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JUNE / JULY 2016



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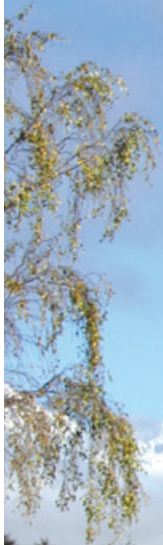


ON THE COVER:
Chas Todhunter,
with his daughter
Friederica (11)

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Committed to leaving Glenfalloch a better place





Snow-capped mountains, wide river valleys and golden tussocks are all part of the high country parcel for Chas and Dietlind Todhunter at Mid Canterbury's Glenfalloch Station. BY KATE TAYLOR

The property marks the end of the public road up the Rakaia River valley from Mt Hutt towards the main divide, but the stunning view doesn't stop—one of the reasons why a corporate conference venue and accommodation business is a valuable boost to the farm's income.

Glenfalloch Station, owned by Chas and Dietlind Todhunter, ranges in height from 500 metres above sea level at the river and 620m at the homestead to 2,005m on Smite Peak. It has an annual rainfall of 1,600mm a year while the main divide behind it has about 14 metres, which explains the amount of water often seen filling the Rakaia River. The property has several expansive gravel fans spreading down from the mountains that give some idea of the force of water that put them there.

Glenfalloch Station was originally split from Double Hill and farmed unsuccessfully for almost 20 years and then abandoned because of the depression and previous overstocking. Jim (JR) and Rose Todhunter bought it 1939 and put Hec Urquhart in as manager until 1971 when Tom and Prue Todhunter took over.

"Hec did a lot of the fencing and snow fencing here and most of the development was done during his years, such as superphosphate, subdivision and breaking in a lot of paddocks," says Chas.

"My father's Dad came here and worked for Hec for a few years then Hec worked for my father for a couple of years and then retired. He did an around the world trip and sadly died on the way home."

Jim and Rose Todhunter had also owned Cleardale Station, further down the Rakaia Valley, and Lake Heron Station, accessible at the back of Glenfalloch or out the other side to the upper Ashburton Gorge. Both are still owned by members of the Todhunter family. Cropping farm Highfield between Methven

and Rakaia was added to the business in 1985, with additions in 1986 and 1987, but was sold when the family took all of the properties their separate ways in 1995.

Chas managed Glenfalloch for his father from 2000 to 2002 and leased the land (buying stock and plant). He married Dietlind in 2003.

Originally from northern Germany, Dietlind came to New Zealand to attend Lincoln University on a two year scholarship to study post-graduate economics. After spending most of the two years cycling out to the university, she started carpooling. One of the people in the car was Chas.

Dietlind went on to work in Tranzrail's corporate office in Wellington for two years (now Kiwi

Rail) and then was based in Sydney for four years working for large US based international consultancy company Booz Allen Hamilton. After returning to Canterbury to marry Chas, she worked for a year for an economist in Christchurch before the couple had two children—Friederica, now 11, and Hendrick, 8.

Chas and Dietlind bought Glenfalloch from the family trust in 2011.

"Moving away from the family umbrella meant Glenfalloch had to create its own funding for development but also could be given what it could handle, rather than what tied in with the other properties," he says.

"Up until '95 it had been part of the greater business for 55 years."

Chas and Dietlind are developing about 15 hectares a year. It's marginal to call it cultivatable, he says, as some of it is direct drilled. They have 136ha of "good, flat paddocks with pretty good dirt" that Chas says holds on longer when everything else is drying out. Of the total 10,000ha, about 2,000ha is fenced with 8,000ha described as summer tops. It winters 7,500 stock units including 250 angus cows calving this year and finishes all lambs to autumn. Fodder beet has been introduced to Glenfalloch's cropping regime enabling R2 heifers to be brought up to weight earlier and put to the bull. This change has seen the property change from a store market to a finishing property over the past three years.

Last year 45 heifers were calved and weaned.

"They all had very good in-calf rates and they calved without too much trouble and raised the calves alright. We have another 45 in calf again and we will increase that to 60 going to the bull this coming year."

ABOVE: Chas and his daughter Friederica (11) in the woolshed

BELOW: Snow-capped mountains and wide river valleys are part of the Glenfalloch parcel





ABOVE: The corporate conference venue and accommodation business is a valuable boost to the farm's income

ABOVE RIGHT: The remoteness and beautiful surroundings are the attraction for visitors to Glenfalloch
TOP: The property marks the end of the public road up the Rakaia River valley, towards the main divide

"Fodder beet is the reason we have been able to change our system," says Dietlind.

"We were never able to get the heifers up to a reasonably good weight for calving. We never grew out the heifers as well as we do now. It's also a backup for lighter or older cows or even for first calvers who are a little light and need a bit of a boost. It just allows more flexibility in our system."

Chas says it's also giving a decent yield off a small area. "Realism has crept in that yields were not going to be 40 tonnes, they were going to be 20, which is still good, growth rates were not going to be a kilo a day but 600 grams, which is still good."

He says they have been measuring and weighing as part of a Beef + Lamb NZ fodder beet group.

"The results have been properly analysed and show the facts on what you can achieve and what is realistic," adds Dietlind.

The Todhunters have also put single ewes on the fodder beet pre lambing to allow covers to come away on lambing country, as well as hoggets. It

costs \$1,800-\$2,500/ha but Chas says at cents per kilo of dry matter it's still cheaper than other feeds, although there is more wastage with the sheep than with cattle.

Rape, kale and turnips have been planted for the ewes and hoggets this year.

"It comes down to timing a bit, but after Christmas we will drill turnips rather than swedes now. The kale or rape depends on where that paddock is in the rotation."

Glenfalloch has about 2,000 Perendale ewes with the flock heavily based on Blair and Sara Gallagher's Rangiatea stud at Mt Somers. The move away from merinos in the 1990s, caused by problems with footrot, was supported by Chas.

"My father had decided to change and I thought it was a good idea. Most of the ewe hoggets were from Rangiatea originally to start the flock off and we've used his rams over them since then. He seems to be trying to do the right sort of thing and he's as close to our environment as we could find."

Chas says the Perendales have a reputation for hardiness, which is a distinct advantage in Glenfalloch's environment.

"We thought it was safest to start with Perendales and see where we went from there. We were in front of the game at that stage, they became quite popular a few years after that."

But that Glenfalloch climate started to change and no longer suited the total Perendale sheep flock.

"All through my life, until 2000, Glenfalloch had reliable summer rainfall. Then we started getting dry autumns and with that, the Perendales were taking too much feed away under the cows and struggling themselves. We didn't have enough feed through the autumn to get them to the ram in good enough condition so we backed off a little bit and bought in some merinos to utilise different country through the summer. They climb higher so it makes more room for the cows and the remaining Perendales.

Glenfalloch has 1,000 Merino ewes with rams bought from Glenaan (down the road), Earnsclough in Central Otago and Melrose in Hawarden. It used to grow 20 micron wool and now their merino wool goes to the ultrafine wool market with 14.5 micron for the hoggets and 15.5-16 micron for the ewes.

"There's no sand in it and it's really white. It's a small flock but slowly increasing," says Dietlind.

"They are easy care and on this property we don't get the strong winds picking up the sand from the river bed. We've driven to try to produce good quality fine wool with good staple strength."

Their wool is sold through private auction with a large amount going to Australian house, Schnider. Chas says although they have stayed focused and hope the wool industry will improve, the merino wool part of their business is much smaller than it was a number of years ago.

They used to buy 500-600 merino wethers from Glenaan to grow into superfine adult wethers purely for their wool. But have now increased their ewe numbers instead.

"We're hoping for improvement. As a luxury product it was likely to suffer since the GFC with general tardiness in the world economy. We're hoping as things improve the wool market will pick up too."

BELOW: Glenfalloch has 250 angus cows calving this year





"It's nice to produce something sustainable. It's a wonderful product but it has moved to the stage now where the world wouldn't blink an eye if it disappeared. But crossbred wool has seen a lift in prices and we're hoping merino will do the same thing in the next few years."

The momentum of a thriving corporate conference business on Glenfalloch Station was knocked by the Canterbury earthquakes, but is slowly building back up, Dietlind says. The sideline businesses, which includes accommodation and some heli-skiing, equates for about a quarter of their business income and helps with cash flow in the quieter months of the farming calendar.

It caters for up to 25 conference participants, which tend to be South Island companies getting senior executives together for events such as strategy meetings and planning sessions.

"The main benefit is not the view, but the fact the company has exclusive rights to the venue for their stay. They will be the only company on site, which helps with confidentiality. If there are no other companies around they can discuss everything, they can leave their stuff out in the rooms and on the displays and they can relax. People say it's great they don't have to pack everything up every night. I've heard that three or four times just in the past couple of months."

She says the corporate conference business competes with the wool side of the business.

"It's not small. We need it to survive as it helps to pay for the ongoing development of the farm, which wouldn't sustain it on its own. We developed our standard to corporate level



and we were waiting for that return to build when the earthquake hit. We had built a bit of interest and had a lot of big conferences going on. We could have kept going but it took the momentum away," she says.

"We're not back to the bookings we were before the quake but we can manage it perfectly on our own and look after the clients really well with a personal touch."

While new health and safety regulations and lower drink drive limits are proving a hassle for some social businesses, Dietlind says they have a positive spin for businesses.

"Being so far away from town and having the accommodation supplied, bring your staff celebrations or Christmas parties to us where you

ABOVE: Fodder beet is used for pre lambing ewes
TOP: Glenfalloch has about 2,000 Perendale ewes and 1,000 Merino ewes

don't have to think about transport or getting everyone home safely."

Chas says they love sharing the land they farm with visitors from the business people to four-wheel-drive tours.

He says they are caretakers of the land for the future. "It's impossible to predict what that future will hold ... for us and for Glenfalloch. I have grown up here and I am committed to leaving it a better place ... improving it and making it better in every way I can."

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Data sharing and privacy a concern for many

Privacy is a topic which often evokes emotive discussion. It affects all of us and everyone should understand how personal information is collected, protected and shared.

NEAL SHAW, GROUP CEO

Unsurprisingly, survey results released last month by the Privacy Commissioner, John Edwards, show around two thirds of New Zealanders are concerned about privacy. These figures have remained reasonably static over recent years.

According to Mr Edwards, a large majority of respondents (75–81%) were concerned about issues related to identity theft, credit card and banking details, businesses sharing personal information and security of information.

While around 62 percent of respondents agreed data shouldn't be shared because risks to privacy and security outweighed any benefits, it was interesting to note 38 percent held the opposite view. Results also showed there was potential for this view to shift in the future as most agreed that if good safeguards were in place regarding access and how data was used, people would be happier to share information.

"These results send a clear message that data sharing is a potentially divisive issue for the community, and having the right safeguards in place significantly increases people's willingness to have their data shared," said Mr Edwards.

This is important information for businesses to take heed of. We are particularly mindful of this at Ruralco, especially as we work with many partners in our supplier network.

We are often the bridge between the two and we have to ensure we carry out our responsibilities with the utmost respect and integrity. If we were to breach that trust, we would severely undermine our credibility to all. It can be a difficult position to be in, but by respecting people's privacy while adhering to the rules and using common sense, we continue to uphold this important aspect of our business.

Understanding the legislation around privacy is vital to achieving this outcome. Privacy is a term which is bandied around, but often with little understanding of the legislation and its intent.

According to the Privacy Commissioner's website (www.privacy.org.nz) The Privacy Act 1993 controls how 'agencies' (most people and organisations which hold personal information) "collect, use, disclose, store and give access to 'personal information'". Within this legislation there are 12 Privacy Principles:

Principle 1, Principle 2, Principle 3 and Principle 4 govern the collection of personal information. This includes the reasons why personal information may be collected, where it may be collected from, and how it is collected.

Principle 5 governs the way personal information is stored. It is designed to protect personal information from unauthorised use or disclosure.

Principle 6 gives individuals the right to access information about themselves.

Principle 7 gives individuals the right to correct information about themselves.

Principle 8 and Principle 9, Principle 10 and Principle 11 place restrictions on how people and organisations can use or disclose personal information. These include ensuring information is accurate and up-to-date, and that it isn't improperly disclosed.

Principle 12 governs how 'unique identifiers'—such as IRD numbers, bank client numbers, driver's licence and passport numbers—can be used.

Given the broad scope of the Act and the varied way privacy can be protected and handled, it is little wonder there is often confusion and sometimes paranoia by both individuals and organisations. This can see both groups become

excessively cautious resulting in privacy being overzealously protected.

Last month saw the staging of Privacy Week—a week devoted to raising privacy awareness. Part of the focus included a Right to Know Day, which was aimed at letting people know about their rights to see the information agencies hold about them (as outlined in Principle 6). The focus not only let individuals know of their rights, but was also a good way for businesses and other organisations to take a look at the information they hold, and to review the data they collect, why they collect it and what they do with it.

