

RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

SPRING 2020



Biofeed a
long-time
family affair

Covid fails to stymie
farm environment
awards' success

Instore Days exceeds
expectations despite
Covid-19 limitations

Ruralco
represented
at AgFest



From the Group CEO

Welcome to the Spring edition of Real Farmer where we bring you the fascinating story behind a familiar and highly regarded gardening product—Biofeed organic compost tea.

The Crowe family of Southland founded Biofeed almost by accident, and are now celebrating their 27th year in business. Greg Crowe shares his farming story and how he and his late wife, Noni, came to establish such a reputable brand, renowned for boosting plant growth and health.

Also in its 27th year is the Ballance Farm Environment Awards and Ruralco is proud to have become a strategic partner with the award organisers, the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust which recognises the innovators of farm sustainability from a social, economic and environmental perspective.

Despite Covid-19 disrupting the usual award ceremonies, this year's awards have still managed to uncover some superb examples of humble farmers and growers who have been quietly investing in good land management practices. Part of Ruralco's commitment to our shareholders is to share best practice across all aspects of farming. Anything we as a co-operative can do to showcase the excellent work being done by farmers and growers throughout New Zealand, to our fellow kiwis, is worth pursuing.

Covid-19 also impacted on how we delivered our annual Instore Days this year. Despite having to act quickly to adapt to changing circumstances, this year's event was a huge success for Ruralco and our farming partners. We take a look at the event, and hear from participants and their take on the revised format. We also talk to the winners of this year's major Instore Days prize, a Ford Mustang.

As we go to print, we are reminded Covid-19 and its impact is likely to be with us for some time yet. We thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we work to Government guidelines to keep you safe while continuing to support your farming operation by way of farm supplies, advice and technical know-how.

We will continue to keep you informed of any developments, and if you have any questions please give us a call on 0800 787 256 or visit our website www.ruralco.co.nz

Please let's all remember to be patient, kind and respect each other in this ever-changing environment.

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RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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Southland family, Greg Crowe, daughter Deborah and grandchildren share the Biofeed success



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Biofeed a long-time family affair



Greg Crowe and daughter Deborah

Establishing a reputable brand in New Zealand's competitive gardening sector is no easy task, but a Southland family are celebrating their 27th year in business with Biofeed, a product highly regarded by keen gardeners throughout the country. But behind that brand is also a family with their roots strongly bound in the land, a history of looking after it, and a future firmly set on helping the next generation know where their food is coming from.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

Biofeed organic compost tea has built a long-standing reputation among its regular users over that time for its ability to boost vegetable growth, pick plants up after a slow patch, and ensure continuous, robust health.

Greg Crowe founded Biofeed with his late wife Noni on their family's farm at Otapiri in Southland. It came about almost by accident, and thanks largely to a keen organic neighbour they had at the time.

Greg, Noni and their family had a large wintering shed on the property that held a variety of animals over the course of the season, including deer, sheep and cattle.

"Our neighbour had been growing organic peony flowers. She noticed all the manure we had pulled out and piled up outside the wintering shed. Being organic she needed to have a BioGro certified supply, and she suggested we seek BioGro certification on it."

Little did they realise the chance discussion over the fence would be the foundation for a business that has included two generations of family members today.

Greg says Biofeed was a hobby that ultimately came to be a business, but prior to this he and his late wife Noni had farmed on the family farm in Southland alongside Greg's two brothers. As well as farming, he had also pursued an interest in horses, not a pursuit his family were always convinced would bring much in the way of financial reward.

"I remember telling my grandmother I was going to buy a racehorse one day, and she told me that was not the 'way we make our money'!"

He did eventually buy a racehorse, "Belcarra" that went on to have eight wins, proving his grandmother wrong and helping fund the family's new property at Otapiri.

"We started breeding quite a few horses when we were there and at one stage had four stallions standing, with 120 mares on the place and 60 foals."

Greg admits that like most things with horses there was some luck involved.



"I bought a mare in the pub one day for 30 quid and the first foal out of her topped the South Island thoroughbred sales, by a stallion called Kurdistan."

Kurdistan was the sire of the 1970 Melbourne Cup winner Baghdad Note.

"Kurdistan was a terrific stallion and he used to be owned by Bill Hazlett."

But as the Biofeed business grew it meant time for horses was less, while the distance to the North Island thoroughbred industry was also an issue, so over time the numbers diminished.

The horses and Biofeed business were also fitted around a busy family life. Noni and Greg had four children who have all today enjoyed their own successes—Deborah is an entrepreneur living in the Bay of Plenty, son Barry continues farming, painting and paper hanging in Southland, Gillian, previously a forensic scientist now coordinates programmes at the Science Museum in London, and Vanessa works in an environmental position in Wellington.

The Biofeed business started back in 1994 and ever since then they have managed to retain

ABOVE: The Biofeed composting process produces a "compost tea" made from the hot composting process of the animal manures and hay balage
TOP: Behind the brand is also a family with their roots strongly bound in the land, a history of looking after it, and a future firmly set on helping the next generation know where their food is coming from

their BioGro organic status, no easy task given the robust audits that come with the ticket.

Despite not being an organic farm, they were able to ensure that the BioGro organic standard could be met by ensuring the animals they kept in it were quarantined from conventional treatments, drenches and drugs. "Being a BioGro certified input means organic farmers can use it as a fertiliser and still comply." The largest market for Biofeed is through the home gardening channels for vegetable and flower use.

The Biofeed composting process produces a "compost tea" made from the hot composting process of the animal manures and hay balage. "Hot composting" is the process of bringing together a variety of organic materials, mixing



ABOVE: Deborah brings not only her commitment to her Dad and his efforts, but also a deep level of business experience, a love for the outdoors and farming, and respect for the environment

BELOW: Greg and his family had a large wintering shed on the property that held a variety of animals over the course of the season, including deer, sheep and cattle

phosphorous or potash, Biofeed acts as a natural soil conditioner delivering enzymes, micro-organisms and trace elements that assist in releasing essential nutrients and organisms from the soil.

Greg admits it was a step-change as a farmer to move into becoming a salesman-marketer, dealing with distribution, production, promotion and pricing, with all the usual challenges and slips along the way.

In 2008 at the height of the dairy boom, Greg

finally relented to the market and sold the farm for a dairy conversion, moving to a smaller property at Lady Barkly, north of Winton.

"We ended up bringing Biofeed with us, building a big shed and putting in the big tanks we use for holding the liquid."

Thanks to the input and support from his family, Greg has been able to continue the business well after many would have opted out for retirement.

Now well into his 70s, Greg acknowledges the challenges that go with keeping in touch with a range of retail outlets, and much of his focus has been in the lower South Island most recently. However slow, steady work in past years saw uptake from some big outlets, most notably The Warehouse which provided an invaluable sales boost in the earlier stages of retailing.

With some sales and business input from Deborah, he is keen to see Biofeed continue.

The family are open to opportunities and discussions with interested parties who may share their organic vision, and see the opportunities opening up as people become more tuned in to gentler, alternative soil treatments.

Greg has collected dozens of testimonials from happy customers over the years, many accomplished gardeners who would not be without their regular Biofeed regime in their plants' lives.

"I had one customer, a local who took me to his garden shed and showed me all the other liquid fertilisers he had used over the years, and he said he had dropped them all.

"Another customer said he would regularly spray his vegetables with a Biofeed treatment every night religiously and it delivers every time."

This follows Greg's main advice to buyers of Biofeed, to use "a little often" to get the full replenishing benefits of the tonic.

Meantime the opportunity for Ruralco Cardholders to access Biofeed orders opens the door to an even wider range of customers, with the certainty strong supplier relations the rural co-operative brings with it.

them into a large pile in one process with some water added to initiate the breakdown process.

The process aims to optimise the microbial activity within the pile and requires getting the right amount of microbial activity going with about 25 parts of carbon to one part of nitrogen, with the hay providing the carbon element and the manure the nitrogen component.

The recommendation of Biofeed's effectiveness was soon passed on to other growers, farmers and neighbours but it was the experience Noni's brother had with it that reinforced its plant health value.

"He had bought some plants for his wife and stopped at the pub on the way home, and the plants wilted badly in the heat. Knowing he'd be in trouble, he put some Biofeed over them, next morning they were looking very healthy. He encouraged me to start looking at putting it on the market after that."

While not a fertiliser in the conventional sense of containing high levels of nitrogen,





"We see Ruralco picking this up as a great opportunity—we know there is a strong interest in gardening among many farmers and having Biofeed available with their Ruralco Card is ideal," says Deborah.

Deborah brings not only her commitment to her Dad and his efforts, but also a deep level of business experience, a love for the outdoors and farming, and respect for the environment.

Her talents and interests have meant she not only completed a Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at Canterbury in 1990, but also earned a graduate diploma in design and fashion from Massey University 13 years later.

Deborah's time spent during her OE in the wilderness of Colorado and a meeting with Paul Hawken, the author of the *Ecology of Commerce* helped her realise the value business can play in being a means of positive change for the environment, and it became something of a guiding light for her career pathway.

After spending seven years as an engineer at Telecom, her extensive resume includes time spent founding IT start-up companies both here and in Los Angeles, all with a strong links to IT, learning and the environment.

Most recently Deborah has been working with The Formary as a strategic advisor. The Formary sustainability consultancy is helping organisations around the world create "closed loop" solutions and more sustainable pathways to business success.

This includes Usedfully—Textile Re-use Programme launched in 2018 by Minister for Conservation Eugenie Sage.

It aims to significantly reduce the environmental impacts of the textile and clothing industry by designing and implementing a circular system to capture much greater value from textile resources, diverting them from landfill. It is a public-private sector collaboration transitioning the

industry to a low carbon future.

Deborah's links to the land have also stayed strong and since moving to Bay of Plenty she is closely involved with a local social enterprise project "Teacher in the Paddock."

Based on farmland on the edge of Tauranga the farm acts as a learning centre to connect children to the land and where their food comes from.

Teacher in the Paddock offers after school programmes, holiday activities and school learning projects for kids across all ages.

In 2014 her son Mani went as part of a primary school visit and had enjoyed the time there so much that she offered to pay Kevin Powell the founder for letting him continue to come.

"In my mind it was the same as paying for swimming lessons—here the lessons were lifelong and just as valuable, and cheaper than owning a farm!" From this the after-school programme was born.

Looking back over her varied, interesting professional career and at life growing up in Southland, Deb says she owes a lot to her father's "have a go", entrepreneurial spirit to giving her the courage to try new things.

"Dad pretty much tried everything except dairying when he was farming, racehorses, grain growing, sheep, cattle, even ostriches for a brief time, and I totally owe the things I have tried to his approach."

Biofeed has been another part of that full, active life for Greg who also lists country music among his many other interests.

Humble as ever, Greg downplays his country music associations as simply "a bit of a hobby."

But a quick trawl through YouTube finds him singing much of his music, something he still gets out and about to do through Southland at assorted country music socials.

