

# RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2017



Diversifying  
to ensure a  
robust future

Farming sector  
meeting nutrient  
challenge head on

Couple ride wave  
of deer success

A humble  
co-operative  
legend and  
irrigation pioneer  
recognised

New Holland  
presents its Concept  
Tractor powered by  
methane

# From the Group CEO



## Farming passion always to the fore

Passion in what you are doing and why, is a critical ingredient to success and we see it in spades throughout the farming sector.

We all know passionate farmers. They are often the busy people who get things done, and they often shy away from the limelight, not seeking public recognition for their efforts. This issue of Real Farmer celebrates

a number of passionate farmers who have generously opened their doors to us, including co-operative legend and irrigation pioneer, Brian Cameron whose decades of hard work was recently recognised at a national level.

The humble, retired Mid Canterbury farmer created a legacy worthy of Co-operative Business New Zealand's highly sought after premier award for Outstanding Co-operative Contribution. He shares his farming story with us and how he came to be publicly recognised for his agricultural input. Ruralco Chief Financial Officer, Oliver O'Neill, was also recognised at the awards winning the Co-operation Amongst Co-operatives Award.

Mount Somers deer farmers, Duncan and Lorna Humm, also embody those same hard working and passionate characteristics and share with us their journey so far. They have an energy and enthusiasm for their sector which sees them go well above and beyond the usual on-farm commitments, both active in industry organisations and more. Communication within the rural sector is also a passion, with Lorna recently completing a Kellogg

Rural Leadership Programme focused on rural communication, while Duncan is an administrator for the hugely popular NZ Farming Facebook and Instagram pages.

Staying with the deer theme, we also take a closer look at this industry which is experiencing one of its most stable supply periods ever.

Agricultural reporter Richard Rennie talks us through the impending impact of greater restrictions on nutrient losses, especially nitrogen, and the impact regional plans will have as they come into play around the country. Richard's article takes a look at how farmers are already meeting these challenges.

Farming has remained the mainstay of Braemar Station's operation, despite the booming tourist opportunities in the Lake Pukaki and Mackenzie Basin area. Hamish and Julia Mackenzie are passionate farmers first and foremost, and they share their story of remaining committed to farming in this unique and often challenging area, and how tourism fits into their operation.

As always, there's plenty of variety inside this Real Farmer so try and take some time out of your busy spring schedules to have a break and enjoy these great articles.

**Rob Sharkie**

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## RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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ON THE COVER:  
Julia and Hamish Mackenzie  
from Braemar Station



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# Diversifying to ensure a robust future



The Mackenzie couple run Braemar Station together, with Julia focusing on the tourism aspect and Hamish the farming side of the business.

## While New Zealand's burgeoning tourist market presents opportunities for Mackenzie basin farmers to explore new income streams, for Hamish and Julia Mackenzie of Braemar Station, they are farmers first, and always will be.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY ANNIE STUDHOLME

With its spectacular uninterrupted views of Aoraki Mt Cook, it's no surprise Braemar Station has become a Mecca for tourists. Today, tourists flock to the 4,092ha high country property located on the southern shores of Lake Pukaki year-round to frequent the local ski fields, enjoy other local activities, cycle the world-famous Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail linking the Southern Alps to the Pacific Ocean or just soak up the views.

But while tourism now provides a large chunk of the Mackenzie's annual income, both Hamish and Julia remain committed to farming this unique piece of the world, and all the challenges that come with it.

Duncan and Carol Mackenzie, Hamish's parents, first purchased Braemar Station off the Australia New Zealand Land Company in 1969. Back then it was a sheep and cattle run, split into seven blocks and with no real fertiliser history, explains Hamish.

### "The key is being able to farm to what Mother Nature throws at you, says Hamish."

During the mid-1970s the upper Waitaki power development saw Braemar Station lose 1,000 acres as Lake Pukaki's levels were raised higher. "We lost all the lucerne and hay paddocks, and also used to run 500 cows up in the river bed but when the lake came up that dropped to 150."

Back then the farm's main income came through Merino wool. Although the station was highly regarded as having one of the country's leading commercial flocks, it was a hard graft, says Hamish. "They were basically going broke because of footrot. There was no time to do any development or repairs and maintenance, as every moment was spent turning over sheep. There was also no production because of the footrot; it was a bad thing to be known as a footrot place."

In 1997 Duncan turned his back on farming Merinos, switching breeds to Perendales, which had a reputation for being hardier.

Hamish returned home in 2000 after gaining vital experience working on farms in North Canterbury and Omarama, as well time spent travelling working in the US and two years on farms in Australia. The same year he and Julia were married.



Brought up in the Rakaia Gorge, Julia (nee Todhunter) has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science degree from Lincoln University and had previously worked for AgResearch at Tara Hills, then at South Pacific Sera at Blue Cliffs Station for William and John Rolleston. After they were married she worked off-farm for WoolPro, which was the precursor to Beef + Lamb New Zealand, until children came along.

Initially Hamish and Julia worked as a married couple, assuming more management roles over time, with Duncan and Carol moving off the farm in 2007. "We were very lucky. Duncan stepped back pretty quickly and willingly gave us the reins," says Julia.

By 2014 they owned the farm outright, and had also completed Tenure Review, which saw the total farm area reduced from 17,500ha, of which 2,500ha was already freehold, to 4,091ha. In the handover 6,450ha was designated as public conservation land, while 6,990ha went to the Defence Force that operates the nearby Balmoral military base. The remaining 1,700ha was freehold.

"It was a long-drawn out process, taking almost nine years to complete. It sounds like a massive loss, but in reality we didn't lose any stock units," says Hamish. "The important thing was that we already had 2,500ha freehold and we gained another 1,700ha."

Since taking over, Hamish and Julia have focused on increasing productivity, undertaking massive regrassing and development, which they are starting to reap the benefits of now.

Of the total 4,091ha, 2,341ha is developed into paddocks and blocks. Sitting at 630m above sea level on the eastern side of Lake Pukaki, it's climate is one of extremes with dry summers and long, cold (150 days) winters with temperatures plummeting to -15 degrees. Average rainfall is about 875mm, with snowfalls "pretty reliable". This winter they had snow around the homestead for five weeks.

The key is being able to farm to what Mother

ABOVE: Today, Braemar Station runs a 4,700 Perendale breeding ewe flock lambing at between 115–125% BELOW: They have 340 predominantly Angus breeding cows with the progeny sold at weaning

Nature throws at you, says Hamish. "The climate is our big limiting factor. You have to farm to it so we have room to move, being able to get rid of stock if it gets dry in the summer. It's a short growing season. Luckily, we have a very reliable spring because we are in the norwest rain shadow, but the summer can be dry right through. In the odd year when you get a good season right through, everything works."

Today, Braemar Station runs a 4,700 Perendale breeding ewe flock lambing at between 115–125% with all lambs fattened on-farm (weather permitting), about 340 predominantly Angus breeding cows with the progeny sold at weaning, and 750 hinds, alongside the tourism accommodation.

They have put a lot of time and effort into the sheep over the years improving the flock,





ABOVE: Julia wanted a job that wasn't off farm and gave her flexibility, their on-farm accommodation was the perfect fit

developing strong markets for their hoggets. "We keep 2,000 hoggets to fatten through the first winter (on winter feed) then drop to 1,300 with 700 sold as replacements. We have a good market for those replacements and the market for them seems to be relatively stable," says Hamish.

But while their wool was fetching \$7.50 per kilo clean two years ago, this year's prices have fallen dramatically. "We usually get a premium for our wool because its full length and nice and white, but a premium on \$2.50 is only going to be \$2.60 this year which will barely cover costs," says Julia. "There is just a huge difference between a good year and bad one (with sheep). We have put a lot in to the sheep but feel like we've hit a wall, whereas all our effort seems to be being rewarded with the deer. It really feels like we are achieving

something. No-one likes to go to work everyday and not see results."

In the past five years the Mackenzie's have focused on developing the deer operation, increasing deer numbers by 400. Their deer block, which has a small proportion of developed paddocks, is 485ha of what they describe as some of Braemar's tougher country. There had been wild deer on the block, which led Hamish's father to set up the deer farm in the early 1980s.

"The deer work quite well in the high country because their later fawning means that they match feed supply with the later spring. The rest of the time we are trying to manipulate what feed demands we have to make some money out of it," says Hamish.

Originally, they used to sell all their deer at weaning, but with improvements to their breeding programme, and looking at ways to grow weaners to better weights - simply and at least cost - finishing them has become a

viable option. Now the Mackenzie's keep all the weaner hinds, only selling the stags.

The market too had gone through a resurgence, which Hamish believes is largely because of the Passion2Profit (P2P) deer industry initiative which was launched in 2014. A joint venture between the New Zealand deer industry and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) under the Primary Growth Partnership (PGP), the seven-year \$16 million initiative spans the venison value chain, from farmer to consumer. It involves substantial projects on both farming and marketing sides.

On the marketing side, the programme has been centered on extending the use of Cervena with the five biggest venison marketing companies joining forces to create a marketing programme outside of the US and Australasia looking at smaller markets like China and Europe. While on the farming side they have set up Advance Parties bringing together motivated deer farmers to work together to identify to improve profits on their deer farms.

The Mackenzie's are part of the Mackenzie Advance Party working group with Hamish being group chairman. It is one of 26 such groups nationwide with Deer Industry NZ (DINZ) aiming to have 30 operating by the end of the year.

**"The deer work quite well in the high country because their later fawning means that they match feed supply with the later spring."**

While venison production is still down from the highs of 2008-2013 when 15,000 tonnes were produced, DINZ expects it will reach 12,000-14,000 this year. Venison schedule prices are also up 17 per cent on last year reaching more than \$9/kg on the back of continuing strong demand in the North American market.

Earlier this year marketing also started in Germany, and excitingly a new market has been developed in Sweden.

"You have to remember that only four years ago the deer market was in a pretty bad way. While it's still early days, they've stuck to their word and it's looking positive for the future. I think the way they have done it gives more backbone to the market going forward," says Hamish.

Prices are one thing, but Hamish has also grown very fond of the deer. "There is a lot less work involved and you work them totally differently to anything else. I do really enjoy working with them. In time, we might look to reduce the sheep numbers further to increase the deer herd."

Tourism is another area where the Mackenzie's can see future growth. Originally started in a "low key" way by Hamish's mother, Carol, in the 1990s, Julia started pushing the on-farm accommodation when the children were little

as the change from married couples to single boys freed up some of the staff houses. "I needed a job that wasn't off-farm and gave me flexibility," she says.

Initially they started with just the Shearer's Lodge and Pine Cottage. Then in 2007 they converted the Hilltop Cottage and in February last year added the purpose-built Station Cottage, which takes them to 40 beds in total. The cottages are fully self-contained, with clients coming from all over the world, as well as Kiwis. All linen is provided and Julia also offers cyclists a dinner, bed and breakfast option as well as packed lunches.

While many of their clients are cyclists on the Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail which opened four years ago, Julia says without them, they would probably still be full. "We work really hard to make sure we don't rely entirely on one market. About 35 per cent of our clients over the year would be cyclists. We are pretty much full from September through to May, and cyclists make up 80 per cent of the bookings in February, March and April."

One thing the Mackenzie's love about the cycle trail is that it gives people an opportunity to see the real Mackenzie country. "We do like having the cyclists as most of them are Kiwis and Australians and it's great to get them off the main drag and appreciating that there is more to the Mackenzie country than what they see from the main road," says Julia.

But while they can see the potential for future opportunities on the back of New Zealand's massive tourism growth, it takes time, effort and capital. "It is certainly not the easiest money we earn on the farm! It takes a lot of work and financial input. Over the years we have slowly been chipping away at it, extensively renovating all the cottages, but it all costs."



Now that they are almost at capacity, Julia has someone to help with cleaning and meals during the busy months. She splits looking after the accommodation with her other farm duties, chasing Gus (14) and Kate (12) who are both at boarding school in Timaru, and her other commitments.

Julia is also on the Mackenzie Country Trust that's goals are to achieve long lasting protection for the outstanding Mackenzie landscapes and natural values alongside a sustainable local community. It is one of the greatest challenges facing the whole region, and one she is very passionate about.

As farmers, Julia says it's getting increasingly difficult to farm with the limitations being placed on them.

The whole property can be seen from the main road to Mt Cook and is considered an "outstanding natural landscape" in the District Plan.

ABOVE: The Mackenzies feel as though their efforts are being rewarded with deer, hence their plans to increase numbers

BELOW: Braemar Station has become a mecca for the tourists with its situation right on Lake Pukaki

"Almost anything we do now requires a resource consent," she says. "We have gone from being a not overly regulated district to one of the most regulated in the country which will take some getting used to."

It's simply getting harder and harder to farm in a place like this, and that's unlikely to change, but our passion has not diminished, says Hamish.

Going forward, they hope to make the business more robust so that if, and when, their children are old enough to take over, there is something to come back to.



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# Conditions ripe for footrot



**With the extremely wet winter in many parts of the country, we are likely to see a marked increase in the number of sheep flocks with outbreaks of footrot as soon as temperatures start to warm up.**

WORDS & IMAGES SUPPLIED BY THE  
NEW ZEALAND MERINO COMPANY

In an average year, it is estimated that footrot costs New Zealand's fine wool sector up to \$10 million each year in lost productivity and treatment. With the conditions prevailing this year, this could be an even higher number.

## What is footrot?

Footrot is caused by bacteria (*Dichelobacter nodosus*) that are most active when moist and warm conditions prevail in autumn and spring.

Exposure of the sheep's hoof to moisture for a prolonged period makes it vulnerable to infection by a range of bacteria. This presents as reddening and infection of the skin between the claws of a hoof. This is often referred to as scald or ovine interdigital dermatitis (OID).

This primary infection must be present to allow the footrot causing bacteria to invade the skin and then move on to the hard-outer

material of the hoof, causing the under-running that is the hallmark of footrot. It is important to note that if there is any under-running of the hoof material present then *D. nodosus* or footrot is present in the flock. This is because only *D. nodosus* has the necessary enzymes to breakdown the hoof material and cause under running.

Outbreaks can occur from both through having a small number of infected sheep that have carried through from the previous season or through new sheep coming on to the farm. Footrot can survive in a sheep's foot for at least 12 months, even with no outward signs of infection and often it is these animals that can spark an outbreak when the right weather conditions prevail.

While the bacteria *D. nodosus* can survive for a long time in a sheep's foot. It can only survive for 7–10 days on soil or pasture. It can also only multiply within the sheep's foot, and will not multiply in soil.

## Feetfirst Project

Five years ago, The New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) embarked on an ambitious project\* to develop an estimated breeding value (or EBV) for footrot. This work has moved through several phases to determine the best way to achieve the ultimate goal—a new way to find the animals that are least likely to succumb to footrot.



ABOVE: Dr Mark Ferguson, Chief Production Scientist, NZM  
LEFT: Emma Wilding, NZM Production Scientist inspects for footrot

The overall objective of the "FeetFirst" project is to raise fine-wool sheep productivity, as well as enable new growers in higher rainfall areas to transition to fine-wool sheep, through the development of a new tool for identifying animals with better genetic resistance to footrot.

To gather the data required for the project, NZM created the world's largest single-site central progeny test (CPT) for merino sheep, in collaboration with merino stud breeders and farmers from across the industry.

Through the CPT, we have been able to determine the genetic resistance of rams to footrot by testing the performance of their progeny in the same environment.

Using this data, we have generated breeding values for footrot resistance and with each year of the CPT, we are building a bigger, richer data set, which is improving the accuracy of the footrot breeding value.

## Single-step

Over the past few years, our collaborating partners in Australia, have been working on a world-class system to analyse genomic information. Known as 'single-step', this analytical technique combines genomic (DNA) information with pedigree information and measurements or scores of traits to predict estimated breeding values.

Single-step is being used to predict the footrot breeding value for sires where we have collected DNA information only, based on the information we have for sires that have had their progeny tested for footrot as well as DNA information collected. This is a major milestone and is the outcome that we have been striving for since the inception of the project.

\*FeetFirst is led by The New Zealand Merino Company, and co-funded by Merino New Zealand Incorporated (Merino Inc.) and the Ministry for Primary Industries.



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# Farming sector meeting nutrient challenge head on

Amongst the usual daily challenges of farming, whether dealing with this year's seemingly endless rain, difficult growing conditions and creeping costs, many farmers across the farming spectrum have another constant on their minds.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

That is the impending impact of greater restrictions upon nutrient losses, and how they will deal with those restrictions as regional plans come into play around the country.

At front and centre of those losses is nitrogen (N), with limits on acceptable levels of losses becoming clearer by the month, as the plans to manage them start to unfold.