It is vitally important we have such legislation in place, and to make the most of opportunities to discuss and revisit what we do with information and why. Privacy doesn't need to be complicated and ensuring we understand the purpose and intent behind the rules will allow us to fully comply and respect the needs of all.

BELOW: Neal Shaw, Group CEO





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Seminar helps cut energy costs

This autumn ATS members had the opportunity to get some detailed, useful and actionable information on how to potentially shave hundreds of dollars off their farm energy costs through a seminar hosted by ATS Energy. BY RICHARD RENNIE

Data from MPI monitoring reports indicate electricity costs amount to 5% of a dairy farm's operating expenses, or about 13¢/kg milk solids (MS).

But for farmers irrigating in areas like Canterbury or Hawke's Bay, electricity costs can be four times the farm dairy cost again, or an additional 50–80¢/kg MS.

ATS Energy worked with long time energy efficiency consultant and engineer Jim Miller of Millbridge Consulting to develop the seminar. Jim offered farmers attending the presentation insights to key areas where they could make savings as the new farming season kicks off.

A key part of Jim's work today extends from his earlier farm dairy electricity audit conducted with EECA. He offers energy audits to farmers wanting to get a better fix on their consumption, and how to manage it.

His template programme assesses a farm's energy use, and has been able to grow the original EECA audit database over time, improving the accuracy for benchmarking and maintaining current costings in the process.

The data he presented lifted the hood on where dairy farm energy use lies, and a number of farmers attending were surprised at where the electricity costs in their farm dairies really lay.

"We find dairy farm electricity use lies over four areas, and reasonably evenly. This is refrigeration, water heating, milking plant with the vacuum pump accounting for much of that, and water/effluent pumping."

Hot water heating is one of the "low hanging fruits" to pick for saving electricity costs on farm, and farmers got some insights to payback periods, technology and costs to help them achieve that.

While ideally fitted in a brand new shed, much of the technology can be retro-fitted.

"The heat is there and able to be picked up—it is a matter of capturing it and turning it into something that is useful."

Simple heat exchange systems capturing heat escaping from refrigeration units will take water temperatures to half way or about 40–45°C. Recirculated super heater systems get to 60°C and some advanced systems will get the water temperature all the way to the required 85°C mark.

"A lot of these farmers will turn off their hot water systems through the season."

Jim emphasised to attending farmers that every farm operation was different, and to be wary about claims made on electricity savings.

"They will only be based on an average, and it is not until you work it out based on your own situation, and we find the savings can really vary dramatically."

For farmers opting for the right system he said the payback is good, with many farm systems paying for themselves after 3–5 years.

Farmers learned that the technology to save them energy does not always have to be the most sophisticated.

Tried and tested milk silo insulating wraps can pay for themselves in 3–5 years. Jim also highlighted up-coming changes to milk cooling regulations

requiring milk to be down to 6°C two hours post milking, and the critical role silo wraps can play in making this achievable for farm dairy systems.

"They can also increase the milk cooling capacity by 10–15%. Many farmers will find it a struggle to meet the new regulations and putting a jacket on the silo will give that extra capacity for those hot afternoons and make that target more likely to be achieved in a cost effective way."

Jim also urged farmers to look hard at the pricing schemes they had with their retailers. Tips like minimising the number of individual connection points for example can save \$1–5 a day even if all on the same account. Day-night contracts will also offer price advantages if farmers adapt systems like effluent application, as do controlled water heating tariffs.

Jim gave the example of two farms audited for a corporate farming group. "They were very similar size and on exactly the same tariff which had day/night pricing. One had an effective electricity price of 21.7¢/kWh, the other 18.7¢/kWh, 16% lower. That was all and only due to the second farm actively pushing electricity use onto the night rate."

"Overall most farmers find there are savings to be made, some with next to no expenditure while there are many capital options with 3–5 year paybacks but it pays to shop around for independent advice," says Jim.

For more information on this topic or any other energy issues, please contact Tracey Gordon, ATS Energy Account Manager on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) today.



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Porter Hire has been serving New Zealand's rural communities for many years now with an extensive fleet of rugged and reliable hire equipment, along with a solid reputation for providing a comprehensive customer support service.

As Graeme Wellesley-Davies of Porter Hire suggests, hiring heavy equipment in for one-off or short-run projects is the lowest risk option for farmers and rural contractors.

"With the new Health & Safety legislation now in place, managers and directors of companies have a greater responsibility to ensure their team and machinery are compliant.

"Our approach at Porter Hire is to ensure the machinery heading out into the field meet all safety requirements before they leave our regional yards, reducing our rural clients' exposure to risk," he says.

"We engage with our customers to ensure proper safety policy and practice are in effect when the machine leaves our yard. Naturally this comes with a cost attached, but overall we offer the best value and lowest risk in the market and you cannot put a price on peace of mind."

Graeme says that all of Porter Hire's equipment is fit for purpose from market-leading manufacturers, so not only is the company's hire customers getting the best safety specification as standard, they have the reassurance that the

machine they're depending on will get the job finished and on time.

Rural clients are predominantly hiring tracked crawler excavators of between 12-14 tonne to perform a variety of specific tasks, such as race construction, drainage work and general earthmoving and maintenance.

The Porter Hire machinery portfolio is extensive however, and depending on location, includes wheel loaders, water carts, graders, rollers, 4x4 fuel tankers, road trucks, telehandlers, lighting towers, generators and much more.

Porter Hire can utilise the in-house services of Porter Haulage to transport required machinery right to the farm gate; another hassle-free component of the service for clients.

Even before it leaves the Porter Hire depot, all equipment goes through a comprehensive pre-check regime to ensure it will perform as required when it arrives on-site. Detailed service records are kept for all hire machinery and only manufacturer-approved parts, fluids and fittings are used during Porter Hire's routine servicing.

Porter Hire's involvement with the customer doesn't end when the machine leaves for the farm though. As part of the Porter Group's exceptional reputation for quality customer service, a detailed hand-over is available if required.

"We never assume the customer hiring our equipment has recent experience using it," says Graeme.

"To that end we make sure we're supporting that customer in order that they get the best out of their time with it. We can organise independent training on a particular machine if it's required, or a simple familiarisation lesson; whatever makes the customer feel more



ABOVE: Water Carts are available from porter hire with a capacity range of 3,000–30,000 litres

MAIN IMAGE: Rural clients are predominantly hiring tracked crawler excavators of between 12–14 tonne

confident that they can get on with utilising the gear to the best of its abilities in a safe manner."

The same goes for Porter Hire's ability to provide high level, rapid-response technical support, says Graeme.

"The Porter Hire service is no different for rural customers than it is for contractors working on large scale infrastructure projects; a machine is hired to fill a resource gap, so it needs to perform as expected for as long as expected.

"We pride ourselves on having the best possible hire service and an extensive array of machinery available to meet any requirement. We're a company that has grown and developed in the provinces and we understand that what's really important to our rural clients is a great relationship."



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Winter pasture priorities for a better spring



The calm before calving offers a great opportunity to take stock of your winter pasture situation and plan carefully around two key areas of management that will directly influence both the amount and quality of feed you have on hand at the start of spring.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY AGRISEEDS

The first priority is to put a system in place to safeguard your pastures during winter, particularly in wet weather. The second priority is to monitor pasture growth rates and covers to make sure you reach the start of the new season with the right amount and shape of feed on the farm.

Protecting pastures during winter

There's only one thing worse than seeing a badly pugged pasture in the middle of winter, and that's living with the results – lost DM growth and the cost to repair damage in spring.

The negative impact of treading and pugging is two-fold. Immediate DM utilisation can drop by up to 40%, which is bad enough. But future growth can be significantly compromised as well. This then means having to spend money and time restoring pugged areas back to production.

Fortunately wet weather damage can be minimised with awareness and forward thinking. Draw up a contingency plan, and make sure everyone shifting stock on the farm understands the plan, and your expectations as

well (see boxed text for more tips). Remember the old adage—cows don't pug pastures, people do!

Even with a good plan, however, pastures can still get damaged, simply because cows need to be fed no matter what the weather. Again, it's best to have a strategy in place so you can start repairs as soon as possible. Mark damaged areas on a farm map, so it's all recorded for the contractor when conditions are right for re-sowing.

Use colour coding to differentiate between minor damage (where seed just needs to be direct drilled to fill gaps) and more severe damage, where paddocks require levelling before direct drilling. And be ready to get the work done as soon as feasible, so weeds don't take hold.

Monitoring growth rates and covers

The goal here is ensure feed budgets are met from now through to balance date. If covers are **below target** for the start of calving, act

promptly to reduce pasture demand and/or increase supply.

Options include feeding more supplement and less pasture if the cows are at home. If you winter off, keeping late calvers away for longer can allow pasture growth to catch up. Another option could be holding stock back on winter feed crops to ease the pressure of not having enough grass.

Extra N and gibberellic acid can be used when soil temperatures are above 6°C.

If covers are above target and it looks like you will start calving with too much DM/ha in some paddocks, be proactive. Some excess growth is not a problem but you don't want too many paddocks over 3,500 kg DM/ha. Otherwise you will lose pasture quality through the first grazing round, and regrowth will be poor in the second round, when you really need them.

In this case consider bringing cows home early from winter; feeding less supplement and/or increasing daily intake allowances of cows at home.

It's also important to be aware of the shape of covers across the farm, not just 'average cover'. You need a range of pasture covers at the start of calving—some ready to graze immediately (e.g. 3,000–3,500 kg DM/ha) and others which will be ready later (e.g. 1,500–2,000 kg DM/ha).

If too many pastures have high covers at the start of calving, you won't be able to graze them all at the right time, and some of that food will just go to waste, because grass doesn't keep. Quality will be lost and utilisation will drop but more importantly, once those long paddocks do get grazed, they won't re-grow as fast as budgeted, leading to a feed pinch in the second round.

Wet weather rules

- Graze paddocks known to be vulnerable to wet conditions early. New grass paddocks fall into this category!
- Spread stock out thinly on wet pastures, at a lower stocking rate.
- Use on-off grazing to minimise damage, in conjunction with a feed pad, yards etc.
- Create laneways within paddocks which are being break-fed, to limit treading damage to smaller areas.
- Don't worry about post grazing residuals when it's wet. Protecting your soils is more important.
- Sacrifice a poor paddock for holding stock if you have to. It's not ideal, but it will save the pasture and soil across the rest of the farm.

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Compound fertilisers—the future choice?

Could you apply less fertiliser yet still grow a better crop? Chances are the answer is yes, since the most common approaches to fertiliser for arable crops leave plenty of room for improvement.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

“When it comes to fertiliser for crops like wheat and barley, there are two key aspects to consider,” says Aimee Robinson, Ballance Science Extension Officer. “The first thing is to make sure that your soil is not deficient in any of the nutrients needed by your crop. The second is to think about the best way to deliver fertiliser nutrients—what form they’re in, where they’re placed and when they are applied. In most instances, nutrient deficiencies are dealt with adequately, but we can still make gains in the way we use fertiliser in arable settings.”

Take winter wheat, for example. Typically, a base fertiliser would be broadcast over the soil to

correct any nutrient deficits prior to sowing. As a rule, this base fertiliser would include some phosphorus and potassium, along with some sulphur and magnesium, as required. To achieve this, several products would be blended together, so that the right rates of each nutrient can be applied.

“Broadcasting’s a nice, easy way to get fertiliser on the ground, but it lacks precision,” notes Aimee. “If your aim is to generally improve soil fertility—as you would for growing pasture—then broadcasting is fine. But if you really want to target crop growth, then precision placement is likely to offer greater benefits.”

“There are two factors that reduce the effectiveness of broadcasting in an arable setting. First, while it improves the overall soil fertility rating, it’s very much an average effect. The nutrients get applied over the whole soil surface, yet the seed is only sown in one discrete location. That means there’s the potential for some of those nutrients to be wasted—or at least, not be available to the arable crop.”

“Second is the spread pattern of the blend. The ideal bout width (distance between spreader passes) varies depending on the granule size and weight. When a blend is made, we try to use products with similar ballistic properties, but sometimes we have to compromise in order to provide the right nutrients at the best price.”

When a blend contains products with different spreading characteristics, two things can happen: part of the land receives too little of one product, and part receives too much of another product. As a consequence, you end up with uneven nutrient distribution.

“One of the ways to overcome the challenges of spreading blends is to use a compound fertiliser,” advises Aimee. “This type of fertiliser contains all of the nutrients in a single granule, so there is no worry about segregation or uneven spreading due to ballistic differences.”

Compound fertilisers offer additional benefits to arable farmers. For a start, they are ideal for precision planting.

