Ashburton, almost bulls eye around his property.

"We also have very consistent, good quality soils—in our case with Wakanui and Templeton silt loams."

"And there is a real commitment here among growers to produce really good crops, they are doing this because they want to, they enjoy it and happen to be good at it."

He acknowledges the pressures the region's arable sector has been under from dairying's advances in recent years.

However, with dairy conversion becoming ever more expensive and limited by environmental constraints, he sees the land



TOP: Eric & Maxine Watson stand proudly on the Mid Canterbury property that got them in the Guinness Book of World Records

OPPOSITE: For Eric the goal was to build some reputation and recognition for the arable industry

that remains in arable as almost too valuable to put into ryegrass, clover and cows.

"We are also starting to learn more about what else can be grown here with smart irrigation and fertiliser, including crops like potatoes and cabbages, the options seem to be opening up even further."

The Watsons' family farm at Ealing developed border dyke flood irrigation from the 1960s and 70s, in a mixed sheep and cropping situation. But 1992 saw them move to the

better cropping soils at Wakanui, with more reliable overhead spray irrigation.

Today the farm operates nine linear irrigators, most of which have variable rate systems tuned to soil moisture levels and soil type to ensure only optimal application at the right time, without losses of the valuable water, and accompanying nutrients, through the soil profile.

“But if you have a constant soil type, variable rate irrigation can also be a cost you don’t really need to incur. Overall though the arable industry is getting smarter about its water use, knowing over-watering can do almost as much harm as underwatering.”

The sector is also optimising nutrient use more, becoming more aware of a crop’s specific agronomy so that nutrients are applied when the crop can best utilise them, and at the appropriate rate, thus helping minimise over-application and potential losses through the soil profile and into underground water systems.

Eric uses deep soil nitrogen testing in spring time, down to 60cm, which recognises the ability of crops like wheat to pull nitrogen up from such depths.

“I have done it for years and could not farm as effectively or efficiently without it, it ensures we are only putting on what nitrogen is necessary.”

Eric and Maxine have also been working closely with FAR (Foundation for Arable Research), on the Forages for Reduced Nitrate Leaching project. This is a multi-year project aiming to reduce nitrate losses through urinary output, hold more nitrogen in soils and maximise yields and nitrogen use efficiency in forage crops, providing solutions to integrate



into both dry-stock, mixed and dairy systems.

Initial trial data indicates plantain has a valuable role to play in helping achieve the project’s goals. This includes DairyNZ data showing plantain is a key species whose presence can help increase dry matter production in a pasture mix and reduce nitrogen concentration.

“Maxine has been involved in the work and has been very encouraged by what it is finding.”

In assessing the record breaking crop, Eric admits there were some tense moments during harvest as especially when he was told, with one load to go, he still needed 12 tonne.

The harvested crop had to be run over a certified weigh bridge and audited by an inspector from the verification company SGS, checking each load, followed by moisture testing.

He attributes much of the success to input from a range of industry specialists from seed through to nutrients and spray treatments. The Oakley variety was purchased from Carrfields Grain & Seed.

Carrfields’ Cereal Seed Product Manager, Phil Smith, said he was thrilled to see two world records set in Canterbury in a short space of time.

“It’s fantastic that these world records have both been set right here in Canterbury and we’re immensely proud that both the farmers are Carrfields customers,” he says.

“It’s very humbling to see all the work we have put in with our breeders to develop the best seeds for our customers now come to fruition with two world-beating yields in two years.”

Eric also attributed the input from Bayer Crop Science to helping ensure optimal crop treatments were used at the best time of the growth phase. This had included the use of a broad spectrum dual fungicide Provaro.

Bayer New Zealand Crop Science Country Manager, Scott Hanson, says the record is not only an important achievement for the Watsons, but for New Zealand as a whole.

ABOVE: The 2017 harvesting season has proven particularly difficult for Canterbury arable farmers with the rise in rainfall

BELOW: Eric inspecting the grain derived from his successful Oakley wheat crop

“For me, the record demonstrates the skill set that we have in New Zealand in the arable industry. The New Zealand grain and seed industry is an important part of the global seed market. Farmers like Eric and Maxine demonstrate what New Zealand can do at a global level truly promotes our industry to the world.”

Eric said input from Yara had also proven invaluable in ensuring he had applied the right rate of nutrients to optimise crop growth early on and final yield potential.

“Paul Johnson was taking leaf samples over the growing season. We used a few trace elements which help with yield and quality, including magnesium, manganese and zinc.”

Eric has been working with variable-rate lime, potash and phosphate applications over the past eight years to optimise application, matching application to soil sample results from across the farm.

“The amount of money you can save by not over-applying fertiliser more than makes up for the cost of the soil sampling you need to do. This year we have applied less phosphate and we have evened up our soil pH across the farm. That has been reflected in the yield figures from this wheat crop which proved to be pretty even throughout.”

One of the biggest challenges he has had is trying to spread nitrogen urea across a 32 metre tramlines.

“We are looking to go all liquid nitrogen application this year which will enable us to spread with greater consistency.”

This harvesting season has proven to be particularly challenging for Canterbury arable farmers, with the rain welcomed by pastoral farmers a bit of a curse over harvest time.

“The weather will dictate what we will do for planting, but it’s been a tough one, and high yielding wheat should really be in the ground now, (mid-April) to get the best start.”

While the Guinness award does not bring any financial payout with it, for Eric that is not the goal. The profile it has helped build for his industry is worth far more.

“It’s a great thing, we are such a small and relatively unrecognised sector, and underrated too I feel. New Zealand arable farmers are pretty switched-on people. I have travelled a bit around other arable areas of the world, and our arable guys can be proud of what they do and how well they do it.”

20t by 2020 project on its way

New Zealand arable farmers grow about 400,000t of wheat a year, averaging about 12t a hectare.

A key goal of the industry’s research body Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) is to increase the wheat industry’s yield to 20t per hectare by 2020.

The initiative is a collaborative approach involving FAR, Plant and Food Research, Canterbury University and United Kingdom research groups.

The various trials being done here in New Zealand are also being replicated in the Northern Hemisphere by the UK researchers.

Part of the project’s research to help achieve that goal has been to examine the impact of planting dates on wheat crop yields.

Trials done at Leeston have found significant variations in crop yield when planted across February, March and April.

The research found that on average “Wakanui” variety sown in late March were .82t a hectare



higher than the same variety sown four weeks later in April.

Eric Watson believes the “20tonne” goal is achievable, but it may take somewhat longer than the 2020 timeframe which is bearing down quickly.

“It will ultimately be a breeding process to get there, it may not be within my career time, but will happen.”

ABOVE: Eric Watson believes FAR’s 20tonne goal is achievable but the timeframe may be an issue
BELOW: A beautiful day on the Canterbury Plains for the Watsons well deserved harvest in April



FARM DETAILS

FARM OWNERS:
Eric and Maxine Watson.

FARM LOCATION:
Ashburton district.

FARM SIZE:
490 ha

RECORD SETTING WHEAT VARIETY:
Oakley

AREA IN OAKLEY:
11.9ha

RECORD YIELD:
16.791t/ha

PREVIOUS RECORD:
16.519t/ha (United Kingdom).

OTHER CROPS GROWN:
Radish, red beet, corn salad, pak choi, spinach, barley, triticale, chicory, plantain, tall and red fescues, and perennial ryegrass.

SOIL TYPES:
Wakanui and Templeton silt loam.

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FUEL

Planning and preparation important for successful beet

Planning, preparation and timing are all major factors to consider when including beet in your farming system. Following some key steps will help ensure your beet gets off to the best start. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY SEED FORCE



When planning your beet crop this season, consider the crops' likely end use, as this will dictate crucial factors such as the type of beet being utilised as well as the optimal plant population required for that purpose. For grazing systems, the stock class will help determine the required dry matter and plant characteristics, and for harvesting systems the beet type, dry matter, planting rate and row spacings are all important considerations.

Once the beet type is decided you should secure your seed requirements with Ruralco Seed as early as possible to help ensure your required beet type is available. For grazing, the low dry matter mangel beet SF Brigadier™ will suit most systems with its high utilisation and for mechanical harvesting the high dry matter sugar beet SF SUGA™ will help ensure maximum harvestable yields and the longest storage in suitable conditions.

Once the suitable area is determined a soil test should be carried out, and this is best done in the autumn prior to planting. This will help allow sufficient timing to rectify any nutrient deficiencies in the paddock well in advance. A key element to consider is pH as beet does not thrive in acidic soils. Aim for at least 6.0 and

include magnesium if required at the time of lime application.

Moisture retention for the seed bed is an important consideration to help with germination and early growth. This should be focused in the area where the seed is placed during planting. A fallow period is crucial to allow sufficient moisture to build up in this zone. The seed bed should be prepared well in advance and be free of pans and compaction as these can cause issues with root development. If these are suspected then sub soil to help rectify. A thorough plough is recommended to help ensure there are no obstructions to root development, ploughing also has the benefit of burying many weed seeds. Follow this with multiple surface workings to ensure that the surface is as fine, and to ensure adequate seed to soil contact once drilled.

The plants' base dressing fertiliser requirements can be applied at this stage and incorporated in the final working. A firm fine tilth is essential in successful establishment, you should just be able to see your heel indent on the soil surface following a light roll. It is this contact with fine and firm soil combined with adequate moisture and temperature which will help

seedling emergence and help reduce the risk of a staggered strike.