In her report "Water quality in NZ Land use and nutrient pollution" report back in 2013, the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment Dr Jan Wright said N levels were likely to be under-predicted, given its elusive nature meaning it slips more easily through the soil profile compared to its fellow nutrient, phosphorus.

She noted the dairy sector in particular faced some big challenges with higher stocking rates leading to higher nutrient losses.

However Commissioner Wright's update report in 2015 also contained some hope. She noted it was encouraging since the 2013 report to see the focus on ever-increasing production being questioned, and some win-win strategic thinking developing.

Even more recently government ministers have openly discussed "peak cow" and the focus for big processors like Fonterra more on high value products that will earn their shareholders a premium, as they too work harder to minimise their farm business's nutrient footprint.

In June Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy acknowledged the need to seek more value over volume in the primary sector.

While only one of four key contaminants from farming, along with E.coli, sediment and phosphate, N has been a key focus for regional plans and water quality control largely on

grounds of its implications on safe drinking levels, and human health impacts.

And the rural sector is moving quickly to try and deal with the implications N is having upon waterways and water quality, with few farmers likely to be claiming ignorance around it and their role in trying to reduce its losses.

In July Fonterra announced its plans to work closely with communities, iwi and regional councils to identify 50 catchments around the country that would benefit from the co-operative's help in lifting water quality. This could include riparian and conservation work, in addition to the requirement that all shareholders have their streams and waterways fenced off from stock.

Meantime the Forages for Reduced Nitrate Leaching (FRNL) multi-year project is bringing the arable, drystock and pastoral sectors together to examine forages that



LEFT: Canterbury arable farmers Eric and Maxine Watson, holders of the Guinness World Record for highest yielding wheat crop

In Canterbury farmers are keenly interested in recently launched liquid fertiliser company Agrichem, whose products are distributed through Ruralco.

Company rep Ed Redfern says with its foliar application of nitrogen product, crops and grasses receive a more specific, targeted delivery of fertiliser, helping minimise losses through leaching and volatilisation using standard urea products.

"It tends to be a more efficient means of deliver, whereas urea is a bit of a blunter instrument," he says.

### Precision N application a key step

Warwick Catto, Ballance Science Strategy Manager believes the farming sector is facing a paradigm shift when it comes to the use of nitrogen (N) in pastoral systems.

"Some time ago the challenge for us was to determine objectively what the right amount of N was to apply to arable and vegetable crops. We worked on that to develop tools like the Sirius Wheat Calculator to help forecast the amount and timing of N application. That moved on to include a similar calculator for N application on potatoes and brassicas."

But determining the optimal amount of N to apply for pastoral systems has proven a tougher problem to crack.

"The paradigm shift required is how to optimally apply N? You can come up with all the maps and soil profiles you like, but you need a way to apply it and that is what the industry is working on now."

The hardware required to achieve optimal application is available in many of the spreaders on the market, while mapping software and fertility profiling is evolving rapidly.

"It is now all about linking these together in a way that does not make it any more difficult or time consuming for the farmer to use."

He believes the industry has a two-fold challenge around N fertiliser use. One is at a grass roots level, over losses through the soil profile, and the other when it is lost as nitrous oxide, a potent green-house gas.

"As countries seek to move towards carbon neutrality, by making N application more precise and efficient farmers are at least addressing part of the emissions issue."

He said it may sound counter intuitive for a fertiliser company to argue for less, more efficient N fertiliser use. "But the reality is as a company we realise how important our export markets are to New Zealand, and ultimately our role is to make our farmers more competitive, and protect New Zealand's brand value by proving how sustainable they are acting."

will help bring down the level of N losses in all sectors.

Leading lights in the trial have been Canterbury arable farmers Eric and Maxine Watson, holders of the Guinness World Record for highest yielding wheat crop, averaging 16.79t/ha when harvested in late February this year. Maxine Watson has been heavily involved in the arable aspect of the trials, and has been encouraged by what it is finding.

Farmer participation includes a network of monitor farms across Canterbury, with the group including farmers keen to adopt new ideas and have an eye on farm sustainability. The project includes examining the effect of management on crop yield, and how it can improve the uptake of N by plants from the soil. Led by DairyNZ, one of the early findings from the trial is the impact mixed pasture swards can have on reducing N losses. These can prove to be viable alternatives to the traditional ryegrass-clover mix which tend to load ruminants up with excess nitrates that are lost as urine.

DairyNZ data shows plantain is a key species whose presence can help increase dry matter production in a pasture mix, and reduce nitrogen concentration.

FRNL programme leader Ina Pinxterhuis said early research indications are that N losses can be sliced back with plantain in the mix. This has led scientists to the hypothesis that at least 25% plantain is required in a pasture sward to have the effect their research trials have indicated.

"However we are now looking at how much you have to have to see that benefit. A lot of farmers have some plantain, but often it is not enough as a proportion to have that effect."

Another long term trial, Pastoral 21 on farmlets in Canterbury has also demonstrated that N losses can be significantly reduced. The trials had three principles to reduce nutrient loss—reduced N inputs, captured urinary N and managing critical source/N loss areas.

In Canterbury researchers found lowering cows per hectare and lowering N by half contributed to a doubling in N use efficiency compared to the accompanying "high" low input comparison farmlet. N leaching was also sliced from 46kgN/ha on the "high" input farm to 32kgN/ha. This reduction demonstrated it will be possible for many Canterbury dairy farms to achieve the Good Management Practice of reducing N losses by 30% on the milking platform, and come well under the 80kgN/ha limit set for 2037.

Latest genetic technology may also help take those reductions further. Thanks to a genetic discovery by CRV Ambreed, bulls will be on the market with a trait for reduced Milk Urea Nitrogen (MUN), in the company's LowN Sires team.

R&D manager Phil Beatson says there is overwhelming international evidence of a direct connection between MUN and the amount of N excreted in urine. The company's projections are for it being possible to breed dairy cows capable of reducing N leaching by 20% within 20 years.

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# Don't cut corners with hay and silage

If you've taken advantage of the growing season and warm summer weather to harvest hay or silage, you'll need to think about replacing the nutrients the crop has taken away.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

Removal of hay and silage takes large amounts of nutrient, particularly potassium, from your soil. "If the conserved feed is fed out on the same paddock then some of the potassium will be returned, albeit unevenly, through animal dung and urine," says Ballance Nutrient Dynamics Specialist Jim Risk. "But if you feed it out elsewhere, the potassium return goes with it."

If you're feeding out within the milking platform, some will end up in your effluent pond and ultimately on your effluent area. "Farm dairy effluent is high in potassium and nitrogen," says Jim. "If your effluent area is small, soil potassium levels can get too high. Cutting hay or silage off the effluent area and feeding out in other paddocks helps to redistribute nutrients, reduce the chance of potassium and nitrogen loss from the effluent block and helps manage the risk of animal health issues related to potassium levels in the feed."

If you're not deliberately mining soil potassium to manage risks, you'll need to replace nutrients. If you don't, then over time—how long depends on your soil nutrient status—the hay/silage paddock will revert to poorer pasture species and clover will decline, reducing production. Even if you do feed out on the same paddock, it pays to keep an eye on nutrient levels as not all of the hay/silage nutrient content will be returned in dung or urine.

To give you some idea of what's involved, for every tonne of dry matter your hay or silage will remove around 15 or 20 kg of potassium (for hay and silage respectively), 5 kg of phosphate, 3 kg of sulphur and 2 kg of magnesium.

Remember, post-harvest fertiliser does not replace your normal maintenance fertiliser. It's an extra application that takes care of the nutrients removed by the harvest alone.

## Double-duty

Pasturemag Hay & Silage and Ballance's Sustain N K range are good options for hay and silage paddocks. As well as replenishing potassium levels, they contain nitrogen to reduce the time the paddock is out of grazing rotation (if you are shutting the paddock up) or improve yields from a second cut. The pasture response to nitrogen will vary depending on environmental conditions.

Importantly, the urea in both ranges is coated with Agrotain® nitrogen stabiliser, which has been proven here and overseas to reduce nitrogen loss from urea (as a result of ammonia volatilisation) by 50% on average.

Rainfall *following* application is critical to reduce nitrogen losses from urea—not soil moisture or a dew at application, as some believe. You need 5–10 mm of rainfall or irrigation within eight hours of urea application to minimise ammonia loss. "Sustain N gives you more flexibility with that window."

Sustain N K combines the advantage of Sustain with varying percentages of potassium (15%, 20% and 25%) to accommodate a variety of replacement scenarios. Pasturemag Hay & Silage has the additional benefits of magnesium, sulphur and phosphorus in appropriate levels for replacement.

For more advice on keeping your hay and silage paddocks in good shape, talk to your Ballance specialist or Ruralco today.



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# The growing requirement for Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF)

**Efforts to drastically reduce harmful vehicle emission pollutants have seen increasingly more stringent emissions standards introduced over recent years.**

WORDS BY DON JOSEPH, IMAGES BY AMY PIPER

Toxic air pollution from motor vehicles is widely recognised as a major health concern contributing to respiratory disorders and illnesses, with nitrogen oxides being key elements in the production of photochemical smog. While much has been done over the last couple of decades to reduce these harmful emissions through technological advances, a continued increase in the number of vehicles on our roads and other contributing factors mean safe targets have not yet been reached.

Many diesel-powered vehicles (trucks, buses and tractors), and especially those imported into New Zealand now have a SCR (selective catalytic reduction) system designed to combat this pollution problem. SCR is an advanced active emissions control technology system which injects a liquid reductant agent through a special catalyst into the exhaust stream of a diesel engine. The liquid reductant agent is a DEF (Diesel Exhaust Fluid) which is usually automotive-grade urea and there are many such products on the market. So how does it work? Diesel engines with SCR systems have a separate tank for holding the DEF. The DEF (which is basically water and urea) is

injected into the exhaust upstream of the catalyst where it vaporises and decomposes to form ammonia and carbon dioxide. The ammonia is the desired product which in conjunction to the SCR catalyst, converts the nitrogen oxides into harmless nitrogen and water, which are then released through the exhaust.

While there are many products available on the market, it is important to ensure the DEF product you select has a urea concentration of 32.5% by weight. This concentration has the lowest freezing temperature (12 degrees Fahrenheit) which meets the ISO 22241 standard. If a product does not adhere to the ISO 22241 standard, then the fluid cannot be called a Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF). The product should be a mixture of 32.5% solution of high quality urea in demineralised water which makes it clear, non-toxic and relatively safe to handle. It is also non-flammable, explosive or harmful to the environment.

One producer of high quality DEF product in New Zealand is farming co-operative Ballance which produces DEF at its Kapuni plant in Taranaki. According to Ballance Agrinutrients' scientists, over 100 million litres has been produced in the first six years of production and this has resulted in the removal of over 2,000 tonnes of harmful exhaust gases from the air. With demand growing Ballance has invested in storage capacity to ensure a continuous supply is available, including several months' worth of contingency supply.

If you have a vehicle that requires DEF, it's important to store and use it correctly to avoid



contamination or damage to your vehicle. A cool, dry, and well-ventilated area that's out of direct sunlight is good for storing DEF. While DEF isn't toxic, it is corrosive to some metals such as carbon steel, aluminium, copper and zinc. This means if this fluid is ever mistakenly poured into the fuel tank it can cause serious damage to your vehicle.

How to use it:

- Always pour DEF into the Diesel Exhaust Fluid tank;
- Ensure diesel is never filled into the DEF tank;
- Only use dedicated exhaust fluid equipment when storing or refilling;
- Keep all equipment clean and free from dirt or dust;
- Ensure your storage container seals remain intact;
- Ensure you don't put DEF in a petrol vehicle;
- A complete product data sheet should always be kept on hand (these are available on request from suppliers).

Exhaust fluids are available in 20L packs, 200L drums or 1,000L IBCs through Ruralco Farm Supplies stores. If you would like additional information please contact Ruralco's Fuel specialists Don Joseph or Melinda Driscoll on 0800 787 256.

# Couple ride wave of deer success



Despite their busy lives, the couple still find plenty of time to spend with their daughter Isla who's just three

## Mount Somers deer farmers Duncan and Lorna Humm have an enthusiasm and energy for their sector that is well founded as more of the world gets a taste for New Zealand venison.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY AMY PIPER

The couple farm on the family's well-established property on the edges of Mount Somers, leasing 43ha in deer, and aiming to lease the remaining 100ha in the near future from Duncan's retired parents.

Duncan's passion for the sector goes right back to the mid-nineties when as a 14 year-old he encouraged his Dad to fence up 8ha of land on the family farm for deer.

"I just thought deer farming seemed an exciting, interesting option, and over that period the returns were steady, reasonably good without being crazy, and the stock were relatively easy to source."

Fortunately, his Dad was open to some new ideas, and had always had an eye for something a bit different. Looking to diversify from sheep farming and encouraged by his son's enthusiasm, he fenced off part of the farm, and built a deer shed.

Duncan's early enthusiasm for the sector is supported by Lorna, a veterinarian who has since committed to "walking the talk" in the deer sector since she took on the role of Deer Health Project Manager with Deer Industry New Zealand in January 2016.

Three days of her week are spent committed to the job, promoting proactive deer health management and encouraging a risk-based targeted approach to animal health spend. Between them the busy couple also share the role of parenting their young daughter Isla.

"I think Duncan thought it may mean a lower animal health bill having a veterinarian for a wife,



but it's probably a bit higher as we try harder to be more preventative in our approach and ensure the animals are getting all they need to achieve the growth rates we want them to," says Lorna.

Lorna's knowledge and hands on experience deer farming with Duncan has meant they have full animal health plans for the year's farming, and a professional approach to better understanding how to get more from their herd.

"I think as a whole, the industry is doing a lot better in this area than it used to. But there is still a lot of money being left on the table, and much of the gains will come in being more proactive and preventative about herd health issues," she says.

No one can call this couple lazy, with Duncan also working full-time off-farm as Manager of the Fertiliser business at Top Soils, near Methven. It is Duncan's passion for soil health, growing quality feed, and producing healthy well-performing deer that is the driving force behind their success.

"Animal health, genetics, soil fertility, and feeding are all parts of the puzzle. We aim to do our best in all these areas, as well as looking after the land and the environmental responsibilities we have" he says.

ABOVE: From Left Duncan, Lorna, Isla, Christina & Bryan Humm

BELOW: Some weaners were as heavy as 100kg by 1 June

The couple are proud of the extensive established trees and shelter belts and plan to plant more trees as they continue to develop and deer fence more of the farm.

They have built up the deer fenced area which was initially only 20ha, and it now covers 43ha. Longer term they are very keen to ultimately fence off the remaining 100ha of the family property as prospects for the industry look increasingly promising.

The sector is set for a rebound in deer numbers on the back of good returns and innovative strategies that have diversified markets for venison globally.

There is also greater interest among new or returning farmers in the sector, on account of the farm type's lower nutrient foot print, compared to traditional pastoral land uses like dairying (see accompanying article).

The shift that Duncan and Lorna have overseen on their property highlights some of the change in thinking about deer farming's place on the Canterbury Plains.

Typically, Duncan and his father had also run dairy grazers to support any drop in venison returns, but their confidence in the sector now has seen Duncan and Lorna drop the dairy grazers and replace them with a velvet herd which they are building up.

The velvetting plans are only in their early stages, but the couple aim to capitalise on the increased marketing focus being brought to bear on velvet production.

They enjoy a strong relationship with velvet co-operative Provelco, with which Lorna is an intern director. Lorna is heartened by the growing professionalism of the velvetting sector helping ensure strong farmer-supplier relationships are being matched by more formalised marketing channels to the growing healthy functional food sectors in China and South Korea, as well as traditional oriental medicine markets.





ABOVE: Duncan utilises his skills in soil health to optimise the production of their deer operation  
 ABOVE RIGHT: Testing a sample with the refractometer  
 RIGHT: Measuring the brix level in his pasture

On the venison side of the business, the couple have worked hard in the past few years to breed for better weaner growth whilst staying within a simple red deer system. It's a move that puts them counter to many who run smaller hinds, in higher numbers.

They maintain a "less is more" approach, where it is simpler to carry heavier weighted hinds capable of better growth rates from their heavier offspring.

"We have come full circle with our genetics. We originally leased stags of our (then) neighbours Donald and Kathy Hudson then we went to a few different studs. Now we are back having bought two stags from the Hudson's last year, from Stanfield genetics. We are targeting big framed English Reds with proven records of hitting target weights as yearlings."

And the results speak volumes. Ten years ago, weaners were averaging 58kg on June 1, and are now hitting 73kg on May 1, with some as heavy as 100kg by June 1.

"Our goal every year is to do better than last year's crop," says Duncan.