His retinue of songs are expansive, each one a homage to the many important things in his life, including "She's my Woman" about his

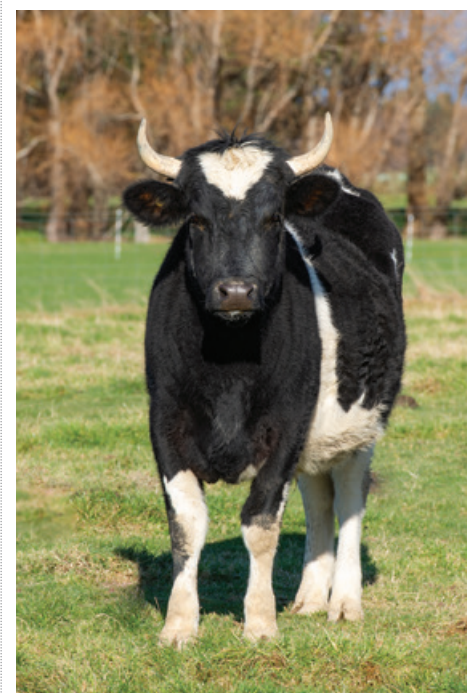
ABOVE: Greg admits it was a step-change as a farmer to move into becoming a salesman-marketer, dealing with distribution, production, promotion and pricing
 ABOVE LEFT: Humble as ever, Greg downplays his country music associations as simply "a bit of a hobby."

BELOW: Greg has tried everything from racehorses, grain and growing and sheep to cattle and even ostriches for a brief time

late wife Noni, Jacob, his first grand-child and "Bervan", a race horse few will remember but to its owners was everything. There is even one titled "Go Organic", written for an annual BioGro NZ conference.

"Dad comes from a time when farming as it used to be was varied and entrepreneurial, and Biofeed really has been an extension of that," says Deborah.

Ruralco Cardholders can purchase Biofeed product by using their Ruralco Card online at www.biofeed.co.nz



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If you need help with the answers grab the farmer brochure at one of the Ruralco stores or go to www.cydectin.co.nz

ACROSS

- 4** Cydectin Pour-On keeps working against *Ostertagia* for ____ days. (2 words)
- 7** NZ trials demonstrated an increase in ____ (2 words) in treated cows.
- 10** Which parasite does Cydectin Pour-On have 42 days persistent activity against?
- 11** No worries if a shower of rain as Cydectin Pour-On is ____.
- 14** What is the best active for treating *Cooperia* in calves?
- 15** In which country is Cydectin Pour-On manufactured? (2 words)
- 16** Does Cydectin Pour-On treat both biting and sucking lice?
- 17** How many mLs are required to treat a 500kg cow?

DOWN

- 1** What calculator will you find at www.cydectin.co.nz (3 words)
- 2** How many days withholding period for Cydectin Plus Fluke for meat? (2 words)
- 3** What is the Cydectin Pour-On withholding period for meat, milk and bobby calves?
- 5** What is New Zealand's number one selling Pour-On called?
- 6** Cydectin is convenient for milking cows or about to calve dairy cows as it has nil ____.
- 8** Is the most important parasite affecting cattle.
- 9** Which beetles are safe when using Cydectin Pour-On?
- 12** Improved milk production and also increases ____.
- 13** What company produces the range of Cydectin Products.



Pork import data highlights New Zealand pork sector's high health status

New Zealand's commercial pig herd has high health status and is free of the diseases that are proving very damaging to pork industries in many other countries. However, in the six months to April 2020, over 22 million kilos of pork was imported into New Zealand from countries impacted by pig diseases.

WORDS & IMAGE SUPPLIED BY NZ PORK

NZ Pork Chief Executive David Baines says that while biosecurity services take the safety of our pork sector very seriously and New Zealand does not import live pigs, imports from affected countries still pose a risk.

Disease-causing viruses can be spread via infected meat, so anyone keeping pigs, even just one or two, needs to be aware of the legal requirements around feeding scraps. "These disease-causing viruses can come into New Zealand on imported pig meat," says Mr Baines. "It is illegal to feed any pigs waste food containing meat products or

food that has come into contact with meat unless it has been heated to 100 degrees Celsius for one hour."

Twelve per cent of the total 22.5 million kg of imported pork came from countries with known or suspected cases of African Swine Fever (ASF) and 78 per cent from countries with known or suspected cases of Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS). ASF has already resulted in the death of at least a quarter of the world's domestic pigs, including around 220 million in China. PRRS is considered the most economically damaging disease to affect USA pig production in the last 50 years.

"These diseases are not harmful to humans," says Mr Baines. "But if infected pork or scraps that have come into contact with infected pork are not heat-treated in the required way, then there is a risk diseases, particularly ASF, could spread to the national pig herd."

Other pig diseases affecting or potentially affecting countries importing pork to New Zealand, include Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD), Aujeszky's Disease (ADV) and Classical Swine Fever (CSF).

A total of 41,742kg of pig meat was also imported from China, which is actively affected by all these diseases. Of the 21

countries that imported pork products into New Zealand, only Australia, which exported just over 1,350,000 kg to New Zealand, was, like New Zealand, free of all of these pig diseases.

New Zealand's pork sector is worth about \$700 million a year to the economy. Pork consumption is growing rapidly here. On average, Kiwis eat 23.46kg of pork per capita each year—8.81kg of NZ-produced pork and 14.65kg of imported meat.

"Over 95% of commercial pig farms in New Zealand are certified under the PigCare™ programme," says Mr Baines. "PigCare™ is an annual on-farm animal welfare-based audit that ensures farms meet the requirements of the Code of Welfare and animal welfare regulations. New Zealand pig farming is governed by much higher welfare standards than most of the countries exporting pork products to New Zealand. "By looking out for the PigCare™ labelling, shoppers can identify pork products that come from pigs born and reared in New Zealand to these exacting health and welfare standards."

For further information on treating waste food prior to feeding it to pigs, see www.mpi.govt.nz



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Kris Bailey & Emma Murray from Ruralco showing off the winter clothing range

Instore Days exceeds expectations despite Covid-19 limitations

Great deals and great service have always been the underlying principles of Instore Days, and this has proved to be a successful formula again this year despite a significant shift in how the event was delivered.

Covid-19 meant Ruralco had to re-think how it could continue with this long standing tradition at a time when there was much uncertainty about holding events which would see hundreds of people converge on one site.

Lockdown provided the perfect opportunity for the Ruralco team to update its online presence, with more members taking advantage of online ordering—including some who had never used the option before. “Covid presented an opportunity for us to change the whole way we delivered Instore Days and we responded in a very small amount of time,” said Ruralco Group CEO Rob Sharkie.

“Given the uncertainty around the transmission of Covid-19 we took the responsible decision to make Instore Days an online event this year. We did not think it was a good idea to have large numbers of people in close proximity as would be usual at Instore Days, so creating a variety of accessibility options over a longer period of time became our new goal.”

A rural delivery mail drop saw the Instore Days publication delivered to 30,000 farmers across the South Island, as well as to members around all of New Zealand. This saw an influx of new members keen to access the Instore Days offerings.

“Instead of two days largely based onsite in our Ashburton store, this year’s event was spread over several days and saw all offerings available online. In addition to this our card suppliers stayed within their own premises while delivering the same great deals, service and expertise, and many of our farm supplies representatives were available to meet with members at all three of our stores,” said Rob.

While there was no big marquee in the carpark, or the hot lunches members have become accustomed to, the event proved to be just as popular in its new format. “We had barbecued sausages in store and served around the same number of members over more days, as we would have in the usual two days.”



And the event also proved to be financially successful for our suppliers participating. “Last year was our best ever, but this has exceeded it,” said Rob. “We are only as good as our farmers and suppliers and we have to be circumspect. We are a part of the glue that brings us together.”

That community mindedness was evident at this year’s Instore Days, with the farming community supporting its farm supply network through Ruralco, and is very true to the cooperative’s story which acknowledges that important connection.

“We live in the rural communities we serve. We have straight up conversations with the

ABOVE: George Bedford & Jarrad Mehlhopt, Ruralco On-Farm Account Manager
ABOVE TOP: Rob Sharkie (Ruralco Group CEO), Jessie Chan (Ruralco Chair), Bang-Orn & Remco Stehouwer (Canterbury Bulbs), and Maree Smith (Ruralco Rakaia Store Manager)

farmers, contractors, service and support businesses who work together in our local communities. We listen until we understand the needs of the real people who make a living from agriculture. Then we do what we can to make life a little easier.”

Looking ahead to next year’s event, the Ruralco team recognises there is much to be learned from the changes made this year.



LEFT: Lana Owen, Raewyn Maw, Warren Ineson & Neville Bendsorp, Ruralco Inwards Goods Team busy packing orders to be delivered

One of the major benefits in previous years has been the ability for farming folk to come together, and this year the opportunity for that level of camaraderie was markedly reduced. Despite this, there were still many positives to consider looking forward. Ashburton based 100% Smith & Church has attended every Instore Days and according to Alister Lilley, this year's event was one of the best. "Customers came into our shop looking for the Instore Days offers that had been advertised."

"It was a great idea of Ruralco's and had excellent marketing. Well done for promoting and embracing a new format." He said it was win, win, win—for Ruralco, for the card suppliers and for the customers.

"What this has done has cemented the old adage of supporting the locals." Alister said the format of the event allowed for the loyal locals to keep supporting the business while also embracing new ways of doing things. Staying on-site at the 100% Smith & Church store meant the event was also cost effective for the business. Alister said they didn't have to take staff and stock to the marquee and customers were able to view their full range of products and speak with all members of their team.

Another long-term supporter of Instore Days, Placemakers in Ashburton agreed. Branch operator, Paul Robinson said it was a nice change to stay within their store this year. "We went into Instore Days hopeful the event would be as successful as in previous years and it was. Ruralco have done a good job of turning this new format into a successful event."

The business had already been busy coming out of lockdown, but people had seen the Instore Days specials and had come in or accessed online shopping for the deals. "People were also trying to win the car too," Paul said.

He said this year's Instore Days proved to be just as strong as previous years, with interest

coming from their normal Canterbury and South Canterbury customer base.

For Milligans Feeds Business Manager, Joseph Paton, Instore Days still provided an opportunity to meet with local farmers. He spent two days in the Ashburton store and saw quite a few familiar faces and also had the opportunity to work with some of the Ruralco field representatives to make contact with some key customers.

"All in all, Instore Days was pretty successful for us. We look forward to having the opportunity to meet with our customers and the Ruralco reps and we are looking forward to catching up again next year."

"The support from Ruralco has been fantastic. Instore Days is a great opportunity for us and our customers to lock in orders and for us to plan ahead."

Instore Days is also a busy time for Skellerup, and Area Sales Manager Tony Fuller said this year was no different, despite the changed format. He was based in the Ashburton store for two days and was able to spend more time with customers, and supporting the Ruralco team to re-stock shelves. This year he was also able to showcase new products—a gusseted gumboot and a steel-toed safety gumboot.

"A lot of farmers wait for good specials at Instore Days, so there is always plenty of interest in our products." This year also

BELOW: Mariano Benedetti & Agnaldo Rios

BOTTOM LEFT: Shirley & Brian Manson

BOTTOM RIGHT: Ross Matthews & Bryce Sharkie, Ruralco On-Farm Account Manager



proved to be successful over the full five days of the event. Tony praised the online marketing of the event, and their products. "The Ruralco website has a great range of our products displayed. We know their website works well for them, both for Instore Days and outside of it."

Looking ahead Ruralco GM Marketing, Digital and Communications Izania Downie says "We have been given the opportunity to do things differently and to more fully utilise our digital capability through this year's campaign and it has proven to be successful. We will continue to develop our online offering over the coming year to bring our members more opportunities to receive value from our suppliers regardless of where they are in NZ."

RIGHT: George Walker (Ruralco Product Manager) & Tina Nichols (Shoof)



The winners of the Instore Days Ford Mustang are still coming to terms with their big win

Graeme and Tania Hollings of Winchmore, Mid Canterbury said it has all been a bit unreal, and think they'll need a few days for the win to sink in. "It's a lovely thing to win; it's the sort of thing you dream of winning. We are extremely lucky."