Sowing timing will typically depend on climate and location. Adequate soil temperature is essential and timing of planting will ideally be after the last frosts. Aim for a history of at least 5 days of 10°C or higher before planting. Consider night time soil temperatures as well as day time, as low night temperatures can greatly reduce the average. Colder temperatures will cause additional stress on the emerging seedling and can influence the potential number of bolters or 'weedy beet' in a crop.

To help promote rapid establishment; seed should be sown relatively shallow to a depth of 1.5–2.0cm. If the seed bed is too loose the seed can often be drilled too deep, even if the depth control is set correctly on the drill and this can also affect the evenness and timing of emergence. With precision drills, sowing speed needs to be slow to ensure correct seed placement, this means a maximum drilling speed of 4–6 kph. For good seed to soil contact ensure adequate tension adjustment on the drill's press wheels. Ensure moisture is holding firm around the seed in the following planting, when the seed is in the initial stages of its germination process.

For more information on what type of beet is best for your system and advice on paddock preparation talk to Ruralco Seed today on 0800 787 256.

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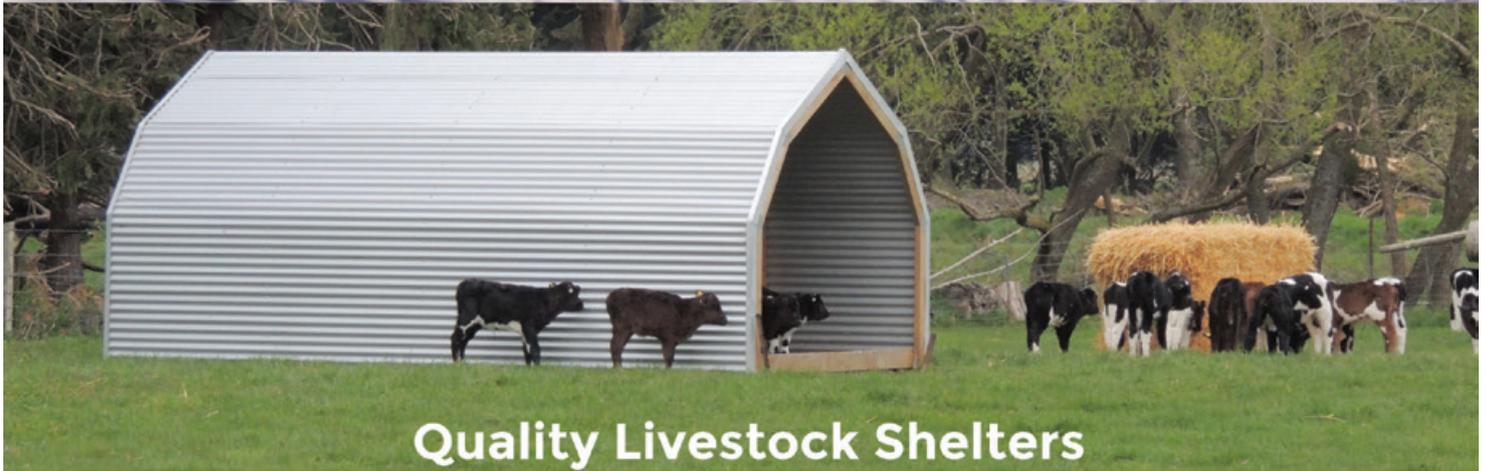


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A photograph showing three people in a barn setting. They are wearing dark polo shirts with a logo and rubber boots. One person is holding a blue bucket, and another is petting a black and white calf. The calf has a green ear tag and a yellow tag. The barn has a wooden structure and a corrugated metal roof. The floor is covered in straw bedding.

Caring for calves key to success

A successful calving season starts long before the first calf arrives. Planning ahead ensures that your calves are handled with care and you can reap rewards for your team and the herd.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY DAIRYNZ

It takes a team effort to ensure all calves are treated with care and respect, from birth to beyond the farm gate, so it is essential that everyone handling your stock, including your temporary workers and contractors are aware of their responsibilities and know the rules regarding how all calves must be cared for on farm.

Familiarising yourself and your team with the new young calf regulations is a good start. Seven new regulations were announced by Minister Nathan Guy in 2016, five are already in place and two more come into effect in this season. The regulations aim to ensure the welfare of calves leaving the farm, during transport and at the meat processors. The health and wellbeing of drivers and transport operators has also been a key consideration with the introduction of new requirements around the use of loading facilities.

Since 1 February this year, it is regulation that bobby calves are slaughtered within 24 hours of their last feed. This responsibility falls on meat processors and will require that they work closely with farmers and transporters to monitor last feed on farm, pick-up and transport times.

Meat processors have made changes to their bobby calf supply contracts. If you haven't already signed up, it's important that you read your bobby calf agreement and understand your obligations. To enable the processor to meet their requirements, you will be required to complete a declaration for each consignment of calves.

Your meat processor may require you to commit to feed your calves within an agreed timeframe, ahead of a scheduled pick-up time, for the duration of the season. Although the welfare of calves on-farm is the farmer's responsibility, the maximum time off feed requirement remains with the meat processor.

The regulation applies to all processors, however it is likely each processor will have different requirements and can offer different pick-up options. Once you have your agreement, it is important that anyone responsible for bobby calf selection and preparation for transport is aware of these requirements.

A useful tool which can help farmers monitor on-farm performance and communicate with transporters is the DairyNZ bobby calf collection sign. The reusable plastic sign has a checklist for farmers to tick-off with a whiteboard marker to let the transporter know the calves are fit for transport and provide details, including the number of calves for pick-up, and the time of their last feed. The other side of the sign is for transporters to tick-off any reasons why calves were left behind.

From 1 August, calves awaiting collection by transporter must have access to shelter that is clean, dry, suitably ventilated, and provides protection from the weather. Calves must also be able to walk safely onto the truck, either via

a ramp, a raised holding/loading pen or other suitable system. If you need to build a new loading facility, make sure you plan it well so it lasts for many years to come.

There are several options. These include adapting your existing facilities, buying a ready-made solution, or building new. You might do the work yourself, or pay a contractor. Whatever approach you take, do your research to make sure the facilities work for your farm, as what works well for others may not necessarily be the best for your situation. Before you make any changes to your facilities, talk to your transporter to ensure what you are proposing to do is fit-for-purpose and in an easily accessed location.

Some key factors to consider include making sure the track to the loading facility is no less than 4m wide, clear of any overhead obstructions, and that it is easy for the truck to reverse up. It is also a requirement under your dairy company supply agreement that your loading facilities must not be on, or adjacent to, the roadside, as it is potentially hazardous to truck drivers, staff, and other road users.

Make sure your team is aware of the eight criteria bobby calves must meet before they are put in the holding pen for transport. The calves must be at least four days old, able to stand and walk, have a dry navel, ears up and bright eyes, no scours, correct ear tag, firm hooves, and a full stomach. DairyNZ has a poster that is available to put up in the calf sheds as a quick and easy reminder.

Once you and your team are familiar with the regulations and set up to meet them, there are other ways you can prepare ahead for spring to save time and reduce stress once you are in the thick of calving.

Calving is a team activity, so get everyone involved in your planning. Run through various calving scenarios in advance with the farm team. Watch the DairyNZ calf care videos with your staff. Discuss the expected actions to be taken by staff for each scenario, according to their experience and ability.

A well-stocked, easily accessible calving kit can be put together well in advance. This will save you making unnecessary trips between the paddock and the shed, reducing stress levels and improving calving performance. Put a team member in charge of making sure it is restocked regularly.

Mid Canterbury farmers Craig and Hannah Fulton prepare two emergency packs to tackle calving problems as they crop up. "There are ropes and pulleys in there, a set of metabolics for two cows, anti-inflammatories, lube and a notebook. I carry one with me at all times and there's one in the shed so if staff have any problems, they just grab the bag and they know that they have everything in there to deal with a down cow or a calving cow," says Craig.

Set the calf shed up before calving starts, with new bedding material, new teats for

calfeterias, calfeterias and utensils are cleaned, iodine and electrolytes are purchased, and meal, hay and fresh water will be available. Hannah Fulton says their calf shed has rock, covered with windbreak cloth and then a layer of bark chips on the floor. "This allows fluid waste to drain away while the solids are collected in the chip and at the end of calving, the cloth can be lifted up and the shed cleaned out. I always order an extra few metres of chip so the pens can be refreshed partway through calving. Every pen has an automatic water trough."

Hannah and Craig believe that a successful season starts with calving. "This isn't an area where farmers should skimp. "Making sure you're fully staffed over spring is the best thing you can do, otherwise the wheels can fall off and it creates a bad start for the team and the herd early in the season," says Hannah. "If you pay attention to detail, stick to the system that you know works and create contingencies for adversities, then you're pretty right."

For more information on the new bobby calf regulations visit www.mpi.govt.nz/calves.

Guidelines for calf holding and loading facilities meeting the new regulations are available at www.dairynz.co.nz/loading-facilities.

Regulations for young calves leaving the farm for sale or slaughter

FROM 1ST FEBRUARY 2017

- Calves must be slaughtered within 24 hours after their last feed.

FROM 1ST AUGUST 2017

- Calves must have access to shelter that is clean, dry, suitably ventilated and which provides protection from adverse weather, including extremes of heat and cold. This applies before and during transportation for sale or slaughter.
- Calves must be able to safely walk on and off transportation using loading and unloading facilities when being transported off farm.

REGULATIONS FORMALISED IN 2016

- Young calves must be at least four days of age and physically fit before they are transported off farm.
- A maximum duration of 12 hours' journey time for young calves being transported.
- Prohibiting the transport of young calves by sea across the Cook Strait.

FOR ALL CALVES

- Prohibiting the euthanasia of any calves by use of blunt force trauma, except in an emergency situation.