Having the bigger hinds makes feeding them even more critical to unlock their growth potential. The Humm's have made a concerted effort to re-grass with a good mix of Shogun hybrid ryegrass, chicory, plantain and red-white clover mixes.

"We worked out that our advantage being on the flat of the Plains was we could feed these bigger hinds efficiently. Over a year the feed requirement

for the hind and fawn is not much different if we get the weaner away earlier at a heavy weight, and there is also more of a premium in it for us."

The couple enjoy being members of the Deer Industry's Advance Party initiative.

They are active members of the Canterbury/West coast Advance Party, which has been going for over two years now.

"We learn so much from being part the group. There is a great mix of younger and more experienced deer farmers, farming a wide variety of farm systems. There is a high level of trust and a real commitment to positive change" says Duncan.

Longer term the couple are keen to improve eye muscle yield in carcasses and utilising Breeding Values in assessing sires for that and overall carcass yield.

They also do not see it being a huge step to establish a stud, given the strong demand for their surplus hinds in a market struggling to make stock numbers.

"We hope to utilise DNA testing in the future, alongside our current high-level recording to make our breeding decisions more targeted" says Duncan. The couple are enjoying having their

stock appreciated and in demand for a sector they believe still has plenty of potential upon the Plains.

"We just love working with deer. They are a joy to farm, and we hope to build up a business that can see the farm stay in the family for future generations to enjoy" the Humm's say.

"We are proud to produce a high-quality food, and want to be able to contribute to a wider story of New Zealand providing premium deer products to the world".

## Couple take deer to world

Duncan and Lorna Humm's commitment to venison and farming in general goes well beyond the farm gate, to include reaching out to an enormous and connected social media community.

Lorna has recently completed a Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme, for which she did a project on communication in the rural sector titled: Deer Industry Leadership: design-thinking for communication and engagement.

Conclusions from her report focus on how industry organisations can better design the



ABOVE: Beautiful view of the RDR and Mount Sommers  
 RIGHT: Their passion they have for the deer industry, the success of their farming operation and the love for their gorgeous daughter shines through

BELOW: Duncan loves sharing his agricultural knowledge and with daughter Isla

ways in which they interact with farmers based on preferences, time constraints and the level of connectedness of the target audience.

"While it is important to produce a suite of materials to suit different preferences, these days a digital-first mentality is needed. Adoption of social media, augmented reality and other technologies for conveying information and providing platforms for engagement will become more mainstream."

Lorna says she is also building on these skills daily when discussing herd health management with deer farmers around the country in her position as Deer Health Project manager for DINZ.

The position was created through the Primary Growth Partnership "Passion2Profit" programme which aims to transform the productivity and profitability of New Zealand's deer industry.

For someone who has had an interest in deer and deer farming it is a dream job. "It has allowed me to have an active role in deer, an area I would not have got as much contact in working at a clinical level as a vet," she says.

Her role has also meant she comes face to face regularly with other young upcoming deer farmers who share her passion for the industry.

"It is really encouraging when you meet these people. I recently spent two days attending and speaking at the DFA Next Generation Deer Farmers Programme, designed to grow and develop younger deer farmers wanting to know more about the industry and it was inspiring meeting so many keen, motivated people, I came back buzzing from the event."

Duncan's commitment to the sector extends to being a committee member of the Deer Farmers Association for Canterbury-West Coast.

He has recently been on the organising committee for deer shed open days in the district, getting deer farmers together to discuss new regulatory changes for the harvesting of velvet. Under new regulations, as part of a Regulated Control Scheme for deer velvet harvest, deer sheds have to be up to a strict set of standards. These open days provided a chance for farmers to share ways to bring deer sheds up to standard with representatives from the National Velvetting Standards Body (NVSB) in attendance.



"The days were really practical and positive, with lots of useful advice that we can take home to implement" Duncan says.

But he also reaches out to an audience much further through his administrative role for the NZ Farming Facebook and Instagram pages.

Two years ago, when he took on the shared role, the page boasted a (then) healthy 20,000 followers. Today that totals over 130,000 and it forms one of the most visited, vibrant social media sites for farming and farm issues in the country. There is now a strong diverse admin team helping keep the page running.

Duncan says the Kaikoura earthquake last November cemented the page into a role as a key rural forum. "A lot of people were affected over a really wide region, in contrast to Christchurch where it was all in a much more defined area. The Facebook page ended up being critical for helping people find out about friends and relatives, and for organising supplies into areas that were cut off."

He said there had also been a nice marrying of the bush telegraph and social media technology after the quake.

"We had one guy ride down a river valley on his horse to get to a computer to be able to use Facebook to let people know everyone up there was okay."

Co-ordinating aeroplanes, pilots and ground people had enabled topdressing planes to be used to drop supplies in, and help arrange to get people out.

He said the Facebook page was also proving a valuable forum for bringing rural and urban people together, while the NZ Farming Instagram site was giving non-farming people an immediate and personal view from farmers about their lives and what they did on the land.

## Farm Details:

Carluk Farming Ltd  
 Duncan and Lorna Humm

**LOCATION:** Mt Somers

**AREA:** 43ha deer fenced. dryland

**STOCK:** 150 mixed age venison hinds;  
 135 mixed sex R1 fawns;  
 34 Rising two year old hinds;  
 30 mixed age velvet hinds;  
 28 mixed sex velvet R1 fawns  
 12 mixed age stags;  
 All weaners wintered on.





# Deer industry on a roll

The enthusiasm and confidence Duncan and Lorna Humm have for their industry is justified thanks to the sector having a clear plan for marketing its high-quality product, and the potential deer farming has as an alternative land use in places like Canterbury.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGE BY AMY PIPER

An ANZ agri-report produced this winter highlighted the industry's continuing tight supply of livestock and growing global demand for venison as a red meat product.

Both were pushing the sector towards returns approaching all-time highs for the 2017–18 year, now cracking the \$9/kg schedule price.

Deer Industry New Zealand reports the sector is moving through one of its most stable supply periods ever experienced. This comes after the tumultuous surge in returns and numbers over 10 years ago, followed by a rapid drop in the farmed population, and a spike in farmer returns in 2008 driven by the weaker value of the New Zealand dollar.

Over that time the sector has managed to achieve something rarely seen in the red-meat sector, a level of stability that has the average schedule price at \$7.40 a kg.

In the past decade, the number of breeding hinds in the sector have declined almost every year, and are now at half their 800,000 peak.

Similarly, total slaughter numbers are levelling off at about 300,000 and unlikely to pick back up to nearer 400,000 until 2019–20.

Duncan says the sector is also looking particularly attractive as an alternative to traditional pastoral operations in Canterbury as nutrient losses come under the spotlight, with nitrogen in particular facing reductions in most Canterbury catchments.

"As a land use option deer have a smaller environmental footprint, and there seems to be more interest amongst farmers in looking at deer as an option given how things are unfolding."

Bayleys rural agent Ben Turner in Canterbury says he has a regular stream of buyers interested specifically in deer units.

"However, the challenge for us is finding enough deer units to meet that interest."

He said Canterbury is more suited than ever to an industry that is showing signs of maturing with steadier, high level returns justifying the investment in infrastructure like fencing and yards on land ideal for deer fattening.

"It is quite possible that some of that hill country where sheep have typically been stocked may prove to deliver a better return in deer, and it's well suited for that." He said with farmers also increasingly challenged over nitrogen losses

in Canterbury, deer may also prove a useful additional land use that does not face the same challenges as traditional livestock.

A concerted effort by New Zealand marketers in the field overseas has also helped deliver longer term, more sustainable returns to farmers here.

These include wealthier parts of Asia, Scandinavia and North America, with the United States showing the strongest growth to date.

That market's total volume share stands at 30%, with a value share of 25%, overtaking Germany. While coming off a small base, Canada and Austria have also demonstrated strong growth.

ANZ analysts have reported the success of venison matches the trend for consumers seeking natural grass fed, high quality proteins that are not genetically modified, have no hormone treatments and no antibiotics used.

Being the largest farm source of venison in the world, New Zealand is well placed to meet this with most markets relying otherwise upon sporadic and unreliable sources of wild game over their main consumption periods.



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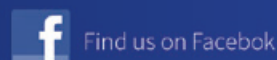
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# Celebrating 10 years in business

As you pass through Methven's main street David and Debbie Nesbit's Hammer Hardware store looks deceptively small from the outside but step through the doors and it truly is Aladdin's cave of goods. WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES BY BARBARA LOVELOCK



ABOVE: Polly, Bronwyn, David and Debbie  
MAIN IMAGE: The Methven Hammer Hardware building from the road

It's not often you see builders, farmers, tourists and gardeners all shopping under the one roof, and more importantly finding exactly what they need.

From the beginning the Nesbits have stuck to a simple formula for their business. "You've got to give people what they want, we stock a huge range of products because we are a convenience store and we never know what people will come in here wanting," David explains.

Whether you are a local wanting a gift for an occasion, needing some paint for a DIY project, stocking up on plants for summer, or a tourist needing some last minute camping supplies, you can find it all at Methven Hammer Hardware.

Originally from Christchurch the couple ran the local supermarket for three years before switching to hardware. They opted for the Hammer Hardware brand as it was more focused on smaller communities like Methven and as it's a nationwide chain they can access virtually any product and offer competitive pricing.

Their business formula is definitely working as this year Hammer Hardware will celebrate 10 years of business and have many achievements to celebrate along the way.

In 2009—only 3 years after opening the store—it was awarded the national title of Hammer Hardware Store of the Year. In 2016 the store won Members' Choice Award in the Ruralco

Supplier Awards—an honour that the Nesbits are intensely proud of.

What's the secret to their success? "We get on with our customers and we always try and go the extra mile to source product and offer help with a project," David says.

Debbie also believes good staff are essential to any successful enterprise and they admit they are lucky to have a great team behind them and with whom the local customers have an excellent relationship.

With such a wide range of product in store the couple enjoy taking ownership of different departments.

Generally Debbie does all the paperwork and behind the scenes work, while David runs the shop floor. Debbie also looks after their growing giftware range visiting giftware trade shows twice a year. She admits all the staff enjoy the nursery and plant supplies side of the business. This year the store is excited about new plant releases from the nurseries showcasing previously unseen plant varieties.

David manages the fishing, camping and outdoor supplies as well as the standard hardware stock, and explains that with

technologies changing so quickly he is always kept busy sourcing new products. "It's incredible how fast things are evolving especially around lighting and power tools".

After over 13 years in Methven the couple describe it as "a great wee town and we are so grateful that the community has always been behind us". Likewise, the store often sponsors local charities and fundraisers and David is kept busy being a part of the local search and rescue team, and a Lions member.

They are both passionate about local causes and promoting Methven enterprise. "We like to think we have built good relationships and if we can direct a customer to another local business we always will," Debbie says.

The entire team is looking forward to the 10 year anniversary, and starting on Monday 2 October there will be a 2 week long in-store celebration with giveaways, promotions, spot prizes and a BBQ over the weekend.

In association with Watty products there will be a BBQ giveaway and there are also two wheelbarrows full of prizes to be won.

David has just attended the nationwide Hammer Hardware supplier expo last month so there will be lots of new and exciting products on the way into store. The Nesbits are excited about the anniversary event and encourage everyone to pop in and see what's on offer. With such a wide range of merchandise it's unlikely you will leave empty handed, and you might even win yourself a prize.



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# Seed Force releases standout performers

**It takes years of development to create a new perennial ryegrass cultivar, but by investing in the time, effort and resources required helps ensure confidence in a variety once it's commercialised.** WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY SEED FORCE

The task is obviously much greater when the aim is to launch two new cultivars at once, but that's exactly what Seed Force has done with the release of its exciting new perennial ryegrasses Seed Force (SF) Moxie™ and SF Hustle™.

First, there's the background story of the birth of their development programme. Seed Force formed a joint venture partnership with European breeding powerhouse RAGT way back in 2006. RAGT's story goes back a long way. It was formed in 1919 by a group of farming families and has remained this way ever since. One of its key areas of investment has always been research and development, with over 15% of its annual turnover reinvested back into its research

and plant breeding programmes. From the outset, this partnership enabled Seed Force to leverage off their huge investment in research and development and gain access to a team of specialist breeders who would help create something special.

Seed Force knew that for its perennial ryegrass material to perform in the New Zealand market it had to be able to stand up to the pressures of our unique environment, while also delivering the production demanded by our world leading farm systems. Some key breeding parameters were required from the outset. The focus was robust genetics teamed with performance across the seasons. RAGT plant breeding is based on the fundamentals

of great genetics teamed with high production and quality. It's these foundations which help ensure the material they produce performs as expected in the field. Throughout the process, selections were made with key focuses on not just yield but a range of factors which help ensure robustness and strength in the real world. They were then put under real environmental pressure to see if they could withstand the rigours of a challenging climate, in a grazing situation.

From the early development and throughout the trial phase of SF Moxie™ and SF Hustle™ Seed Force knew they had some standout performers. Not only were they showing the key genetic traits of high tiller density, low



aftermath heading and high quality, they were also providing excellent dry matter production which was a key feature of their breeding.

Another key aspect to their background, was selection for heading date. The heading date of cultivars (+ or - days relative to Nui) is a useful tool in selecting a variety that is suitable for the intended purpose. The basis of different heading dates relates to the timing of dry matter production for different environments and grazing systems. A high proportion of material in the local New Zealand perennial ryegrass market is either mid or late heading. SF Moxie™ offers a heading date the same as Nui (0 days), while SF Hustle™ is + 8 days, this timing helps ensure early season production from both varieties which differentiates them from many other perennial ryegrass varieties available. Both are available this spring with AR1™ endophyte.

Below are some key tips to help with your perennial pasture renewal this spring:

#### **Paddock selection:**

Review your existing pastures to determine which ones are suitable and most in need of a perennial renewal programme. Decide what condition your paddocks are in to determine

which ones will need re-sowing. Use a simple scale of 1-3, or more complex scale up to 5 to condition score the existing pastures. The key aspects that need to be determined are which pastures are still in a good state and which are showing a decline in the original sown species, allowing weeds to enter the pasture. Even in years with adequate moisture or farms with irrigation, this should be an exercise done regularly, so when poor conditions do occur, whether that's through drought, or very wet conditions, you can sacrifice your poorest performing paddocks and look after your high performing ones. Repasturing capital needs to be spent wisely on those paddocks in poorest condition that lie in typically higher producing areas. Areas that grow the most feed are key areas to concentrate on.

#### **Companion species:**

Including a range of additional species with your SF Moxie™ and SF Hustle™ perennial ryegrass can help aid pasture performance by increasing production and pasture quality. Depending on what species are included in the mix; reduce the sowing rate of the perennial ryegrass to accommodate.

- Clovers are one of the main drivers underpinning New Zealand's high pasture production. Due to their nitrogen fixing capability, clovers are one of the most economic and valuable additions to any grass based pasture system. Not only do they provide much needed soil available nitrogen to the companion grass species accompanying them, but their own quality e.g. metabolisable energy (ME), protein content and production is also high. This high quality leads to increased animal intake and pasture performance. To help ensure the clovers sown in the mix establish well, it is important that they are not shaded out by the ryegrass. Also, ensure they are also not sown too deep as this can affect adequate establishment. Consider the clover seed size when determining the required sowing rates of the legume component of the mix. Red clover is a much larger seed than white clover, so its sowing rate should be higher;
- Companion herb species such as chicory and plantain are characterised by their extensive root structure. This enables access to deep soil minerals which can be transferred to grazing animals and also aids in their ability to handle periods of moisture deficit. Herbs offer high nutritional quality and production and can help enhance permanent pastures.

#### **Grazing management:**

To help ensure your new SF Moxie™ and SF Hustle™ pasture gets off to the best start a few key points should be followed regarding grazing management:

- New pasture should be grazed as soon as plants will withstand pulling. This early grazing will encourage rapid tillering and influence early feed production;
- Once established and the paddock has had its first grazing; monitor the ryegrass leaf stage as an indicator of when the paddock is ready to graze again. Pastures should be grazed at the 2.5–3 leaf stage to best balance feed quality, recovery after grazing and total feed production. Good grazing management will help promote plant tillering. By grazing too early (low covers) will reduce yield and regrowth but can also affect the plants' ability to restore its energy reserves. Grazing too late (high covers) increases the amount of dead material at the base of the pasture which in turn reduces quality. This also affects clover and other companion species survival due to increased shading and can lead to lower pasture utilisation and increased levels of pasture disease.

Include SF Moxie™ and SF Hustle™ together with the appropriate companion species in your perennial pasture planning this season. For more information on what's the right mix for your paddock, talk to Ruralco Seed today.