“High-quality compound fertilisers—for example, those from the Yara range of products—are ideal for use in drills. They are hard, even granules, all of the same size, all with the same nutrient content. When they are drilled, each plant gets access to the exact same suite of nutrients, which means the crop has the best chance of reaching its potential yield.”

Banding compound fertilisers, such as YaraMila 12-10-10 and YaraMila Actyva S, can help improve efficiencies, since there tends to be higher recovery of the nutrients, especially phosphorus. As a result, it’s often possible to use lower rates of fertiliser.

“Precision farming isn’t that widespread in New Zealand,” says Aimee, “but we feel it will play an increasingly important role in the future, especially in the arable setting, where it will help farmers get more out of the nutrients they use.”

For more information on the ways in which compound fertilisers can make a difference to your crop this season, contact ATS today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) or your local Ballance Representative.

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Organics opens up land use options on Plains

The New Zealand organic food sector is surfing a wave of success that shows little sign of breaking any time soon as consumers locally and overseas clamour for organic products. BY RICHARD RENNIE



Since 2000 the global organic market has expanded 346% in food sales, and as a global food sector now accounts for US\$80 billion of sales, up from US\$59 billion in 2010 and US\$18 billion in 2000.

Alongside the increase in value has been an increase in land area devoted to organics, accounting for 1% of the planet's total farmed area, with Australia claiming the largest area at 17 million hectares (ha), followed by Europe with 11 million ha.

Here in New Zealand there is 74,000ha, or .52% of the country's farmed area devoted to organic fruit, vegetables, wine, meat and milk products.

In New Zealand Kiwi consumers have got a taste for organically grown products, with growth averaging 42% since 2012, and now accounting for sales of \$250 million.

ABOVE: There is an even greater opportunity for Canterbury's many talented arable farmers in the organic market

With its abundant water supply, flat contour and varied soils, Canterbury's options to tap into the organic success story would be among the best of any region in the country.

Reinforcing those physical strengths is an abundance of farming talent, well capable of making the leap from conventional to organic systems, and making them work.

Harry and Mary Lowe can count themselves as Canterbury pioneers in organic farming, having practiced organics for 30 years.

When they started growing grain organically on their family property near Ashburton in the mid-80s they earned plenty of sideways glances from their neighbours.

For Harry the move was necessitated as much by economics as it was by a personal philosophy. He had been trialling different trace element applications to improve the productivity of some land the family had bought to add to the family farm. But he still had a sense that using them left him as the "ambulance at the bottom of the cliff" when it came to stock health.

He started trialling the use of seaweed type fertilisers and over time came to notice the farm's soil had developed exceptional condition and organic matter content.

"We also got talking to the seaweed rep who told us about Europeans wanting organically grown grain, and basically we went from there."

He admits at the time he thought the world would change to farming systems closer to what he was doing.

"The truth is it has probably taken 30 years!"

Today New Zealand Biograins is a leading source for anyone seeking out assorted grains, fruits, oils, nuts and pulses. Their products include a quantity of locally sourced and imported grains such as rice from India.

Harry believes there is even greater opportunity for Canterbury's many talented arable farmers to fill an ever widening gap in the market for quality local organically grown products.

"Until recently it had been getting hard to find land with more people switching to dairying. It takes three years to convert to organics. Also the surge in dairying had pushed up land prices making leasing land for organic cropping difficult."

But enquiry from farmers seeking alternative land uses has started to grow again, and is now the strongest he has ever seen it. The slide in dairy returns, alongside strengthening organic returns partly explains this.

"It used to be if you were cropping, dairy was the only alternative to consider. But organics is increasingly an option that does not involve the same shift in land use to achieve."

He says he would welcome growers capable of supplying almost any of the grain crops he processes, from wheat to barley, oats, buckwheat or even the ancient grain spelt that has gained increased popularity in recent years.

Harry says global experience has shown the first 12 months of organic farming usually has 50% of farmers drop out.



"It can be an unsettling time when you have farmed using certain treatments and processes. But if you get through that period, usually people stay with an organic system for good."

He is also particularly excited about what the opportunities could be if organic dairying gains a foot hold on the Plains (see accompanying article).

The synergies that exist between dairy and arable farms could be paralleled, with some additional environmental benefits.

"For example a dairy farm that puts some land up for growing organic wheat not only provides a source of supplement, but also having the wheat growing helps almost halve the level of nitrogen lost"

ABOVE: Harry Lowe, a pioneer of organic farming, started up New Zealand Biograins

TOP: Biograins processes a variety of grain crops from wheat to barley, oats, buckwheat and even the ancient grain spelt

With fresh fruit and vegetables forming 45% of the organics sales in NZ, HortNZ welcomed the opportunities it brings to cropping regions including Canterbury.

HortNZ chief executive Mike Chapman said there still remained a need for clearer labelling of organic products.

"We need to see support from government to help with regulating labelling of these products, both as organic, and with their country of origin.

"Regardless of the strength in the domestic organics market, it is still totally unacceptable for Kiwi shoppers to have to try and figure out what 'organic' actually means," he said.

Organics a future option for Plains' dairy?

In the past organic dairying in Canterbury has been limited by the lack of plant committed to organic processing. This has left some hardy committed farmers to farm organically and supply conventional processors, or to process their own milk into organic products.

Without a cornerstone processor to generate volume getting organic dairying ramped up has been stymied, but this is likely to change soon.

The global market for organic dairy products is projected to grow by 12% a year into the future, according to the Organics Aotearoa NZ 2016 organic sector report.

This is off a base that represented 11% of total global dairy sales in 2013, with the bulk of sales found in Denmark (24%), Sweden (12%) and the United Kingdom (7.5%).

But the key drivers of food safety, animal welfare and environmental stewardship are also starting to play out in developing Asian markets. China and India are identified as key growth areas for organic dairy products.

Even at home in NZ sales have been growing rapidly, with a reported 50% increase in organic milk sales in 2014.

For farmers considering organic dairying in the North Island, the margins being paid now represent an attractive proposition in a low payout environment.

Fonterra recently announced a forecast premium for organic milk collected from its North Island suppliers of \$9.20/kg milk solids.

Meantime the Organic Dairy Hub Co-operative (Dairy Hub NZ) is forecasting payment of \$8.00/kg MS for the coming season. A year into its existence it has had intense interest from farmers in the South Island wishing to supply.

Dairy Hub founder Bill Quinn says the co-operative is keen to expand its supplier base into the South Island, and there is no shortage of farmers keen to talk.

"We are currently working with 30 larger farmers in South Canterbury and North Otago on the transition process to go organic, the interest is certainly there."

Of the possible processors for organic milk in the region, Oceania Dairy is the only one to have made any direct reference to the possibility of processing organic milk through its Glenavy plant in South Canterbury.

Earlier this year Oceania surveyed its suppliers asking them if they were interested in considering organic supply.

While at that point interest was reportedly low, manager Roger Usmar said it would remain on the company's drawing board as a future option.

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One-stop electrical shop

With winter here and quieter months, now is the perfect time to carry out farm maintenance and upgrades to ensure things continue to run smoothly, at the lowest cost possible, during peak seasons. BY LINDA CLARKE

ElectraServe can help farmers cut their electricity costs during the busy irrigation season with variable speed drive (VSD) equipment for pumps. This technology provides a smarter way of using electricity when pumps start up and run, and VSDs can typically save farmers thousands of dollars over the course of the season. By automatically adjusting the pump speed to match the desired demand and regulating usage, a VSD is capable of seriously trimming power bills.

Blair Watson, General Manager at ElectraServe in Ashburton, says farmers should get in touch with them to work out how much could be saved with their individual systems, as it varies based on the size of the pump. "Every farm is different," Blair says, "and there is so much new technology available now that we are able to find a money-saving solution to fit everyone's specific requirements."

With an experienced team of qualified electricians and apprentices, ElectraServe is more than happy to do site visits to assess and quote for the best approach to help farmers cut costs. "We do everything from supplying power to centre pivots, new power connections, to servicing dairy sheds and augers," Blair says, "so we're a one-stop shop all the way through from installations to repairs to general maintenance."

And with the cold weather on its way, don't forget to make sure your home is well-covered this winter too.

Ducted air conditioning systems are aesthetically pleasing, with venting and ducting concealed within the ceilings and also super efficient in keeping your entire home both warm and cool, depending on the season.

A quiet operating unit sits in the roof space, venting temperature-controlled air to bedrooms and living areas via ducting. If you already have a heat pump in your main living space, then a smaller unit can be installed to regulate further areas of the house.

Blair says the higher demand for whole-home heating and ventilation systems has been obvious in both new builds and renovations. "We are getting a big call for ducted systems in new and existing homes where people want their bedrooms and bathrooms to be warm as well," he says. "ElectraServe can supply and install the complete package to heat or cool all rooms from one single system. The whole house is able to be kept an even temperature, ensuring complete comfort no matter which room you're in."

The systems have a wall-mounted controller, with seven-day timer features and wifi access options.



ABOVE: Blair Watson, General Manager at ElectraServe in Ashburton

MAIN IMAGE: Winter offers the perfect time to carry out farm maintenance to ensure you're running at the lowest possible cost

You don't need to be a rocket scientist to operate it, but Blair and his team are happy to help you learn the ropes and sort out any issues or concerns.

"Some people may think a system like this is beyond reach cost-wise," says Blair. "They'd be surprised to learn that many systems end up running for a similar cost to what they'd pay for a cord of wood, but with much more convenience and a lot less effort on your part."

There are always variations, so talk to Blair and the ElectraServe team first for their recommendations. They are happy to visit your home or business and provide free, no-obligation quotes on the best system for your situation. Installation is fast and easy, with most of the work happening in the roof space.

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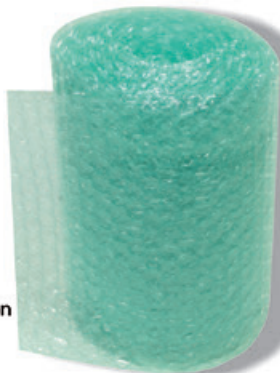
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Rest and Recharge

The dry period is important in the life cycle of the modern dairy cow.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY IAN HODGE, BVSC., MACVSC. VETENT RIVERSIDE

It provides the cow, and the farm staff, with the opportunity to rest and recharge. The rest and recharge is important for the feet, udder, and body condition of cows, and for our own wellness.

Feet

Walking long distances during lactation means that towards the end of the season the soles of cow's feet can wear very thin and become prone to penetration injuries. The combined effects of continual carbohydrate and protein loading can pre-dispose the cow to bacterial infection and inflammation of the feet. The subsequent growth of poor quality hoof horn may contribute to hoof vulnerability. The dry period provides an opportunity for hoof horn regeneration; however it makes good sense to check cows regularly for lameness over the dry period.

Udder

Bacterial infection of the udder during lactation (mastitis) results in damage to the milk secreting cells within the udder. At dry off, long-acting antibiotics given to high cell count cows and those that have had mastitis during the season penetrate deep in to the udder tissue to resolve longstanding infections in most, but not all, cases. Cows that don't respond to dry cow therapy will have high somatic cell counts after calving and they should be culled.

Body Condition

The dry period provides an opportunity for the cow to gain body condition. Cows are very

efficient at stripping reserves of fat and protein during lactation. Negative energy balance occurs in most cows to some degree during (early) lactation because the cow's feed intakes do not always meet the energy demands of milk production and maintenance. The dry period provides an opportunity for positive energy balance for the cow, and for her developing calf, while she grazes high quality winter feed.

Body condition gain during winter should result in cows calving at condition score 5. To many people a cow in this condition would appear to be fat, but science has shown that these cows are in a better position to withstand the rigors of calving, the onset of lactation and the demands of getting back in calf again. Current economic pressures dictate that we must focus on aspects such as cow body condition for good production and reproduction, rather than reactive interventions which can be very costly.

Winter Crops

Winter crops can potentially be dangerous to cows and heifers. Diseases such as ruminal bloat, acidosis and nitrate poisoning and copper deficiency in the autumn and winter can be significant. Kale often contains high levels of nitrates, and substances that burst red blood cells. Fodder beet crops can result in phosphorous deficiency and rumen acidosis. Care should be taken with this crop.

A month or so prior to calving it is a good idea to check the body condition your cows. There may

be a group of lighter cows or heifers that have not adjusted well to winter crops or have not competed well with other cows. These may need preferential feeding before calving.

Metabolic Diseases

Metabolic disease prevention starts during the winter period. You should plan this early with your veterinarian. Cows in good body condition are less prone to metabolic diseases at calving. Magnesium can be supplemented pre-calving, and increasing the energy density of the diet in the transition period will enable cows to utilise more dietary energy after calving. Trace element supplementation, including iodine is important.

Prevent Mastitis at Calving

In addition to preparing the cows, you should prepare the cow shed for the forthcoming lactation. Arrange for a milking machine test, renew the liners and replace any other perished rubber ware. Make sure the teat spray system is fully functional.