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Local repair business takes on Honda

Well established Ashburton automotive repair business Malcolm Lovett Automotive Ltd has taken another step up in the service it is able to offer motorists and farmers in the region, taking over as the district's Honda parts and service agency.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY BARBARA LOVELOCK



LEFT: The Malcolm Lovett Automotive premises on Havelock Street

BELOW LEFT: Malcolm (left) and the team, Ben, Neil, Nick, Denise, Harold, Cindy



Malcolm and Cindy Lovett have owned and run the business since 1997, having the Mitsubishi parts and service agency over that time. Malcolm says taking over the Honda parts and service agency just adds another reliable, respected brand to their business's CV.

"We have found the Mitsubishi brand has been a very reliable, respected one to have, and Honda just builds on that."

Cindy says the Mitsubishi Triton remains a popular four-wheel drive for local farmers, with its

reputation for reliability and excellent value for money reputation making it a good option as a farm and family workhorse.

Meantime Honda has also always been recognised for its reliability and quality build,

making their models a popular option in the region.

Along with Malcolm's skills as a qualified mechanic, the business also has two other qualified mechanics, a full-time parts technician and Cindy managing the office and administration with Denise part time.

In the years, they have owned the business and been servicing vehicles Malcolm says working on customers' vehicles has become more about interpreting diagnostic equipment's fault detections than simply about listening to a car's engine.

"And often the problem may be linked to something that may initially appear unrelated."

The couple have worked hard to keep abreast of engine technology and fault work to make them the "go to" business for locals having car troubles.

The business has also undergone something of a modernisation in recent months, thanks in part to the aftermath of the Canterbury earthquakes.

Like many buildings in Ashburton theirs required earthquake strengthening, and today the premises features improved buildings that fit well with the business also taking on the Honda parts and service agency.

Cindy is proud to be an ambassador for both the Mitsubishi and Honda brands, owning a Honda Jazz and the ever-reliable Mitsubishi Diamante.

Cindy and Malcolm have opted Ruralco as their exclusive farmer charge card, and appreciate the benefits it brings them and their customers by being Ruralco Suppliers.

The couple continue to focus of offering the best quality service possible to their loyal local customer base.

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LOVE YOUR LAND



Drying off cows with high BCS on to fodder beet—what to do?

In life, almost nothing is black and white, there are often no ‘one rule fits all’ policies—an example of this is the spread of the body condition score (BCS) of cows and ease of management at calving time.

WORDS BY BERNARDITA SALDIAS, CENTRE FOR DAIRY EXCELLENCE

It is normal to have a wide range of BCS but as managers it is increasingly important to aim to reduce the distribution across the herd and concentrate a higher number of cows within a BCS range per their stage of production and reproduction status, this facilitates feeding strategies and animal management over the dry period.

Winter and the associated dry period is the time in which cows have an opportunity to increase their BCS in preparation for calving and with the use of fodder beet. We have seen increases of 1 BCS unit in cows on fodder beet for 60 days in an ad-lib intake feeding regime; which is excellent for those mature cows that are dry-off at BCS 4.0 or even 4.5. But, when cows are dried-off at BCS 5.0 – which is not uncommon to find; sometimes (15-20% of the herd; 15% of 650 cows herd = 98 cows) there are potential risks at calving as cows may be over conditioned (BCS 6+), such as metabolic diseases.

Fodder beet being a high sugar content feed, is recommended to feed animals to ad-lib intake,

after a proper transition period, to prevent risk of acidosis and drive BCS gain in cows over the winter dry period. But, what happens when cows are dried-off already in a high BCS and the winter feeding is fodder beet? Feeding fodder beet to ad-lib intake will increase the BCS of those cows and therefore they are most likely to suffer at calving from milk fever or ketosis. So, if this year you don't have any other winter crop to use for those fatter cows, there are a couple of strategy points to consider.

Think in advance of a springer diet and plan how to deal with differences in BCS in a group of springers which is easy on paper but it takes a good management to overcome challenges of multi-mobs at calving time. Bear in mind that good springer diet management will prepare the cows physiologically to the high demand of milk production, post calving. For those cows that are at or over their BCS target for mating (BCS 5.0 for MA and 5.5 for 2 and 3 years old) it is recommended to reduce their energy intake to 90% of their requirement through the springer diet phase.

Other alternatives are prior to cows springing up is to separate those fatter cows from low or mid-BCS cows over the winter as they will need different feeding management through June and July. If you are using only fodder beet, both mobs should have a proper transition protocol onto fodder beet and even after it is better to move both mobs slowly on their daily allocation of fodder beet to the point they reach ad-lib intake. Thereafter, keep the light and mid-BCS cows in ad-lib fodder beet intake plus the 2–3 kg DM supplement/day. For the

fatter cow mob, it is safer to offer ad-lib fodder beet allowance for 1 or 2 weeks and then slowly reduce their daily fodder beet allocation to the point that you are comfortable with the amount of ME that you are providing to the cows by feeding fodder beet and supplements. Be aware that there is a need for increasing the amount of supplement going into the diet at the time that fodder beet is reduced. Further considerations are to also remove the fat cow mob (especially those cows that are eating around 4-5 kg DM fodder beet) off the crop at night time to reduce risk of breakouts, and the following day open the fodder beet line after offer the supplement (3-4 hours later). However, for those cows eating around 7-8kg DM fodder beet it's better to keep them in the crop with a good level of supplement supply and lots of power going through the fence.

It is also important to check cow's BCS half way through winter by walking through the mob to ensure cows are still reaching the recommended targets for calving and where practical alter individual cows into different mobs to ensure a tight spread of BCS at calving time.

The thinking of getting the cows up to ad lib intake and then reducing their crop allocation is that if a breakout situation does occur they are physiologically adapted to deal with the sudden higher ME load therefore reducing the risk of a severe acidosis outbreak.

If you have any concern regarding ME supply to the cows, take time contact your vet or farm consultant and discuss feeding strategies over the winter period.

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What is animal wellness?

Veterinarians are trained in the art and science of disease recognition and treatment in a wide range of animals.

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



I can recall feeling overwhelmed by having to remember the temperatures, respiratory rates and heart rates of so many different animal species when I was a student. I thought it was an impossibility to do that. However, with time I realised that in practice only a few are required to be committed to memory. Now they are impossible to forget!

Knowing how to recognise disease in animals and to successfully treat those diseases takes many years of training and experience. Animals can be diseased yet not show overt signs or symptoms. This applies to both our companion pets and farm animals. Cats with

arthritis will develop strategies to “hide” the problem and the pain. This enables survival. Herd or flock animals will also hide symptoms so as not to be picked out and rejected (or eaten if in the wild).

So, if you take a look at your animals (pets or farm production animals) do they look “well” to you? Even though they appear well they may in fact have a problem which could be causing pain, reducing mobility or reducing production. Last week I looked at a group of calves that were not growing as expected. Despite appearing reasonably normal, at post mortem examination I discovered very serious pneumonia which almost certainly would

have been contributing to the poor growth rates in these animals.

The focus for veterinarians is slowly changing. Today's vets have a greater appreciation of animal wellness and how it is attained and maintained. This is not to say disease diagnosis is still part of the armoury, but vets now appreciate much more that maintaining animal wellness, with minimal opportunity for disease to develop, is far better for our companion pets and our farm production animals.

The good management of an animal's environment will go a long way to maintaining wellness and preventing disease. Shelter, consistent feeding levels, good quality feed, good energy levels, good drainage, minimal walking and reduced dust are all important in preventing many production limiting diseases. Practices such as sensible stocking rates, good colostrum transfer, correct weaning and vaccination go a long way to preventing significant animal health associated costs.

Vaccination of healthy animals with good quality vaccines at appropriate times is important in achieving animal wellness. Improved herd immunity, achieved by vaccinating all animals, will reduce the overall infection challenge opportunity and reduce the number of cases, and severity, of disease. Vaccines are available for many production limiting diseases: Leptospirosis, bovine viral diarrhoea, respiratory diseases, Salmonella and Clostridia are good examples. In future, we will almost certainly have access to better engineered vaccines covering a greater number of diseases.

Maintaining suitable animal environments, feeding levels, body condition, stocking rates and robust vaccination programs will reduce the amount of antibiotics used in farm animals. Notwithstanding the fact that antibiotics maintain animal wellness and welfare, we must be more prudent and responsible with the way we use them. Antibiotics should never be used to prevent diseases or be used in large numbers of animals without very good reason. Antibiotics must always be used in consultation with your veterinarian.

So why not make the move toward improved animal wellness, and talk to your vet today. They will be only too happy to chat about achieving better animal wellness for your farming enterprise.

Farmstrong plans for growth

Farmstrong is a nationwide rural wellbeing programme that provides advice and tools for farmers and growers on how to stay healthy and productive. The aim is to help farmers, their teams and families stay in great shape and get more out of life and work.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY FARMSTRONG



The ups-and-downs of farming present many challenges to the wellbeing of farmers and rural communities. During its planning phase, Farmstrong spoke to many farmers and growers. They were told that farmers have systems to look after their land, stock and equipment, but not as much in place to help them stay in good shape. In other words, farmers said they were good at looking after their farms but not so good at looking after themselves.

That's where Farmstrong comes in. It was launched in 2015 to help farmers make small improvements in how they look after themselves so they can cope better when the going gets tough. These include things like taking regular breaks and time off, sleeping well, eating well, spending time with family and friends, keeping active and using healthy thinking strategies to stay positive.