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# New eye clinic has sights set firmly on the future

Dr Ian Dallison, surgeon and clinical director of Laservision Eye Clinic Merivale, is absolutely delighted with his practice's purpose-built facility which has recently opened on the site of the clinic's original premises on the corner of Papanui Road and Heaton Street.

The new building was designed by architect Robert Weir, in collaboration with Dr Dallison to bring all aspects of the practice together under one roof.

Externally the black and white clad building is striking and stylish. Inside, the 320 square metre space is full of light, with wide passage ways and high ceilings and a generous reception and waiting area.

*"We now have outstanding professional premises to go with our leading-edge laser refractive surgery and general ophthalmology services."*

**Dr Ian Dallison**  
LASIK Surgeon / Clinical Director

"Everything works just as I had envisaged", says Dr Dallison. "With a fully-specced operating theatre, four consulting rooms, a diagnostics and set-up room along with staff facilities, we have a clinic that will serve us well into the future. The feedback we are receiving is wonderful. It's about presenting a total patient experience - comfortable, friendly and very inviting."

Contract Construction completed the build in nine months and with landscaping designed by Goom Landscapes, the facility is very much in keeping with the residential nature of the location and neighbouring properties. "It's wonderful to be in one place again after several years of working out of various sites. Here we can continue to be one of New Zealand's leading providers of laser eye surgery."

Call Laservision Eye Clinic Merivale on **0800 52 73 71** for a free no obligation assessment to find out if the LASIK procedure is right for you.

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FAR Industry Graduate Sarah Whiteman uses a combo metre to measure water pH, conductivity and temperature from each well sample



# A community approach to understanding water quality

Reports of deteriorating groundwater quality and the presence of high nitrate levels in wells are concerning for rural and urban dwellers alike, and are driving a lot of debate within communities and nationally. WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY NICK PYKE CEO, FOUNDATION FOR ARABLE RESEARCH

Unfortunately, there is not a lot of solid, long term information available about water quality. Many reports and claims are based on limited data, collected over a short timeframe, from sites that are being tested for a particular reason. Across New Zealand some long-term sites are sampled regularly as part of national or regional programmes, but it is not always clear how or why these sites were selected and therefore how accurately they reflect the overall groundwater quality in a region.

East Ashburton is one area with widespread use of groundwater, where it has been suggested that water quality is degrading. Historical testing of groundwater in this region has indicated that nitrate levels in some wells are relatively high and a report in 2007 indicated that 25% of the 155 wells monitored exceeded the Ministry of Health Maximum Acceptable Value (MAV) of 11.3 mg NO<sub>3</sub>-N/l (mg/l). Well monitoring from the Ashburton industrial area towards the coast in both 2000 and 2002 showed nitrate levels were high close to the industrial area on the edge of Ashburton and extended in a plume towards the coast. As well as this, in 2003 testing in an agricultural area also identified some wells (5 of 37) where nitrate nitrogen levels exceed MAV. A study in a similar area in 1990/1991 monitored 22 wells and the highest level of nitrate nitrogen was 10mg/l. The wells used in these two studies were different but the data suggested an increase in nitrate nitrogen between 1990 and 2000. These studies were all short term, designed to investigate a particular area and the selection of wells was not randomly stratified across the landscape.

## Is the groundwater quality in East Ashburton really that bad?

To investigate, a group of farmers in the East Ashburton area, bounded by the Rakaia River, SH1 and the Ashburton River, have set up a project, funded and supported by MPI Sustainable Farming Fund, farm sector groups, Silver Fern Farms, ECan and farmers, to regularly monitor groundwater quality. In this project, the average nitrate level of the water from 50 wells sampled on seven occasions is 6.3mg/l, well below the MAV.

The project, which is managed by the Foundation for Arable Research, randomly selected 50 wells throughout the area, with a distribution that reflects the regional location and variation in depth of wells, and regularly tested water quality for nitrate nitrogen. Each well has been tested

quarterly since March 2016, and the results from the most recent tests in August 2017 have just become available. The results from these tests can be compared with the results from other testing programmes in the area.

The results from the testing in this project clearly show that the quality of groundwater in the majority of wells in the region is good. Only five wells exceeded the 11.2mg on one or more occasions and the overall average of 6.3mg/l includes these tests. After the first year of testing, the average for the wells in this project was 6.03mg/l while the average for the 16 wells in this area, which are used to indicate the levels in groundwater in the area tested as part of the ECan monitoring programme for the same period, was 10.5mg/l. Even selecting the 16 highest wells from the 50 randomly selected wells in this project the average was nowhere near the value from the ECan wells. It is not clear how the ECan wells were selected, but they don't appear to be a true reflection of overall groundwater quality in the area.

Across the 50 randomly selected wells there has been no significant trend by time over the seven samplings. The most recent sampling, August 2017, has the highest average level of any test period, at a mean of 7.3mg/l, but at all other test times the level was around 6. The increase for the August 2017 sample may reflect that this is the first time since the project started that there has been a significant rainfall event resulting in drainage from the soil profile into the groundwater.

The study has identified that there is a significant increase in nitrate levels in water from SH1 to the coast (west to east) but no other trends within the region or from north to south. Data from this study did not provide any evidence that the nitrate levels are higher in an area close to the Ashburton industrial zone. Nor has it identified any significant differences by the depth of the wells.

## Does this mean the water quality is good?

The water quality from most wells in the randomly selected group is good, with some being extremely good (nitrate levels of less than 1mg). There are also a few where water quality is reaching levels which are concerning. But, the study has only been underway for two years, so it is not yet possible to identify any long-term trends or if water quality is changing over time.

Thus, to understand any long-term trends, we need to analyse the data from the wells monitored by ECan. Of the 16 ECan monitored wells, 43% were showing a significant increase over the period they have been monitored and 19% were showing a significant decrease over the period monitored, with 38% showing no change. The highest level of any ECan monitored well was 21mg/l and the lowest was 0.5mg/l.

The current project needs to continue for a number of years. It is a community approach to understanding the water quality in the region and will provide important information to inform discussion and ensure implementation of effective local policies. The vision of the farmers who have led this project and those who have supported it will be integral to ensuring good information is available. Keeping this work going will require continued community support, including further funding from farmers, particularly after the third year of the project. However, a small contribution from all farmers within this region can ensure good information to inform good decision making and protect the viability of their farm businesses. This community approach to understanding water quality could also have significant value in other areas where ground water quality is being challenged, such as some areas of Selwyn.

"Information in itself is not powerful, power lies at the very core of being informed and making good use of it."

BELOW: Water sampling from 50 wells in the East Ashburton area



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# The mobile world of health and safety

The advent of smartphones and increasingly better mobile data coverage across New Zealand means there are real opportunities to use clever technologies to minimise any paperwork involved with rural health and safety management.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY MARK ORR, GENERAL MANAGER ZERO HARM FARM



## It's more than just about putting photocopies in the sky

The idea of using web applications for simpler more effective health and safety data collection and display makes sense and isn't new. The initial first step of the rural mobile revolution has usually been to re-position paper based processes into some type of digital format. This approach normally means application developers hoping to deliver reduced cost and added functionality by simply transferring paper based systems into digitally available PDF files.

Common sense would suggest though that rather than just providing forms from the likes of ACC, DairyNZ, Beef and Lamb or Safer Farms to be downloaded, printed off and stored in a folder in the office, a real digital health and safety service should make better use of the device capabilities which are on offer. Time and time again it has been proven that paper is completely ineffective in the management of rural based health and safety. It is unwieldy,

unscalable and in most cases, impractical.

A better approach would be to enable on farm team members and contractors to share photos of any issues, upload GPS coordinates, and report risks and hazards digitally on the go. The true benefit lies not in transferring from analog to digital, but in transforming health and safety from a compliance-based process to a productivity tool anyone can do at any time, providing results which can be monitored, shared and measured.

## The "cloud" is the secret sauce

Behind the "on farm" health and safety revolution is the introduction of the smartphone. Suddenly, computing grunt and mobility joined forces. We all have vastly more power in our pockets now than we did on our office desktops even just a few years back.

Web and native applications on contractor's smartphones are now commonplace for most rural users. Upskilling requirements around their use is becoming less onerous or

necessary. Rural users now typically open a new application and instantly start to use it right off the bat.

To cap it off, the features found on most smart devices these days makes them ideal tools for reporting health and safety info directly in the field. Google mapping, internal GPS, high quality cameras, the ability to information share—these features are all ideally suited to push and deliver health and safety messages in real-time.

## Mustering up digital health and safety solutions

Health and safety should never be just about box ticking nor the lowest cost option. What it is really about is making sure everyone gets home off the farm safely. Today's rapidly changing and varied rural workplace bring new challenges for those farm and rural contractor managers responsible for keeping their workers safe. In a farming environment where it is no longer just about keeping direct employees at a specific location safe, a new approach to rural based health and safety is also needed for contractor management. The great news is new digital technology and rural focused productivity concepts offer new methods which have the potential to radically change the way we approach and manage on farm safety for the better.

By moving from paper-based processes to real-time digital health and safety, and by enabling not just your workers but contractors take an active role in health and safety, your rural businesses can save time, money and be better equipped to actively respond to problems when they arise on farm. Digital applications can also be a useful tool for health and safety consultants to monitor the overall effectiveness of the processes they have introduced to assist workers to stay safe.

Rural businesses who switch to these new technologies will be well positioned to not only run with today's health and safety best practices but also meet future demands as the New Zealand Health and Safety environment continues to evolve.

There are clear benefits clever productivity applications have brought to Ag contractors, in nutrient management, pasture growth recording and animal production. It is now just as easy to add those same mobile benefits to any rural based health and safety system.

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# How energy efficient is your business?

Energy is crucial for the day to day operation of businesses. The question is “How efficiently is energy being utilised across your business?”

WORDS SUPPLIED BY ALELIGN GESSESE (PHD), NZ ENERGY SYSTEMS LTD



Energy prices have been on the rise for decades and will continue to rise for many years to come, across all consumers. However, according to Electricity Authority's data, certain sectors have experienced price drops. One can have a clear picture of the trend of the energy prices by analysing one's own energy bills over the last several years.

Energy efficiency and emission reduction has a paramount importance in helping businesses to maximize their profit, and most importantly in helping New Zealand's clean-green image. Failure to take advantage of this opportunity, especially given the pending changes in environmental legislation, could be very costly for NZ businesses. As the old saying goes, “Failure to plan is planning to fail”.

However, reaching these targets are a lot more achievable than commonly conceived. There are simple steps that need to be followed to begin the process of achieving energy efficiency and emission reductions.

## 1. Controlling your energy spend.

It is easier to control something that is being measured rather than a parameter that isn't. The best approach is to start having a plan to

measure, analyse and manage your energy spend for activities on a day to day basis. Are there redundant activities/equipment? Can the process be done differently and still achieve the targets?



## 2. Get informed on what others are doing about it and try implementing it if feasible for your business.

This may seem a cliché but not a single business operates in absolute similarity with another one. Hence, sharing ideas with fellow operators/owners in relation to energy efficiency and emissions reductions will certainly be helpful. The collective knowledge pool can avoid the costly mistakes that have been made by other businesses.

## 3. Get help from experts.

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) helps consumers across a wide sector by providing support to achieve energy efficiency and emissions reduction. For instance, EECA has an online tool for dairy shed owners to simply determine how efficient they are in terms of energy by asking simple questions like the annual spend, annual milk production, whether or not a variable speed motor for the vacuum pump is used, whether or not the milk vats are insulated, whether or not there is a heat recovery system and of course the location of the farm. Energy efficiency experts can also help in implementing any energy saving opportunity from conceptualisation to implementation stage.

The opportunity to improve your businesses energy efficiency profile is available. All that is required is the proactive step to begin the journey by following the simple steps laid out in this article. For further assistance feel free to contact NZ Energy Systems Ltd ([www.nzenergysystems.co.nz](http://www.nzenergysystems.co.nz)) or call Ruralco Energy Account Manager Tracey Gordon on 0800 787 256.

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FARM SUPPLIES



# Proline—a versatile choice for this spring

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



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FARM SUPPLIES

October is here and with it 10 weeks of frantic farm activity to protect the potential of arable crops.

Winter planted crops which you have nurtured over the winter and early spring have now sprung into life and are developing new leaves almost while you are watching. And this new growth is the ideal target for a range of diseases being unprotected by disease if a robust fungicide programme isn't applied. Let your disease control slip now and it will cost dearly. Spring crops are being planted and with kind growing conditions will also develop quickly. Again adopting a robust fungicide programme is critical to a profitable harvest.

During the 2016 and 2017 seasons, Bayer conducted a series of fungicide trials in Canterbury investigating best use practices for its fungicides.

Many of the treatments applied replicated standard farm practice, applying a fungicide to wheat at GS32, GS39 and GS60 for instance, but the Bayer team strongly believe that communicating the importance of fungicides, backed by Canterbury generated data, is too important not to do.

So, after two years of trials, what do the Bayer trials show?

In a nutshell, applying a three-spray fungicide programme to either wheat (GS32, GS39 and GS60) or to barley (GS30, GS32 and GS39) is consistently profitable. Of course, the prevailing disease pressure impacts the degree of profit.

For instance, in 2016 Bayer's trials in wheat showed little visible disease infection but even so profitable returns of \$40–100 / ha were recorded.

In 2017, when disease pressure was higher, the profit skyrocketed such that a wheat trial situated close to Timaru returned a profit of \$1,690/ha. In this trial disease didn't really develop until early December and yet it reduced the untreated yield by 6 t/ha. Whatever the situation in early spring, by adopting a robust and well timed fungicide approach you will not be disappointed.

For the 2018 season Bayer is again conducting fungicide trials and is running their Disease watch programme. Early indications from the Disease watch sites indicate that crops are already infected with a range of diseases. Aggressive scald and net blotch infections have been found on barley, along with Septoria leaf blotch and sharp eyespot on wheat.



TOP: Early January 2017, crop treated with a Proline/Aviator Xpro/Aviator Xpro programme  
BOTTOM: Untreated

"An integral part of the success of these trials was the inclusion of the powerhouse fungicide prothioconazole, best known for forming the fungicide Proline®.

It will be 12 years this spring that Proline was launched in New Zealand and in that time, it has revolutionised disease control in barley and ryegrass seed crops.

The superb disease control delivered by Proline, especially of scald and net blotch in barley and of stem rust and blind seed disease in ryegrass seed crops, has enabled yields to increase dramatically," says David Parker, Bayer Territory Sales Manager with responsibility for Ruralco.

"We are fully committed to continued innovation for Proline. As well as ensuring the Proline formulation is first class through constant formulation research and innovation, this season we are introducing Proline in a new Smartline 10L container. This container is very easy to use, uses less plastic and brings health

and safety benefits to anyone handling the container."

"As well as Proline, our portfolio of fungicides includes, Aviator® Xpro, Prosaro®, Delaro® and Folicur®. These trusted Bayer brands should be an integral part of your fungicide programme this season to ensure you maximise your crops potential!" These trusted products are available from Ruralco Farm Supplies, call 0800 787 256 to place your order.

If you would like to access results for Bayer's fungicide work, Disease watch reports and an e-book version of their recently published Essential Disease Planner log on to [www.arablefungicides.co.nz](http://www.arablefungicides.co.nz).

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# Sovereign kale a consistently good winter performer

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:




Father and son team Rod and Jared Opie have been realising the benefits of growing Sovereign kale to winter beef cattle on for the past decade. On their beef finishing and mixed cropping farm on the Canterbury plains, the Opie's are able to use Sovereign in conjunction with their intensive cropping rotations to ensure that they have a product that fits their system and provides consistent, good quality feed for their livestock over the winter months.

Over the years the Opie's have stuck with Sovereign as it has a very good fit in their farming system, offering consistent and reliable yields. "We have used it for the last 10–12 years and have never seen a reason to move away from it. It has been a proven performer on our property," explains Jared. Sovereign has been a solid performer across Canterbury, becoming very

popular in the 2000's showing good yield potential and outstanding quality. In any kale, the leaf component of the plant is where the quality is at its greatest. With Sovereign's leaf making up nearly 50% of total yield along with it producing a thin stem, Sovereign is able to hold quality, resulting in high intake and utilisation while achieving an average yield of 12–14 t DM/ha and a yield potential of 18 + t DM/ha. Sovereign will hold its quality right through the winter.

Sowing date and timing of grazing can impact the yield potential. Traditionally kale is sown between late November and early December with grazing occurring from May onwards (18–24 weeks post sowing). However, January or early February sowing is a genuine alternative to sowing rape at this time. The benefits are that Sovereign has no ripening requirement and will hold its leaf for longer and maintain stem quality while still having a potential yield of 8–10 t DM/ha.