In the early part of calving a milking time mastitis risk assessment visit is an extremely valuable investment.

Take a Break

Finally, remember to have a good break to recharge your own batteries. Animal wellness is largely dependent on our own wellness.

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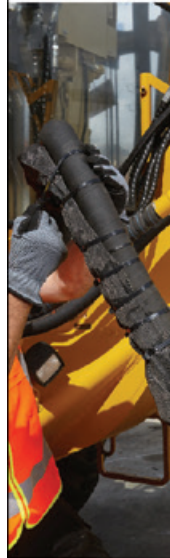
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Farm plans made easy

Don't wait until the last minute to hit the panic button if you haven't got a farm environment plan or a nutrient budget, says Eve Harper. BY LINDA CLARKE



Both documents will be compulsory in a new regulated environment for a lot of farmers come 2017.

Both are about encouraging farmers to use good management practices and work the land sustainably.

Eve and her father David Harper, a Rakaia Gorge farmer, run Harper Agribusiness Services and their message to farmers is simple: Don't be overwhelmed by the new compliance rules, seek sound advice and be willing to change if necessary.

Eve said most farmers were already farming sustainably and but needed help to sort through the compliance documents. From next year farmers will be audited to make sure their farm environment plans and nutrient budgets meet the new rules.

The Harpers say the process need not be expensive or complicated.

ABOVE: Eve and her father David Harper, a Rakaia Gorge farmer, run Harper Agribusiness Services

Eve, 25, is responsible for the farm plans and nutrient budgets, while David uses the latest software to produce farm maps which detail land areas and boundaries. Eve said some farmers did not have a basic map with accurate measurements of paddocks, all vital to work out if they were complying with nitrogen discharge rules. It also makes it a lot easier for the farmer whenever anyone comes onto the farm to do contact work to just rip off a map from a pad.

Farming is in Eve's genes, though she spent time working in the mental health arena after leaving school. She is currently studying part-time at Lincoln University towards a Bachelor of Science degree and previously studied soil science through Lincoln and sustainable nutrient management at Massey. She and her partner James Robinson are renovating a Methven house and she says the district is brimming with some of the most innovative and productive farmers in the country.

"I also worked in the Brown Pub for a few months when I left Christchurch after the quakes and I heard farmers talking about all the new compliance things coming in; it made no sense to them. I started going to farm meetings and learning what was happening with ECan."

From the high country property farmed by her parents Millie and David, to the arable property farmed by James' parents Linda and Tim Robinson, Eve is passionate about farming, and understands both practical and regulatory demands. She studies three days at Lincoln, then visits farmers for the rest of her week to help them with farm plans and nutrient budgets.

A lot of her work is the result of word of mouth or referrals and Eve brings a calm head to what can be an emotive issue.

Each inquiry from farmers starts with a short farm visit. Eve assesses how much work will be involved in preparing the plans – this depends on whether information is stored or recorded digitally, or is in the farmer's head—and a quote given.

The Harpers do not have a blanket fee and charge on the volume of work needed. Eve says clients are not numbers, and she prefers the personal connection. These are people who live in her community and she knows doing a good job is important; there was no one size fits all plan as each property had different soils, water sources and farming systems.

She said many farmers were unsupported when it came to farm plans or nutrient budgets, especially if they were not part of the dairy industry or didn't belong to an irrigation group. No farmer wanted to apply fertiliser that could be washed through the soil profile and potentially into waterways.

"The farming community is in a gradual process of change and we want them to understand why they will benefit from a farm plan and nutrient budget, rather than just ticking the box."



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Better management of Californian thistle

Recent scientific advances by scientists at AgResearch will go a long way in establishing better management of one of the country's worst agricultural weeds.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY AGRESEARCH

Californian thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) has been the bane of many New Zealand farmers for generations for its ability to spread across farmland and out-compete grass species.

AgResearch scientist Dr Graeme Bourdôt is spearheading research to initiate and encourage more effective management of the weed. He says recent advances in our knowledge of the weed, as well as the introduction of the green thistle beetle (*Cassida rubiginosa*) biocontrol agent are having positive results.

Research by Dr Bourdôt published earlier this year showed the true cost of Californian thistle to be close to \$700 million in lost pastoral farm gross revenue each year and also suggested that previous estimates of the aggregate cost of agricultural weeds have been significant underestimates.

The figure is the work of Dr Bourdôt and colleagues in the Farm Systems team at AgResearch and is based on the development of a robust new method for quantifying the economic losses attributable to pasture weeds.

The scientists developed the "seasonal pattern" model primarily for Californian thistle but it is applicable to any weed species that exhibits a seasonal pattern in its pasture occupancy.

The work was published in *Weed Research*, an international journal of weed biology, ecology and vegetation management.

Dr Bourdôt says researchers can now use this new model for accurate economic analyses for Californian thistle at various scales.

"We applied the model at the national scale, scaling it using farmer estimates of peak whole-farm cover to derive mean monthly covers, and then mean annual percentage covers of the weed for dairy, beef, sheep/beef, sheep and deer farms. The percentage of pasture lost, in combination with 2011–12 farm statistics, revealed that Californian thistle caused a national loss in pastoral farm gross revenue in 2011–12 of \$685million (\$446m dairy, \$233m sheep/beef, \$6m deer)."



Dr Bourdôt says that at the scale of a particular farm, in conjunction with a single point-in-time estimate of the weed's cover on the farm, the expected cover of the weed on for each month of the year can be determined.

"These estimates can then be used in a farm system model such as Farmax, to explore the impact of the thistle and compare the economics of alternative management methods."

Dr Bourdôt says that previous estimates of economic cost of California thistle (and of pasture weeds in general) have been based on either anecdote or single point-in-time estimates of the weed's occupancy that do not account for the seasonal dynamics of the weed in a pasture nor the changing feed value of the pasture over the year.

"Since Californian thistle is not eaten by most classes of livestock, the loss in pasture production due to the weed is directly related to the pasture area that it covers. Our research uniquely provides a way of quantifying that. We have established, through a two-year field experiment in which we measured the within-patch cover of the thistle on many pastoral farms throughout New Zealand, that the seasonal pattern of the thistle's cover is the same on all farm system types (dairy, sheep, beef, deer) throughout New Zealand. So we have one simple model of how Californian thistle ground cover changes over the year in a pasture."

Dr Bourdôt says the \$685 million is a significant loss and confirms that the thistle is a very significant constraint to production. A financial

loss of this magnitude also indicates that research leading to a long-term reduction in the coverage of the thistle has the potential to deliver a very significant return on investment and large benefits for pastoral farmers, he says. Dr Bourdôt says the size of this estimate of the national value of lost production due to this one weed species indicates that previous aggregate estimates of pasture weed impacts

Dr Bourdôt says defoliation of the thistle is widely regarded as the most effective way to halt its population growth in a pasture. "The amount of root that the thistle produces over the growing season is what regulates population growth. The more you defoliate the thistle, the less root it can produce. "We've always known there would have to be a 'tipping point' because the root can only be

February each year, then the thistle population is likely to go into quite rapid decline, halving in density each year. Mowing at other times of the year is likely to be less effective, causing slower rates of decline.

This backs up past field experiments and provides good guidance for farmers across all grazing systems in choosing the best time to defoliate the thistle.

But it's not just farmers who will benefit from the new knowledge and tools.

A new and user-friendly online Regional Weed Management Cost:Benefit web-app for regional weed management programme evaluation allows Regional Council staff to make science-based decisions on which weeds to include in their pest management plans.

The tool was unveiled to Regional council staff earlier this year and is already available online: <http://agpest.co.nz/useful-links>

Dr Bourdôt says the app marks a monumental shift because until now the cost benefit analysis for regional weed management programmes that are required by the Biosecurity Act, have often not been well founded in science or dealt adequately with uncertainty.

"This has been designed to enable a regional council to meet its obligations under the Biosecurity Act; whether or not a weed can be justifiably included in a Regional Pest Management Plan and attract ratepayer funding to manage it regionally. To get it on the list the council must show that the benefits of regional management outweigh the costs.

"Regional council staff have never had this sort of user-friendly power at their fingertips. In the past they've employed independent resource economists to undertake a cost benefit analysis but now, the staff themselves will be able to take the driving role."

"Changes to the Biosecurity Act in 2012, and its associated National Policy Direction [NPD] require all 16 regional councils to standardise how they approach regional pest management. The NPD provides guidance to councils on this, and our apps provide a key tool," Dr Bourdôt says.

The cost benefit app enables the user to define the weed, its invasion trajectory in the absence and presence of the proposed weed management programme, the value of the asset being protected, the effect of the weed on this value and the cost of the proposed weed management programme providing the protection. Sensitivity testing is provided for and enables the user to identify those parameters to which the net benefit of the programme is most sensitive.

Dr Bourdôt also sees potential for the tool to be applied further.

"It could be applied to other types of pests - mammals, insects and so forth - that may be considered for control at a regional level and thus be bound by the requirements of the Biosecurity Act."



ABOVE: AgResearch scientist Dr Graeme Bourdôt is spearheading research to initiate and encourage more effective management of the Californian thistle

in New Zealand, such as the \$1.2 billion per year derived from a Monsanto study in 1984, are large underestimates.

Meanwhile, scientists at AgResearch have also developed a model that simulates population growth of the thistle and, based on substantial experimental data gathered by New Zealand and overseas scientists over many years, allows the scientists to compare different defoliation strategies, whether that be through use of herbicide, mowing or biological control like the green thistle beetle.

It has just been published in the online publication, Ecology and Evolution.

produced if there is foliage above the ground. So the tipping point has to be where you defoliate enough so the plant cannot produce enough root to replace what was there during the current season. This model allows us to figure out where that tipping point is."

Dr Bourdôt says the model shows that a single defoliation during the growing season (typically December–March) and repeated each year isn't going to reduce the thistle, it will simply stabilise the population.

In comparison, the model shows that undertaking two treatments at specific times during the year will bring about population decline if repeated annually.

As an example, Dr Bourdôt says, the model shows that if a farmer chooses to mow the thistle firstly in December and then again in



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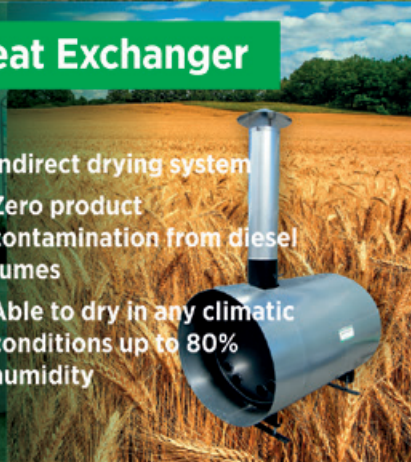
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Strength in steel

Gary Fahey spends a lot of time thinking when he trains at 6am. The 14-times competitor of the gruelling Coast-to-Coast multisport race with 12 podiums including 2 wins knows a thing or two about planning and hard work.

BY LINDA CLARKE

He is applying the same energy to his new role as owner of Dan Cosgrove Ltd in Timaru, making sure the well-known silo manufacturer and steel engineering business remains connected to its farming customers while introducing new products and services.

Gary spent 30 years working for another local engineering company before he seized the opportunity to buy Dan Cosgrove and its 1.6ha steel fabrication plant in Timaru's Redruth industrial area. He said Dan Cosgrove was proud of its 80-year reputation as a quality brand and wanted to remain the first choice for farmers wanting silos, structural steel, sheet metal work, longrun roofing and more.

He said the grain and silo industry had evolved little over the years, though the Canterbury quakes and new health and safety laws had brought changes. Many imported silos buckled or tipped over in the quakes, creating headaches and dangers for farmers.

Dan Cosgrove makes its own silos from New Zealand steel, engineered for New Zealand's toughest climate conditions, ensuring they can withstand natural disasters. "Our silos are built to last 50 years, and handle our harsh environment. Some farmers might see our label on silos that have been on their properties for years, yet have not made the connection back to us. We are endeavouring to reach back out to those customers to re-engage with their business."

Gary said their silos were designed by New Zealand engineers to withstand our seismic loads and climatic conditions without collapsing—not all silos in the market come with the same certifications. Farmers buying or installing new silos are now required to meet New Zealand standards, so it pays to check the specs to make sure no health and safety issues exist.

Dan Cosgrove's silo safety cage can be fitted to new and old silos to make working around silos safer. And if repairs are necessary then products can be bought off the shelf for an immediate fix, there's no waiting for imported parts to arrive.

The company is also well known for its longrun roofing, sheet metal and engineering work, with qualified, certified and experienced welders part of their team.

Gary said the company's philosophy was to work with its customers as part of a partnership to put out a quality product. "That's why we stopped building dairy sheds eight years ago. We would rather supply our business partners than compete against them."