Sam Whitelock, Farmstrong ambassador



Farmers and growers, their families and workers are the most important asset on any farm. Investing in your wellbeing is crucial to the longterm success of your business, says Sam Whitelock, rugby player and Farmstrong Ambassador.

"Farmstrong is a great fit for me. I can identify with many of the pressures that farmers have to deal with every day. That's why I know that looking after yourself and getting time off the farm are so important."

"Farmers have got to remember, if you're healthy, then your farm will be healthy. It's as simple as that. That's what Farmstrong means when it says, 'live well, farm well'. Farmers need to schedule in time to get away from the farm. That's exactly what I do with rugby. When the season's over, my wife and I spend time in the Sounds, turn off the phone and relax."

From strength to strength

Since it was launched in 2015, Farmstrong has been the catalyst for a national conversation about wellness in the rural community. The starting point was research into what farmers and growers say are the biggest challenges and barriers to their wellbeing. The following topics were the ones that farmers said were most important:

- 47% how to achieve better work-life balance;
- 35% how to manage tiredness and fatigue;
- 34% how to get the best out of employees;

- 31% how to manage stress;
- 29% how to stop worrying about work all the time.

This research shaped Farmstrong's initial programme of activities. Farmstrong developed a website and Facebook page to share online information and farmer stories, as well as tools and resources to help people lock in small improvements and healthy changes to their lifestyle. By the end of last year, the site had attracted nearly 100,000 visitors and Farmstrong engages regularly with around 8,000 people through social media.

Farmstrong has rolled out a series of Dr Tom Mulholland's *Healthy Thinking* workshops across the country. A total of 31 workshops were attended by 1,122 farmers, growers and rural professionals in the first year alone.

In 2016 Farmstrong launched the *Farmstrong Challenge* and *Fit4Farming Cycle Tour*—initiatives designed to encourage rural New Zealanders to become active by walking, running and cycling. More than 1,000 people signed up for the *Challenge*, travelling 633, 216 kilometres. The *Fit4Farming* team, a core group of 20 farmers, cycled for 16 days from Ngatea in the North Island to Invercargill in the South. En route they hosted six event-days where over 600 farmers and their families participated in walk, run and cycle events. A new *Farmstrong Challenge* will be rolled out later this year with many more opportunities for rural people to get involved.

Farmstrong has also had a profile at national and regional agricultural events, and has sponsored over 40 performances of the popular Mel Parsons and "Sons of a Bitch" woolshed music and comedy show as a way of creating an opportunity for rural communities to socialise, have a laugh and get off the farm for an evening. More than 600 media articles about Farmstrong have featured in 30 different print, broadcast and online outlets. The combined effect of all these activities has been to put rural wellbeing on the agenda for a growing number of New Zealand farmers and growers.

It's Working

Since it began, Farmstrong has been committed to tracking the progress it is making in achieving its goals. The results achieved in its first year have been very encouraging.

Half of New Zealand farmers were aware of Farmstrong within 17 months of its launch. Research shows that 38% of farmers participating in Farmstrong reported an improvement in their ability to cope with the ups-and-downs in farming, compared with 21% of the general farming population. 41% of farmers participating in Farmstrong reported an improvement in their work-life balance, as compared with 22% of the general farming population.



ABOVE: Dr Tom Mulholland rolled out a series of *Healthy Thinking* workshops across the country
OPPOSITE: "Sons of a Bitch" was a great opportunity for rural communities to socialise, have a laugh and get off the farm for an evening

Alongside the encouraging statistics has been a flow of positive feedback from farmers who have engaged with Farmstrong.

"Farmstrong is crucial and I fully support its programmes," says Tony Coltman, ATS Director and Dunsandel dairy farmer. "It's vital that people feel comfortable talking about these issues. If things are bad for you, you can guarantee that 99% of other farmers think so too or someone's got it worse than you. Farmstrong helps people talk about these things and realise they are not alone in any of the struggles they're having out there."

"Keeping well is absolutely crucial to the success of this business and developing the mental resilience to manage the challenges is really important."

James Pharazyn, manager of Moutere Angus in Hawke's Bay, is equally enthusiastic.

"Meeting Dr. Tom at the *Healthy Thinking* workshop was fantastic. He had so much to offer. After doing the workshop I came back and passed on the tools to the guys who work here. I also made some good friends at the course and picked up some great ideas from them."

"The biggest insight I got out of it was how much we worry about things we can't control. It really makes you question why you are getting so worried. Now I just focus on getting things done and not stressing."

Plans for the future

Farmstrong has plenty planned for the year ahead. Increasing the reach of Farmstrong so more people lock in positive lifestyle changes is a priority and so too is growing an active network of community-based supporters who can share Farmstrong tools and resources in their local area.

Some exciting new ideas are on the table, including initiatives to help farmers get a break from the farm.

Expect to hear more from Farmstrong ambassador, Sam Whitelock, who said he "is really impressed with what Farmstrong has already achieved." He added that "When the opportunity came up to get involved, I jumped at it."

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Gallagher scales weigh up with new technology

Gallagher R & D wiped their white boards clean, put on their gumboots and went on-farm to discuss farmer needs before starting work on the new TW-1 and TW-3 weigh scales.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY GALLAGHER



The scales represent a complete re-work of the company's stock weighing systems, until now served by both the robust W610 & W810 models and the TSi integrated scale range.

"We were looking for a complete re-design from the ground up. We wanted a design that recognised how farmers interact with equipment. Touch screens are part of their daily lives now, with smart phones and tablets with simple user interfaces, and we wanted to deliver a new generation of scales that shared that simple interface," says Gallagher product manager Dan Loughnane.

A key focus for the designers was user experience. Often packing multiple features into a specialist piece of equipment like weigh scales requires a complex menu, with options that can be confusing to navigate.

A device like weigh scales may also be one not used frequently by all farmers. This could mean they forget how to use them, making the experience each time frustrating and time

consuming. Trying to extract information from scales and linking it to other systems also proved clumsy and put into the "too hard" basket.

"Farmers told us they often only use 20% of the functionality in equipment and devices, because of complexity, so we spent considerable time developing a very friendly user interface."

Repeated trips out to farmers to test and re-test improvements in the interface proved invaluable. The resulting TW-1 and TW-3 screen interface is extremely intuitive, from initial scale setup to final weigh data download.

The TW scales usability is also reflected in its touch screen. Its full colour display delivers maximum screen visibility regardless of sun light conditions. It is designed to be extremely robust and tough in a harsh operating environment, repelling water and capable of taking the knocks typical in the field.

The Gallagher team has taken cues from smart phone operation, ensuring every step of the scales operation is easily understood with help

options embedded throughout, doing away with the need for an instruction manual.

"The steps are very logical and give the operator every chance to work out where to go next."

The TW scales software is designed to connect simply and quickly to load bars and readers regardless of what brand they may be.

Connectivity is now crucial on all farm devices, and the scales offers a significant advantage over competing brands by connecting with Gallagher's own Animal Performance Software (APS) system.

APS provides easy access to reports on individual animal information, offering timely analysis and understanding of individual and mob performance.

All data recorded in the field can be directly uploaded into the APS software, doing away with the one thing farmers hate the most – having to enter data twice.

"It is just something you do not want to do at the end of the day, and once its downloaded you can simply check out the results, not do more data entry," says Dan.

Links can be achieved via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, connecting to the user's cell phone bringing up the Gallagher Dashboard software. The Dashboard provides a quick view of crucial animal data, easily visited on tablet, smartphone or PC.

The TW-1 is ideally suited for farmers already using livestock EID, and is capable of weighing and drafting by average daily gain, and drafting on weight ranges.

"It is ideal for finishers and graziers wanting to maximise weight gain, manage poor performers and maximise profit per hectare."

The TW-3 has all the capability of the TW-1, plus the ability to record animal traits, including ownership, breed, sex or age, and the ability to draft the animal based on the recorded traits.

"This is invaluable for a grazier who may have animals in one mob from several different owners, and they want to draft them out into their respective owners' mobs. It can be done easily, with a full report on how each owners' animals performed in that mob."

For stud operators, the TW-3 gives them the option to manage animals based on performance attributes other than just weight.

The TW-1 can be purchased from Ruralco Farm Supplies now with the TW-3 available from July, to order contact the Ruralco Farm Supplies team today on 0800 RURALNZ (787 256).

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Dave Workman Plumbing and Heating warming up rural Canterbury

Thanks to Dave Workman's experience of the UK home heating industry, many Canterbury homes are going to be a lot warmer and healthier this winter.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY JASON MCKENZIE

Dave arrived in New Zealand five years ago, having run his own company in Devon installing plumbing and heating systems.

"After what seemed like an eternity, 3 ½ years to be accurate of form filling, box ticking, fee paying, examination passes, more fee paying and frankly unnecessary bureaucracy, I have managed to get to a position where the authorities will allow me to ply my trade in New Zealand. They almost made it too difficult, but our family's desire to live in New Zealand made us continue."

The lure of Canterbury's hunting, fishing and winter sports was always there for Dave and his family. So, when things got tough and difficult through the immigration and trade registration process, they were always able to look towards the lifestyle they came to NZ for.

Dave and son Braddy are bringing UK central heating systems to Canterbury, they are operating primarily between Rakaia and Timaru. They have seen the demand for efficient home heating rise

this year with more and more new home builds in the region being built with modern "whole home" central heating systems.

They are installing radiant central heating systems using hot water filled radiators and radiant under floor heating, again using hot water. These systems have been used in the UK and Europe for over 50 years, so the technology is tried and tested.

Radiant central heating is widely regarded as the most energy efficient and healthiest form of home heating available today.