Being one of the latest flowering kales on the market, Sovereign is a very attractive option for the late grazing environments around Canterbury as it will last and

ABOVE: From left, Jared Opie, Jarrad Mehlhopt (Ruralco Seed), Fraser Harrison (Agricom), Rod Opie

maintain quality until the start of October before the onset of flowering.

In a system where cattle are brought in and taken through the winter on kale and finished on grass in the spring as two-year olds, the Opie's need a winter feed option that they can rely on. The late flowering trait of Sovereign works extremely well within their rotation given that their goal is to drill at the beginning of January following Wattie's peas in order to have a good yielding, high quality crop that can be grazed right up until the beginning of September. Rod's conclusion is simple, "Sovereign provides us with a good quality, consistent yield that can almost be guaranteed year in, year out."

Sovereign has proven to be a reliable performing, user friendly kale over a long time and is an attractive investment for consistent, good quality winter feed on farm. For more information about how Sovereign could fit your farming system talk to Ruralco Seed today.

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Accuro 125SC is registered pursuant to the ACVM Act 1997, Approval No. P7504

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# Choosing the Best Kale

SEED

Choosing the best kale for your farm system isn't just about selecting the cultivar with the most dry matter yield potential. Forage quality is an important consideration for animal performance, and with a range of kale cultivars available, it is important to consider which one will be most suitable for your farm system and stock class.

Kale height ultimately influences dry matter yields along with other important agronomic characteristics such as leaf percentage, stem softness, stem palatability, and feed quality. The shorter kales tend to have lower total yields but offer the higher leaf percentages and stem quality. At the other end of the spectrum, giant types offer the highest yields, though often at the sacrifice of leaf percentages and stem quality.

Kestrel, a short kale, carries high leaf percentages and produces high quality stems. A recent Canterbury kale study\*, showed that Kestrel, compared to intermediate and giant kales, had the best quality stem with MJME of top stem 13.0 and the stem base 11.6 MJME\*, containing significantly more energy (MJME/kgDM) and less fibre (NDF) than the other kales. While it yielded less dry matter per hectare, the energy density of Kestrel lifted MJME yield per ha to levels comparable with other cultivars. Kestrel is an excellent feed option when high energy feed is required for top priority stock classes in order to drive live weight gain or body condition over winter, when younger animals are being fed such as hoggets and calves and is the preferred option of hill country farmers where wind and snow loading can cause lodging with taller cultivars. Farmers also often comment how much easier it is to prepare a paddock for the next pasture or crop following Kestrel kale as there is significantly less stem residue to deal with.

If the situation is that dry matter yield and forage quality are equally important, Regal, an intermediate kale, is a cultivar that is able to deliver both and is suitable for all classes of wintered stock including ewes,

beef cattle, deer and replacement dairy heifers and dry mixed aged dairy cows. In the same study, Regal also maintained high leaf percentages even into late winter, whilst maintaining excellent dry matter yields. Bred for high leaf-to-stem ratio and selected for softer stems, Regal is a very popular option to cater for winter feed requirements, delivering on quality and quantity. As an all-rounder Regal is a great cultivar. An additional option this year has been the very limited release of the new Cleancrop™ Firefly kale, which is a Regal type kale but with the additional option of cleaner weed free paddocks.

"Kestrel is an excellent feed option when high energy feed is required for top priority stock classes in order to drive live weight gain or body condition over winter..."

If production of bulk feed is the primary decision driver, a taller type kale should be considered. Traditionally these 'giant' kales have provided high yields, but are compromised with lower feed quality due to significantly lower leaf percentages. However, recent plant breeding efforts have been made in this area. Corsa, a new

generation tall kale, offers significantly higher leaf percentages over traditional giant types, while still maintaining high dry matter yields.

Irrespective of the kale cultivar selected, it is important that agronomic needs of the crop are met to allow the kale to achieve its growth potential. This means meeting its nutrient needs, irrigation if available, eliminating crop limiting pests and weeds and sowing the seed in the correct way to allow a rapid and even establishment. Talk to Ruralco Seed today and they will assist you in selecting the correct cultivar for your situation.

SELECTION TIPS:









- Regal is the kale of choice for excellent DM yields and leaf production, even in late winter.
- Choose Kestrel when high energy feed is needed for top priority stock classes and younger stock.
- For a bulk feed for maintenance of live weight chose Corsa

REFERENCE:

\*Westwood C.T., Cutts M.K., Russell R.J., O'Brien K.M. (2014) Effect of timing of harvest on nutritive value and dry matter yield of four cultivars of kale (*Brassica oleracea* L. Var. *acephala*) Proceedings of the New Zealand Grasslands Association (in press)



## KALE

	Exceptional quality	Exceptional yield and good quality	Exceptional yield and more leaf	Exceptional yield
				
	↓	↓	↓	↓
Kale Type	Short	Intermediate	Giant*	Giant
Farm Type				
Sowing Rate	3-4 kg/ha	3-4 kg/ha	3-4 kg/ha	3-4 kg/ha
Potential yield (tDM/ha)	12	17	18	18
Winter leaf retention	***	***	***	**
% Leaf	***	***	**	*
Stem quality	***	**	**	*

\*A new generation giant kale with higher leaf to stem ratio and softer stems than traditional giant kales.

# TALK TO YOUR RURALCO REP

Contact your local Ruralco Representative today for on-farm advice, recommendations and all your farming requirements



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# Unlock your flock potential

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## Late Pregnancy Nutrition

Lamb survival is largely dependent on a good birthweight and high lamb vigour, coupled with good maternal care and a swift onset of lactation by the ewe. With 70% of foetal growth taking place in the final 6 weeks of pregnancy, all these factors are dependent on good late pregnancy nutrition.

Ketosis (pregnancy toxæmia/sleepy sickness) is the result of a dramatic shortfall in dietary energy intake by the ewe. Most cases are caused by under feeding of multi-foetate ewes—a true dietary energy shortfall. But ketosis can also occur in well-fed over-fat ewes—they become “lazy feeders”—and their appetite falls more quickly in late pregnancy than it does with fit ewes.

*“Ketosis is the result of a dramatic shortfall in dietary energy intake by the ewe.”*

Crystalyx Extra High Energy provides a palatable, concentrated energy source containing all the minerals, trace elements and vitamins often lacking in grass, to ensure optimum fertility and performance. And because Crystalyx is available 24 hours a day—every day—this ensures all individuals in the flock will have the opportunity to get their fair share during the course of the day, unlike supplementary feeding once a day where daily intakes by individual ewes can be highly variable and irregular—not ideal to maximise rumen fermentation and lamb survival.

Independent university research at Newcastle University in the UK, has also shown that feeding Crystalyx can stimulate forage intakes and improve overall diet digestibility, resulting in more efficient use of forage and an improved available energy intake.

Using Crystalyx intakes as a guide to ration balance and nutrient supply can help reduce the risk of over-fatness through over feeding, as greater reliance can be placed on home-grown forages. Research shows that feeding Crystalyx on a self-help system allows ewes to regulate their intakes according to their requirements. Because it is licked, not chewed or bitten,

Crystalyx provides a continual “trickle feed” of nutrients to stimulate rumen fermentation and forage digestion.

*“...feeding Crystalyx can stimulate forage intakes and improve overall diet digestibility, resulting in more efficient use of forage and an improved available energy intake.”*

Independent trials undertaken on Rosebank Farm, Southland in consecutive years, with triplet-bearing ewes, have confirmed significantly higher lamb survival rates (+8% on average over the 2 trials) in ewes fed Crystalyx Extra High Energy from 2 weeks before set-stocking through to tailing. Crystalyx intakes averaged 20g/ewe/day.

As Dr Mark Oliver from UniServices, University of Auckland commented in his trial report:

“The first major deficit that a triplet-bearing ewe faces in late pregnancy and early lactation is the ability to produce enough glucose to support foetal growth and survival in late pregnancy. Careful nutrient supplementation in late pregnancy and lactation can aid maternal manufacture of glucose and prevent ketosis. It is likely that the current formulation of Extra High Energy Crystalyx works in this manner. Enhancement of maternal glucose production favours maternal survival and function, but also promotes the deposition of glycogen in the lamb liver and muscle in the days before birth which is important for improving triplet survival.”

Dr Oliver further commented in his report: “The second major deficit the triplet-bearing ewe faces is the inability to maintain critical levels of minerals in late pregnancy, particularly magnesium, calcium and vitamin D. calcium has a vital role to play in maintaining gut motility and uterine tone and contraction. Hypocalcaemia/hypomagnesaemia coupled with ketosis because of impaired gut function can rapidly lead to maternal demise or fatal exhaustion during stressful processes like giving birth. Extra High Energy Crystalyx provided a good source of all minerals, trace elements and vitamins to aid calcium metabolism in the Crystalyx-fed ewes”

Good management and nutrition throughout late pregnancy and early lactation can help unlock your flock’s potential this season. Many shepherds now realise the tremendous nutritional and management benefits of providing Extra High Energy Crystalyx on a self-help/free access system to all multi-foetate ewes, especially in late pregnancy and early lactation—because it really does take some licking!

*“Good management and nutrition throughout late pregnancy and early lactation can help unlock your flock’s potential this season.”*

To find out more information or to order your Crystalyx product today contact Ruralco Farm Supplies on 0800 787 256.



# THE LAMB HEALTH PLAN FOR OPTIMAL PRODUCTION

**SURVIVING TO THRIVING FIRST YEAR PLAN**



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For more information visit [www.zoetis.co.nz](http://www.zoetis.co.nz) or talk to your animal health advisor.

1. Murphy, A. et al. (1995) A comparison of production responses in lambs drenched with moxidectin or ivermectin. *NZ J Agricultural Res.*, v. 38(2), p. 221-224. Zoetis New Zealand Limited. Tel: 0800 963 847; [www.zoetis.co.nz](http://www.zoetis.co.nz). CYDECTIN is a registered trade mark of Zoetis Inc. or its subsidiaries. ACVM No's. A6204 & A7388.



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\*Offer is available from 1 October to 31 October 2017.

Available now from Ruralco Farm Supplies

FARM SUPPLIES

# Cyductin® Oral Drench for Sheep: Get your lambs humming!

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



Want to make the most of the lamb schedule by growing lambs faster? Using the right drench can help.

There are many reasons why lambs are not finishing, or are growing slower than expected. These can include nutrition (lack of quality and quantity), mineral deficiency, diseases such as pneumonia, and parasites among others. A 2006 Beef + Lamb study<sup>1</sup> found the most common reason for ill-thrift in lambs was due to poor nutrition. But when pasture quality was taken into consideration, the next biggest cause was parasite infection (45% of cases).

The damage heavy worm burdens can inflict on lambs is pretty obvious, such as decreased appetite, scours, wasting and death. But damage is done at the 'subclinical' level as well. This is when clinical signs of disease aren't obvious but production losses, such as decreased growth rates, are occurring but go unnoticed.

Studies<sup>2,3</sup> have demonstrated slower growth rates when lambs are challenged with large numbers of parasite larvae and, conversely, increased growth rates when the parasites are eliminated. One such study compared the differences in growth between lambs given a short acting drench (thereby still having to deal with larval challenge) and a longer acting drench, Cyductin Oral Drench for Sheep, which due to its persistent activity, protected the lambs from larvae. Half the lambs received the short acting drench and half received Cyductin Oral Drench. 29 days later the treatment groups were reversed and the lambs received the other treatment. The study showed that lambs receiving Cyductin Oral Drench grew between 60-87 grams a day faster than the group receiving the short acting drench in both phases of the study. This study demonstrates that not all drenches are the same. Cyductin Oral Drench lasts longer than most other drenches against *Teladorsagia circumcincta* and barbers pole worm, i.e. 21 and 35 days respectively. This means for 21 days after drenching, Cyductin Oral Drench will continue to kill incoming *Teladorsagia* larvae, allowing lambs to dedicate energy and protein to growth instead of their immune system. This also means the valuable feed they are eating gets converted into growth and is not wasted. This study highlights the importance of effective worm control in rapidly growing lambs. It clearly demonstrates the production



benefits provided by a drench with persistent activity. As a result of receiving Cyductin Oral Drench, lambs could have been sent for slaughter earlier than lambs given only a short acting drench. The additional live weight afforded by Cyductin Oral Drench treatment could have been worth an extra \$14,105 per head. For a mob of 1000 lambs this could equate to an extra \$14,100 of income due to drench selection alone.

You might expect a longer lasting product to have longer withholding periods, but Cyductin Oral Drench has a meat withhold of just 10 days, and a milk withhold of 84 hours (7 milkings).

There is compelling evidence for the use of combination products in order to delay the development of drench resistance, and this advice should still be followed. However, for most combination drenches there is no persistent activity and the production benefits described above may not be realised. Fortunately, in the South Island there are lower levels of drench resistance than the North Island. Just over 10% of South Island farms tested<sup>4</sup> at Gribbles Veterinary Laboratories

between 2014 and 2015 had resistance to moxidectin, compared to 20% in the North Island. This level of resistance is the lowest for any of the older single active products. With continued prudent use of these products, this level can be maintained for as long as possible.

Used sustainably, and targeting your most susceptible animals at times when parasite challenge is high, Cyductin Oral Drench for Sheep can help improve profitability on your farm. Talk to Ruralco Farm Supplies today and secure your Cyductin Oral Drench for your sheep.

<sup>1</sup>Beef and Lamb R&D Brief Dec 2006

<sup>2</sup>Coop, RL. The effect of three levels of intake of *Ostertagia circumcincta* larvae on growth rate, food intake and body composition of growing lambs. *Journal of Agric. Sci.* 1982

<sup>3</sup>Murphy, A. A comparison of production responses in lambs drenched with moxidectin or ivermectin. *New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research* 1994

<sup>4</sup>McKenna P. Update on the prevalence of anthelmintic resistance. *Vetscript* Nov 2016

<sup>5</sup>Based on \$3/kg live weight

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# Technology helps complete heat detection puzzle

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



Better heat detection in dairy herds is recognised as an action that is one of the industry's "low hanging fruit", capable of delivering profits easily banked within a year of acting upon.

Dairy researchers have managed to quantify the value of those gains, and the costs that go with missing cows when they are on heat, or ultimately end up as empties.

When detecting heats, the two mistakes most commonly made are either missed heats, or cows not actually even on heat. Missed heats will lower the herd's submission rate, a key driver of six week in-calf rates.

For dairy farmers wanting to improve their herd's six week in-calf rate from the national average of 66% to the national target of 78% the potential profit gain for a 300-cow herd is \$14,000 extra. This represents a gain of over \$45 per cow on average.

These calculations are based off a \$5.50 pay-out, so the prospects are even better for the coming season with its anticipated \$6.30–\$6.50 kgMS payment.

Similarly, reducing the empty rate on a 300-cow herd from a typical rate of 10% to 8% delivers an additional \$6000 profit, or about \$20 per cow.

The potential for better returns from improved heat detection and the costs of missing cows on heat played heavily on the mind of Tirau farmer Bill Aubrey as he considered his options with his high producing, high BW Friesian herd.

Averaging 498 kgMS a year across the 320-cow herd Bill and his wife Kay have continued a strong family tradition of breeding high quality Friesians using genetics intended to deliver on specific traits.

For Bill and Kay the benefits of better heat detection take on significance over and above the average gains to be had.

A missed heat also forfeits their ability to mate the cow to specific high-quality sire genetics, possibly losing the opportunity for a high genetic worth replacement calf.

Bill came to farming later in his working life, and had enjoyed having the experience of his wife and father in law for guidance.

This has left him feeling confident most of the pre-requisites of a good six week in-calf rate, feed input, minerals and body condition score were all on track.

"We are a system 4 farm, with cows getting a good level of feed either in the shed or as maize or grass silage and have a minimum BCS of 5 at calving."



However, two seasons ago at mating time he felt heat detection was not as exacting as it needed to be in the high performing herd.

"I just had a sense that between myself and my staff we were not detecting all the cows we should have been. I wanted something to address that, given our focus on optimising the genetics we are using."

He had tracked the development of Gallagher's FlashMate™ heat detection device, and after discussion with staff at Mystery Creek he decided to go "cold turkey" at mating time.

FlashMate™ is an electronic heat detection device attached to the cow's rump for a full mating season and capable of identifying multiple heats within that season. On detection of mating activity, it will flash a red alert light for 26 hours to inform the farmer she is in oestrus and ready for mating. If the cow attracts no further riding activity for 25 days FlashMate™ will flash green confirming her status as likely to be in-calf. It will return to flash red if she shows heat activity again.

A key revelation for Bill using FlashMate™ was discovering cows experiencing silent heats.

"While we may have identified one or two manually, FlashMate™ actually picked up a dozen.