Ruralco members had the opportunity to go in the draw for the new Ford Mustang High Performance 2.3L Fastback during the Instore Days promotion. Every \$250 spent on their Ruralco card or account across participating suppliers from 1 June to 8 July automatically gained an entry in the draw to win the car.

The Hollings have been Ruralco Members since they started farming and support

Ruralco as much as they can. They didn't go out of their way to make extra purchases to win the car, but did take advantage of some of the specials Instore Days had to offer.

"We would like very much to thank Ruralco for this wonderful prize. It is absolutely fabulous and is quite unbelievable."

The draw attracted plenty of interest and Ruralco is very grateful to all of those who supported both the cooperative and its

suppliers over this promotion. "Without them, we couldn't put this campaign together," said Ruralco Group CEO, Rob Sharkie. "We are truly humbled with the support for this year's Instore Days and look forward to bringing you this well-known promotion for years to come."

ABOVE: Graeme and Tania Hollings with Jono Pavey (Ruralco GM Farm Supplies)

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SF1505 fodder beet wins local winter feed competition

Greenlea farms was awarded the best fodder beet crop in this years' Methven A&P Show winter feed competition, and also took the crown for best overall crop.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY SEEDFORCE

George Lilley operates a 200ha arable unit in Mid-Canterbury and also fattens trading stock from February through to May. He grazes fodder beet with both sheep and cattle over the autumn period to give his grass paddocks a period of recovery, as well as giving the rape and oat crops a chance to grow out.

“We’re feeding a balanced diet of 50:50 beet and kale to reduce the need to supplement and make the transitioning process easier.”

“We’re feeding a balanced diet of 50:50 beet and kale to reduce the need to supplement and make the transitioning process easier. Of course, the cattle always gravitate toward the beet first. This strategy also enables us to lengthen our crop rotation as we flip the position of each species. Currently we operate on an 8-year farm rotation.”

Compared to any other typical feed source, fodder beet’s, high feed quality, utilisation

and flexibility are hard to ignore. And if done correctly, this can be achieved with very low cost per kgDM. George says “Growing 6ha of beet at 20t/ha is roughly equivalent to 25ha of oats. Plus, with beet being a winter safe option the high yields provide me with the flexibility of buying the lambs I want rather than when the crop dictates. This year I went to Temuka and bought the cheapest lambs possible.”

For George, SF1505 was the fodder beet variety of choice, selected for its feeding system versatility, impressive yield ability and its high proportion of good quality green leaf. When selecting a beet variety for your specific operation, it is important to consider the end use of the crop. Getting this right will ensure that the genetic advantages of the chosen cultivar are fully exploited, and that the chosen variety is a good fit for the stock class.

The winning crop was planted following ryegrass, on 14 October 2019 at 95,000 seeds/ha into a fine, firm and moist seedbed, which is optimal for seedling emergence. “Despite a challenging year for weed and disease control, SF1505’s green leaf retention has been really strong which I think is another contributing factor towards the high yields grown.” The leaf contains a high proportion of the plant’s protein, therefore healthy green leaves play a key role in providing a balanced diet. When combined with the high energy in the bulb, this makes SF1505 a great fodder beet choice for New Zealand growers.

A catch crop of milling wheat will follow the beet crop to reduce the risk of N leaching and capitalise on the nutrients left over.

For more information on SF1505 fodder beet contact your local Ruralco Representative.

IMAGE: Greenlea Farms' George Lilley



Spring Style

ON TREND CANE AND RATTAN

With a retro feel, the cane and rattan trend can add a textural style to your home decor. This natural look can be paired with many different colours, bold prints and patterns and works well when mixed with both modern and antique pieces. Not only are rattan, cane, and bamboo lightweight and versatile furniture options, they are also made with environmentally friendly resources.



This occasional chair combines a raw cane style with a cushion for a cosy look.

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ALSO AVAILABLE:
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Now more than ever, buying New Zealand made products is becoming more important to Kiwi's and our local businesses. Our range of Mount Somers Station blankets are made from high quality, 100% lambs' wool which is grown, spun, and woven entirely in New Zealand. With many uses, these blankets can add luxury to any living space or can be kept in the car as a travel rug, making it the perfect gift for a loved one or an everlasting piece in your home.

The beautifully soft and stylish Mt Somers Station blankets come in a range of colours with the option of a herringbone or basket weave.

MT SOMERS STATION LAMB'S WOOL BLANKET \$185.60



LOCALLY MADE

Local Ashburton artist Brian Shimmin creates artwork and boards from wood and resin. Brian says "As resin is a fluid, straight lines are very rarely formed, giving a very organic look to every piece. By mixing pigments, dyes, and acrylic paints, you can obtain many different looks." Check out some of Brian's boards, available in your local Ruralco Gift & Homeware store.

RESIN AND WOOD BOARD \$74.80

What's New

The new Essentials range from Ladelle boasts a contemporary, yet classic style to suit any kitchen or dining table. From serving sticks and cheese knives, to the very popular spinning and tower servers, you can mix and match tonal contrasts of white, stone and charcoal to create a unique look.

All made from porcelain and completely dishwasher safe, this range makes entertaining fuss-free.



ASSORTED TEMPA CHEESE KNIVES \$17.90



ESSENTIALS SET OF FIVE SPINNING SERVER \$97.50



ESSENTIALS SET OF FOUR CANNISTERS WITH SPOONS \$46.50



ESSENTIALS TWO-PART SERVE STICK \$19.20



ESSENTIALS SERVING TOWER (WHITE OR CHARCOAL) \$56.30

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Scented candles will help your living room smell great, so change it up with assorted fragrances. There is a scent for every occasion, and you will have fun finding the right scent for your space.



WOODWICK COASTAL SUNSET (MEDIUM) \$37.50



WOODWICK SEA SALT & COTTON (MEDIUM) \$37.50



WOODWICK WHITE WILLOW MOSS (MEDIUM) \$37.50



WORDS SUPPLIED BY VTNZ



Creating confident drivers



SHARING CAR MAINTENANCE TIPS AND TRICKS WITH YOUR TEEN MOTORIST IS A GREAT WAY OF BROADENING THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF VEHICLES AND HELPING THEM TO STAY SAFE ON NEW ZEALAND'S ROADS.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY VTNZ

For many rural households it's a welcome day when your young adult passes their 'full' test and becomes a licensed motorist. With the driving services of parents and friends no longer needed, the independence of a legally mobile teenager can be a game changer for the wider family unit. That lasts right up until they call you saying "I've got a flat tyre and don't know what to do!". Getting a driver's licence is a significant milestone in your child's life. Making sure they know some car maintenance basics will go a long way to help keep them safe on the road, ensure their vehicles stay in good working condition and provide the foundations for a competent and self-assured driver.

With us now in Spring now is the perfect time to share some self-help tips with the drivers in your household. If your Warrant of Fitness (WoF) expired during lockdown or is now due, use these as part of your pre-WoF check before you take your vehicle into VTNZ for your next inspection:

Lights

It's still dark in the morning so check all the lights on your vehicle are working as they should. That includes testing your indicators, park lights, brake lights and headlights (full and low beam).

Windscreen wipers

Wiper blades may need replacing particularly if they've had to clear a lot of rain or snow over Winter. Spray water and cleaning fluid on your windscreen and turn on your wipers. Between each sweep, check for patches or smudging on the surface. If these are appearing your wiper blades need replacing.

Seatbelts

Fully functioning seatbelts are essential for you, and your passengers, safety. To check a seatbelt is working correctly, pull it all the way out and then tug on it sharply to ensure it stops. Remember to do this on all the seatbelts in your vehicle including those that you don't use often.

Tyre tread

The weather can get wet and wild in Spring. Tyre tread is critical as it creates traction between your vehicle and the road. The minimum tread depth on a tyre is 1.5mm. Show your teen the 20c coin check for checking their tyre tread. Get them to insert a 20c coin into the tread. If they can see the whole of the number on the coin, it's time to think about a replacement tyre.

Oil

Not having enough oil can cause increased wear to your vehicle's engine or cause it to seize up. Oil levels can be checked using a dipstick. If the oil doesn't reach the indicator mark on a dipstick, you need more oil.

Car boot

Make sure your boot is empty and clear of any rubbish or clutter. The VTNZ Automotive Technician that carries out your WoF needs to be able to access the spare wheel in the boot and check that it's in good working order.

VTNZ is also committed to keeping you and your vehicles safe on your farm. In addition to 75 branches nationwide, we also have over 100 customer sites that serve the rural community carrying out vehicle safety inspections on farm vehicles and certain equipment. Give your local VTNZ a call today and check if an inspector works in your area.





ACHING JOINTS, SORE BACK, UNEASY SLEEP AND RECURRING IRRITABILITY MAY ALL SEEM UNRELATED, BUT IN FACT COULD BE LINKED TO HOW THE BODY IS BEING FUELLED AND WHAT IT IS DOING OTHER THAN BEING PUSHED DAY IN DAY OUT TO KEEP WORKING ON THE FARM.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

Mind, body & soul approach can help heal

Ashburton based health advisor and rehabilitation expert Dave Green has joined the dots for many of his clients, teaching them how to link what they put into their bodies with the energy and well-being they exude from it. That in turn has an impact upon mental wellbeing, and general sense of positivity about life, work and family.

“Working with clients I tend to take a massive overview, looking at everything they consume through a typical day, and from that you can see how it affects their body, whether it is or is not performing, and how they feel in themselves.”

His dietary advice is far from rocket science, instead reinforcing the need to reduce or eliminate the usual suspects that plague western eating patterns, particularly alcohol, sugar, salt, and most processed foods.

Dave’s experience in getting clients on a healthier track by starting with a dietary audit is that once a revamped diet is in place they experience less fatigue, less inflammation, greater clarity of thought and improved respiration. This will often come over a relatively short two-week period.

For Dave setting a better dietary foundation for his clients provides the necessary springboard into shifts in physical exercise routines.

“So often we see people focusing too soon and too much on the ‘physical’ side of their wellbeing improvement, often in big single hits of exercise that yields poorer results than they would like, for the effort they are putting in.”

Mid-life males can be particularly bad for wanting to get into shape quickly by ‘going hard’ in bursts of activity that risk injury to bodies unaccustomed to intense exercise.

“People get injured, feel demoralised and fall into a bit of a vicious cycle, getting depressed and even less motivated.”

He tends to reinforce a “less is more” approach with his clients, and often works on 40–50% less time spent on physical exercises that are more easily fitted into a busy life.

“Often you will only need half an hour, sometimes less, to achieve a

positive, healthy exercise experience.”

Many farmers will be more than familiar with the constant ache of a sore back, hip or knee joint, and taking a holistic view on what their day comprises can help design approaches to improving those problems.

“We look at what your lifestyle is, how much time you spend sitting versus moving about, along with your diet, and what foods you may be inflaming the problems with.”

Flexibility is a big issue for many older males, while posture can also be an issue for modern farmers who spend plenty of time on quad bikes and tractors.

One of Dave’s biggest successes came with a client who confessed to constant back pain for almost 40 years of his life.

“Taking unusually heavy loads at awkward angles at high velocity had really taken its toll. We managed to get rid of it over two years.”

Empathy and humility become two additional talents needed to help people step back from the painful places they often live in. Dave finds himself counselling the mind as much as the body to help clients shrug off the depression and anxiety often accompanying physical injuries.

For farmers the prospect of committing to a gym may be impractical or impossible. Often the social environment it brings can be replicated in other group fitness with similar minded individuals.

“Whatever the activity, it’s

important to make it a habit and make it ‘your’ time, ditching the cell phone and gadgets, worries about the business or family, and giving something back to yourself.”