"Typically, in Canterbury we install a diesel fired central heating boiler to heat the hot water in the pipework system, this then travels to the radiators and transfers its heat through the radiators to the room or space. Our rural customers are comfortable using diesel as a heating fuel, as most properties would already store a certain amount of diesel."

As well as their home, central heating systems Dave and Braddy are increasingly be asked to install gas continuous hot water systems (Calfont's).

Home owners are actively seeking more economical and efficient ways of heating water for their homes and gas hot water systems



ABOVE: The team operate primarily from Rakaia to Timaru

MAIN IMAGE: Dave Workman & son Braddy are bringing central heating systems to Canterbury

offer economy and high performance for the customer.

High pressure hot water is on demand, and you only pay for the water you heat and then use.

Dave and his company have recently become Ruralco suppliers, accepting the Ruralco Card as a payment option.

"It made sense to look towards Ruralco. We live and operate in the rural community and see the value of being associated with the Ruralco brand".

"Accepting payment via Ruralco is providing another reason for our rural clients to regard us as their go to service for any home or on farm plumbing heating or gas services."

Providing effective home heating solutions is Dave and Braddy's passion, but regular plumbing and gas fitting services also take up a lot of their time.

Dave and Braddy are happy to talk to customers thinking of building a new home or renovating their existing home about central heating.

"Once you have lived in a home with central heating you will never want to be without it."

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Managing your farm resources

Dairy farmers are coming under increased pressure to improve their businesses' environmental footprints. AbacusBio farm consultant Kevin Wilson shares his perspectives and insights. WORDS SUPPLIED BY KEVIN WILSON, FARM CONSULTANT FOR ABACUSBIO



It feels like this expectation has come in a short and abrupt timeframe, but the reality is clear—intensive farming has an impact on the environment.

A report from the Ministry for the Environment showed a 69% increase in dairy cow numbers between 1994 and 2015, during which freshwater quality and biodiversity declined in some water ways.

Consequently, nutrients from rural and urban waterways are a growing problem. However, New Zealand's dairy industry has been very proactive in trying to turn the tide on these trends.

For instance, catchment groups around New Zealand are taking positive steps to educate and inform their local farmers. We have the Pathway for the Pomahaka, where NZ Landcare Trust and Pomahaka Farmers Water Care Group work together to support farmers as leaders, and develop strategies to meet new rules and water quality standards.

At the individual farm level, there are also good initiatives to minimise sediment and nitrogen losses from our soils. Primarily, the focus is to encourage best management practices for farm resources, particularly:

- nutrient management,



- waterway management,
- land management, and
- water use efficiency.

Sustainable milk plans can provide a practical approach to managing these resources and offer a farm-specific action plan that outlines steps to accelerate adoption of good environmental practices.

This effort will be beneficial for farms through efficient use of resources—at the same

time providing evidence of a sound farm environmental plan for future regulation changes.

For more information, visit these links:

www.landcare.org.nz/Regional-Focus/Gore-Office/Pomahaka-Project

www.dairynz.co.nz/media/3403269/sustainable-milk-plans.pdf

www.dairynz.co.nz/media/4106341/Good_management_practices_April_2016.pdf

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FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised
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- 2440 X 1225mm ID
 - 2440 x 1500mm ID
 - 3070 x 1530mm ID

STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS frame and bolt on channel drawbar - New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
- New 14" 8 ply tyres - New 14" galvanised spoke wheels - 5 leaf 1000kg springs
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EXTRAS

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

TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised
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- 3600 x 1800mm ID
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STANDARD FEATURES

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

EXTRAS

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

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SMART irrigation attracts Sustainable Farming Fund

Irrigating farmers will soon be growing 'more crop per drop' thanks to IrrigationNZ and the government's Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF). WORDS & IMAGE SUPPLIED BY IRRIGATIONNZ



Minister for Primary Industries, Hon. Nathan Guy, announced the successful SFF projects, with IrrigationNZ awarded funding to develop its 'SMART Tools and Tips for Irrigators' project.

IrrigationNZ CEO, Andrew Curtis says the project will enable farmers and growers to make a significant improvement in irrigation efficiency and for potential irrigators to have access to comprehensive information on developing irrigation.

"We know from working with irrigators, and through analysing Farm Environment Plan audits, that environmental compliance, and particularly achieving Good Management Practise (GMP), are the biggest challenges faced by the sector. The Smart Tools and Tips project will be instrumental in helping irrigators achieve impending GMP regulatory requirements, while at the same time, improving their yield quality and quantity and minimising their operating costs."

Curtis estimates \$1.5bn in farm gate value could be created from the successful

implementation of Irrigation GMP and this project "has a significant role in helping to achieve this."

"The SMART Tools and Tips project compliments the investment government has already made in irrigation infrastructure development and modernisation to get 'new water' to the farm gate. It also supports the investment they've made in Freshwater Management, ensuring New Zealand's freshwater continues to support a full range of community values."

Irrigating farmers were coming under increased scrutiny around their water use efficiency and the SMART project would provide them with the knowledge and practical tools to be more efficient, without impacting growth, productivity and reliability of supply.

"Farmers and growers make a significant investment in irrigation infrastructure, but in order to benefit from that investment, they need to really understand how to maximise its use and efficiency. The SMART project

will give farmers and growers practical tools to help them make a difference in terms of efficiency, productivity and environmental outcomes."

The project attracted \$294,000 and will enable IrrigationNZ to work with a range of irrigator user groups to understand the barriers and benefits to the uptake of Irrigation GMP; and then develop programmes and strategies to overcome the barriers and build on the benefits. It will also enable IrrigationNZ to convert its current suite of 'traditional' knowledge resources and training into an e-learning format.

"Farmers and growers are busy people and getting them off-farm for workshops can be a challenge. Having all of our key resources available on line will ensure they can develop an informed and clearer understanding of how to operate within new GMP regulatory requirements. Ultimately, it will increase their efficiency gains, increase skills and capability and improve sustainability and reliability of supply."



A trek to restoration and repair

When Phil Everest stepped onto the plane to fly home from Nepal two years ago after a trekking adventure a return trip was not top of his priorities.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

Running a 280ha dairy operation brings plenty of demands and little time off, and he had other places in the world he was as keen to visit, when time permitted.

But the earthquake that struck while he and his group were literally in the air changed his plans.

The Nepal quake in April 2015 killed 9,000 people and wreaked havoc in a country that never had a lot of wealth to begin with. For Phil and his travelling companions the knowledge that the porters who had faithfully guided them on their trek to Everest base camp were in the midst of this disaster was too great to ignore.

"They were from the village of Khari Khola where three of the five main buildings at their monastery had been really hammered."

The seven male members of the initial trekking group decided to band together and return to the village on a rebuilding mission. They also hoped to bring some new ideas on construction to the earthquake prone region that locals could easily adopt in future projects.

Phil says the support from Canterbury businesses to fulfil equipment needs was overwhelming. This included supplies from Ruralco where he has been an ATS Shareholder for many years. Ruralco Suppliers including Skellerup provided boots, socks and leather gloves that proved invaluable for building site protection and Blacklow's Tradezone for engineering supplies.

And the group was not short on skills to help a devastated community. Phil and a pig farmer bought a practical approach, a couple of Air New Zealand aircraft engineers helped with equipment assembly, while a quantity surveyor and project manager helped with the work process in a demanding higher altitude third world environment.

"A key part of what we wanted to do involved using stone filled gabion baskets for construction. These had proven to work after the quake in Haiti, and there is no shortage of rocks in Nepal."

On arrival, the men got busy rebuilding the village monastery, completely reworking traditional building design by constructing a concrete pad floor complete with reinforcing steel, something locals had never seen before.

Wooden trusses were provided from pit sawn timber, and its varying interpretations of "4*2" made for some adaptive carpentry techniques.

"You soon learned to work with what you had given, and make the most of it."

Six locals provided manpower to assist the seven Kiwis in work that cracked off at 5.30am and went to dark at 6.00pm for three weeks.

Armed with 200kg of gear that included wheel barrows, a concrete mixer and power tools the group had an array of equipment foreign to the villagers, and all was gratefully accepted when left with them on completion of the job.

Phil says the wheel barrows in particular were a huge hit with the adults and children alike. While the men enjoyed how easy it made their jobs, their children like children everywhere were ever keen for joy rides in the barrows around the building site.

The concrete mixer was a vast improvement from making mortar on the ground, and it worked well until the electricity faded at the end of the day.

The crew were warmly welcomed by villagers, having three cooked meals a day turned out on a simple kerosene stove.

"That included a delicious rice porridge none of us had had before then."

They also soon appreciated how deep the ties were between the two countries, thanks to Sir Edmund Hillary's untiring work in the Himalayan communities.

"We visited Sir Ed's hospitals and schools during our last visit to Everest Base Camp. We had a doctor accompany us too from NZ who had worked in Ed's hospital and came with a pack load of medications. The communities rely upon farming and portering for trekkers, so there were strong links to the climbing community in NZ there too."

All the children's schools had not only text books but exercise books supplied through Sir Edmund's Himalayan Trust, and New Zealand features in all the classes' geography lessons.

After three weeks, the men had rebuilt the monastery, finishing up all but the final roofing which they learned had been completed shortly after their arrival back home in late April.

The night before they returned home the men were treated to the "full royal" reception, with a feast and party involving much singing and celebration from a village happy to see a key part of its village restored.

Phil acknowledges the irony that only through the earthquake's destruction were they able to witness a part of Nepalese life that a typical trekker would never have experienced.

"We were all given many scarves in thanks, and were told the reception we got was only for very special occasions, we were the ones who felt lucky."