ABOVE: Bill finds the opportunity to have two chances to get cows in calf invaluable  
TOP: Flashmate application insitu red flashing

That opportunity to have two chances to get them in-calf to high quality AB genetics was just gold for us."

He had also used CIDRs on 30 cows three weeks into mating. FlashMate™ proved invaluable in identifying not only those cows coming on heat from the CIDR treatment, but also those that returned up to 25 days after the treatment.

The region experienced one of the wettest, toughest springs ever in 2016 and Bill says his empty rate of just under 10% was extremely acceptable in a region that regularly reported 13–18%.

The herd also hit the 78% national target for six week in-calf rate. "We have tried to manage the front end well, with good feeding, minerals and body condition score.

"FlashMate™ was worth it just on grounds of the extra silent heats they detected. But they fairly and squarely were about us getting the right cows inseminated at the right time to the right bull."

For more information on FlashMate™ contact Ruralco Farm Supplies today on 0800 787 256 or visit [www.gallagherflashmate.com](http://www.gallagherflashmate.com).

SEED

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- Suitable for all stock types
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# Making the most of your backyard chickens

A healthy and productive flock of chickens counts as one of the great pleasures of owning a lifestyle property. Provided you follow a few basic guidelines, it's easy to have happy chooks and a ready supply of nature's perfect food - nutritious eggs.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY SEALESWINSLOW

Whenever you mention lifestyle properties, chances are that free-roaming chickens—along with the prospect of your very own fresh eggs—are among the first images that spring to mind. It's unsurprising really, because chickens have been our domesticated animal companions for thousands of years; pets with benefits, so to speak. Besides, it's relatively straightforward to make this relationship a rewarding experience as long as a few basics are observed.

The choice of breed is typically the first decision that will be made. For a lifestyle block situation, the choice may not exclusively be made on criteria such as production and/or meat quality. In fact, some people derive joy from having old breeds or more exotic birds in their flock—an enjoyable and affordable pastime. Breed selection is certainly not a “one-size-fits-all” approach, but rather an exploration of requirements and preferences.

When it comes to housing, on the other hand, things become a little more prescriptive, as it's really important to provide appropriate shelter. It should be draught-free but well ventilated, and protect the birds from rain and direct sunlight. Adequate perches for roosting

and nest boxes that offer seclusion from the rest of the hen house will help to establish good habits among the birds. In general, you'll promote better conditions and cleaner eggs with regular cleaning, control of dampness and twice daily egg collection.

A great many problems can be mitigated with good management and clean habits.

Of course, as with any animal species, adequate feed is high on the list of priorities. “The right nutrition plays a big role,” says animal nutrition expert, Wendy Morgan. “It's a very important factor for the quality and size of the eggs and for maintaining overall health.”

She recommends paying particular attention to proteins. “Chicken eggs are naturally high in protein,” she explains. “However, hens need to produce those by taking proteins from their feed source, breaking them down and reforming them.”

That's where amino acids come in. Often called the “building blocks” of proteins, they deliver the vital protein that ends up in eggs. Accordingly, amino acids are a most important component of good chicken feed. When combined with the right mix of vitamins and minerals, it meets the nutritional requirements of your chooks.

SealesWinslow's Homestead SupaChook is a perfect example that ticks all boxes. It also doesn't have any artificial colourants and is provided as a convenient all-in-one pellet, which stops the birds from selectively eating only certain components.

While Homestead SupaChook is a complete food for your backyard girls, Wendy recommends you supplement with kitchen scraps. “Even though there's no need to add the nutritional value of scraps, it's fun for the chickens and keeps them happy. It's part of their natural behaviour and you can see that they really enjoy going over the scraps.”

It's vitally important to supplement the feed offering with good quantities of cool, clean water. “Depending on the breed and age of the bird, she may drink up to half a litre of water a day,” says Wendy.

All in all, keeping your birds well fed and watered will give you healthy chickens and will keep your family and friends in eggs for a considerable amount of time.

SealesWinslow's Homestead SupaChook can be bought at Ruralco by contacting Ruralco Farm Supplies on 0800 787 256.

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# Tru-Test takes the hassle out of tracking livestock weights to meet growth targets

Tru-Test is an advocate of the research that shows growth rates in young dairy stock can have a lifetime impact on milk production. Being able to set, track and view target weights is critical to achieving this. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY TRU-TEST



They also estimate that less than 20% of sheep, beef and deer farmers use stock weight information to drive farm management decision-making.

This has inspired the world leader in EID and animal weighing to launch MiHub Livestock Management; cloud-based software that enables dairy, sheep, beef and deer farmers to easily track and manage animal performance. "As a developer of hardware for measuring animal performance, we're very aware that this is the one area in which most farmers can make the most difference to achieving their desired animal target weights," Verne Atmore, Tru-Test's NZ General Manager says.

MiHub Livestock works seamlessly with Tru-Test weigh scales allowing even technology-wary farmers to monitor animal weight gains and track their performance to target weights. The Base plan is available free for Tru-Test device users and for a small fee for non Tru-Test users. The software transforms session files into simple, easy-to-understand graphs so farmers can quickly and easily make decisions on the optimum time to breed, feed, treat, sell, or cull. MiHub Livestock links directly to Tru-Test's XR5000 or ID5000 and to EziWeigh7i (and the XR3000 & ID3000) via Data Link (phone or PC).

Unlike general farm management systems, it is a specialist weight and growth rate management system. Tru-Test believes this can be the single most important decision-making area on farm.

"We want farmers to be able get clear insights into their key profit drivers: kilograms of protein produced per day for sheep and beef; and for dairy farmers, growing young dairy stock to reach weight/age milestones that will increase fertility and lifetime productivity," explains Verne. Currently a farmer wishing to analyse weighing information either needs to be proficient in Excel or to be using a complex farm management system.

Early farmer feedback on the new software indicates it delivers what it is designed to do.

"I put raw data in excel and it's not very friendly... those [MiHub Livestock] graphs are fantastic, it's the information I want to see".

"I can see my lines going forwards and upwards, that's good! If I can do this, anyone can use it".

MiHub also allows users to easily share weighing data with staff, vets or consultants without attaching files to emails, and to easily print or download reports and graphs in common file formats.

Because it's an online (cloud) programme, weighing data is accessible from any device

with an internet connection. If a computer or Tru-Test device is lost or stolen the files are safe. Brian McFelin, Tru-Test's Mid/South Canterbury Weighing and EID specialist, says of the new software, it's been something that farmers' have been looking for and as a result there has been strong up take in the area.

"The feedback I have received has been really positive with farmer's finding it really easy to use. The other beauty of it, especially for graziers, is that they can send all relevant information off to owners, vets etc at the click of a button. Being cloud based they can also invite relevant 3rd parties to view the information online. Users are finding it's making communication and sharing of information so much faster, simpler and more relevant."

He adds, "As well as being good for the farmer's, it's also better for the animals too as decision making is faster and more accurate through easy to view tracking data and quicker feedback through the ease and speed of sharing information."

Farmers currently using Tru-Test devices can sign up for MiHub Livestock by visiting [www.tru-test.com/livestock](http://www.tru-test.com/livestock) or for more information contact their local Tru-Test Representative or Ruralco Farm Supplies on 0800 787 256.

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# Economic impact of weeds far greater than billion-dollar estimate

**The true cost of weeds to New Zealand's agricultural economy is likely to be far higher than previous research would suggest, according to a new study funded by AgResearch.**

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY AGRESEARCH

AgResearch and Scion scientists worked with economists from Lincoln University's Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit to review the available published research on the costs of weeds to New Zealand's productive land (for the pastoral, arable and forestry sectors). That review reached a conservative overall estimate of \$1.658 billion (b) a year (based on 2014 costs).

"The research on weed costs done previously used differing approaches, and the numbers were sometimes outdated or contained

guesswork," says AgResearch principal scientist Dr Graeme Bourdôt.

"In addition, the estimate of \$1.658b only covers the few weed species—10 of the 187 pasture weeds, some arable land weeds and forestry weeds—that have been the subject of research into their impacts. The focus has largely been on the loss of production. The substantial costs of weed control, such as the use of herbicides, was not always considered."

"Given all of these limitations, the true cost of the weeds to the agricultural sector is likely to be much higher than the \$1.658b estimate."

The study looked at the economic impact of some of the more widespread and destructive weed species such as gorse, broom, yellow bristle grass and Californian thistle.

"We also developed a dynamic approach for estimating the potential costs of weeds that have not yet realised their potential range in New Zealand, taking account of possible rates of spread, maximum geographic extent and



ABOVE: Giant Buttercup  
TOP: Mike Cripps with Californian Thistle

changes in consumer prices for agricultural products," Dr Bourdôt says.

"This dynamic approach applied to the Giant Buttercup weed in dairy pastures indicates that this weed alone would cost the dairy industry \$592 million per year in lost milk solids revenue if it were to spread across its entire range over the next 20 years."

"New Zealand has one of the highest levels of invasion by introduced plant species in the world, and there has always been a shortage of information when it comes to their economic costs on productive land."

"Knowing more about these costs is important to developing cost-effective ways to tackle weeds, and in quantifying the benefits of research aimed at keeping us ahead of the game."

For further information head to [www.tandfonline.com](http://www.tandfonline.com).

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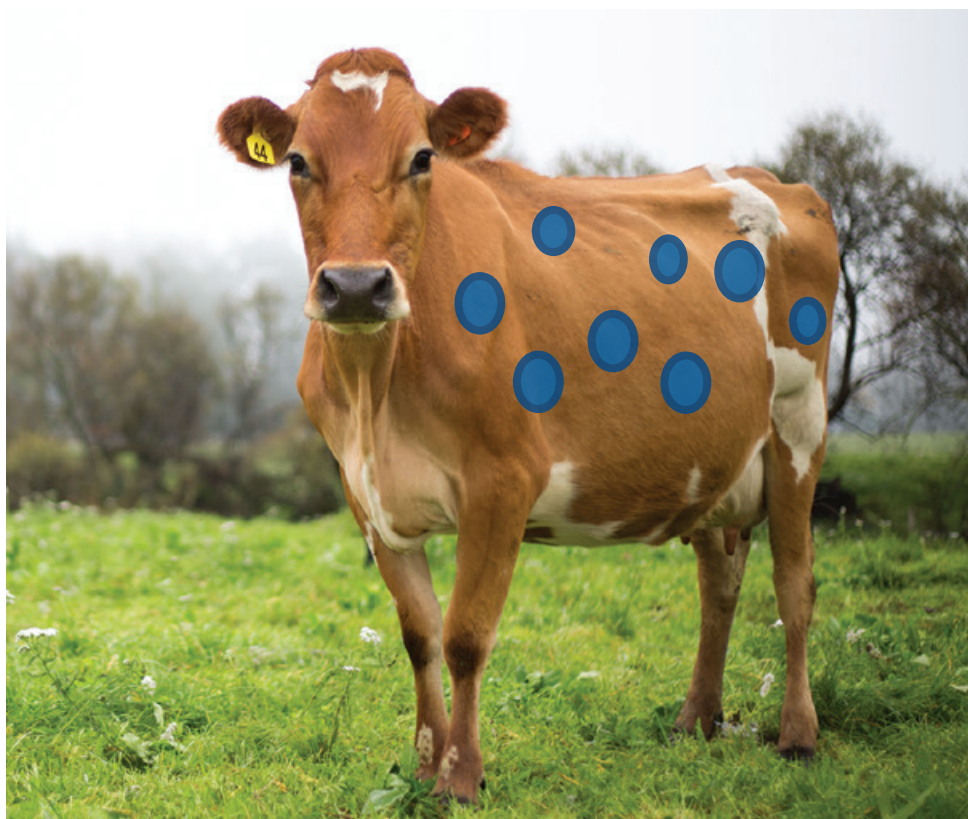
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# Seen anything unusual? Look. Check. Ask a Vet.

Many years ago I worked in the UK at a Cattle Breeding Centre. One year, we noticed that bulls in a far away perimeter pen, bordering a field, used to get sick (and die) more than others. They were all affected by the same disease.

WORDS BY IAN HODGE, MANZCVS. GM TECHNICAL SERVICES, VETERINARY ENTERPRISES GROUP



We puzzled over this for some time and eventually, after a cunning surveillance plan, we discovered that wild fallow deer were coming up to the bull pen perimeter, making nose contact with the bulls and infecting them with a nasty disease called MCF. From that point on we had to tighten up our biosecurity.

As I write this there are two serious diseases of farm animals present in the wider Canterbury area; Salmonella and Mycoplasma. While Salmonella is endemic in New Zealand, Mycoplasma was not thought to be present in this country until this year. It is possible that Mycoplasma has been in New Zealand for some time and has remained undiagnosed. The recent confirmation of Mycoplasma has resulted in a large scale operation to contain the disease and to establish the extent of infection across the entire country. This investigation is on going, and will be active for some time until all the questions have been answered.

Salmonella, although endemic, usually shows up as epidemics of infection in late winter and early spring especially when we have high rainfall, and possibly summer time as well. Farms that

have been infected with Salmonella experience severe sickness in the stock, loss of pregnancies, uterine infections and death in many cases. Because Salmonella is directly transmissible to humans, this has resulted in cases of very nasty gastrointestinal disease.

The presence of diseases like Salmonella and Mycoplasma should alert us all to the importance of farm biosecurity. Your farm and livestock are your business. Infectious disease has the potential to have a catastrophic effect on animal productivity.

So what is biosecurity? Biosecurity means preventing diseases entering your farm from multiple potential sources. When you think about all the possible routes that infections could potentially enter your farm, biosecurity quickly becomes a complex and expensive exercise.

Diseases can transfer between animals over long distances or with close contact. Wind or secretions like saliva are common vehicles for spread of infection. Diseases can also transfer on inanimate objects (called fomites) like footwear, vehicles, instruments etc.

This means that your entire farm is vulnerable to infectious disease. Neighbouring stock, poor fences, accessible creeks, dirty trucks, people entering the farm, birds, rodents and dust are all examples of potential sources and routes of entry of infectious diseases. No wonder biosecurity is complex.

In New Zealand, we tend to have a relaxed approach to such things and we probably “get away” with a great deal because the challenge from many infectious diseases is low. But when they do occur we get hit hard, often with devastating effects. We need to lift our game with biosecurity.

From a practical standpoint, simple things like disinfection footbaths or mats at farm entrances can be very effective. Similar disinfection stations at entrances to calf pens, sheep yards etc. also work very well. They are effective as long as they are kept recharged with disinfectants. Keeping vehicles and protective clothing clean is also going to make a significant contribution to reducing the disease challenge.

On some farms it may be necessary to put measures in place to protect the farm perimeter by strengthening fences and using outriggers to prevent close contact with animals at the boundaries. Creeks can be fenced off to prevent stock getting access to infected water, birds can be controlled if populations get too high, and paddocks can be drained if they are prone to flooding.

People and vehicles entering the farm should be carefully monitored. They may have been on infected farms and will need to disinfect before making close contact with your animals. This includes vets!

Importantly all stock entering the farm should be carefully screened for infectious disease. Aside from Salmonella, Bovine Viral Diarrhoea is highly infectious and is very common. It can arrive on farms via animals that appear completely normal, including breeding bulls. You are wise to know precisely the infection status of all animals entering your farm, and you should reject those you know to be infected.

With dairy herd mating on the horizon, the last thing you need, on any farm, is an infectious disease that can have devastating effects on fertility.

Look. Check. Ask a vet.



# Have a beautiful smile on your wedding day

## What is a dental hygienist?

A dental hygienist is a university trained registered health professional whose job is to help you maintain and achieve your optimal oral health. The hygienist works alongside the dentist as part of a prescribed treatment plan to suit your individual needs. Their role is primarily the identification, treatment and prevention of issues with your gums. We have progressed from the days of the dentist providing a 'quick clean' when they check your teeth and it is common practice now for dentists to employ hygienists to take care of their patients gum health needs. At Dentistry on Parkside we are fortunate to have two hygienists who are able to help you reach your oral health goals. When you first see a hygienist, they will check around each tooth for signs of gum disease as they assess the presence of soft plaque and hard tartar deposits. They will then gently and meticulously remove the deposits and help to tailor a homecare plan with you providing advice about best ways you can look after your teeth and gums. If their examination shows that you have periodontitis, they will guide you through a treatment plan of how to best stabilise your gum disease, this can sometimes include referring you to a specialist periodontist if necessary.

## What is gum disease?

Gum disease effects most of the adult population to some extent. It ranges from reversible gingivitis, which may present as tenderness or bleeding when you are brushing, to irreversible periodontitis. Periodontitis is a serious condition which causes loss of the jaw bone and ligaments and fibres supporting the teeth, it requires careful diagnosis and regular professional care to maintain and prevent further bone loss. Bad breath, loose teeth or spaces opening up between teeth, receding gums, bleeding gums or a bad taste in your mouth are all signs that there may be some serious issues with your gums.