He then points to good sleep habits and lots of hydration throughout the day to strengthen the efforts with exercise and diet.

Dave has treated a wide spectrum of athletes, musicians and corporate clients over the years, and believes there are many farmers who recognise the need to deal with their physical problems and ensuing mental stress, but are not sure where to start.

“There are plenty of simple exercises and practices you can do every day that will help reduce the fatigue and pain- and you don’t have to be limited by age, age is just a number and the body is a wonderful, complex thing capable of far more than we realise.”

To learn more contact Dave Green: www.dghealthandfitness.com





Spreading risk lower with safety focus

FARM FERTILISER SPREADERS ARE ONE OF THE MOST VALUED CONTRACTORS VISITING FARMS, THEIR SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT DELIVERING TIMELY LOADS WITH PRECISION AND PROOF OF PLACEMENT TECHNOLOGY IS HELPING FARMERS OPTIMISE THEIR FERTILISER SPEND, AND COMPLY WITH TIGHTER RULES AROUND NUTRIENT LOSSES.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

But ground spreading is also one of the riskier areas of rural contracting, and in recent years the New Zealand Groundspreading Association has pushed hard to lift the standards and expectations around training, risk assessment and attitudes in the sector.

Grant Anderson is the Otago-Southland delegate and vice president of the New Zealand Groundspread Fertilisers Association (NZGFA). He has also been health and safety officer for the past two years. With 20 years in the ground-spreading sector, he completes a busy CV as dispatch manager for HWR's Western Southland Richardson Group fertiliser division.

As the association's inaugural health and safety officer Grant has been responsible for overseeing several initiatives aimed at ensuring the association's members and staff get home safely every night.

This has included the Spotlight incident reporting app as a transparent and constructive tool for recording and learning from industry incidents.

"It means members can invite me to view their incident report, which everyone has to do anyway. Spotlight means it is possible to see all incidents, and get a sense of what if any trends are coming through. Data can be collated, and we can look at how these incidents could be avoided in the future." While only relatively new, he is encouraged by the member uptake for the app to date.

As a new generation of younger drivers come into the industry, technology is not only making their job more precise, it is also helping them be more spatially aware of the varied risks that come with every property they visit in the course of the job.

"TracMap would be accounting for about 80% of the proof of placement technology used by members now. It sends out a text to the farmer when the spreader is on the farm.

"But it also provides a means to highlight any risk areas on the farm, thanks to having the farm map loaded into it."

More recent upgrades to the technology enable spreading contractors to add in any new risks or hazards they may come across in the course of their spread on the property. "It could be that a spring or sink hole has opened up the farmer was not aware of, and it's now possible to mark that in yourself from your cab."

As an industry group there has also been more focus on ensuring the next generation of drivers are better trained. Training at Grant's business is staged over an eight week period, and this is becoming more typical for businesses keen to attract a more safety conscious generation to their ranks.

Training includes modules on risk mitigation, hazard awareness and actions in an incident. As part of the industry's Spreadmark accreditation criteria, all ground spreaders now have to undertake approved training. A NZGFA safety manual outlines approaches to risk identification and management and includes sections on fatigue, distractions and stress.

Last year was also the inaugural year for the NZGFA awards, with one of the four categories being for health and safety. Graeme Martin is also on the NZGFA council as its Waikato rep, and has a strong background in industry safety.

He worked closely with the NZ Agricultural Aviation Association in helping establish safer operating environments for aerial topdressing and implementing its "AirCare" programme. The programme helped turn around a risky flying environment and saw it receive the Richard Pearse Trophy for Innovative Excellence in 2014 from the aviation industry.

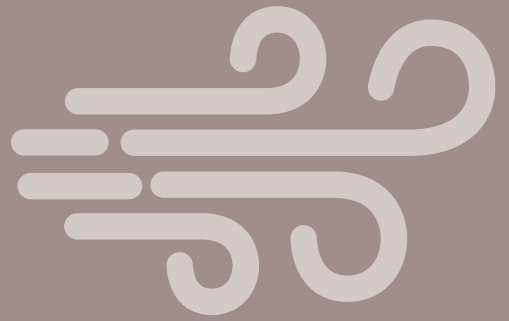
He says NZGFA is also working toward achieving similar standards on the ground today and NZGFA's Spreadmark accreditation system is modelled closely off AirCare's approach to risk management.

Before the aerial initiative kicked off farmer-topdresser relations often lacked communication about hazards and issues, and this has since improved significantly.

Similarly, farmer's communication with ground-spreaders is now more professional and risk-aware. "This is in part thanks to the changes in ownership we have seen, with more corporate style farm ownership meaning there is a need for systems to be put in place to ensure safety and accountability," he says.



One-third of all irrigator claims are wind-related



WITH THE SPRING FOEHN WINDS FAST APPROACHING, RURAL INSURER FMG IS ENCOURAGING FARMERS TO GET READY.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY FMG INSURANCE

FMG's Manager Advice Services, Stephen Cantwell says wind accounts for 34% of all irrigator damage claims, half of which occur in spring when the frequency and severity of foehn winds rise.

Through claims' insights and alongside IrrigationNZ, FMG has developed a new Irrigation Guide. The guide will help farmers and growers get ready and do what they can now to stop irrigators from blowing over when the winds rise. One key piece of advice in the guide is the importance of having a plan.

"Farmers and growers have told us that when a windstorm is on the way having a plan can really ease the pressure. Now's a great time to review or create your plan. Although it's been a few years since the Canterbury windstorms we can't get complacent as we never know when the next one will strike," says Stephen.

Another tip that the guide shares is to 'Point, Park & Anchor' your irrigator.

"We've found that pointing an irrigator either into or away from the wind (if possible) remains an effective way to reduce damage to your irrigator in high winds. IrrigationNZ and FMG have worked with farmers and found that irrigators parked in this position significantly reduce the probability of damage—reduces the surface area exposed to the wind," says Stephen.

Once it's pointing into the prevailing wind, park it there until the winds dissipate. Lastly, make sure the irrigator is anchored correctly.

Other significant contributors to claims with FMG are the irrigator hitting something (27%), something hitting the irrigator (11%) and mechanical and structural failure (8%). Advice on how to prevent these causes of damage are also included in the guide.

"We want to support farmers and growers use irrigation as part of their operation as we see irrigation as an important part of supporting the growth of strong and prosperous rural communities.

"The collaboration of farmers, growers, and other industry partners with IrrigationNZ and FMG helped identify key causes of irrigator damage, both from winds and operational accidents. In order to continue to help irrigator users throughout the country, we have developed this guide on how to mitigate irrigator risks and minimise the disruption should damage unfortunately occur," says Stephen.

The full advice guide can be found at www.fmg.co.nz/irrigator



POINTING AN IRRIGATOR

→

→ INTO

HIGH WINDS

→

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Ruralco represented at AgFest, 13 & 14 November

The postponement of this year's AgFest on the West Coast to November's Canterbury Anniversary Day is likely to provide Ruralco with greater opportunities to meet with rural farmers than ever before.

Covid-19 saw the biennial event moved from its usual autumn date to Friday 13 November and Saturday 14 November—dates which became available due to the cancellation of this year's Canterbury A & P Show. This is a one-off change for AgFest, which is looking to resume its normal March or April timeframe in 2022.

Ruralco Group CEO, Rob Sharkie, said there is an expectation more Cantabrians will attend the AgFest event due to the cancellation of Show Week, providing the Ruralco team with the opportunity to meet with a much larger array of farming folk. It is also likely to create a welcome boost to the West Coast economy through increased visitor numbers—from both AgFest attendees and exhibitors.

"We attended the 2018 AgFest and see it is as an important way to connect with our West Coast farming community and to show we are a serious option for them and their farming operations."

AgFest was started in 2012 and has grown to be a major agricultural event on the West Coast calendar, with something on offer for



everyone including new farm technology, plenty of agricultural and trade displays, the Women's Pavilion, and an Ag Chef and Creative Gumboot competitions.

All of the Ruralco business units will be represented at the event, and Rob said it is a great way to find out first-hand what Ruralco can do to best serve farmers. Among those attending AgFest, will be Ruralco Membership Services Manager, Lizzie Redfern. Coming from a farming

background, and living in the heart of Mid Canterbury, Lizzie has been with the Ruralco team for several years and can assist with any queries you might have about becoming a Ruralco member, and will make that transition as simple as possible.

Keep an eye out for some exclusive Ruralco promotions especially linked to this event, and make sure you visit Lizzie and the team at the Ruralco AgFest site to find out about all Ruralco can do for you and your farming operation.



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Covid fails to stymie farm environment awards' success.

Covid-19 may have made the usual Ballance Farm Environment Awards ceremonies impossible this year for most regions, but it certainly did not diminish the quality and commitment of this year's award entrants.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE,
IMAGES SUPPLIED BY NZFET

Now in their 27th year, the awards have come to represent a high point in the farming careers of those who have entered and been recognised for their efforts, while support for the awards has also grown from within the agribusiness sector.

This year marked the first for Ruralco stepping up as a strategic partner with the award organisers, the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust.

Two regions were fortunate enough to recognise their award nominees before Covid forced the national lockdown, with East Coast and Canterbury holding their ceremonies in the conventional way.

This year's Canterbury supreme winners also share close ties to Ruralco.

Tony Coltman, Ruralco director and his wife Dana Carver claimed Canterbury's supreme award for their outstanding efforts on their Canlac Holdings dairy operation at Dunsandel.

They also claimed the Bayleys People Award, DairyNZ Sustainability and Stewardship Award and the WaterForce Wise with Water Award.

The couple's ability to manage nitrogen in one of the country's most sensitive catchments was a key reason for their recognition, and something they continue to work on despite already making significant headway in nitrate reduction.

The regional plan required them to lower nitrate losses by 30%, and they have achieved a 48% reduction.

The East Coast supreme award went to Central Hawke's Bay beef and deer farmers Evan and Linda Potter who were recognised for their "do it once, do it right" approach to protecting their farm's environment. This has included extensive fencing, water investment and bridging on a very environmentally challenging property.



The couple have included 125ha of QEII bush covenant within their property and an extensive native replanting programme beyond that area.

After these two regions were announced, Covid-19 prevented further award evenings being held in the traditional manner.

ABOVE: Tony Coltman & Dana Carver claimed Canterbury's supreme award for their efforts on their Canlac Holdings dairy operation at Dunsandel

Farm Environment Trust general manager James Ryan said the decision to postpone the remaining events was difficult but necessary.



precision irrigation and “right pasture, right time” approach to grazing.

They had also established two new wetlands and an on-site nursery for growing native seedlings to plant out on the farm. The couple also claimed the Ballance Agri-Nutrients Soil Management Award and the WaterForce Wise with Water Award.

Southland farmers Geordie and Frances Eade claimed the region’s supreme award on their Riverton sheep and beef breeding and finishing farm.

On their Granity Downs property they have protected large areas of native vegetation and taken their efforts to the local community by demonstrating and showcasing good practices in their local catchment group.

They have also balanced this with excellent monitoring and management to achieve high yielding crops and pasture output.

Field days at the winning properties are now being planned throughout the country.

The awards would normally have a ceremony to announce the supreme national winner of the Gordon Stephenson Trophy. James Ryan says this will still go ahead but has been delayed until the new year and will include a revamped programme for the next round of awards.

“Celebrating the successes of our farmers and growers has never been more important. But we’re also looking to work with our partners more closely to ensure farmers get the feedback they need to navigate with confidence in a changing world,” says James.

Ruralco chief executive Rob Sharkie says the co-operative has been delighted to become a strategic partner with the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust for the awards, and it was a particularly timely one.