Phil also quickly acknowledges the ironic link between his surname and his recently completed mission to Nepal.

"It was not lost on the Nepalese either, they thought it was a real laugh to have the surname I did, and wanted to check out my passport to see if it really was true."

For Phil, the earthquake and restoration visit two years later had also bought another tie to the country.

A Nepalese guide who took the group on their first visit now works for Phil on his Flemington dairy farm.

After six treks to the summit of Everest and working in stressful rescue circumstances pulling his countrymen from an avalanche in 2014, Kaji Sherpa had decided he was done with mountaineering.

"He came over just after the quake, when I told him if he was ever in New Zealand to drop in. He did, and he ended up working for us. He is very conscientious and an excellent stockman."

It was Kaji who managed to pull a lot of the logistics together for the group's restoration visit this year.

Phil says it would be good to return and see their work completed, but farm demands and the time involved make it a tough mission to re-visit.

"We were happy to do what we did for the people there. It was simply not an option to hop on the plane after the quake and not feel we should do something for those people—they are very welcoming and generous, despite having few material things themselves."

TOP: The leather gloves supplied by Ruralco proved invaluable for building site protection

MIDDLE: The first roof truss goes up—a new concept for the locals who traditionally use a ridge pole

BOTTOM: Chongba and Kaji (Father and son) fill the gabion baskets tightly with speed and skill



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Any employer would answer this question the same: would you let a worker loose on a new piece of machinery without teaching them what to do?

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY JANE FOWLES, COMPLIANCE PARTNERS



Of course not. Training and the competence of our workers is paramount to equip our workers with the knowledge and skills to work safely and well. We all know that we need to provide information, training and supervision to enable workers to carry out their work safely.

In the last few years we've seen numerous prosecutions for lack of adequate training and supervision. A meat processing company was fined \$57,949 and ordered to pay \$15,000 to an employee whose hand was crushed in a machine—along with guarding being missing, the court heard that the employee had not been adequately trained and was unsupervised while operating the machine. A sawmilling worker, who had worked with the employer for 6 years, removed a guard while cleaning a

machine—there was no interlocking device and the rollers kept operating and he crushed his right hand. Again, no formal or documented training and no documented procedure in place. The company was fined \$32,500. Two dairy assistants—one having been there six months and one about one month—were manually cleaning the vat as the automatic system was broken. The newer worker, climbed into the vat to clean the wall, and the other poured the mixed solution in. Upon completion, one of the workers, noticed her knee was burning and advised her boss. The first aid received was not the recommended first aid on the safety data sheet. Her leg continued to burn—she talked to her boss who told her to go to hospital. Again, no training, no documented procedures and incorrect First Aid. The fine here was \$18,000 and \$3,000 repairation.

Training versus competence

These are two terms that are often confused—they mean different things. The Oxford Dictionary defines training as “The action of teaching a person a particular skill or type of behaviour”. Essentially, training is a structured approach to give someone knowledge. It defines competence as “The ability to do something successfully or efficiently”. Competency consists of several aspects, of which training is only one. It also includes skills, knowledge, experience and understanding of the task at hand, the surrounding environment, and a range of human factors.

See the difference? Training and/or qualifications by themselves will not necessarily mean that your worker is competent. There are many situations where your worker's theoretical knowledge will not be enough to deem them competent. It is a case of where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts—all the aspects of competency must be taken into consideration to deem someone successful to undertake the task.

So how do we train?

- External training courses—these are the courses that the workers go to off farm for a range of topics that they might get a certificate or a unit standard;
- On the job training—this is where the worker shadows you, or someone senior, to learn how to do their tasks as you would expect (also known as a buddy system);
- Using clear written procedures of how you want the tasks on farm to be done—these can be used for on the job training.

So, how can you ensure ‘competence’ on farm?

- Speak to your workers—how confident do they feel? You may deem them competent but they may not actually feel confident in the task they are carrying out. The aim is that the workers will know when they are not competent and they will tell you;
- Never assign people to a role they are not competent to do. If you are giving a task to someone who is not competent make sure you've organised some form of training;

And remember, keep a central, written, up-to-date record of all training courses your workers have undertaken and their level of competence to work.

Think smart before you start.

KING TONY 36 PIECE 3/8" DRIVE 12PT COMBINATION SOCKET SET

36 pce

KT3036CR01
• 36pce 3/8" drive
12pt standard &
deep socket set
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x 153 x 40mm

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12pt standard
sockets: 6-22mm
• KT3530S-series - 3/8" drive
12pt standard sockets:
1/4-7/8"
• KT3769-08F - 3/8" drive
reversible ratchet
• KT3571-08 - 3/8" drive sliding
1-handle
• KT3452-08F - 3/8" drive
flexible handle
• KT3792 - 3/8" drive univer-
sal joint
• KT3221-series - 3/8" drive
extension bars:
3 & 6"



KT3508MR
8PC 3/8DR DEEP
SKT SET 10-19mm

Contains:
• KT3235M-series - 3/8"
drive 6pt deep sockets:
10-19mm



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when you buy the
KT3036CR01

KT3108PR8
3/8"DR HEX SOCK-
ETS ON RAIL
Contains:
• KT3025-series - 3/8"
drive hexagon bit sockets
- H3-H12

KING TONY 18PC RING & OPEN END WRENCH SET TET POUCH 6-24MM

18 PC

6-24 mm

KT1218MRN
• 18pce
• Combination (ring
and open end)
wrench set in
pouch

Contains:
• KT1080 series
combination
wrenches: 6-24mm



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\$201.25 incl GST



KT1282MR
KING TONY
STUBBY R&OE
WRENCH SET
8-19MM



BONUS
when you buy the
KT1218MRN

Contains:
• KT10D0 series stubby
combination wrenches: 8, 9,
10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17,
18, 19mm

11 PIECE RING AND OPEN END WRENCH SETS

11 PC

KT1211MR

Metric
Contains:
• KT1060 series
combination wrenches:
8-24mm

EXC. GST
\$89⁰⁰
\$102.35 incl GST



11 PC

KT1211SR

Imperial
Contains:
• KT5080 series combi-
nation wrenches: 1/4, 5/16,
3/8, 7/16, 1/2, 9/16, 11/16, 3/4,
13/16, 7/8, 15/16"

EXC. GST
\$89⁰⁰
\$102.35 incl GST

1/2" Drive

KT4408MP

METRIC
Contains:
• KT4535M series
1/2" drive 6pt stand-
ard impact sockets:
10-24mm

EXC. GST
\$45⁰⁰
\$51.75 incl GST



1/2" Drive

KT4408SP

IMPERIAL
Contains:
• KT4535S-series
1/2" drive 6pt stand-
ard impact sockets:
3/8 - 15/16"

EXC. GST
\$45⁰⁰
\$51.75 incl GST

7 PIECE PHILIPS/ SLOTTED SCREWDRIVER SET

7 pce

KT30117MR

• 7pce
• Phillips/slotted screw
driver set
Contains:
• KT1421-series - Phillips
screwdrivers: No. 1-2
• KT1422-series - slotted
screwdrivers: 3-8mm

EXC. GST
\$37⁰⁰
\$42.55 incl GST



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8PIECE 1/2 DRIVE DEEP SOCKET SETS

KT4410MP01

METRIC
Contains:
• KT4435M-series -
1/2" drive 6pt deep
impact sockets: 12-
24mm

1/2" Drive
EXC. GST
\$75⁰⁰
\$86.25 incl GST



KT4410SP

IMPERIAL
Contains:
• KT4435S-series -
1/2" drive 6pt deep
impact sockets:
1/2-15/16"

1/2" Drive
EXC. GST
\$75⁰⁰
\$86.25 incl GST

KING TONY 10 PIECE METRIC EXTRA LONG HEX KEY SET

10 pce

KT20210MR

• 10pce
• Extra long arm hex keys

Contains:
• KT1125MR series -
extra long arm hex keys:
3-17mm

EXC. GST
\$89⁰⁰
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KT20107MR01
KING TONY 7PC LNG BALL
PT HEX KEY SET

Contains:
• KT1130MR-series
- long ball hex keys: 2.5-10mm



BONUS
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KT20210MR



Strong environmental gains on farm show opportunities

Substantial reductions in the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions at a South Canterbury farm show environmental gains can be made hand in hand with a farm's growth, scientists say. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY AGRESEARCH

Record keeping back to 1991, when Bill and Shirley Wright took on the sheep and cattle farm at Cave, has allowed scientists to study the profile of greenhouse gas emissions over time in an evolving farm system.

Analysis of the Wrights' farm system in the last couple of years has also provided important insights into nitrate leaching (the loss of nitrogen), and what impacts on the amount of leaching and how best it can be managed.

"The present environmental and water quality issues facing the agricultural sector has highlighted some challenges that need to be addressed," Bill Wright says.

"Farmers are conscious of their collective responsibilities to not only restore water quality and minimise their environmental footprint, but this is material we are now only learning how to manage in a way that not only protects the environment but provides opportunities to be more productive with less impact."

Scientists from AgResearch worked with funders the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre (NZAGRC) and the Ministry for Primary Industries on the study of gas emissions at the Wrights' farm, while the Forages for Reduced Nitrate Leaching (FRNL) programme has brought together funders DairyNZ, the Foundation for Arable Research, AgResearch, Plant and Food Research, Landcare Research and the Government in funding research around the nitrate leaching.