Customers can view the silos, structural steel, roofing and cladding materials at Cosgrove's

ABOVE: Dan Cosgrove makes their own silos from New Zealand steel, engineered for New Zealand's toughest climate conditions

plant, which has a new showroom dedicated to showcasing these products.

Maintaining quality also means investing in technology, like their new 320 tonne brake press and 4m x 13mm plate guillotine. "We also have new sectional rolls for rolling pipe, box section, angle iron and large new plate rolls; these give us flexibility to undertake all kinds of steel work."

A new-to-New Zealand material sourced by Dan Cosgrove is about to revolutionise the water and effluent tank market. The material is galvanised steel on one side and stainless steel on the other, which means no liner to cause problem rust or contamination.

Gary said internal liners on galvanized steel can sweat and cause corrosion, which voided warranties on many tanks. The new material was favourably priced and Dan Cosgrove will import sheets in multiple sizes to make tanks to order. "This is great for water storage, including potable water."

The galvanised steel/stainless steel has a worldwide patent on the bonding technology and the Cosgrove team has put it through some rigorous testing to make sure it won't delaminate or fail under the required conditions. "It is quite exciting to be bringing this new material to the market."

Gary says steel is being used in wider and innovative ways in the building industry and being able to meet new demands was important to the business trading for another 80 years.



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Deer farming from New Zealand to Wales and back again

From working as a shepherd on New Zealand farms when he was a teenager, Welsh-born David Morgan is grateful for the opportunities that lead his family to ownership of their own farm.

BY KATE KAYLOR



IMAGE: Welsh-born David Morgan is grateful for the opportunities that lead his family to ownership of their own farm

David and Jan Morgan call Raincliff Station home—755 hectares of mostly rolling heavy clay country near Pleasant Point, South Canterbury.

The business leases another 130ha nearby.

The Morgans bought the station with a 50/50 equity partner in 2005 after managing it for four years for a European investment company based in Copenhagen. In 2012, the Morgans bought out the equity partner to own the property outright.

David was quoted during the 2011 Deer Industry Conference, which included a field day at Raincliff Station, as saying “deer are my life and my life is deer.” Understandably then, the main stock class across the property is deer. The Morgans have an elk breeding stud, selling between 35 and 50 elk terminal sire stags each year, and the rest of the breeding hinds are mainly for antler and velvet genetics, says David.

Over the past 12 years, the breeding programme’s blood lines have come from Pullars, Oraka Wapiti, Taringatura Elk and Winston Day.

“For the past seven or eight years we have been using Tikana genetics to breed with. We are looking to produce good solid stags with good bone structure, constitution, temperament, doing ability and easily moved from here to their new farm environment.”

There are 700-800 red hinds and 300 stud elk hinds (both including first calvers).

“We have 3,500 deer altogether,” he says.

Between 1,200 and 1,400 stags are cut for velvet each year averaging 4.8kg including the two year olds.

“We’ve been building that average for the past 10 years. We’re only now starting to settle down and get a bit of consistency and true reward. We’re looking forward to the development of new markets and there are some innovative and exciting things happening with the velvet itself as well.

“I am a great believer in being market led. New Zealand farmed raised venison leads the way in this concept, but it will need continuous discipline between the marketers, processors and the farmers going forward, if we are to sustain and improve the current returns, we all have our part to play.”

As well as about 100 sheep, for their own use, the property carries 400-500 cattle, including 380-400 dairy grazers.

“We’ve always grazed dairy heifers. With the high borrowing level in the past, it has given us good



cash flow. We’ve been lucky. We have two farmers we graze for and through the troubled times, we kept the business going. The turns of the dairy industry has put a bit of pressure on the rest of us farmers... getting rid of capital stock to graze heifers and now many are seeing the ramifications of that with high store prices for beef animals and even young deer.

“As an industry we’ve been developing new markets, but interest in venison has risen and the positive prices we’ve been getting in the past 12 to 18 months is making people look at the industry again. Some farmers have swung back quite quickly, especially those who already had the deer fencing and infrastructure in place. Store weaner deer prices are 30 to 40 percent more than this time last year.”

ABOVE: The farm is also growing fodder beet both for its own use and to be lifted, cleaned and sold to other farmers

BELOW: There are 700–800 red hinds and 300 stud elk hinds (both including first calvers)

David says they’re concentrating on continuing to develop the property, which is already quite intensive.

“We have high expectations of what we can do per hectare. We’re part of an advance party—a farmer group under the umbrella of the deer industry’s Passion2Profit primary growth programme—so that’s been one way to focus on what we could be doing and we’re also the Focus Farm for the next three years as well,” he says.

“I’m a big believer in giving back to our industry. We’re proud of our industry and passionate about getting it back on track as a good pastoral farming alternative.”

He says the drive for profit comes down to five subjects—feed, environmental, genetics, farm succession and stock-class integration.

“Those five subjects are quite dear to my heart. Then we can break it down further than that, taking feed for example, feed is about matching our growth curve to the right stock to make the most return from it. It involves re-grassing and using different pasture mixtures, grasses and plantain, as well as a bit more lucerne, which I’ve never done before.”





The farm is also growing fodder beet both for its own use and to be lifted, cleaned and sold to other farmers.

"We've grown it for about 10 years. I've always said it's not the golden bullet but it is a good part of risk management for winter if there's a big snowfall (our kale was flattened under snow in 2006). This year crops averaged about 22-23 tonne. We're pretty happy with that – Brychan does the drilling and we put fertiliser down the spout with the seed as well this year."

The Morgans' son Brychan, 23, runs Raincliff Agriculture, which obviously counted Raincliff Station as one of its original clients.

After boarding at Timaru Boys' High School, Brychan had a gap year in Southland at Richard and Trudy Slee's Wairaki Station before starting university. But then life took a different turn.

"I tried to do uni but didn't like it," he explains.

"I lost one of my best mates in my gap year and the anniversary came around while I was there and I just couldn't do it so I got out of there and went overseas for a month with the old man. I told him I wouldn't mind doing some contracting so I came back and had a wee go at doing the ag work on the farm and for a few other locals... nothing too serious. I went to England for four or five months, working in Hampshire as well as travelling and came back the winter before last and got stuck into it."

He says his parents have backed him all the way, but first he had to present them with business proposals and prove that he was serious.

"The sticking point was Mum, she's the real boss," he says, laughing.

"There's no handout here. No free lunch. It all goes back into paying off the business. I'd rather take the knock there and put the money somewhere where it's going to grow, but doing something you like doing in the meantime. It gives me something to work towards. I've got skin in the game now and I want to see it grow. We're trying to move it forward. I don't want to stay the same size forever, we'll keep developing and growing and keep delivering good products to people. I like to find out newer and better ways of doing

things. I can learn from others' experience but it also doesn't mean the way something was done five years ago is the right way to do it today."

Raincliff Agriculture operates two silage chopper wagons, a baler, square baler, triple mowers, cultivation gear, fodder beet driller and a fodder beet cleaner.

"The cleaner is an extra cost, sure, but not if you want quality feed. It cuts down eight per cent of wastage out of the fodder beet and you're also not breaking chains on the feeder. It soon adds up so the expense of putting the fodder beet through the cleaner at a couple of tonne a minute doesn't seem too bad."

Brychan employs four summer students from the UK and hopes to also have another full-time person on board before next season.

"We don't have many weekends off in the summer so it's good to have a good team with positive attitudes. Everyone lifts with good spirit around the yards. Last season was pretty tough leading up to January. We did have a nice steady flow of work including some weekends off, but then Christmas Day was like a switch. The phone started ringing and didn't stop and we went three months straight."

When he's not the contractor, Brychan says he loves working with deer.

"I do get a buzz out of it. This morning I did a wee bit on the farm when it was too wet to drill so I get the best of both worlds... when I have time."

He also buys and trades stock when he can, mainly calves, and mainly in the quieter months for the contracting.

Brychan has a special thank you for his parents.

"I couldn't have done it without them and their belief that I can do it. Not every boy gets the opportunities I have so I don't take it for granted. It makes me get up in the morning. They've given me this huge opportunity and I don't want to let them down."

David and Janet have three children: Ellie, Brychan and Millie.

Ellie has an interior design degree and is managing the nearby Farm Barn Café on Mount Michael Road, which David and Jan have half shares in.

"Ellie has a really nice touch there. We've had great feedback about the homemade, simple food and the New Zealand-made items in the shop. The locals have taken it on board too. This past weekend for example, most of the Sunday trade was locals. It's a little bit of diversification for us but I've always had a bent towards retail after having a butcher shop in the UK."

The café is also a place to get the famous Denheath Custard Squares and Fairlie Bakehouse pies.

"One day we envisage putting our own venison and velvet products through there as well," David adds.

Youngest daughter Millie is in her second year of a law degree at Canterbury University and despite injury setbacks, is looking to continue to represent New Zealand in long distance running.

David says the girls get involved with the farm as much as they can.

"We get a lot of satisfaction helping Millie through university and she works when she's home."

ABOVE: Brychan says his parents have backed him all the way

BELOW: David keeps himself busy, continuing to develop the property, which is already quite intensive





They've been under no illusions. They have always been involved when we talk about succession and succession planning. There's a saying "fair is not always equal and equal is not always fair". Old-fashioned but true. I heard a guy from Rabobank say the other day "a kilo lift is worth a tonne of inheritance" and that's true too."

David had a serious back injury after a bike accident two years ago, which he says brought his priorities back into perspective.

"We knew we had to realign ourselves after the accident so we could help the kids one day if we needed to," he says.

"We're more organised within the business now. I've enjoyed farming a lot more since the accident but we've got rid of a lot of debt too. It must have been playing on my mind. I had been a bit down, a bit depressed, before the accident, which was one of the things I had to come to terms with. I always thought I was the born optimist and pooh-poohed that sort of thing. It was a wake-up call."

It is with the family in mind that David also looks to protect the farm's environment.

Raincliff Station was a finalist in the Canterbury Ballance Farm Environment Awards in 2011.

He says he wants the farm to be in the best-practice bracket.

"We try to fence off areas that are naturally the bottoms of gullies, an easy decision to take out of production and become natural filtration and sediment areas without too much fuss. You can only go green if you're in the black and I think we get an unfair bashing at times. If everyone did their bit we'd move mountains. Some people want to front load it and do it all in one generation, but unless someone hands out heaps of subsidies, why should that fall on one generation? I get a bit worked up about that issue." He says farm plans should look ahead 20 years or even 50.

David has been in the deer industry, between the UK and New Zealand for most of his adult life. He came to New Zealand in 1983 as a teenager working on farms and "got the bug" for deer farming. "I loved it and stuck at it. I went back to Wales for a while but came back here in 2001 and we've been here full time ever since. It started with my OE, spending a bit of time in the Te Anau basin area and on Mt Linton. Gosh those places bring back memories including working with (Sir) Tim Wallis and the other great pioneers in the Te Anau basin at the time."

At that time, beef and lamb was promoted widely in Europe instead of venison. When David went home to Wales, it was difficult to convince people to lease him land to go deer farming.

But succeed he did – creating an integrated value chain including farming, slaughtering, processing and marketing.

"I built up a little business in the village of Bwlch, about 50 miles north of Cardiff, delivering to restaurants and hotels on a daily basis. I ended up employing a couple of guys butchering, a van driver and a lady in the office. I was promoting venison all over the place, selling burgers and steaks and sausages at agricultural shows and country events, surviving all the issues that were thrown at us like BSE and then foot and mouth."

The business, the Welsh Venison Centre, is now run by David's younger brother.

In 1991, David was awarded a Nuffield scholarship and travelled to NZ to look at venison and lamb processing and marketing.

approached me about finding a property in the South Island. We found a couple of choices and we ended up at Raincliff. It was a great opportunity and to this day, I am still grateful for that opportunity. It was a bit of a shock when they decided they were going to sell the farm, but we understood it was just a change of direction within their business. They knew perhaps deep down I wasn't a corporate farmer, although it was a hell of an opportunity with all that money and power behind you, creating jobs for locals. We were able to have three or four staff working here and develop above and beyond what would have been possible otherwise."

The investment company alerted David in December 2005 of their intention to sell the farm. Six months later the Morgans had found an equity partner and were farming Raincliff in their own right.

"It was a quick turnaround but it has been good. Time passes quickly. It doesn't seem like yesterday but it also seems like a lifetime as well."

As well as Brychan's younger influence, the Morgans employ stock manager David O'Sullivan. David and wife Chanelle live on the station and are just as passionate as their bosses about the future of the deer industry.

Raincliff Station will host the technical day of this year's FMG Young Farmer of the Year, which is being hosted in Timaru.

"It's nice to be asked to be involved, but it's also about us giving back to that younger farming community. It will be great."