“The New Zealand Farm Environment Trust recognises the innovators of farm sustainability from a social, economic and environmental perspective,” says Rob.

“Part of our commitment to our shareholders is to share best practice across all aspects of farming. To do this effectively, we partner with the leading organisations who demonstrate the value of what they are bringing to the industry.”

Rob says Covid-19’s impact on lifting awareness about farming and its critical role in underpinning New Zealand’s economy has also made sponsorship worthwhile.

“Anything we as a co-operative can do to showcase the excellent work being done by farmers and growers throughout New Zealand, to our fellow kiwis, is worth pursuing,” he says.

A full list of winners can be found on line: www.nzfeatrust.org.nz/award-winners

But thanks to some innovative thinking award organisers ensured there was still a sense of occasion for the remaining nine regional winners.

“We decided to continue with the awards themselves by holding the remaining BFEA functions on-line through April and May, screening them live and also available through YouTube. We were determined to keep up the recognition of our other nine regional winners.

“We enjoyed good viewership and engagement through both media and YouTube for those events.”

James says despite the unexpected interruption Covid-19 bought to proceedings, this year’s awards have still managed to uncover some superb examples of humble New Zealand farmers and growers who have been quietly investing in good land management practices.

Often they have been doing so for many years before deciding to step into the relative limelight of the awards.

Ironically the Covid-19 lockdown disruption helped highlight the valuable role farmers like the BFEA winners were playing in helping New Zealand weather one of the most damaging economic storms ever experienced.

“The lockdown highlighted the critical role New Zealand farmers and growers play

not only in feeding New Zealanders, but in generating valuable export income that many countries lost over the crisis,” says James.

“For the first time in a very long time food security has become a big issue, and these awards help highlight how important our farmers and growers are and how much they care about the land they rely upon.”

“For the first time in a very long time food security has become a big issue, and these awards help highlight how important our farmers and growers are and how much they care about the land they rely upon.”

Meantime as many people engaged in sectors like hospitality and tourism find their jobs have gone, agriculture and horticulture are providing much needed opportunities across several regions for those seeking a new career or seasonal work.

In the South Island, Otago award winners were Anna and Ben Gillespie at Omakau on their beef and dairy grazing operation. They were recognised for how their work headed off potential negative environmental impacts, including buffer zones, use of

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More than just nutrients

Fertilisers differ in more than just nutrient content. WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS



Products such as the Cropzeal range, Sustain Ammo and Pasturemag range are examples of fertiliser blends.

The method used to apply the fertiliser plays a part in achieving the desired uniformity. When using a spreader, the size, shape and weight of a fertiliser granule can affect how far it is thrown. Spread testing, completed annually or biannually, can help determine optimal spread widths for different products and blends.

Making the choice

“Consider the value of the crop, application methods and what’s right for your farm when choosing between a compound and a blend,” says Aimee.

For high value seed and vegetable crops, premium compound fertiliser YaraMila Actyva S is an extremely useful starter and/or side dressing fertiliser, and is also ideal for wheat, barley, maize, and fodder beet. It can be drilled and has been spread tested up to 32 m (Ballance recommends spread testing yourself to determine optimum spread width for your conditions and spreader). Each granule contains 15 percent nitrogen, 12.5 cent potassium, 7 percent phosphorus, 3 percent sulphur, a small amount of magnesium as well as the micronutrients zinc, manganese and boron.

Cropzeal Boron Boost is an ideal compound fertiliser containing nitrogen, phosphorus and boron in every granule. Ideal as a starter fertiliser for brassicas and fodder beet, the boron in every granule increases the uniformity of boron across the paddock, decreasing the risk of brown heart rot.

Cropzeal 16N, 15P and 20N are blends and offer varying ratios of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and sulphur to meet the needs of a variety of crops, particularly cereals, brassicas and lucerne. The entire range are designed to be used as starter fertilisers. As blends, Cropzeal products are usually broadcast, but can be drilled using a cross slot drill that separates the seed and the fertiliser in the soil, or if soil moisture is sufficient.

“Quality compound fertilisers offer benefits including reduced risk of blockages, lower risk of striping, better performance when spreading to wide bout widths, as well as uniform nutrient spread. When determining if it is better to use a compound or a blend look at your crop value, spread width and its subsequent risk of striping to determine which option is best for your farm.”

For more information talk to your local Ruralco Representative.

Using fertiliser to apply a single nutrient is fairly straightforward, but what about when two (or more) nutrients are needed?

“Applying multiple nutrients can present some challenges. Choosing what type of fertiliser or blend of fertiliser to use will depend on the targeted crop or pasture, nutrient quantity as well as targeted spread width,” says Ballance Agri-Nutrients Science Extension Officer Aimee Dawson.

There are two ways nutrients can be applied as fertiliser—as a compound fertiliser or a fertiliser blend.

A compound fertiliser consists of multiple nutrients combined into individual, evenly sized granules. Each granule contains a specific ratio of nutrients, and is manufactured to be as uniform as possible in terms of shape, size and weight. This means nutrients can be applied more evenly, promoting even growth and reduced risk of striping.

Compound fertilisers can easily be spread or drilled. Products such as YaraMila compound

fertilisers Actyva S and AmidaS have smooth, hard, free-flowing granules that are not prone to chips or dust. This makes them ideal for drilling or broadcasting at wide bout widths. Other examples of compound fertilisers are di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), Cropzeal Boron Boost or sulphate of ammonia (SOA).

The alternative for applying multiple nutrients is a fertiliser blend. They can be cost-effective, but distribute nutrients less uniformly. Not all the nutrients are contained in each granule, and the particles are more varied in size, shape and weight. If blends are not physically compatible differently sized particle in blends can segregate during transport.

When spreading blends there can be a risk of striping, especially at wide bout widths, as particles are not thrown as evenly. Blends are also not usually recommended for drilling due to the risk of seed burn, especially if there is muriate of potash (MOP) in the mix.

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SovGold kale— making the switch easy

To find a successor to the hugely popular and widely regarded kale variety Sovereign is no easy task, however, SovGold kale continues to show its merits in the paddock providing an increase in both production and quality. SovGold has proven when it comes to yield, ME and utilisation against Sovereign, change is an easy decision.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY AGRICOM



In the past, dairy farmer Michael Loe had been an avid user of Sovereign kale on his 1300 cow dairy farm based near Rakaia. When it was recently released, Michael decided to adopt early and has been highly impressed with SovGold's results.

His support block carries all 1300 dairy cows along with 360 R2 heifers during the winter months. Within his cropping rotation are 30 ha of fodder beet and 22 ha of SovGold. Both crops complement each other in paddock rotations but the kale has an important role heading into late August.

SovGold is one of the latest flowering varieties on the market and will hold

through August to carry the R2 stock; during this period it will retain leaf density without compromising quality.

From an early December planting, Michael's SovGold crops yielded between 16 and 17 tonnes of dry matter per ha. It was highly palatable and had very high utilisation. "I'd had such good performance out of Sovereign in the past that I wasn't sure if a change was necessary. However, I have noticed the increase in leaf yield with SovGold and more importantly how stock fully utilise the stem," said Michael.

Lower stem quality within kale varieties has always hindered total utilisation of the

grown crop, however, SovGold produces thinner stems when sown at recommended rates and produces a high leaf to stem ratio. Throughout multiple trials, SovGold showed a 7% increase in total yield over Sovereign with the leaf yield alone showing an increase of 9%.

"I'd had such good performance out of Sovereign in the past that I wasn't sure if a change was necessary. However, I have noticed the increase in leaf yield with SovGold and more importantly how stock fully utilise the stem."

Another standout and unique characteristic of SovGold is the increase in ME in the two lower quartiles of the stem. Trial results have shown that there is an increase in ME of 1 unit in SovGold compared to Sovereign in the lower half of the stem. This along with the leaf quality creates a plant that maximises utilisation in a grazing environment.

"When shifting break fences I look behind me and the paddock is bare, there is no wastage," Michael commented, "and when I cut into a stem I notice the consistency in quality from top to bottom."

Following SovGold, Michael has been sowing Monty feed barley to carry through for whole crop cereal silage. This is a good environmental option as the crop is quick to establish with a deep root system, which acts as a tool to ensure that excess nitrogen held in the soil post-kale is utilised – reducing nitrate losses.

Michael feels that whilst Sovereign achieved high yield and quality through the years, SovGold is a step-up and agronomically shows advantages over the old.

For more information on SovGold kale or winter feed options, contact your local Ruralco Representative.

IMAGE: Ruralco On-Farm Account Manager, Jarrad Mehlhopt (left) and dairy farmer, Michael Loe

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- Reduces leeching

Biomax Nitro-gib-S is created by a New Zealand owned and operated company Pacific Ag, a specialist fertiliser company that has been operating since the mid 1980's. Pacific Ag are leaders in providing New Zealand farmers with scientifically advanced fertiliser products, which are developed by company founder and engineering chemist Jung Wen Chiang.

Biomax Nitro-gib-S has been tested and designed especially for New Zealand climates and farming practises to ensure they are easily absorbed by plants and supported superior nutrient cycling and nutrient availability in the soil.

Biomax Nitro-gib-S delivers dry matter growth rates beyond 75kg Urea and a common gibberellin products.

Our savings in application come from spraying the Nitrogen and gib on at the same time AND this leads to one superior liquid fertiliser solution for all New Zealand pasture growing requirements.



Photo: Gary Harrison and Doug Sheldon

"I have been applying all types of products over the last 12 years and have found that Nitro-gib-S is the one product I can rely on to substantially increase dry matter."

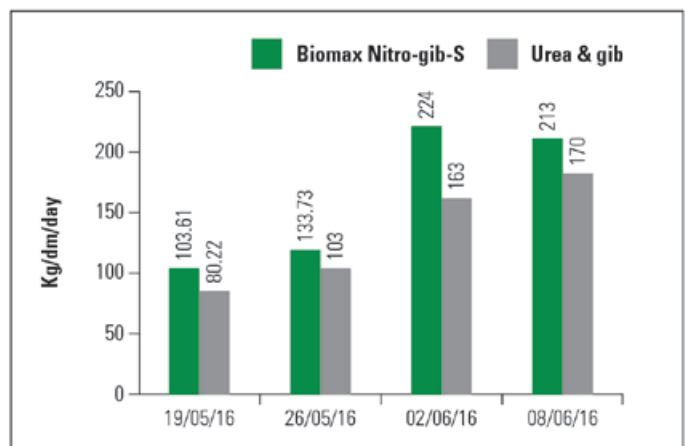
"In my own trial, I applied Nitro-gib-S to a paddock that was producing only 35kg per hectare per day, 14 days after application this was increased to 65kg per hectare per day."

Gary Harrison

Pacific Ag
as seen in the
NOVACHEM
Agricultural
Manual



Biomax Nitro-gib-S trial data



The trial above is a comparative trial between Urea (at 75kg/ha) and a common gibberellin product applied to the same area and Nitro-gib-S applied.

Fertigation Solutions and Exclusion Zones



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- Use in conjunction with fertigation and effluent application for proof of application



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Maximising stock performance with Platform perennial ryegrass*

With spring fast approaching and most winter crops finishing up, now is the time to start making decisions around pastoral renewal. If you are looking for a top performing perennial ryegrass that combines high dry matter production with exceptional quality, then look no further than Platform AR37.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY PGG WRIGHTSON SEEDS



Platform AR37 perennial ryegrass* is the newest release late heading diploid ryegrass from PGG Wrightson Seeds. Bred and developed by PGG Wrightson Seeds team of plant breeders across New Zealand, Platform has been selected for increased tiller density, finer leaves and low aftermath seed head.