Data shows the Wrights' farming system increased its efficiency and reduced the amount of greenhouse gas emissions per kilogram of product (meat and wool)—also known as emissions intensity—by 18% between 1991 and 2014, and a further 17% by 2015. Emissions in 1991 were 16.9 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent gas* per kilogram of product, 13.8kg per kg of product in 2014, and 11.4kg per kg of product in 2015.

The farm changed from predominantly lamb and wool production in 1991 to a large proportion of beef, plus dairy support in recent years. The total amount of product leaving the farm had dramatically increased due to more forage production and use, and adoption of new technologies. The reduction in emissions intensity between 2014 and 2015 was largely due to reduced livestock numbers, in response to dry conditions in the spring of 2014 and 2015.

"What these numbers show is that with the right choices the emissions intensity can be effectively reduced while also developing a farm that is more resilient, more financially viable and still producing quality products," says Dr Robyn Dynes, who leads AgResearch's Farm Systems team.

"For the Wrights, as for many sheep and beef farmers, increasing the efficiency and resilience of their farming business had huge spin-off benefits for the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions. New Zealand farmers are playing a big part in lowering the emissions intensity of New Zealand's

agricultural production. Without efficiency gains, New Zealand's agricultural emissions would now be more than 30 per cent higher than in 1990 due to increased production."

From the research undertaken in the FRNL programme, the Wrights also gained a clear view of the nitrate leaching on their farm - 18 kg per hectare in 2014 and 13 kg per hectare in 2015—and how different pastures and crops can help manage that.

FRNL programme leader Ina Pinxterhuis, a senior scientist at DairyNZ, says the inclusion of a network of monitored farms in the research programme is invaluable.

"The farmers keep the researchers focussed on delivering practical solutions that maintain the viability of the business. They also test the FRNL options on their farms, which is highly valuable for demonstration to other farmers and for determining what information is required for decision making and management support."

Working together on programmes looking at nitrate leaching and greenhouse gas emissions is important to discover solutions that benefit both goals, says Dr Pinxterhuis.

*Note: Carbon dioxide equivalent or CO₂e is a term which describes different greenhouse gases in a common unit. For any quantity and type of greenhouse gas, CO₂e signifies the amount of CO₂ which would have the equivalent aggregate global warming impact over the course of the next century.

Up to your armpits in farm work.

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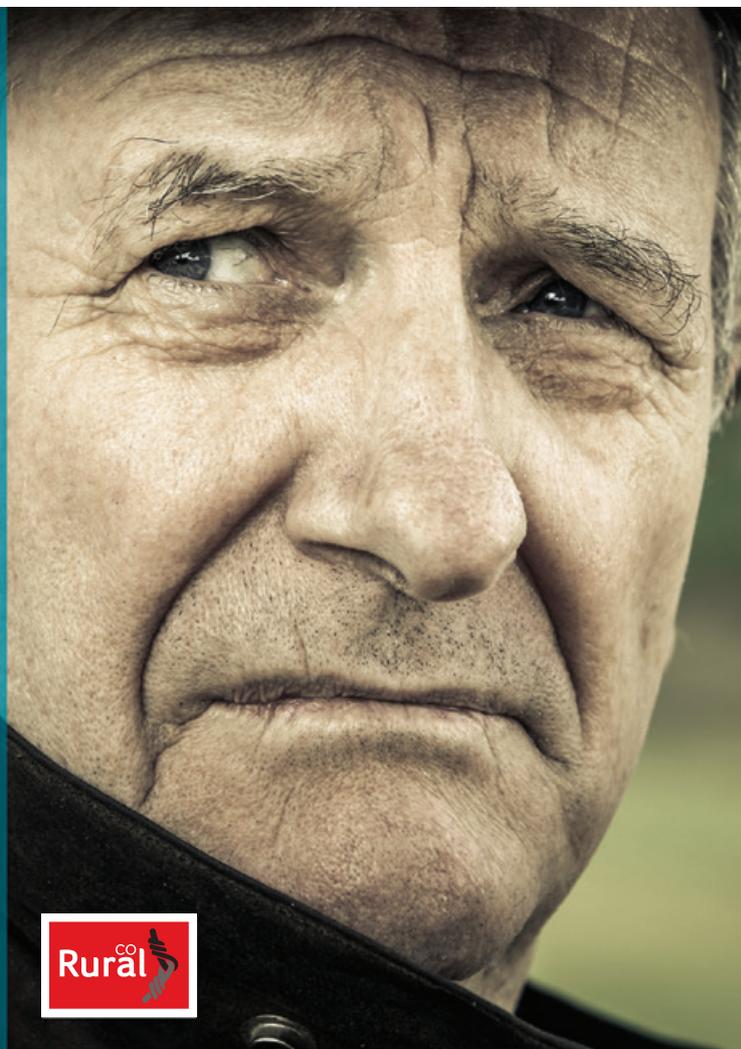
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Diesel bug prevention key to engine health

Anyone operating diesel vehicles and machinery will be aware of the damage and seriousness of problems caused by diesel bugs. But a greater awareness around preventative steps and being a little more vigilant could be the difference between major breakdowns and inefficiencies, and the trouble-free operation of your diesel vehicles.

WORDS BY ANITA BODY



Because diesel is an organic fuel, it provides an ideal environment for fungi, yeast and bacteria to grow. Bugs require warmth, a hydrocarbon source (diesel) and an oxygen supply (water) making diesel tanks a perfect incubator. If all three of these conditions are present, bug spores can settle, germinate and grow at the water/diesel interface. Other diesel bugs include fungi and bacteria. When fungi spores grow, they produce long strands which inter-tangle and form 'mats'. The major by-products from this growth are corrosive acids—fungi need an acidic environment to grow. Bacteria are small single cell microorganisms that reproduce in the presence of water, producing polymer strands. Anaerobic bacteria, which grow in the absence of oxygen, are more commonly known as "sulphur reducing bacteria" and produce sulphide and hydrogen sulphide gas. Yeasts are another bug, and grow in the absence of water. They have two main effects on

diesel—they can produce organic acids and they act as a buffer to allow both bacteria and fungi to grow simultaneously.

Given these various characteristics, diesel bugs cause problems in two major ways. Corrosion is one, thanks to sulphides and acids produced as by-products of bug growth. These are particularly corrosive to aluminium and aluminium-copper alloys. The other is blockages, especially to fuel lines and pumps, and can potentially lead to engine failure. It can also be responsible for poor fuel economy, reduced power, and increased wear and tear on fuel pumps and injectors.

So how do you know if your diesel tank is harbouring diesel bugs? It's not always easy to tell by just looking at the fuel. Possible indicators include:

- Visual scum at water/diesel interface
- Permanent haze
- Poor filterability

- Poor water separation
- Increased corrosiveness
- Sulphide (rotten egg) smell

Even clear and bright diesel could contain high spore numbers, so the only reliable way of determining the quality and type of bug present in your diesel supply is microbiological testing by a trained professional. Correct sampling technique is vital and samples should be taken from the bottom diesel layer in the tank. All sampling equipment, containers and lids, must be cleaned, soaked in methylated spirits and thoroughly dried in an oven for 30 minutes at 120°C.

The old saying, 'prevention is better than a cure' holds particularly true when it comes to tackling the problem of diesel bugs. The easiest and most effective way to control bugs is to eliminate any free water in the tank. Without water the spores cannot germinate. This also eliminates problems with both corrosive by-products and blockages.

Winter months are the worst time of the year for getting diesel bug. Rain, ice and snow are responsible for creating more water condensation, contaminating diesel in fuel tanks and providing the right conditions for bugs to thrive.

Preventative measures can include:

- Where possible, water bottoms should be drawn off tanks at least once a week.
- Having a minimum settling time of three days for tanks after new product has been dropped—this allows any spores in the diesel to settle out of 75 per cent of the diesel.
- Filtering through a five micro filter will, in most cases, allow even diesel with a high bug concentration, to be immediately useable.
- There are also products available that prevent moisture settling.

In the past biocides have been used to kill off the bugs, but the resulting 'waste' will still block filters and fuel lines. Biocides are also extremely hazardous so extra care is needed when using them. In the case of serious bug contamination, the preferred treatment option is to fully clean out your diesel system.

For more information on diesel bugs, how to prevent and how to treat them, please contact Don Joseph, Ruralco Fuel Sales Manager on 027 839 7351 or by emailing Don.Joseph@ruralco.co.nz



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Tech Tips

BECOME TECH-SAVVY WITH RURALCO'S TOP TECHNOLOGY TIPS



Kin2kin

Social media can be a great tool for feeling more connected when you live in an isolated place. New Zealand designed app, kin2kin, makes staying connected with your family even easier. The app is designed to share photos and communicate with those closest to you, no matter where they live, in a private network. It's easy enough for grandparents and safe enough for kids under 13. No need to worry about security settings and perfectly curated images—kin2kin lets you share the everyday on a secure platform with those you love. With kin2kin you can see all your family in one place, and photos are organised by who is tagged in them. For more information or to download the free app visit www.kin2kin.com.

How to protect yourself against scam email

- Do not reply. A reply only serves to confirm that your email address is active and ready for further offers.
- Notify the spammer's Internet Service Provider (ISP). If spamming is against the ISP's policy for email account holders, the ISP may penalise the sender.
- Notify your own ISP or IT support. They may be able to advise you whether filters can be placed on your email programme to stop such emails.
- Do not forward hoax emails. Take a common-sense approach when you receive strangely

worded or sensationalist emails in your inbox—if you think the email is a hoax it probably is. Do your friends a favour and don't pass them on.

- Unless the email is from a known and trusted source, do not open attachments or click on links, as these can infect your computer with malicious programs.
- Think twice about emails from trusted sources but are 'Forwards' of joke or chain letter types, these can also be dangerous.