"I was pretty jammy and picked up another trip through the Waitangi Foundation as a farmer/agribusiness person during the millennium celebrations and that cemented my thoughts about immigrating to New Zealand. I had a lot of good friends here pushing me to come out." He says the story of how they ended up at Raincliff is unique and also shows an element of luck about knowing the right people at the right time.

"Our accountant at the time, at about the end of 2001, was chairman of an investment portfolio and he knew about my hankering to move to New Zealand. The investment company

ABOVE: David and Jan Morgan call Raincliff Station home, near Pleasant Point, South Canterbury
TOP: David's focus is to protect the farm's environment, fencing off areas that are naturally the bottom of gullies

The farm has a picturesque historic homestead and a lot of history dating back to the original settlers in the Mackenzie country and more recently the Quantock family, which farmed the land from 1955 to 2001.

"We're proud of Raincliff's history and we're making sure of its future as well. We're putting our mark on it... taking it to another level!"

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Not just a farmers wife

There's an element of irony about the name of Chanelle O'Sullivan's daily blog, *Just a Farmer's Wife*, because it probably couldn't get any further from the truth.

BY KATE TAYLOR



IMAGE: Chanelle and David with their two children, Isabelle (4) and Hunter (17 months) in front of their house situated on Raincliff Station

She is, actually, a farmer's wife, but is also a qualified vet nurse, mother of two and cleaner of a large rural farmhouse with a colossal 96 windows, a blogger, project manager, guest speaker, online business woman, long-distance runner and admin for several flourishing Facebook pages.

Chanelle lives at Pleasant Point with husband David, stock manager for Raincliff Station looking after 3,000 deer including 600 velvet stags.

Born and bred in suburban Auckland, Chanelle says she never would have guessed the path her life would take. It started when she wanted to help on the Waikato farm where she had been to horse camps, even when there were none on.

"It's in my blood. I have uncles and grandparents farming and I guess it had always been in the back of my mind."

After completing a Certificate of Agriculture at Wintec (Waikato Institute of Technology) she headed for the South Island.

"After being brought up in Auckland with traffic and houses and people, I wanted to work with animals and I wanted to be somewhere beautiful."

Chanelle's first job was at Guide Hill Station at Lake Pukaki. She had only been in the South Island for a month when she met David at a Mackenzie Young Farmers meeting.

"I joined that to meet people as I'd moved down here knowing no-one. I was happy to go along and see what things were about. We met up a couple of times... I remember our first date should have been a complete failure. He had run over his best working dog that day and I had been made to cut and skin some 80 kilogram merino rams and was absolutely exhausted. But here we are."

She spent 18 months on an 800-cow dairy farm near Fairlie then three years working at Aorangi Vets in Geraldine while studying to become a vet nurse. She married David in 2010. Isabelle (Izzy) is four years old and Hunter is 17 months.

Since Isabelle was a toddler, Chanelle has been spending a significant chunk of every day on the Facebook page, Farming Mums New Zealand (FMNZ). She took it over when it had 600 members. Three years later there's an extra zero... the number has grown to 6,440.

"I took it on not knowing what to expect, but knowing there were probably a lot of women in a similar position—who had left their job or career, moved away from family and friends and were isolated out in the country without support."

Online discussions range from children's nits to party ideas, from wedding dress designs to the best wet weather gear; or from employment contracts and health and safety rules through to what's cooking for dinner. The page's motto is supporting, inspiring and connecting.



ABOVE: Chanelle O'Sullivan is the admin for the flourishing Facebook page Farming Mums NZ

"We do have a code of conduct to try to preserve those qualities. It started off like that but at times can get a bit wild and crazy. It takes a lot of monitoring to maintain the quality of the page and can be quite a mission to stay on top of."

There are five admin people on the main page and two more on the FMNZ classifieds page, as well as a long-time friend of Chanelle's who looks after Daisy FMNZ, who posts anonymously on behalf of members.

"That has been extremely valuable in terms of allowing people to be honest, they might be asking an employment question or a family-related question where it isn't appropriate for them to do it under their own name. But it also gives a vicious insight into what's going on out there behind closed doors. People can be truthful to Daisy because no-one knows who she is. They feel safer not knowing who they're talking to and so they are able to pour their hearts out a little more at times," she says.

"It comes to the point sometimes where Daisy won't post what has been sent because it is too revealing – it has too much information – or where it is simply a dangerous situation and it's time to call the police or a women's refuge or other support... or to empower them to make the call themselves."

Chanelle says they have to be careful about mental health and general health issues.

"We don't want self-diagnosis or women diagnosing each other. One thing that would be great in the future is to have a free counsellor available by phone to refer women to... someone relatable... a counsellor who is also a rural woman."

The largest age group on the page is 25–35 years followed by 35–45.

"But having said that, it wouldn't be what it is without the 17 to 70," she says.

"Everyone has comments to make. Especially with bad pay outs and recessions, for our older members to give their advice and tell how they survived is crucial."

That is one of the reasons FMNZ is now working with the organisation Rural Women. With an eye on the future, she's also talking with the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa and WorkSafe.

"They're interested to keep in touch and use us for a sounding board at times. We have a huge dynamic of people, which gives us a chance to have a say and organisations are now realising that."

Most members are obviously mums on farms but Chanelle says the only real restriction is a rural link.

"It's for women who understand farming but being a mum isn't 100 percent necessary."

She says the page is a big machine and she's learning to delegate. After doing the Agri Women's Development Trust's First Steps programme she realised one of the reasons why she does all the things she does.

"I love helping others. I love being on the farm and we definitely want to own a farm, but I also want my thing on the side. It is personally satisfying as well to know someone has gone somewhere from what you've said."

The introduction on Chanelle's blog, which has more than 2,000 followers, describes the young mum as someone who wants to inspire others to get their hands dirty.

"Grow some vegetables. Take your kids exploring. Master a power tool. Eat real, clean food. Upcycle to the latest fashions. Get creative in the kitchen. Prove to the world that women can do anything. Go for a run. Turn excess produce into alcohol. The world is taking a turn

back to where it used to be, home grown food, self-sustainability and women who can use their hands," the blog says.

Chanelle says her blog has grown as FMNZ has grown. "At the start it was just me and my adventures but people said I should write more, so I did. I like supporting local businesses, like Viberi's blackcurrants down the road. I considered commercial blogging, working for a company, but didn't want to be told to talk about things I wasn't that passionate about or a product I didn't like or use. I support local and choose what I do."

She has been a part-time Project Co-ordinator for the New Zealand Landcare Trust's OTO region (Orari, Temuka, Opihi and Pareora) since November. Tasks include organising field days and helping with various projects—mostly from home.

"I've found it to be a fascinating side of farming that I hadn't had to think about in the past and I'm really enjoying learning more about it."

Chanelle set up a Facebook group in early 2015 for young deer farmers, Next Generation Deer Farmers, to talk about issues or share their wins, relating to their industry, which now has 174 members.

She also does a bit of what she calls social media marketing on the side, including selling OTI organisers, which she is conscientious about using herself.

"I'm quite busy and would never know which hat I had on half the time otherwise," she says, looking up at her wall planner.

"The to-do list involves seven different things today including the blog, Landcare, Farming Mums, our rental property and a project I have to do for Kellogg's Rural Leadership, which I'm doing in June this year."

Setting goals are important for the couple—their biggest one is to find an equity management position with deer in the South Island. There are inspirational quotes dotted around the house spouting messages such as 'A smooth sea never made a skilled sailor' and 'Some people want it to happen, some people wish it would happen, some people make it happen.'

"We're quite driven and we push each other a little too hard sometimes but we hope it will pay off. We're approaching investors and we're always looking for the next opportunity. Our rental property is the first rung on our property ladder."

Having a burgeoning public persona means Chanelle has had to survive guest

speaker appearances. "I would run away at school if there were speeches. Public speaking was never something I envisaged doing."

Speaking of running, that's something Chanelle can be found doing early in the mornings when the children are still asleep, when Izzy is at kindy or even, according to a recent blog, while accompanied by Izzy (complete with jumping fence shadows and playing in the river).

Last year she set herself a goal to run 10 kilometres, which she did, four or five times. So she has now set her sights on the Mt Cook half marathon in October.

"It took me about a month to convince myself to say it out loud," she says, laughing.

"David has also been running. He's farming and always active and always moving but never blowing out the cobwebs. It's good to get the endorphins flowing rather than moving at the same pace each day. As for me, I like cooking and baking and eating... that's why I run"

BELOW: Chanelle lives at Pleasant Point with husband David, stock manager for Raincliff Station





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The demand for Toni's wedding services, through Peter May Marquee & Event Hire, led to the creation of Silk Estate—Marquee Weddings



ABOVE: Silk Estate is very discerning about the quality of their wedding hire products

MAIN IMAGE: Silk Estate's luxurious, silk-lined wedding marquees are the perfect backdrop for a spectacular event

by Toni May. Toni and husband Peter had been hiring marquees and other wedding equipment for the past eight years and Toni's attention to detail has earned her a reputation for having impeccable standards. "It doesn't really feel like 'work', because I love it so much. I'm always thinking ahead, so that clients don't have to worry, and to ensure guests have an exceptional experience. It's all in the detail; making sure every aspect is just right."

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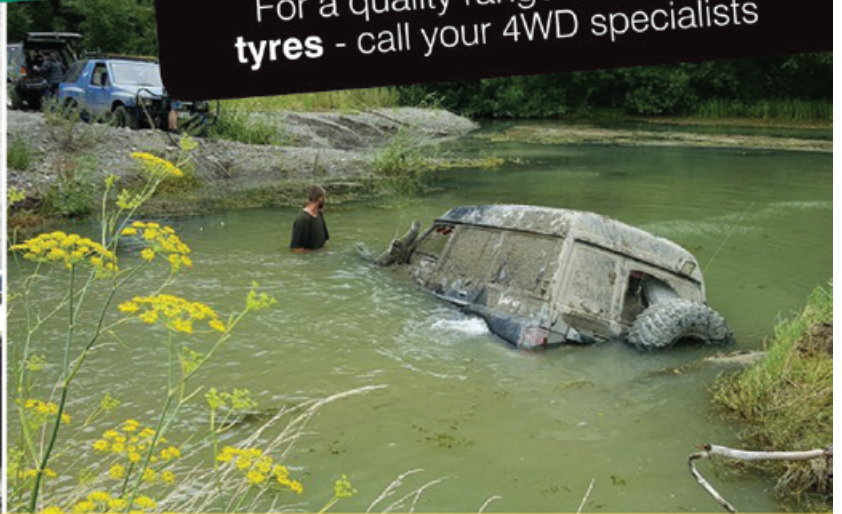


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- Hydraulic over-ride disc brakes
- Stock crates
- Jockey wheel
- Registration

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STANDARD FEATURES

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EXTRAS

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ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY BERNARDITA SALDIAS, CENTRE FOR DAIRY EXCELLENCE

Dairy cows can often be nutritionally challenged during the production season, this is usually most apparent in the spring post-calving where there is considerable changes in metabolic and hormonal demand pre to post calving. Some of the consequences of this nutritional stress can be metabolic disorders such as the negative energy balance during early lactation (ketosis) and milk fever or hypocalcaemia; and also can result in infectious diseases such as metritis or mastitis, and a drop on milk production due to the nutritional stress.

At the end of pregnancy and in early lactation, the requirement for nutrients by the cow increases but the dry matter intake does not increase in the same magnitude; consequently, there is considerable mobilisation of body reserves (energy and minerals) to supply the difference in nutrients that the cows are not receiving in their daily consumption of dry matter. For example, a proper body condition of cows at calving period will help to supply the energy required in early lactation, but care needs to be taken not to go over the recommended body condition score (BCS) target resulting in cows over BCS 5.5. This is because cows that are too fat (BCS>5.5-6.0) are at risk of having higher fat mobilisation to meet their milk production, and usually this large fat mobilisation can result in higher milk fever incidence. These cows can also become

ketotic, one of the long term negative impacts of ketosis is a drop in milk production and usually cows struggle to go back to their potential milk production for that season. We also often see a decline in dry matter intake in ketotic cows which of course further exasperates the situation resulting in higher BCS loss. As a result these cows can also become very lethargic, some cows show signs of excitability, uncoordinated movement and sometimes they can become aggressive. One of the most characteristic signs of ketosis is also the sweet smell on their breath. If you think some of your cows in the spring appear ketotic, your vet has a cow side test which they can take to provide results in only a few minutes.