This combination of traits has led to a substantial improvement in feed quality over other diploid ryegrasses.

Feed quality tests from a trial run on a Waikato dairy farm last season demonstrate the quality advantage that Platform AR37 provided over late heading diploids Governor AR37 and Trojan NEA2.

These results show Platform consistently maintained higher energy (MJME) values than the other diploid ryegrasses throughout the testing period from November to March 2020. With higher energy intake leading to increased milk

production, it is clear why farmers are asking for Platform after trying it previously.

In addition to Platform's dairy fit, its dense fine leaf type and impressive cool season growth make this perennial ryegrass a great option for progressive sheep and beef systems. Platform's feed profile shows increased late winter/early spring growth meeting the early season feed demand of most sheep and beef farms. In addition to AR37 endophyte, this spring Platform is also available with AR1 endophyte suitable for properties with lower insect pressure.

When choosing a perennial pasture mix to maximise stock performance consider pairing Platform with high performing legumes Legacy and Quartz white clover. Both Legacy and Quartz have been bred and selected within a pasture sward to provide superior production and persistence when mixed and drilled with ryegrass, tall fescue or cocksfoot.

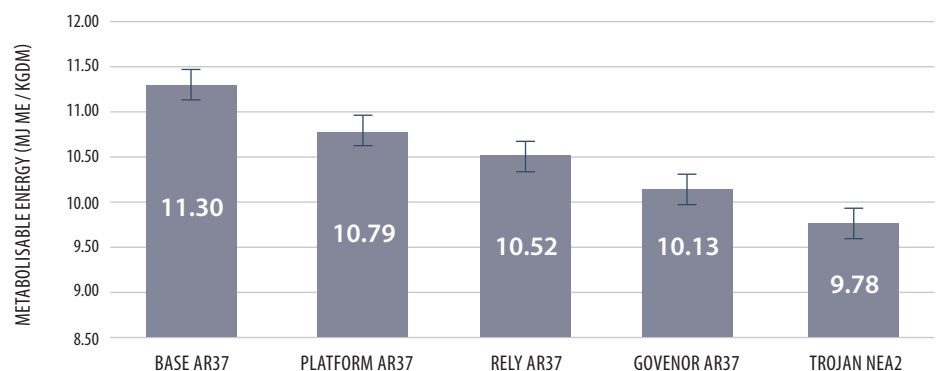
Legacy's large leaf and upright growth habit enables it to compete with ryegrass making it easy to graze by cattle. In contrast, with a medium leaf size, Quartz white clover provides broad adaptability across more challenging and varied farms including sheep and beef grazing systems. New this season to Ruralco's range of Pasture Packs is the Dip Pack containing a specialist blend of Platform perennial ryegrass, Legacy white clover and Quartz white clover.

For more information and advice on how Platform perennial ryegrass can benefit your farming system, contact your local Ruralco Representative.

**Platform has been bred, selected and successfully tested as a perennial and will function as a perennial ryegrass. Due to a small number of tip awns, Platform is certified as Lolium boucheanum*

AVERAGE METABOLISABLE ENERGY (MJ ME / KGDM) OF PERENNIAL RYEGRASS CULTIVARS

NOVEMBER 2019–MARCH 2020



Average metabolisable energy (MJME) content of perennial ryegrass cultivars measured in Waikato between November 2019 and March 2020. LSD (5%) = 0.36 MJME/kgDM. Differences between cultivars must exceed the LSD to be statistically different.

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Agricultural greenhouse gas emissions

Who needs to do what by when...(and how)? WORDS SUPPLIED BY FAR

KEY POINTS

- New Zealand has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 30% below 2005 levels by 2030 as part of the Paris Agreement.
- Methane and nitrous oxide from farms make up about half of our national greenhouse gas profile.
- Emissions are priced through the New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (NZ ETS). The ETS currently excludes agricultural emissions, which are yet to be priced.
- A programme called He Waka Eke Noa has been developed to establish a relevant New Zealand response to climate change, including agricultural greenhouse gas emissions.



The process to date

Over the last 25 years, farmers have improved their production efficiency, and gas emissions per unit of product have reduced by about 1% each year. These improvements have helped stabilise methane and nitrous oxide emissions, but stabilisation is not enough; we need to find practical and cost-effective ways of reducing these emissions.

In May 2018, New Zealand's Interim Climate Change Committee (ICCC) began work to inform policies to help reduce agricultural greenhouse gases. Not surprisingly, they found there were no easy answers, but, on balance, they concluded that the best way to motivate all farmers to reduce emissions on their farms is by pricing them. The benefits of a pricing mechanism include:

- Giving farmers autonomy to choose what actions to take on their farm
- Rewarding those farmers who take positive actions and those who go the extra mile
- Can be managed to ensure that emissions reduce in line with national targets

- Likely to result in emission-reductions at the lowest cost to the sector.

The ICCC also concluded that emissions from livestock should be priced at the farm-level, whereas emissions from nitrogen fertiliser should be priced at the fertiliser manufacturer and importer level.

These ICCC recommendations went to the government, who, in consultation with the agricultural sectors and iwi, have developed a five-year programme to make sure an emissions pricing scheme is workable and effective. The programme is called He Waka Eke Noa (our future in our hands).

He Waka Eke Noa

He Waka Eke Noa combines industry, Māori and Government resources, expertise and knowledge in a partnership to support farmers and growers to adapt to climate change and measure, manage and reduce emissions from their farm. The partnership is working together to develop a framework, by 2025, to equip farmers and growers to measure, manage and reduce on-farm

agricultural greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, to enable sustainable food and fibre production for future generations.

The aim is that by 2025 all farmers and growers are i) including climate change mitigation and adaptation in their farm business and environment plans; ii) able to calculate their net greenhouse gas emissions and iii) incentivised to take action on climate change through an appropriate pricing mechanism for emissions.

The partnership

The Partnership will provide farmers and growers with a toolkit over the next five years, including:

- guidance on how to manage and reduce on-farm agricultural emissions;
- a farm plan module for planning the steps to be taken on the farm to reduce emissions;
- a system for measuring and reporting on emissions;

- a mechanism for pricing emissions as an incentive to take action;
 - guidance on increasing long-term carbon storage (for example in trees or soil);
 - guidance on adapting to a changing climate.
- The partners are: Apiculture NZ, Beef + Lamb NZ, DairyNZ, DCANZ, Deer Industry NZ, Federation of Māori Authorities, Federated Farmers of New Zealand, Foundation for Arable Research, Horticulture NZ, Irrigation NZ, Meat Industry Association, Ministry for Primary Industries and Ministry for the Environment.

- On-farm sequestration—Sequestration is the long- term storage of carbon, for example in trees or soil. This workstream is focussed on designing a simple and cost-effective mechanism that incentivises on-farm carbon sequestration from sources that do not currently qualify under the ETS. These sources may include, but are not limited to, native vegetation, soil carbon, riparian planting, shelter belts, woodlots, orchards and vines.
- Emissions pricing—design a farm level pricing mechanism that incentivises farmers and growers to reduce emissions. This would be an alternative to the existing Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) pricing mechanism.

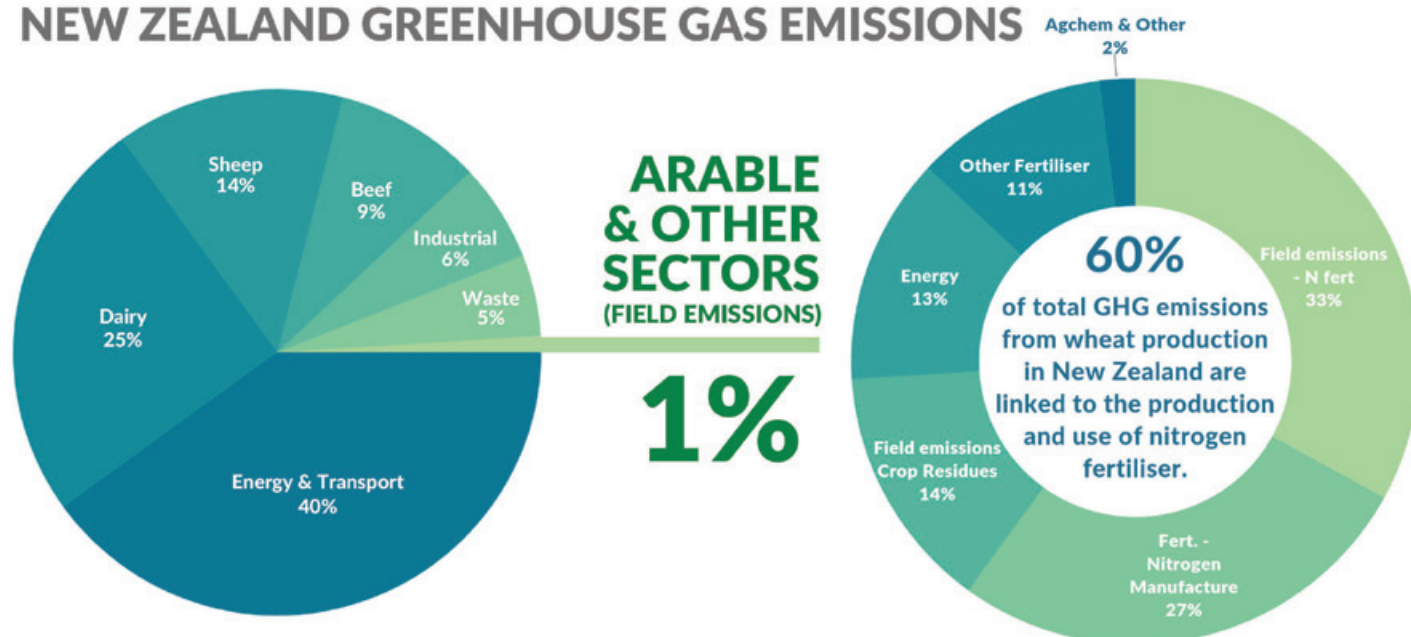
DURING 2021:

- Guidance and information is widely shared through existing groups and organisations and online;
- Discussion with farmers and growers on options for understanding and recognising on-farm sequestration (that is, the long-term storage of carbon for example in trees or soil);
- Discussion with farmers and growers on options for a farm-level pricing mechanism for agricultural emissions.

BY THE END OF 2021

- A quarter of farmers and growers in New Zealand know their annual total on-farm greenhouse gas emissions. In practice

NEW ZEALAND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



The work programme

Many farmers and growers have already reduced emissions as they have increased their productivity, through steps such as having fewer but more profitable animals, managing fertiliser use more efficiently, and planting trees. He Waka Eke Noa aims to support farmers and growers to go further by measuring, managing and reducing emissions from their farm.

To develop and deliver information, tools and support for farmers and growers, a number of workstreams have been set up to work on specific issues. Each workstream includes industry, Māori and government and will be calling for input from farmers and growers to ensure all perspectives are considered.

The workstreams (June 2020) are:

- Farm planning—developing Good Farming Practice Principles for greenhouse gases and integrating with other environmental and farm business guidance and requirements.
- Emissions reporting—developing criteria, methodologies and definitions for calculating on-farm emissions and a system for farm-level emissions accounting and reporting.

- Māori agribusiness—a cross-connecting workstream that integrates Māori perspectives into He Waka Eke Noa to ensure relevance and delivery to Māori farmers, landowners, and land entities.
- Extension—supporting the alignment of existing extension (information-sharing and education) programmes with the goals and milestones of He Waka Eke Noa.