SOURCE: www.police.govt.nz

Five simple tasks you didn't know Siri could do

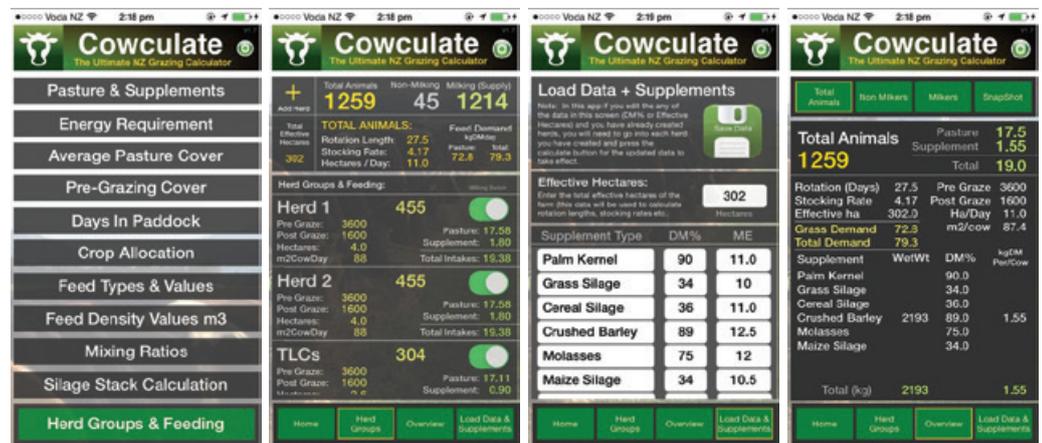
- Set alarms "Siri, set an alarm for 7:30am"
- Convert currencies "Siri, convert 50 pounds to New Zealand dollars"
- Take down notes "Siri, can you write a note?"
- Set calendar reminders "Siri will you set a reminder?"
- Flip a coin or roll a dice "Siri flip a coin"/"Siri roll dice"



Cowculate: The Ultimate NZ Grazing Calculator

BY NLR PASTORAL LTD

This app was developed by me, a New Zealand dairy farmer who wanted a quick and easy method of calculating, feeding rates, break sizes, dry matter calculations, per cow calculations and the like. Whether you're a farm owner, a 50:50 Sharemilker or a Farm Assistant, you will find this app extremely helpful.



Lost or Stolen Cards?

If you are a Ruralco Cardholder and your card has been lost or stolen, you should contact Ruralco on 0800 RURALNZ (787 256) immediately. In all cases, be sure to quote your account number—this can be found on your statement.

Co-op News

Winter a great time to tackle farm safety

The winter months are a great time to catch up on office work and compliance issues. Effective and efficient farm safety is one of the many important components which assist in the smooth running of your farming operation and requires regular review. Take some of the guesswork out of the process by taking part in one of Ruralco's popular farm safety workshops. Workshops are set to take place in Ashburton on 20 June, 18 July & 22 August. Please enquire about the possibility of sessions also being held in Timaru. It costs \$550 (GST exclusive) and places are strictly limited.

For more information or to reserve your spot please contact Peter Jacob on 03 307 5124 or 0800 787 256, email book@ruralco.co.nz or reserve your spot online at www.ruralco.co.nz/farmsafety.

Is it time to take a closer 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? Ruralco Energy is here to make managing your energy accounts easy by continuing to work with our partners—Meridian, Genesis Energy, Nova Energy and Kea Energy, to ensure you get the best offers available to suit your individual needs.

Contact Ruralco Energy Account Manager Tracey Gordon today on 0800 787 256 to get an energy price comparison on your accounts.

Access changes for Ashburton Farm Supplies

Access to the Farm Supplies store in Ashburton is via the Havelock Street doors only, while earthquake repairs take place. The Burnett Street entrance will be closed. During the renovations, the Gift & Homeware store has been relocated to East Street (opposite the Information Centre).

This relocation is only temporary while the store undergoes earthquake strengthening work and renovations. Keep an eye out for dates for the return of Gift & Homeware to the beautifully renovated store on Burnett Street.

Save up to 31¢ on bulk fuel

Did you know bulk fuel deliveries to your farm or business can save you up to 31¢ per litre compared to the national pump price? That's the saving made by those already utilising this service.

To arrange bulk fuel deliveries for your farm or business, contact us today on 0800 787 256 and start saving. All purchases will be listed on your monthly account. Minimum delivery 500 litres and terms and conditions apply.

LOOKING FOR A FUEL STORAGE TANK?

You can either lease or purchase a fuel storage tank using your Ruralco Card and start saving with bulk deliveries direct your farm, also saving down time.

LOOKING TO LEASE?

Nymic Engineering, offers leasing of fuel tanks charged directly to your Ruralco card account. You can lease a 500, 1,000 or 1,995 litre standing or ground tanks or a tank to suit all your on farm fuelling needs. You'll save on the initial capital cost and you'll benefit from Nymic's maintenance package and be assured that it will be compliant. Contact us to enquire about leasing a fuel storage tank from Nymic Engineering.

LOOKING TO BUY?

You can also purchase a fuel tank through our Farm Supplies stores. Tanks can be ordered and delivered on farm in a wide range of sizes to meet your requirements with the tank arriving fully tested and ready for use. Contact us for more information on purchasing a fuel tank for your business



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Help us to keep in touch

If you have recently moved, please let us know so we can keep our database up to date and to make sure you don't miss out on any important information.

To update your details, please contact the Customer Service team on 0800 787 256.

2017 United Wheat Growers Prizing—28 June

Thank you to all those that entered the 2017 United Wheat Growers wheat competition—this year's prize giving will be held on 28 June at the Lincoln Events Centre. Doors open at 5:30pm with the evening including complimentary drinks and nibbles with the awards ceremony beginning at 6:30pm.



The Ruralco Instore Days are on the way

Preparations for the 23rd annual Instore Days are well underway! Keep an eye out for dates and exclusive specials negotiated just for you. More information will be coming your way soon.

For those unfamiliar with the annual two-day event, Instore Days has been described as a mini-field days, and is a great opportunity for you to come along and make the most of some fantastic deals on offer from all aspects of our business including Farm Supplies and suppliers to the Ruralco Card. It's also a great place to catch up with other Cardholders, farmers and their families from throughout the South Island.

Win a water blaster with your spring cropping & pasture purchase

Book an on-farm consultation with Ruralco Seed to discuss your spring crop and pasture requirements by 31 August and go in the draw to win 1 of 3 Stihl RE 109 Waterblasters worth \$495 each.

As an independent supplier, Ruralco Seed can recommend the best product and solution for your farm, and you can be assured you are getting the best agronomy advice and competitive pricing for your individual needs.

To book a consultation contact the team today on 0800 RURALNZ (787 256).



Your end of financial year checklist

With the Year End just around the corner for many of us, we thought it would be timely to provide the following reminders and checks:

SIGNATURES AND AUTHORISATION:

- Check cards on your account if you have had staff changes
- Check bank authorities/signatories/mandates
- Check automatic payments and direct debit authorities
- Check sub accounts/personal accounts—if staff have access to your account, consider whether a sub account may be more appropriate

HOUSEKEEPING:

- Cashbook updated and reconciled
- Cashbook spring cleaned and backed up
- Accountants report prepared and next year opened
- Opening livestock aged up/checked

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Milton

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Health 2000
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Rakaia

Six Below
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Rangiora

Riverside Horticulture
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Tekapo

Four Square Tekapo
Convenience

Wanaka

Central Lakes Engineering
5% discount

Flooring Xtra Wanaka
Quoted Price

Guthrie Bowron Wanaka
Up to 12.5% discount

Selectrix Wanaka
Up to 5% discount

Southern Lakes Panelbeating
5% discount

Wanaka Auto Electrical & Mechanical
Up to 5% discount

Wanaka Joinery & Glass
Quoted Price

Wanaka Marine & Sport
Up to 5% discount

Safeguard your account—keep it up to date

If your staff has recently changed, don't forget to update the relevant information with Ruralco. This can include: Ruralco Card authorisation and the names of those you allow to use your account number;

The holders of an Approved Handler Certificate, Dangerous Goods Licence or a Toxic Substances Licence.

Where staff have moved on, it may also be necessary to check sub accounts attached to your shareholder account. Please remember that the parent shareholder account is ultimately responsible for the settlement of all transactions on any associated sub accounts.

All of these useful details can be updated service team or email ruralco@ruralco.co.nz.

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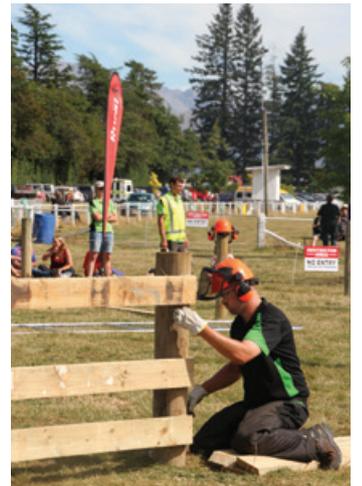


Mt Alford Mud Plug



NZ Young Farmers Aorangi Final in Methven

RIGHT: This contest showcases the depth of talent in the agricultural sector
BELOW: James Gunson proving his fencing ability



Laghmor School Annual Pea Straw Cart



Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge Cheque Presentation



Rural Women—Mens After 5 Dinner

LEFT: Bernie Davidson addressing the attendees
ABOVE: John Tavendale, Mark Lemon, Richard Loe, Rupert Curd, Bob Verrall



Out and about



South Island Agricultural Field Days

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