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Another role of the hygienist is helping you improve your smile. Staining and discolouration can make us feel self-conscious about showing our teeth and can often be easily removed during a visit with the hygienist. Intrinsic staining is within the tooth structure and can only be improved with tooth whitening treatments. We provide two options for whitening your teeth and offer a complimentary consultation to determine whether you are a suitable candidate for whitening, and which option suits your needs. Whitening treatments provided by a dental professional ensure that treatment is provided safely and appropriately and you will get results which meet your expectations.

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# Dixon Machinery and Diesel Tech Ltd making life easier



## With summer approaching it's time to take out the lawnmower and have the lawn looking good.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY,  
IMAGES BY BARBARA LOVELOCK

Some of us enjoy getting out and cutting the grass however for many of us it's just another chore and the lawn never looks perfect. If this sounds like you then Paul Dixon and his team at Dixon Machinery have an exciting new range of Husqvarna auto mowers that may just solve all your lawn problems and give you extra time to stand at the BBQ this summer.

Husqvarna have over 20 years experience with auto mowing and are world leaders in the field. After a recent visit to Sweden with other Husqvarna dealers, owner Paul believes auto mowing is about to increase in popularity within New Zealand and he is keen to get behind this technology. "I think auto mowing is really going to take off here, it's a concept thing—once people grasp it I think they will be really impressed with what these mowers can do." The business has just been recognised as Husqvarna Elite Dealership for Mid Canterbury and is excited to showcase the latest in auto mowing technology.

Paul explains that purchasing an auto mower is a process. Prior to purchase the area needs to be viewed and mapped "we've got to sell the right size mower for the lawn". Thanks to Google Earth they can view the property in advance and then do a site visit to assess the lawn area and if there are any tricky areas to consider. There are four sizes of auto mowers

with an area capacity ranging from 600m<sup>2</sup> to 5,000m<sup>2</sup>. The mower sits on a charge station and the entire mowing area is encased by an electrified boundary cable—the mower has sensors which enables it to move away from any obstacles but larger trickier areas such as exposed roots of bigger trees can also be fenced off. The customers can lay the cable themselves but it is more cost effective to use a cable layer that Dixons have purchased for this purpose.

Being an Elite Dealership means that as well as offering very competitive pricing Dixon Machinery always stocks the entire range of auto mowers. The level of sophisticated technology is impressive, the cutting mechanism consists of three double-sided steel blades and the operating system is very user friendly. You can set the mower to allow for seasonal changes; programming extra cutting in spring when grass is growing more and less mowing over drier summer months. Its virtually silent while working plus a SIM card can be purchased for the two larger models and they can then be operated remotely via an app. It's a mulch mower meaning no need for a catcher and because the mower is continually mowing the lawn the cuttings leave no residue, they simply fall into the grass and act as a natural fertiliser. Another bonus feature is that the machines are completely theft proof as they are pin coded, and also you can't use the mower without the charge station that is fixed to the ground. Maintenance on auto mowers is

easy—Dixons recommend an annual service to get any software updates available. The battery may need to be replaced every few years but the cost is reasonable—its worth noting that one of their machines has recently done over 6,000 hours and is still working perfectly, however they should be stored indoors over winter. The main advantage to auto mowing is convenience. The mower goes out and does the job that many of us—especially busy farmers—don't have the time to do. Regardless of weather with advanced navigation systems the mower will continuously mow every part of your lawn. It leaves a perfectly level finish and will handle more difficult areas such as slopes and narrow passages. "If you want the best lawn on the block then get an auto mower," says Paul.



ABOVE: Paul Dixon believes that auto mowing is about to increase in popularity within New Zealand and is keen to get behind the technology

MAIN IMAGE: Purchasing an auto mower is a process which starts with viewing and mapping the area

Dixon Machinery will be showcasing the Husqvarna auto mower range at Ashburton A&P Show this year and also at the Methven High Country Fete. Demo videos are also online via the Husqvarna website or visit Dixon Machinery on Line Road in Methven to view their range of auto mowers. You may just find yourself with a lot more free time this summer and your garden will be the envy of your neighbours.

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# A humble co-operative legend and irrigation pioneer recognised

Overseas travel and university are almost obligatory rites of passage for today's young farmers. And if those farmers return to eastern or drought prone parts of New Zealand, irrigation will almost certainly be a major part of their farming operation.

WORDS BY ANITA BODY, IMAGES BY AMY PIPER

Wind the clock back 60 odd years and the chances of finding a young farmer who could tick all these boxes would be difficult—but not impossible. Mid Canterbury man, Brian Cameron was such a farmer, and while modest and humble about his achievements, he has certainly created a legacy worthy of national recognition. Recently he won Cooperative Business New Zealand's highly sought after premier award for Outstanding Cooperative Contribution.

A third generation Pendarves farmer, Brian almost didn't get to follow his dream of farming. With two brothers destined to go into partnership with his father, Brian instead set

his sights on going to Lincoln College (now Lincoln University) where he obtained an Ag Science degree.

"I was the first in my extended family to go to university. If you were a country boy it was almost preordained to be on the farm. I didn't see an opportunity of going on the farm, but I still wanted to find something to do with agriculture. I thought about teaching, but when I finished at Lincoln I didn't really know what to do, so a mate and I went to Australia."

He ended up staying for four years in a variety of jobs and locations on the east coast—he went to the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne; researched nitrogen fertilisers

within a subsidiary of Shell but found he didn't really fit in a big company culture; worked on sky scrapers in Brisbane; sold encyclopaedias; and sold irrigation equipment. "But I found I wasn't that much of a salesman. If I could see it was not going to work, I would talk people out of it!"

Another job opportunity saw him fumigating houses for cockroaches near Rockhampton, and that's where he met his wife, Norma. "We were both at the same Presbyterian dance."

Around this time Brian had the opportunity to go home when one of his brothers decided to step away from the family farm, and so Brian went into partnership with his father and his





LEFT: Brian Cameron holding his trophy for Outstanding Co-operative Contribution with wife Norma who has supported him with all his endeavors

With water came a change in farming practices. Although the quantity was small, it allowed the Cameron's to adapt their farming practices. Corriedale sheep were replaced with Coopworths, and new crops were trialled.

"We looked at crop rotations—we had to use the water strategically. There was winter wheat early in the season and red clover later on and we would swing the water over to that. We had some Lucerne and some small areas of cash crops like peas and linseed, but we didn't have the volume with only 15 l/sec—that was the whole lot. With hindsight we could have put down a bigger bore, possibly 12 inch instead of six, so that we would have immediately got more water (45 l/sec rather than 15 l/sec). The thought of the day was that was all you would need. Irrigation was only an insurance policy and wasn't for the whole farm."

In later years, two more bores were developed on the home farm, Akeringa (which is Australian and means out on the plains) – both went to the second aquifer which was at a depth of around 140m. In the 1970s the Cameron's also increased the size of their farming operation with the purchase of a 60 hectare dryland block close to home, and another farm at Winchmore, named Waimara (water farm). This property was within the Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation Scheme and Brian and Norma set about developing borderdyke irrigation themselves. "We did the work with a 70 horse power tractor and it worked very well and we did it for virtually nothing."

It was during this decade that Brian became more active with local farming organisations. As chairman of Pendarves Federated Farmers, he was in the "hot seat" when the group agreed to investigate irrigation options for the area. Brian ended up chairing the Lower Rakaia Irrigation Scheme for 27 years; was on the board of the Barrhill Chertsey Irrigation Company; and became the founding chairman of Irrigation New Zealand in 1978. He was also on the Lincoln College council for 20 years from 1980 until 2000.

In the late 1970s, he was invited on to the board of PPCS (now Silver Fern Farms) and it's at this time he developed an interest in co-operatives. "Federated Farmers and the Rural Bank ran a couple of seminars looking at co-ops and I went along and said a bit too much, and got a job on a working party."

The group was charged with looking at the possibility of forming a nationwide association of co-ops which Brian chaired. "We called a meeting of all the agricultural co-operatives that we were aware of and that went on to form the New Zealand

other brother. Norma came over a couple of years later and the newly married couple lived in Ashburton until they started farming in their own right in 1962. The family partnership lasted only three years until Brian's father retired due to ill health.

"I was 30 when I came home and had a head full of steam and became a workaholic. Both Norma and I did—we didn't have two successive nights off the farm in 10 years. We had some debt from my father when we started so even though we own the farm and we had a start, it was our own work."

"We started with 200 hectares after splitting the farm with my brother. It was very dry land. The saying was the rabbits packed their lunch! In a week it could go from abundance to a drought. We tried everything we could think of for a dryland farm, but we were not able to make it work. We looked at other areas and environments, like the foothills, and in the end decided to go the other way and put down a bore."

The couple had seen it in Australia, but others were less supportive and there was little belief

it would work. "We were called the crazy nuts! We thought there must be water down there, travelling through the shingle plain. It was just a question of how deep," said Brian.

The first bore went down in the late 1960s although there are no photos as the couple were too busy running the farm and raising their three young daughters. "By today's standards it was very small, being only six inches (150mm) in diameter. It was a slow process and took about three and a half weeks to reach a depth of 72m." Water was found at the first aquifer at around 68m and was cause for great celebration. Even with a maximum abstraction rate of around 15 l/sec it was a huge game changer for the Cameron's.

"To have water was wonderful," says Norma. Locals relied on stock water races for drinking water although the Cameron's collected rain water from woolshed roof for drinking and food preparation. "We would collect the water and take it in buckets to the house. We'd use water race water for cleaning, but not for drinking or cooking."

Agricultural Co-operatives Association (now known as Co-operative Business NZ) in 1982." Brian was the organisation's founding chairman and held the role for 18 years. During that time and largely due to his leadership and perseverance, extensive legal work was carried out in the 1990s, culminating in the New Zealand Co-operative Companies Act 1996.

The Government review of the Companies Act initially proposed the abolishment of the Co-operative Act. "They had a point as it was a real hotch-potch of legislation, with amendment after amendment." In the end, a new act was devised which "hung off" the Companies Act. The beauty of that was that we were under the discipline of the main bill but with a few exceptions such as not trading shares and instead having them issued and surrendered when members left a co-op.

"We ended up with extraordinarily good Act which attracted international attention at the time. We were extremely pleased with the outcome. There had been a tremendous amount of work and consultation with all of the co-operatives and we came up with something that suited everyone. Today the Act is unchanged and has stood the test of time."

Brian was also committed to raising the standard of co-operative governance and early training initiatives introduced during his chairmanship still continue today.

Co-operative Business NZ (CBNZ) Chief Executive Craig Presland described Brian as

"a true legend in New Zealand's co-operative economy in the modern era" following the recent awarding of the organisation's premier honour to Brian for his pioneering work in helping to establish today's successful CBNZ. "While chairing our fledgling membership organisation for almost two decades, Brian insisted that kiwi co-operatives and mutuals be represented, protected and supported by separate legislation."

Today, CBNZ's membership exceeds 100, representing a business sector that employs around 50,000 and generates over \$43 billion in revenues (around 20% of the country's GDP and one-third of all exports).

"I didn't really think about what it could become in the early days. It certainly has blossomed. It is such a logical business model and I think it is the business model of the future." He has derived great satisfaction from seeing the success of New Zealand co-ops and their future strength and felt very humbled to have received its Outstanding Co-operative Contribution Award. It's the second time in two years the award has gone to Mid Canterbury, with Lauriston farmer and former ATS Chairman, Phil McKendry receiving the honour last year.

Looking back, Brian says there was no one particular highlight—everything he did was agriculturally related and he wouldn't have it any other way. "I certainly wouldn't have been able to do it without Norma. Often I had to go away at a day's notice, but

later on the co-op association more or less adopted her and she became part of the co-op family too."

## Ruralco efforts also recognised at CBNZ awards

Ruralco Chief Financial Officer, Oliver O'Neill was also recognised at this year's CBNZ awards, winning the Co-operation Amongst Co-operatives Award.

Craig Presland said Co-operation Amongst Co-operatives was a key co-operative principle, and included establishing and developing joint supply agreements, lowering costs through joint procurement initiatives, and the sharing of resources and information.

"Oliver is passionate about driving collaboration amongst our members and, last year, delivered cost savings for fellow co-ops across a range of products and services, these included farm fuel, electricity, general farm supplies, Ruralco Card deals and the purchase of vehicles."

"His efforts in driving lower electricity prices, for example, involved a great deal of patience and tenacity, as well as expert knowledge of tariffs, peak/off peak rates and varying price points for volume usage."

BELOW: 2017 Cooperative Business NZ's Annual Award winners Duncan Coull, Oliver O'Neill, Neil Cowie, Brian Cameron. Image from NZ.co-op





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# Innovation in the irrigator sector

New products, technologies, or practices which exemplify innovation in irrigation are now being sought for IrrigationNZ's 'Innovation in Irrigation Award' sponsored by Southern Wide Real Estate. WORDS BY IRRIGATION NZ LTD



The entry process for this highly prestigious award—which comes with a \$2,500 cash prize—is simple and gives IrrigationNZ a wonderful opportunity to promote the innovative nature of irrigators and their industry. Entries are now open and close at the end of October.

“Following the success of the new format in 2016, INZ will again open entries early and get the judging process out of the way before Christmas making entering easy! There’s a lot of diversity in the irrigation sector and we are excited to be able to highlight this during our Central Otago based conference in 2018,” says Chris Coughlan, of IrrigationNZ.

“IrrigationNZ will be pushing hard to see that a good cross section of primary sectors are represented and reflected in entry numbers for the 2018 award. Previous finalists and winners have benefited from the exposure and profiling that follows so we want more innovative individuals and businesses to experience these opportunities” she says. The brief for the ‘Innovation in Irrigation Award’ is very broad with a focus on

recognising innovation in the irrigation sector, that is about ordinary people and businesses doing new and extra ordinary things. This could range from innovative practice or behaviour, a product or technology or innovative community thinking around irrigation, says Mrs Coughlan.

Presented every two years at IrrigationNZ’s biennial Conference and Expo, the 2016 winner was Carrfields HydroFix for its innovative irrigator stabiliser. The HydroFix Irrigator Stabiliser System consists of a series of inflatable water tanks connected to a pulley and counterweight systems along the length of an irrigator. On arrival of a major wind event, the turn of a tap fills the tanks with water and lowers them to the ground to secure the irrigator at the centre of each span. When the wind danger has passed, the water tanks can simply be drained and after this they will raise themselves to a ‘ready to activate storage position in two stages, requiring minimal effort from the operator. The independent judging panel said Carrfield’s HydroFix system was chosen because it held wide application for New Zealand’s irrigation

market and was the result of solid research involving several parties.

Other highly commended entries included; Next Farm’s smart control systems for grid irrigation, Lindsay Corporation’s new pivot control and Central Plains Water Ltd for its environmental innovations and management of its stage one development.

We would encourage you to get in touch with IrrigationNZ if you have an innovation, discovery or achievement we should know about or to nominate someone else. In today’s environment, it is even more important to promote the good work being done on farms, orchards, vineyards and in our industry. We know there are lots more examples out there. INZ would love you to enter and again grow the range of entries for our ‘Innovation in Irrigation Award.’

Key dates and award information can be found at [www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events-training/innovation-in-irrigation-award](http://www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events-training/innovation-in-irrigation-award), or you can phone Kate Mills or Chris Coughlan on (03) 341 2225 or email [kmill@irrigationnz.co.nz](mailto:kmill@irrigationnz.co.nz) or [ccoughlan@irrigationnz.co.nz](mailto:ccoughlan@irrigationnz.co.nz).

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# New Holland presents its Concept Tractor powered by methane

**New Holland Agriculture has presented the latest development in its vision for the sustainable future of farming: a methane powered concept tractor that reimagines the design of this machine and reveals a connected future.**

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY JOHNSON GLUYAS TRACTORS

The brand imagines the farm of the future as being completely energy independent: a

farm that produces not only food, but also the biomass it needs to generate the energy it uses to run its operations and power its tractors and other machinery. Such a self-sufficient future is achievable today, with New Holland's advanced technology and vision. Carlo Lambro, New Holland Agriculture Brand President, commented: "The new methane powered concept tractor is the latest development in New Holland's pursuit of sustainable and efficient technology through innovation. Its ground-breaking engine delivers the same performance and has the same durability as its standard equivalent, but with much lower running costs. It combines

alternative fuels and advanced agricultural technology to create a vital link that closes the loop in the Energy Independent Farm™'s virtuous cycle by running on the energy produced from the land and waste products." New Holland has been pushing the boundaries of innovation in clean energy solutions for more than a decade. It was the first manufacturer to offer 100% compatibility with Biodiesel back in 2006. In 2009, it developed the world's first hydrogen tractor concept, NH2™ proving the feasibility of this zero-emission technology for the future. This was a key element of the brand's Energy Independent Farm™ concept, launched at the same time.