What farmers and growers can expect to see between now and 2025

By 2025, the partnership aims to have a framework in place that will see farmers and growers:

- having a written plan to measure and manage emissions;
- using an agreed system to measure and report on-farm emissions;
- incentivised to take action through an appropriate emissions pricing mechanism, in line with the Government's legislative requirements.

BY THE END OF 2020:

- Guidance on how to measure and manage greenhouse gas emissions through farm planning;

this means a person responsible for farm management holds a documented annual total of on-farm greenhouse gas emissions, by methods and definitions accepted by the He Waka Eke Noa Steering Group

- A quarter of farms will have a written plan in place to measure and manage their emissions

BY THE END OF 2022

- One hundred percent of farmers and growers know their annual total on-farm emissions

BY THE END OF 2023

- A pilot project, testing a system for farm level accounting and reporting of emissions, has been completed

BY THE END OF 2024 (1 JANUARY 2025)

- All farms have a written plan in place to measure and manage their emissions, and are using the farm level accounting and reporting system to report their emissions number.

For further information please contact Diana Mathers diana.mathers@far.org.nz

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Ashburton based Pool and Pump World are primed for a busy season helping customers manage their pools and spas, catering for all their needs. Owners Paul and Jackie Cooper offer services from new installations, servicing, maintenance, upgrades and repairs to rural and domestic water systems, pumps, free water testing, chemicals, and accessories. Paul has over 18 years' experience, in the pool industry and the couple have owned the business for the past 14 years. Relocating to Gordons Road in 2012, allowed them to grow their pool maintenance programme, and to offer a dedicated pool and spa retail store. Jackie said "we want to make it easy for our customers to make the most of their pools, so we offer a range of services to assist with their pool and spa maintenance, depending on how involved they want to be. Some come in once a month with a water sample and some sign up for a full valet service, involving us going out to water test, balance pH and cleaning."

Jackie is seeing how generations of families have grown and the children who used to come in with their parents to buy chemical or get advice, are now property owners, with their own pools. "We have gotten to know many Mid Canterbury families over the years, and we are grateful to see our loyal customers continue to support local" Jackie said.

Managing alkaline levels and filtration systems is not an easy skill to learn and

customers are mindful of the products they use both for their family's health and the environment. A pool product gaining a big following is Bio Guard, which is manufactured by a company committed solely to pool and spa chemistry. It is easy to use, kinder to those with sensitive skin and can be safely stored alongside household cleaning products.

"There is an art to balancing water as the composition is affected by temperature, location and frequency of use. We offer FREE water testing and support our customers with ongoing advice to help them treat their water" said Michelle Hope, Jackie's daughter who also works in the business "success for us is being able to educate our customers so they can achieve a clean, clear and healthy pool."

While the warmer months are busy with pool maintenance, during the rest of the year, Paul and the fourth member of their team, Clark Stanger, are involved in pool upgrades and new installations. Older concrete pools can be given a new lease of life with the installation of a special liner, spas are popular and with COVID-19 more families are opting for a staycation, so the interest in pools and spas has grown.

ABOVE: Children who used to come in with their parents to buy chemical or get advice, are now property owners, with their own pools.

ABOVE TOP: Clark Stanger, Service Technician & Paul Cooper, Service Manager

MAIN IMAGE: Jackie Cooper, Administration Manager & Michelle Hope, Sales and Office Assistant

Jackie said "another tool making maintenance easier is a range of robotic cleaners Pool and Pump World offer. These run off mains power and crawl across the floor and walls of your pool in a four-hour cycle, working just like a vacuum cleaner" Jackie said. "All the products and chemicals we offer are tested in our own family pool and only the best makes it to our retail space. We ensure that we keep up to date with technology and attend industry run educational courses, so we can offer the best advice for our customers."

Jackie, Paul and the team also offer advice around pool fencing compliance, planning, placement and depth, water testing (for Nitrates and E. coli) for household water systems, spas and refurbishment of old pools. If you have a question, then pick up the phone and give Paul and Jackie a call.



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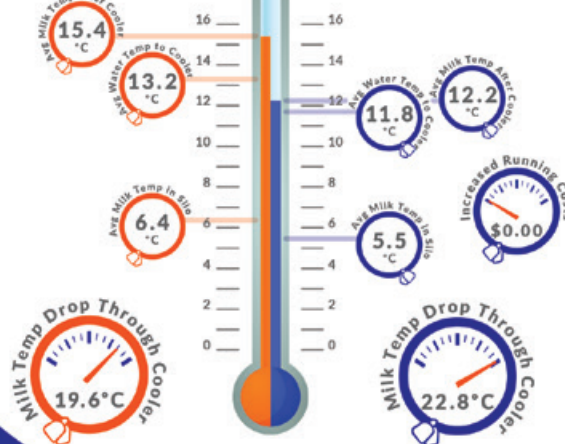
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Smelter closure raises uncertainty in power market

Like an on again off again relationship, New Zealand governments and smelting company Rio Tinto have enjoyed uneasy company over the past decade. More than once the big company has threatening withdrawal, only to be wooed back to the bargaining table.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

However, the July 9 announcement that Rio Tinto would pull the plug on its Bluff smelter has an air of finality about it this time around, both in its own statements, and the government's response to it.

Finance minister Grant Robertson described the decision as a "sad day" for Southland, but also tempered that with an acknowledgement it had been on the cards for some years. This was particularly so following the company's strategic review of its smelting assets last year.

Six years' ago, it had tip-toed towards withdrawal, only to be persuaded with a \$30 million subsidy to remain, with the caveat the government's pockets were empty after that. Add in the slump in demand for the high-quality aircraft aluminium Tiwai produces due to COVID-19 shutting down global airlines, and that finality seems resounding.

The reasons given this time around for the decision are energy costs claimed to be some of the highest in the world globally, and a "challenging short to medium term aluminium outlook."

This comes despite the current price of aluminium globally averaging US\$1600, higher than the average price for three of the six years since the current power agreement with Meridian was negotiated in 2013.

The high electricity prices also cited have fallen since a peak in early 2018 and have fallen significantly again this year.

Meantime despite energy costs falling the smelter appears to have incurred a \$68 million fall in profit between 2018 and 2019.

Anyone not directly linked to the smelter may well ask "so what if it closes?"

The answers to that are two-fold. Firstly, the energy intensive operation consumes 13% of New Zealand's electricity production, making Rio Tinto by far the largest single national consumer. Any drop in demand of such scale will inevitably have an impact upon the country's entire electricity supply balance.

Secondly, the smelter directly employs 1000 people and indirectly another 1500, injecting about \$400 million a year into the economy and accounting for almost 7% of Southland's GDP.

Given the smelter was opened through a government mandate and support (by

state construction of the Manapouri power station) it has been argued it is only fair today's government has to offer the people of Southland constructive opportunities, should that government support for the smelter evaporate.

Greg Sise, director of Energy Link notes there are many who may view Tiwai's shutdown as the opportunity for power prices to fall. However as with most things in the electricity sector, it is far from that simple.

The smelter has been around almost as long as New Zealand's highly evolved national grid, and as such its presence, and demand, has become embedded in that grid's architecture. It is a sort of giant soak for a large amount of southern generated electricity.

However, with three quarters of the country's population north of Cook Strait and no smelter, the challenge is to move that massive wedge of southern power north.

Ironically, transferring that power from down south to up north actually results in transmission losses going up, from 3% of national electricity production to 4%, shaving 400GWh off the supposed 5000GWh surplus Tiwai's closure brings.

In addition, it is estimated Transpower will need to invest another \$750 million to upgrade lines to transfer that additional power, in addition to \$100 million to complete the Clutha Upper-Waitaki lines project.

The entire project could take five to eight years to complete, leaving a pool of southern power on "standby" rather than actively supplying the entire 5000GWh into the grid system. An upgrade of the HVDC cable will be required by adding a fourth Cook Strait cable along with North Island upgrades.

The combined effect will be transmission charges will rise, offsetting some of the slide in power prices from increased supply capacity.

All major electricity generators have described the Tiwai closure as a fundamental and major change in the market. Tiwai's closure would see a two third drop in thermal generated power that burns oil, gas or coal, impacting particularly upon Genesis Energy and Contact Energy.

The CEO of Contact has already announced a

proposed geothermal project, Tauhara, has been put on hold following the Tiwai announcement.

The closure of the thermal stations will push New Zealand's proportion of renewable power from 85% to 94%, but until grid upgrades are completed that hydro energy remains locked up in the south, and even spilled.

The multi-million transmission costs previously borne by the smelter will also now have to be shared across all other transmission customers, in addition to Transpower's additional grid development costs.

More hydro storage generation means wholesale spot prices are likely to fall more on wetter years, and particularly the further south that power is being purchased. Based on some early modelling analysts anticipate the increased supply could push prices down by whole cents per kWh.

At the same time, the recent decision on who pays for grid upgrades will influence how much different regions and users pay. Under current transmission pricing all consumers will pay equally for the smelter closure and grid upgrade costs.

But after 2023 that cost will be allocated based on how much individual consumers benefit from upgrades. This is expected to fall largely upon South Island generators, and consumers in the far north.

To expect power prices to fall with Tiwai's closure may prove too simplistic. Consumers paying spot prices in the south may benefit in the short term, in wet years, but prices are likely to also become more volatile with the greater hydro reliance and fewer thermal stations to smooth the dry years' supply.

Large power consumers may expect significant drops as supply contracts renew and companies fight to retain share, but those paid by small-medium business may not drop as far, given they often don't chase better pricing and stick with their supply company.

Also, fixed costs of supply are much larger for smaller businesses than they are for large consumers.

Tracey Gordon, general manager for Ruralco's energy division cautions members about expecting too much too soon from the Tiwai closure.

"While it is tempting to sign up for spot price power should it fall as predicted, greater volatility and uncertainty are the only two definites to date from the announcement.

"We encourage our members to come in and discuss their options around contracts and commitments to get a deal that will suit their farm business cashflow and seasonal needs," says Tracey.

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Be prepared for mating

The dairy mating season is just around the corner. Most seasonal supply herds in the area will start mating their herds around the 20th October.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY IAN HODGE BVSC, MANZCVS, VETERINARIAN, VETENT RIVERSIDE

There is great importance associated with herd mating. Pregnant cows mean replacement animals and milk production. Cows pregnant in the early part of the mating period have longer lactations, and their replacement calves have greater weights at weaning.

Preparation for mating needs to start early. In reality it starts the day the cow calves. From that point we need to focus on uterine health, body condition, and freedom from organic and metabolic disease.

Uterine infections are common and often go undetected. Cows with these infections will not become pregnant early in the mating season, and they may be more prone to repeat cycling or abortion. If you haven't done so already, have your veterinary practice check all cows in the herd for uterine infections.

Leading up to mating, cows need to be fed so that they can increase body condition. Milk production will be increasing. This uses energy. If cows drop into negative energy balance they will not cycle early. Make sure you know the total ME value of the daily diet and the cow's requirements to ensure you are feeding cows to gain weight and condition.

Treat any lame cows. Lame cows experience pain. Painful cows will not cycle early.

Check trace elements. Copper, selenium, zinc, iodine and vitamin B12 all need to be in the upper part of the normal ranges. Iodine in particular is very important for metabolic health and cycling.

Consider how you will manage cycling and non-cycling cows. There are many options to get cows cycling and to synchronise cycling cows. A common and successful approach is to examine non-cycling cows before mating starts and to treat them so that they can be mated early in the mating period. First matings are not as fertile as subsequent ones. Second matings early in the mating period are often the ones that result in pregnancy. Using hormonal interventions is perfectly acceptable and highly profitable. The technology available today and the treatment regimens are far better than in the past. The Controlled Intravaginal Drug Release (CIDR) devices are very successful especially when combined with other treatments.