Milk fever is a metabolic disorder caused by a low blood calcium (Ca) level that mainly occurs around calving in dairy cows; this is because the amount of calcium that is lost in the colostrum and milk is much higher than the normal blood calcium levels and there is a delay in adapting the "system" from relatively low to high demand of calcium pre and post calving. There are internal mechanisms to replace the calcium that is lost at calving such as the removal of calcium from the bones (resorption) or to increase calcium absorption from the gastrointestinal tract. However, these mechanisms sometimes take a few days to activate and stabilise the blood calcium levels into the normal range. Older, fat

(BCS>6.0) and thinner cows (BCS<3.5) are more prone to suffer milk fever than younger cows or cows with a BCS 5.0 (mature cows) or 5.5 (heifers) at calving. As a result to minimise potential milk fever issues, operators usually supply calcium in the form of limeflour dusted onto pasture or mixed in supplement at a rate of 150–300 grams per day to cows post-calving.

Milk fever can also be as a consequence of subclinical magnesium (Mg) deficiency in dairy cows, especially in high quality pastures where levels of potassium and nitrogen are high. Magnesium plays an important role in the production of hormones that participate in the mobilisation of calcium from bones and the absorption of calcium from the diet, this is why Mg is used throughout the winter and spring period as a supplement. A good management practice around calving is the daily supplementation of Mg three to four weeks before calving to three to four months after calving. The aim is to supply 25g of elemental Mg/cow/day. Getting this quantity of Mg into cows needs to come from several different sources:

- Magnesium oxide (MgO) which contains around 50% actual Mg.
- Magnesium chloride (MgCl₂) which contains around 12% actual Mg.
- Magnesium sulphate (MgSO₄·2H₂O) which contains around 10% actual Mg.



Using a combination of MgO (pasture spreading or mixed into meal/silage etc) and either MgCl₂ or MgSO₄·2H₂O (water) is recommended to reduce palatability issues and ensure adequate intake. Typical application rates of MgO onto pasture are around 80g which would supply 20g Mg (assuming at least 50% blown away and not consumed by the cows of which 50% is Mg). Because MgCl₂ or MgSO₄·2H₂O are relatively low in available Mg, application rates need to be at around 50g (MgCl₂) or 60g (MgSO₄·2H₂O) per cow per day through the dosatron to supply 5g of actual Mg to the cows. It is recommended not to exceed around 80g of either chloride or sulphate per cow per day to prevent taint of the water potentially reducing voluntary intake. Best practice of magnesium supplementation aims to minimise the risk of grass staggers (clinical Mg deficiency) and secondary, reduce milk fever through improving Ca absorption in cows. There are three typical stages of milk fever clinical signs, the first stage is the excitement phase, the second stage is the partially conscious and the third stage is the comatose phase where bloated cows are quite common, this of course where managers most often see them, and it is here they are provided with intravenous Ca and energy supplements to turn them around.

Additional supplementation of phosphorus in the winter is also a hot topic, especially over the last few years as fodder beet has become popular. In some situations, phosphorus supplementation will prevent cases of phosphorus deficiency or creeper cows and

there is no risk inducing milk fever at the low rates generally recommended (50 g of DCP per cow per day through the entire winter period). As a summary, in order to prevent or minimise the incidence of metabolic diseases on dairy herds it is extremely important to have a dry period plan which begins with an assessment of the body condition of the cows several weeks before drying off. This will allow the identification of thinner and fat cows and let you to put in place different feeding management to those cows. For thinner animals it is better to have a longer dry period by drying off earlier and good management for fatter cows is to control the amount of feed (ME) offered in the dry period (feed only for maintenance). In addition, it is also important to implement a good transition period before and after calving using a springer diet and supplementing cows. Remember, the objective of the springer diet is to reduce the total metabolisable energy (MJME) required by the cow, but only if a mature cow has BCS 5 before calving; the springer diet should

provide 80%- 90% of the maintenance energy required by this cow. But if the BCS is <5 continue feeding full amount (100%) of the metabolisable energy required by the cow.

The table below is a good example of calculation of the metabolisable energy required when cows have a BCS higher or lower than five. Planning ahead and having a strategy plan before calving will definitely help you to minimise risks of having the issues described above. Take the time to contact your farm vet or consultant to discuss a plan which should include budgeting feed after calving. Having plans and communicating well in advance to farm staff also ensures that the cows diets are kept steady and according to the plan; communication is critical too of course (we have all heard of those instances where a farm staff member accidentally spread Ca instead of Mg to the springers); taking some time early to go over the plan and why will prevent issues in the spring where time and the bosses patience can be short.

| MID-LACTATION | PRE-CALVING | RECOMMENDED ME INTAKE IF BCS<5 | RECOMMENDED INTAKE OF ME IF BCS≥5 |
|---------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 350 | 400 | 95 | 80 |
| 400 | 460 | 105 | 90 |
| 450 | 520 | 115 | 100 |
| 500 | 580 | 125 | 105 |
| 550 | 630 | 130 | 110 |
| 600 | 690 | 140 | 120 |

Source: www.DairyNZ.co.nz



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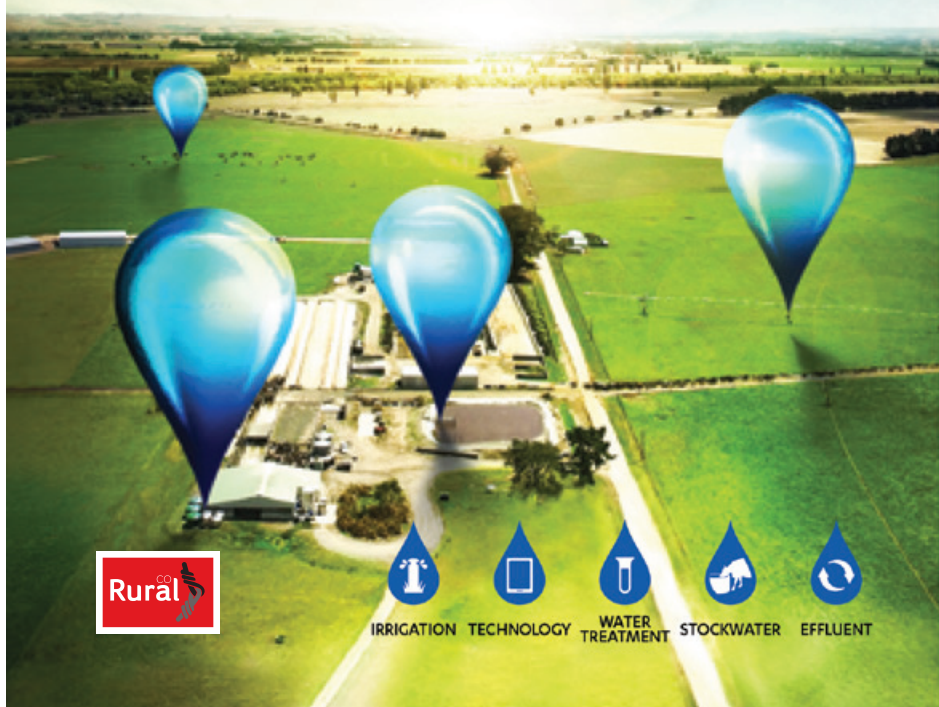
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Irrigation—a game of hours

Ashburton arable farmer Adam Wilson knows irrigation is a game of hours.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY WATERFORCE ASHBURTON



How many hours the water is on (or off, if his pumps unexpectedly cut out), can have a dramatic effect on the growth of his crops and consequently his bottom line.

“Those hours all add up in the growing season,” he explains. But thanks to WaterForce’s leading SCADAfarm technology, he is more in control of those hours than ever before.

“It has really lessened the down-time during our irrigation season and we’ve been able to stretch our water further. Last year, when it was very dry and our well water levels were down, you could really see the benefits of it.” Best of all, Adam’s decision to install six pivots on his 296ha property and control them all remotely using SCADAfarm, has saved him up to five hours of work each day in summer—time which he previously spent shifting travelling irrigators and checking everything was running as it should.

Now he simply uses the SCADAfarm app on his smartphone to control his irrigation system in real time. He can turn water on and off, set each pivot’s speed and direction, check water pressure, change the watering depth and much more—all at the touch of a button.

He also receives an immediate alarm notification if his pivots or pumps stop working for any reason—allowing him to rectify the problem and get water back on as soon as possible.

“We don’t have enough water to run all six pivots at once so it’s quite a balancing act to decide what water goes where.

“A remote system like this, where we have control from anywhere, is excellent. If you’ve got access to the internet, you’ve got access to your irrigation system. It’s a really efficient use of time in terms of getting water on at the right time, in the right spot,” he says.

“It’s also handy to be able to keep an eye on things—knowing each pivot is still going without having to physically be there to see it.”

SCADA stands for ‘Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition’ and is an automated system used extensively by the international mining, petrochemical, water and wastewater industries.

Developed specifically for New Zealand farmers, SCADAfarm is supported by the technical expertise of global automation management specialist, Schneider Electric, and telecommunications experts, Vodafone. These two companies have partnered with WaterForce to provide unrivalled control and peace of mind for Kiwi farmers across all farming sectors.

Adam admits he was nervous about whether SCADAfarm would work on his property because cellphone coverage is extremely poor.

“WaterForce spent a lot of time testing and working out where to position aerials to pick up the best signal. It was surprising what they could come up with. The system certainly works in an area where the signal’s not strong at all.”

He’s also impressed by how easy the SCADAfarm app has been to use and understand. “The SCADAfarm platform is basically a replica of the controls at the base of each pivot. So you need to know your machines, but you don’t need to be a computer genius to operate it by any means.” One of the most useful functions is the ability to monitor water pressure, Adam says.

“Being able to monitor water pressure at each pivot lets us know how the system is running in real time and if we have any pumps out. We can detect any issues straight away and get things going again, whereas before those sort of problems used to go unnoticed for periods of time.”

Now he no longer has to spend four or five hours a day shifting and monitoring irrigation, Adam has more free time with his young family and can focus on getting other tasks complete.

Once the initial SCADAfarm hardware has been purchased, access to this online platform is available for an affordable annual subscription. For more information about the application’s benefits and features, contact the Ashburton WaterForce Branch on 0800 436 723 or email the dedicated SCADAfarm team at info@scadafarm.com

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Tech Tips

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Internet uses are changing considerably over time

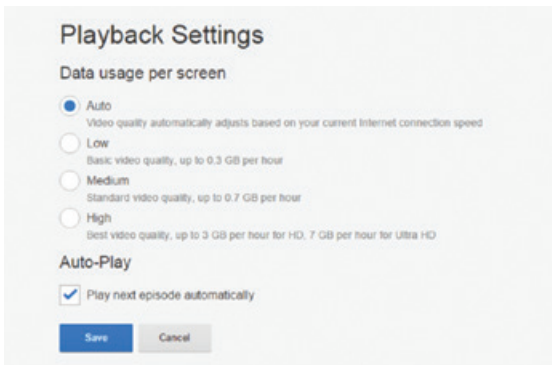
WORDS BY FARMSIDE



The way we use the internet now has changed considerably in the last 5 years and will continue to do so. Websites are no longer predominantly text based, but have a full range of media content like pictures and videos. We are also more reliant on the internet to provide entertainment that we would have once found offline. Movies, TV series, Music and Games are now all accessible right at our fingertips. Due to what is presented to us and how we use the internet, the amount of data we use is a lot higher than ever before.

When you open up your homepage, new data is downloaded to your computer every time. If your homepage is Yahoo for example, you could easily download 2.5MB of text, images and advertising each time you open it. If you were to do this 3 times a day over a month, it could account for a quarter of 1GB of data usage each month.

Streaming sites such as Netflix, YouTube, Quickflix, and Lightbox are quickly becoming the websites to replace our standard TV viewing. Watching TV series and Movies on the internet has never been this easy. You can also adjust how much data these websites use which will help to lower your data consumption. These websites are set to 'auto' in the first instance which means they will use the most data, as they will be giving you the best quality video. This can use anywhere between 3GB and 7GB per hour.



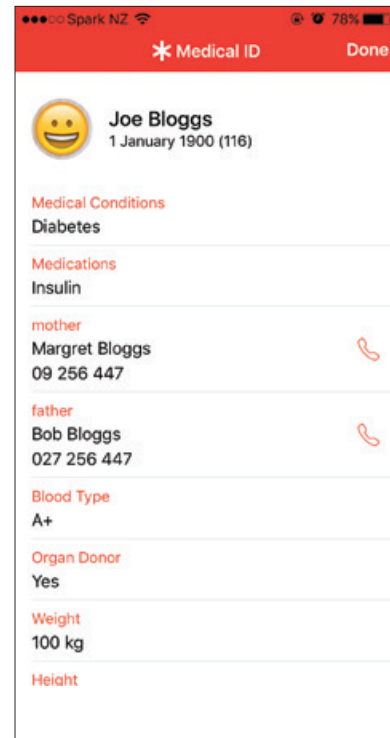
For example with Netflix you can change this setting under your profile and then selecting playback settings (left). To do the same thing with YouTube, you can simply click

on the settings cog on the bottom right-hand corner of the video, select 'quality' and adjust the playback settings from there.