The powertrain of the methane powered concept tractor has the added benefit of quiet operation, with engine noise level reduced by up to 3 dBA. This translates to around 50% reduction in drive-by-noise, which makes it ideal for municipality, yard and transport operations.

In real field conditions, the methane powered concept tractor produces at least 10% lower CO2 emissions and reduces overall emissions by 80% compared to a standard diesel tractor. Its environmental performance further improves when fuelled by biomethane produced from crop residues and waste from farm-grown energy crops, which results in virtually zero CO2 emissions.

The methane powered concept tractor, forms a vital link in the virtuous cycle that delivers CO2 neutral production, where the Energy Independent Farm™ produces the energy it needs to power its operations, heat farm buildings, and run its equipment. Biomethane as a sustainable fuel is particularly well suited to farms, as they have the raw materials and the space to house a biodigester to produce the gas. The biodigester is fed with specifically grown energy crops, animal waste, food waste or crop residues. It can use waste collected from food factories, supermarkets and restaurants in addition to the materials gathered at the farm. The biogas produced in the biodigester is transferred to a refining station where it is transformed into fuel-grade methane to power the farm's vehicles and machinery. The methane can also be used to fuel a generator to produce electricity that can be used on the farm with any extra fed into the electricity grid to power local communities. The by-products of bio digestion can be used as natural fertilisers on the farm's fields.

The New Holland methane powered concept tractor closes the virtuous cycle of the Energy Independent Farm™. It combines visionary design concepts with advanced technologies, extended connectivity and reliable powertrain technology that are already available, fuelling innovation to offer a glimpse into a sustainable future of efficient and productive farming.

New Holland continued to explore alternative fuels that would deliver reduced emissions and lower running costs. In 2012, it created its first propane fuelled tractor prototype and is now developing the T6 Propane Power tractor in partnership with the Propane Education & Research Council (PERC).

In 2013, New Holland presented its first T6 Methane Power tractor prototype, which it has been developed further and tested with customers.

The new methane powered concept tractor builds on the foundations of the previous T6 Methane Power prototypes to achieve a significant technological advance. It features a powertrain that uses a ground-breaking efficient combustion technology specifically developed for agriculture applications by FPT Industrial, a brand of CNH Industrial that has pioneered natural gas traction for more than 20 years. The 6-cylinder NEF methane engine delivers 180 hp and 740 Nm: the same power and torque as its standard diesel equivalent. It has the same durability and service intervals, and generates up to 30% running cost savings. The innovative tank design, using a composite layered tubular structure, enables a full day's autonomy in line with an equivalent diesel model.

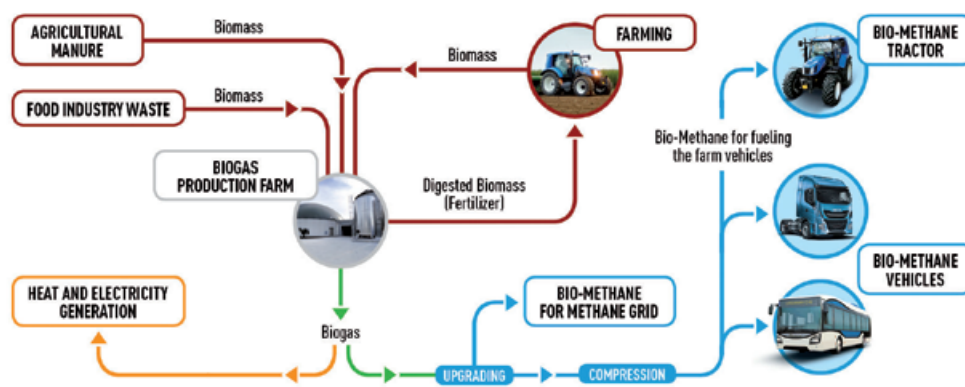
## Harvest Excellence application to optimise combine efficiency, another smart innovation by New Holland

New Holland Agriculture has developed a new application for mobile devices to maximise the efficiency and performance of its combine harvesters. The Harvest Excellence app helps operators optimise the settings of their combine harvester taking into account their soil and crop conditions, as well as providing issue resolution support when needed. It is currently being rolled out as a pilot in France, Germany, the United Kingdom and North America, and will be gradually extended to other markets.

The Harvest Excellence app automatically selects the language based on that of the user's device or, if it is not available, defaults to English. The user-friendly interface then guides the operator through the various steps to collect all the information it needs on their machine and the conditions in their field: combine model, soil, crop, yields, moisture, straw length, slope, presence of stones, wheeled or tracked machine. Once the user has entered all the details, the application works out the recommended settings based on the machine's configuration and the soil and crop conditions. The operator is then able to tweak the settings based on his experience of the field and local conditions, and save the configuration for future use. The app can store multiple configurations for different machines and crop conditions.

The Harvest Excellence app also offers an issue resolution service to further optimise the settings of the combine. It will guide the operator through a series of steps, and at each one the operator indicates whether the suggested action has resolved the issue. If it hasn't, the app guides them to a further step. Should the optimisation strand not reach a resolution, the app will recommend contacting the dealer, who can be called directly from the app or found through the Dealer Locator feature.

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### FINISH

#### STANDARD SIZES

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- 2440 x 1500mm ID
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### EXTRAS

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- Stock crates
- Jockey wheel
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## TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



### STANDARD FEATURES

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### EXTRAS

- Hydraulic over-ride disc brakes
- Stock crates
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**Most hinds will be set stocked for fawning and on many farms velveting will be swinging into gear.**

WORDS & IMAGES SUPPLIED BY LORNA HUMM DINZ DEER HEALTH PROJECT MANAGER

Summer is a great time to take a look at your farm's animal health plan prior to starting health management of the next crop of fawns in the new year. A common question is "what should I be doing in terms of drenching my fawns?". There is no 'one size fits all' answer to this, and the need for drenching will vary between farms. Having fawns grow to their potential is a balance of smart proactive health management, minimising stress, and providing high quality and quantity feed. One of the best ways to assess how your young deer are performing is by weighing and

monitoring growth rates. A 'sample weigh' of a mob might be practical, but you can't beat whole mob growth rates to tell you how well you are managing their health.

Proactive animal health is not about throwing more health treatments at animals. Targeting your animal health spend to be most profitable involves ensuring treatments are warranted. This is particularly so with trace elements. Often, deer are given supplements without a clear baseline of copper levels in the herd. In the event that copper levels are

adequate, at best, this extra supplementation is a waste of money, at worst, excess copper can be harmful and sometimes deadly.

DINZ Deer Health Project Manager Lorna Humm has produced a Deer Health Review Workbook which farmers can use, along with their vets, to create a risk assessed personalised health review with action plans. It can be used in an electronic form, which can be downloaded from [www.deernz.org/annual-health-review](http://www.deernz.org/annual-health-review). Or a hard copy can be ordered by emailing Lorna at [lorna.humm@deernz.org](mailto:lorna.humm@deernz.org).

Farmers who have worked through a Deer Health Review have seen the value in going through the three step approach of

1. Preparation and Performance Review;
2. Risk Assessment and Disease Management Review;
3. Action: Plan, Do, Review.

Lindsay Paton of Orari Gorge Station commented "Although we have been proactive in the past, we now have a document that we can sit down, look at and follow through. We've got things coming out of this that will help our reproduction, our weaner growth, the whole system going forward... just the whole thought process of deer. We've got things written in this plan that we will change from today onwards—you like to have healthy happy animals, but you like to make a profit at the end of the day, that's what we are here for".

Veterinarians are also seeing benefits coming from doing these reviews with clients. It is allowing them to have a deeper understanding of what drives each farm, their targets, and current performance. That helps farmers and vets arrow down on which health issues may be limiting performance. It is more of a collaborative effort, working alongside each other toward a common goal, and more of a discussion rather than a monologue. Once a full review has been done, farmers are encouraged to use the action sheet to tick off actions, which can then be used for the basis of a review annually.

"Production and profitability gains are achievable through what can often be small

tweaks to health programmes," Lorna says.



LEFT: Lorna Humm, DINZ Deer Health Project Manager

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## Compliance Partners would like to welcome Lisa Norrie to the team as Rural H&S Advisor.

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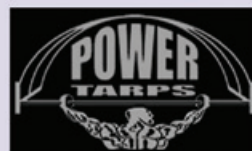
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# Making five-star choices

Dairy farmers have long understood and appreciated the power of the Breeding Worth (BW) index when it comes to selecting the best sires and culling the poorest performing herd members. WORDS SUPPLIED BY DAIRYNZ

Another index as useful as the BW has been evolving. Its purpose is to help farmers choose the best-performing grasses for their dairying region. The Forage Value Index (FVI), developed by DairyNZ with New Zealand Plant Breeders Research Association (NZPBRA), provides a 'star' rating for each cultivar, with five stars being the premier cultivar and one star the poorest.

The FVI provides farmers with an indication of the likely annual benefits of selecting a

ryegrass cultivar based on its performance value, weighted by appropriate economic values for each trait included in the FVI.

If all farmers moved from using a three-star perennial ryegrass cultivar to using a four or five-star perennial ryegrass cultivar, it would contribute an estimated \$160 million/year extra to the dairy industry through improvements in farm profitability.

Plant breeders have made progress towards improved seasonality of perennial ryegrass

production. Historic rates of gain since 1990 have contributed about \$30-\$40/ha in farm profitability compounded each year. Researchers continue to build on this work and new information is constantly being fed into the Forage Value Index (FVI).

The main source of data for the FVI for ryegrass cultivars are from over 70 trials conducted throughout New Zealand, led by the NZPBRA. Research continues to feed into the FVI to ensure the information is



relevant and tested—beyond smaller scale plot trials.

Performance values are based on how well a cultivar performs in a trait, relative to older 'genetic base' cultivars such as Nui perennial ryegrass. Economic values are the change in farm operating profit in dollars/hectare/year for a unit change in the trait.

### New traits coming

DairyNZ FVI manager Cameron Ludemann says while dry matter production of the cultivars is the core means of assessment at present, seasonal metabolisable energy (ME) concentration trait star ratings will be included in the FVI Lists as 'additional information', without the data being included in the FVI calculation.

"Including the ME star ratings as additional information will get farmers to think about

selecting cultivars based on seasonal energy yield rather than seasonal dry matter yield alone. However, we will hold off using the ME data in the actual FVI calculation until we've captured more ME data from the North Island," says Cameron.

### A tool for all farmers

The interface between farmers and the FVI is DairyNZ's online Cultivar Selector Tool, which provides a simple five-step process to choose the right cultivar. Farmers can tailor their cultivar selection based on their region, forage type, endophyte need, tetraploid versus diploid, and seed heading date.

The Cultivar Selector Tool then gives you a customised list containing Forage Value Index (FVI) star ratings. The FVI star ratings are currently based on independently calculated Economic Values and Performance Values for seasonal dry matter production in winter, early

spring, late spring, summer and autumn. Earlier this year DairyNZ also added metabolisable energy concentration information to the lists for perennial ryegrasses.

Access the Cultivar Selector Tool at [dairynz.co.nz/fvi](http://dairynz.co.nz/fvi). You can click the region, forage type, endophytes, ploidy, and heading dates relevant to your situation.

### Farmer awareness growing

Waikato sharemilker John Assen was an early adopter of the FVI, and says time has proven it's helped him make the right choices.

"It is my first port of call for identifying strong performers for our region, with a suitable endophyte. We have quite a high stocking rate and prefer the diploids, and the FVI has proven to be accurate in helping with the choices we have made."

John has found Trojan perennial ryegrass performs well and he's also planted One50 AR37 perennial ryegrass because he prefers to spread the risk around.

"Both cultivars were ranked near the top, and both have performed well over time."

He's found the FVI to be "farmer friendly" and is looking forward to seeing persistence incorporated into the index.

Further south, Nelson's Michael Shearer was also a keen early adopter of the FVI. Having a passion for pasture and data, it was a perfect match.

"It held the same appeal to me as the BW, possibly even more so."

He says the FVI has always helped narrow down his pasture options in an unbiased way, and he appreciates having a few choices presented to him through the Cultivar Selector Tool.

Like John, he's looking forward to ME and persistence being included in the index figures.

"That should be a good level of information to satisfy the needs of most farmers looking for the best cultivar."

### Where does the data come from?

FVI data comes from the National Forage Variety Trials, which regularly evaluate the dry matter production of cultivars being assessed. With 25 years' history, these long-running trials are administered by the NZ Plant Breeding and Research Association (NZPBRA) in partnership with DairyNZ.

NZPBRA general manager Thomas Chin says the trials also go a long way to ease any farmer concerns about the independence of FVI data.

"While seed companies have their cultivars in the trials, they run them in conjunction with independent trial operators. The system has independent analysts and biometricians, sometimes including DairyNZ. The trials are at times run in commercial farm environments and, when they are not, they are simulated to match farm rotations and environments."

Annual updates of the trial results ensure ever-increasing accuracy of the FVI data on existing cultivars, and new ones are added every year.

# Irrigation Control Systems



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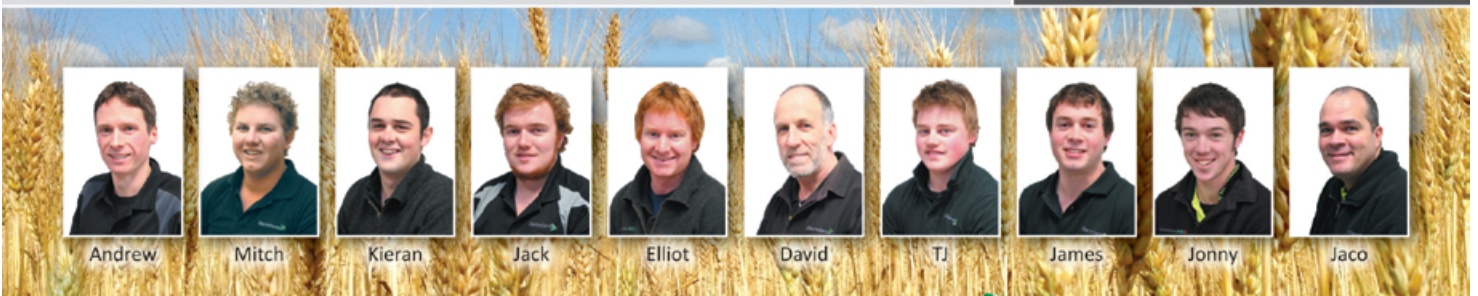
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Effective and efficient farm safety greatly assists the smooth running of your farming operation and requires regular review. Take some of the guesswork out of the process and ensure you are fully compliant by taking part in one of Ruralco's popular farm safety workshops.

Now is a good time to book in for one of the Ashburton workshops set to take place on 24 October and 21 November. Inquiries for Timaru sessions are also welcome. It costs \$550 (GST exclusive) and places are strictly limited.

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

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## Upcoming events

**14 October**

**Ellesmere A&P Show**

Keep an eye out for great fuel deals in this area.

**23 October**

**Labour Day**

Ruralco Farm Supplies stores will be closed from Saturday 21 October–Monday 23 October. If cardholders have any emergency requirements the duty manager can be reached on 03 307 5100 or 027 487 6865.

**27–28 October**

**Ashburton A&P Show**

Please join us at the Ruralco marquee for lunch. Don't forget your Ruralco Card as you'll need it for admittance.

**4 November**

**Homegrown Garden Tour**

[www.facebook.co.nz/thehomegrowngardentour](http://www.facebook.co.nz/thehomegrowngardentour) for more information.

**7 November**

**ATS Annual General Meeting**

7pm, Hotel Ashburton

**17 November**

**Canterbury Anniversary (Show Weekend)**

Ruralco Farm Supplies stores will be closed Friday 17 to Sunday 19 November. If you have any emergency requirements, the duty manager can be reached on 03 307 5100 or 027 487 6865.

**25 November**

**Courtenay A&P Show in Kirwee**

Keep an eye out for great fuel deals in this area.

**25 November**

**Southern Canterbury A&P Show in Waimate**

Keep an eye out for great fuel deals in this area.

**26 November**

**Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge**

Entries are now open, check out [www.longbeachcoastalchallenge.com](http://www.longbeachcoastalchallenge.com) for more.

**7 December**

**Ruralco Christmas Event in Ashburton**

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## Selling grain?

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