Mobile devices like tablets and smart phones are much more common now than five years ago and they can also use a lot of data. With these devices some 'back-up' your content whenever you get into a Wi-Fi area, to ensure your pictures are stored safely on the cloud. It pays to learn about what type of apps you have on these devices and how much data they use. iPhone and iPad users have iCloud, if this is left on it can go through substantial amounts of data when you're not actually using the device. If you go to Settings > iCloud, you will be able to see what is being backed up to the cloud.

Another service that may be getting through a lot of your data could be Apps. With Apps, they require updates (to varying extents and frequency) which will use more data than you may realise. The size of the updates can be from only a few Megabytes, up to several hundred Megabytes. On an iPhone or iPad you can control what and when the updates occur by turning off automatic updates. This means the app store will prompt you when updates are available, and you can choose whether to install them or not. This is very handy if you are on a broadband service which gives you an off-peak data allocation. To enable this go to Settings > iTunes & App Store and turn off the automatic updated in there.

Simple steps to set up your phone for an emergency



The Medical ID is a feature included in the IOS 8 update on Apple iPhones using the Health App which carries emergency contacts, which you can setup following the instructions below. A call can be made to these contacts despite the phone being locked. Simply swipe the screen and rather than putting in a passcode, select emergency > Medical ID, this will display the emergency contact information.

HOW TO SET UP YOUR MEDICAL ID:

1. Open your Health App



2. Select Medical ID on the bottom menu > Create Medical ID. If you have previously created a medical ID, select Edit on the upper right hand corner
3. Turn on 'Show When Locked'
4. Fill in your medical details
5. Scroll down and select 'add emergency contact'
6. Select the contact
7. Select the relationship to that contact
8. Once finished adding the contacts, you can select 'Done' on the upper right hand corner.

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Good wintering practices to maximise results



AbacusBio farm consultant Peter O'Neill highlights a few good practices that farmers should adopt to optimise winter feed and body condition gain.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY ABACUS BIO

The days are getting shorter and slowly cooler; although the dry warm conditions appear to be lingering longer than normal. But rest assured winter will eventually arrive.

Hopefully though it is not a severe one, as feed conditions in the drier areas of the South Island are not abundant heading into winter.

Now is the time to take stock of what feed you have on hand to determine how many animals you can take through the winter. The dry summer/autumn will have had a negative impact on winter crop yields, and in most cases the amount of supplementary feed made on-farm.

Wintering of dairy cows will soon become the main focus for a large number of farmers: dairy, specialist dairy graziers, and sheep and beef.

It is essential first to determine accurate crop yields, especially with fodder beet; this will reduce the risk of animal health issues (sub-clinical/clinical acidosis) during transitioning onto crop.

All animals subjected to a change in diet, from a predominately grass-based diet, to winter crop, need to be transitioned over a period of 7–14 days.

In the case of brassica feeding, this can be done over a 7-8-day period, starting with intakes of 4-5 kg dry matter (DM)/cow/day lifting intake by 1 kgDM/cow/day, until the desired intake is reached.

The transition onto fodder beet is more gradual, with starting intakes of 2 kgDM/cow/day lifting intake by 0.5kgDM/cow/day over a period of at least 14 days.

Notably, a number of farms now use fodder beet during late lactation, so provided cows have continued to be fed fodder beet during the dry-off process, transition can continue from the level of intake at drying off. Often intake is around 4-5 kgDM/cow/day at this point.

It is important that accurate information around grazing levels are passed onto the grazier. Alternatively the grazier should take a conservative approach and use the full transition process.

An allowance needs to be made for extra supplement, or pasture to be supplied during this transition phase.

To carry out crop measurements for the following crops:

- **Kale and broadcast turnips/swedes:** make up a 1m² quadrant or bend a 3.54m length of alkathe into a circle;
- **Ridged swedes:** first determine row width so a m² can be worked out i.e. length down the row to be pulled. For example: for ridged swedes - assuming 600mm row width, measure 1.67m down a row;
- **Precision-sown fodder beet:** assuming 500mm row width, measure 2m down the row.

Fodder beet crops generally tend to be more variable in yield, and dry matter percentages vary greatly depending on the variety sown.

Weigh at least 1m²/hectare of crop. In more variable crops, this needs to be increased in order to give a more accurate yield measurement.

In all cases, weigh leaves and bulb separately and get these dry matter tested to give an accurate idea of actual DM/ha. Crops can vary up to 5%DM within the same cultivar, for fodder beet this can mean a difference of +/- 4.5 tonne DM/ha.

Calculation for 1m² sample:

1. Wet weight x 10,000 = kg fresh matter/ha
2. kg fresh matter/ha x DM% (as tested) = kgDM/ha

Do this for bulb and leaf material, and add the two together to give total crop yield.

A 25 T DM fodder beet yield for example has 2.5kgDM/m². To allocate 10 kgDM/cow crop, each cow needs 4m²/day. Based on 250 cows then you require 1000m²/day. Assuming a 250m crop face, then allow 4m/day for the herd along the crop face.

Most crops will continue to increase yield over winter, so you will need to account for this, or reassess crop yield through winter.

A 480kg cross bred cow will require roughly 11kgDM (@ 11MJME/kgDM) down the throat to allow for maintenance, pregnancy, and some gain in body condition score (BCS).

Assuming 80% utilisation then you need to allocate 14kgDM/cow/day to achieve the target intake.

A proportion of this intake will be in higher DM supplements such as hay/straw or silage/baleage.

Remember in wet cold conditions utilisation will drop, and feed intake will increase, particularly if the animals do not have access to sufficient shelter.

Back fence crops to minimise soil damage and compaction. Graze critical source areas last i.e. swales and gullies, where overland runoff and seepage converges to form small channels of running water, which may then flow into streams and rivers.

DairyNZ has some great resources to help plan your winter grazing to improve animal outcomes whilst also reducing potential environmental impacts, for example:

www.dairynz.co.nz/publications/environment/wintering-in-southland-and-south-otago/
www.dairynz.co.nz/media/1734107/heifer-grazing-responsibility-checklist

There is currently a Sustainable Farming Fund project which is developing a dairy grazing website. The website will improve the accessibility of relevant tools and resources for winter dairy graziers, with the aim of improving stock performance outcomes.

It will be hosted on the Beef and Lamb New Zealand website and be live some time over the winter period.

Good wintering practices will benefit the environment, and ensure your stock achieve BCS targets for calving, which will result in higher milk solids production and better reproductive results for your herd.



AbacusBio farm consultant Peter O'Neill

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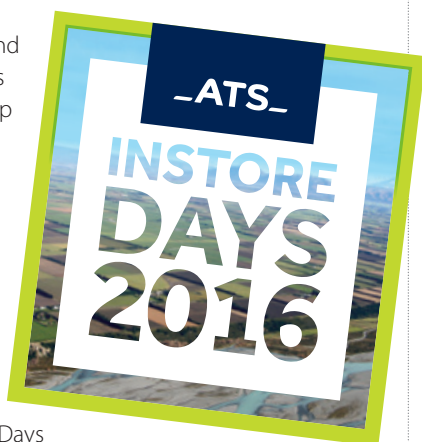
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Co-op News

ATS Instore Days are on the way

Preparations for the 22nd annual ATS Instore Days are well underway! Keep an eye out for dates and exclusive specials negotiated just for you by your co-operative. 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 both ATS Farm Supplies and Ruralco suppliers. It's also a great place to catch up with other Cardholders, farmers and their families from throughout the South Island. Be sure to mark the dates on your calendar and don't forget to bring your Ruralco Card.



Excise tax refund

If you're a business owner who uses petrol-powered equipment in your operations, you may be entitled to an excise tax refund of up to 69¢ per litre. This includes using petrol powered equipment to:

- Move about the land you and your staff work on (i.e. ATV's used by farmers);
- Work the land the equipment operates on (i.e. lawnmowers used by green keepers, hydraladas used by orchardists);
- Keep your businesses operating (i.e. builders using generators, chainsaws used in forestry).

To lodge a claim to refund fuel excise duty, contact Kerry Aldrich from the NZTA (New Zealand Transport Authority) on 06 953 7021 or 0800 108 809 (Ext 7021), she will advise you on your claim, register your request and ensure you have the correct forms to fill out.

Have your say

Is there something that you want to share your opinion on? Something we need to discuss in Real Farmer? Have your say, contact us at marketing@ruralco.co.nz and share your point of view. If you wish to have an article written in the Real Farmer by our journalist or if you simply want to provide the article, contact us and we will organise for you to have your voice.



Use your Ruralco Card or Ruralco Mobilcards and save at least 12¢ per litre off fuel

RURALCO CARD

The Ruralco Card offers great discounts for all your business and family needs. By using a Ruralco Card you:

- Save 12¢* per litre off the fuel pump price with no volume limits at Mobil service stations, Allied Fuelstops and listed sites nationwide;
- Have access to discounts at over 2,000 local and national suppliers;
- All purchases listed on one monthly account.



RURALCO MOBILCARD OFF-PUMP PRICE

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- Have access to the most extensive network of fuel outlets in New Zealand, with over 380 fuel outlets;
- The ability to monitor fuel spend by vehicle and set spending limits if required and control over purchases by selecting fuel and oil only or all purchases;
- Pin security;
- All purchases listed by individual cards on one monthly account.



RURALCO MOBILCARD OFF-NATIONAL PRICE

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- Have access to the most extensive network of fuel outlets in New Zealand, with over 380 fuel outlets;
- The ability to monitor fuel spend by vehicle and set spending limits if required and control over purchases by selecting fuel and oil only or all purchases;
- Pin security;
- All purchases listed by individual cards on one monthly account.

The Ruralco Mobilcard off national price is identified with the word National on the front of the card.

To order any of these cards for your account contact us on 0800 RURAL NZ (787 256). You can hold one or all of these cards on your account.

Check out the Ruralco website at www.ruralco.co.nz for the most up to date and complete list of fuel suppliers nationwide and their discounts, plus any special discounts organised by Ruralco.

**No volume limits. Discount current as at 1 June 2016 and is subject to change. Discount is not available at convenience stations or in conjunction with other fuel discount offers excluding pump price offers. The Ruralco 12¢ discount will not be given at point of sale, but provided as a rebate on your monthly statement.*



Looking for fuel storage tanks?

ATS have fuel storage tanks available to be purchased for your business. 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 ATS on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) to organise fuel storage for your business.



Taking the guesswork out of farm safety

Does your farm's health and safety policy and practises need updating and brought up to standard to match recent legislation changes? Keeping ourselves and our staff safe is a major factor in running our businesses and finding ways to easily manage this while also complying with the new Health and Safety at Work Act can be difficult. ATS want's to help take the guesswork out of this task and so it provides member with access to relevant training, including access to your own farm safety manual. Attendees also have the added bonus of being able to apply for a discount on their ACC levies following completion of the training.

Upcoming training dates for the one day course are 21 June, 19 July and 23 August, at a cost of \$550 (GST and member discount inclusive). Seating is limited so early bookings are advisable. For more information or to make a reservation please contact Peter Jacob on 03 307 5124 or 0800 BUY ATS (289 287), email book@ats.co.nz or reserve your spot online at www.ats.co.nz/farmsafety.

Members' Choice Award

We're asking you to select your favourite supplier, someone who offers you great value for money, exceptional service and goes beyond the call of duty to meet your needs. The supplier which receives the most votes will receive the prestigious Members' Choice Award at the 2016 Ruralco Supplier Awards.

You can cast your vote either by emailing ruralco@ruralco.co.nz, by visiting www.ruralco.co.nz/memberschoice2016 or by phoning 0800 RURALNZ (787 256). Get in quick, voting runs until 1 July.



MEMBERS'
CHOICE AWARD
2016

Use your Ruralco Card at Allied

The Ruralco Card is accepted at all Allied Fuel Stops nationwide. When you fill up at Allied you'll save 12c* per litre off the listed fuel pump price.

The Ruralco Card is now also accepted at select Allied Service Stations nationwide, use your Ruralco Card and save 12c* per litre discount at:

- Oxford Motor Company
- Irwin Motors Winton
- Glenthorne Motors Gore
- Havelock Service Station
- Robbs Garage Roxburgh



Receive your ATS or Ruralco account electronically

Make your accounting easier and avoid postal issues, get your account sent to you electronically.

If you are an ATS Member or Ruralco Cardholder you can opt in to receive your account via email as well or instead of the posted copy.

To receive your account electronically contact ats@ats.co.nz or ruralco@ruralco.co.nz, include your member number, preferred email address and whether you would like to receive your account electronically, via post or both.

Congratulations Anna Tonks for winning our duck shooting competition on Facebook.

Anna chose a Hunting voucher for both her and her mate. Good luck for the Duck Shooting season ahead.



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