Cycling cows can also be synchronized to cycle early as a large group. This process requires careful management to ensure these early calving groups can be fed.

If you are using bulls as well as artificial insemination, now is a good time to source bulls and ensure they are fit for purpose. Bulls should be young, free of BVD and M.bovis, vaccinated against Leptospirosis (and BVD), and should have a fertility examination. At the very minimum testicular circumference is required to ensure fertility. Get bulls on farm early and allow them to socialise with each other before they are required.

Herds are now mated for around 10 weeks. This is a short period, so everything has to be set up and go according to plan. The submission rate and the conception rate matter a great deal. Over a six week period an 800 cow herd with an 80% submission rate and a 50% conception rate would have 512 cows pregnant. This leaves 288 cows to be bull mated. If the submission rate was lifted to 95% and the conception rate stayed at 50% the situation would be that 220 cows would need to be mated by the bull. This illustrates the importance of getting cows cycling long before mating starts, because this will increase the submission rate, the conception rate and the pregnancy rate. You should talk to your vet about getting cows cycling and getting them pregnant.

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Agriculture's most pressing challenge is raising global food production while minimising environmental degradation. For Steve and Sally Sim, farmers and owners of Simply Spraying, this means best practice for their clients and at home.



Eight years ago, Steve and Sally established Simply Spraying, a business that has built a reputation for offering timely, effective service and one that brings value to their clients' business. As farmers themselves—they run a 265ha mixed cropping and store lamb finishing operation near Lauriston, and both with agricultural science degrees - Steve and Sally, an agronomist by trade, walk the walk of best practice.

Primarily a crop spraying business, Simply Sprayings' strategy is one of continual evolution in order to stay relevant and keep meeting its client's needs. This has meant its list of services has grown and now includes chemical sales, Agrecovery crate sales, slug bait spreading, and the most recent, liquid fertiliser sales and application.

With a focus on reliability in the peak season—the Sim's feel lucky to have such a good team with their two experienced operators, Tommy and Hamish, working alongside them to ensure Simply Spraying can maintain quick response times.

With reliability in mind, this season Simply Spraying is installing a cold-mixing plant and will be offering two products; 18% N liquid urea, as well as a 10% N and 11% S product (an order lead time exists). Simply Spraying apply this spray using Stream Bars, considered the Rolls-Royce in fertiliser application as they

have the least amount of leaf scorch possible of all nozzles, the best uniformity, and the widest application rate range. The Stream Bars eliminate overlap and are a big advantage for applying fertilisers in marginal conditions and at higher rates.

Simply Spraying operates at boom widths of up to 32m with a high clearance Househam and a state of the art Amazone Pantera self-propelled sprayer. Both machines are fitted with auto-steer and automatic section control meaning a consistently precise job every time. With impending compliance required, the Sim's have been following recent developments in science and technology and have taken a proactive approach to nitrogen use. Moving to a liquid urea-based system, which they can now offer clients, Simply Spraying are confident that liquid N, will be part of the environmental pathway for the future of farming.

"Sally and I have done considerable research and we see liquid N as a neat fit with the current direct drilling and Kinsey/Albrecht

IMAGE: Tommy Mijs, Steve Sim and Hamish Stoddart

style of fertility management on our own farm. From a biological and economic standpoint to move to using liquid N makes sense and results show a 15–20% reduction in N, yielding a similar or better pasture and cash crop production. We believe that real opportunities exist around the potential of mixing partners for use with liquid N such as sulphur, potassium and humates and look forward to some more science coming through to back these ideas up" said Steve. Being a Ruralco Supplier means Steve and Sally offer another service to make it easier for farmers in the Ashburton district, particularly those between the Ashburton and Rakaia Rivers—a key catchment area for Simply Spraying. Steve is always prepared to talk all things spraying and welcomes enquiries on how Simply Spraying can help be a part your dairy or crop farming business, to help maximise yields and benefit your environmental and economic bottom line.



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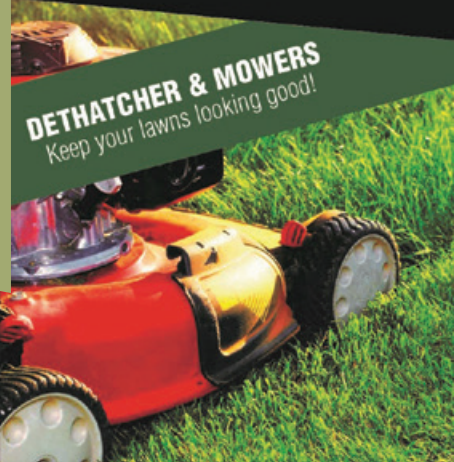
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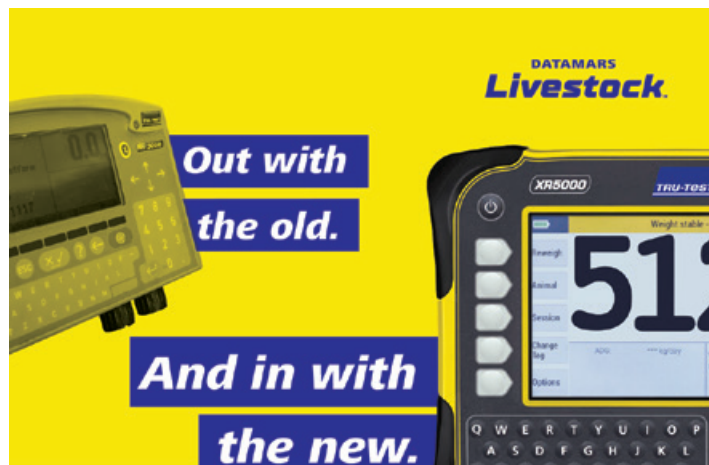
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Spiderban celebrates 25 years

When Mike Ward started Spiderban, 25 years ago, he wanted to provide a point of difference from other businesses in the pest elimination industry.



Hailing from Christchurch, Mike spent 10-years as a commercial window cleaner, and during this time realised that cobwebs were a big problem with clients complaining that after taking them off, only a few weeks later that they had returned. So rather than just spray and walk away, Mike and his team of technicians have developed a service that includes a free 30 minute exterior cobweb removal, prior to spraying the whole house.

In 1995, Mike set up Spiderban and the business quickly grew, with urban and rural clients. The chemicals used to treat spiders and other insects have changed dramatically since then. In the early days, the treatment often marked interior and exterior surfaces, and was an irritant for some people. This was especially true when applied incorrectly and often put people off having their homes treated, however Mike's professionalism has helped to change this view.

"Now we use a synthetic pyrethroid, a third-generation chemical. It is a surface treatment, so as the insect walks over the surface that has been sprayed it breaks the tiny capsule and dies. The chemical is odourless and a non-irritant" said Mike.

The treatment for the interior is applied by a battery-powered motorised backpack sprayer that applies it in droplets just .25 microns in size. When applied by an experienced and qualified operator like Mike and his team, there are no runs or streaks

on walls. There is no smell or mess, and the treatment is not airborne, and there is a three hour stand down period. Mike concentrates on spider and fly control, with ants and wasps also. He also does a small amount of rodent work. A lot of his customers suffer from arachnophobia, and he says he can help their situation leaving their home spider free.

Mike says, staying up to date with developments in the industry is crucial, in terms of the health and safety of both himself and customers and he has a National Certificate in Urban Pest Management and is an approved Handler in Pest Control.

Spiderban has grown from strength to strength, with a core part of the business servicing the rural community. "We have many loyal customers who we visit annually or bi-annually. Being a Ruralco supplier makes it easier for our farming customers as the treatment fits within pest control as a part of farm working expenses."

Alongside Spiderban, Mike started cleaning dairy sheds since 2012, and says the results are astonishing. He has before and after photos to prove the point. "In sheds where

ABOVE: Mike has a National Certificate in Urban Pest Management and is an approved handler in pest control

MAIN IMAGE: Mike Ward, owner of Spiderban

grain is fed to cows while they are being milked it can be dusty and cobwebs are highly visible. We wash down the inside roof of the shed and then spider-proof it."

The service has taken off with over 650 sheds cleaned so far. The work is carried out while the cows are dried off and the shed not in use, with a chemical free washing process and then spider proofing with a dairy approved chemical.

Mike and his team cover Mid Canterbury, South Canterbury, Otago and down as far as Southland.

As a 25-year special, for every exterior booking made before 30th November 2020, Spiderban is offering a free inside treatment (valued up to \$250). Terms and conditions apply. Give Mike and the team a call on 0800 556 778 or 027 296 1234 to make a booking.



Spiderban Pest Control
Mike Ward
027 296 1234
0800 556 778

spiderban@xtra.co.nz
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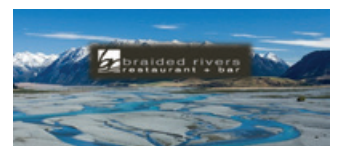
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www.brydonehotel.co.nz
115 Thames Street,
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THE RURALCO STORY

Real people do amazing things

In 1963 a group of farmers formed the co-op that would become Ruralco. They wanted competitive pricing for their businesses and a sustainable future for tomorrow, and today we're still obsessed with that vision.

We live in the rural communities we serve. We have straight up conversations with the farmers, contractors, service and support businesses who work together in our local communities. We listen until we understand the needs of the real people who make a living from agriculture. Then we do what we can to make life a little easier.

We do our best on prices. We find answers. We tell the truth. We share experience and knowledge. We connect people with new ideas. We celebrate our heroes and the people that make Ruralco what it is today.

We care about tomorrow. With the deep roots of our co-op structure we give rural businesses the opportunity to source better deals and know that their contributions deliver real value for their local communities, helping to support a sustainable future for New Zealand farming.



Our Values



We make your farming life easier with competitive pricing and real value.

Supporting a sustainable future for New Zealand farming.



We are innovators, we think differently, we do things differently and we have fun while we're doing it.

We're committed to delivering an exceptional experience every time.



We're in this industry together.

We're committed to uniting rural communities.

When we work together everyone wins.



No hidden agendas, what you see is what you get.

We use clear and simple communication.

We're clear on our purpose and our price.



We're proud of our heritage, our people and what we do.

We are positive about our potential and optimistic about our future.



We are committed to strong ethics in everything we do and how we deliver.

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GoDairy a great opportunity for Kiwis to get into dairy

I've been lucky enough to be involved in delivering GoDairy's free Farm Ready Training through my role as a trainee consulting officer at DairyNZ.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY HUGH JACKSON, DAIRYNZ TRAINEE CONSULTING OFFICER, SOUTHLAND

The three-week training was launched in June and offers Kiwis who have had their employment affected by Covid-19 the chance to get into a dairy career.

I've found delivering the training rewarding as I know I'm helping people into a secure career with many opportunities.

The first week is delivered online and involves videos, presentations and discussions. People from anywhere in New Zealand can join and get an introduction to see if working on a dairy farm is right for them. We provide an overview of New Zealand's dairy sector, the technology used on farms, pasture growth, living rurally and how to find a good job.

Many of those on the training are excited about being able to work outside and care for animals, and the career opportunities dairy offers.

"I've really enjoyed meeting the wide range of people taking part in GoDairy."

I've really enjoyed meeting the wide range of people taking part in GoDairy. Some have grown up on farms, others have worked in sectors like hospitality, tourism, IT and many



IMAGES: The first intake of GoDairy trainees learn about stockmanship

training. The next two weeks cover working with animals, health and safety, and operating farm vehicles.

Some people on the training are already getting interviews and job offers from farmers. It's great to see that GoDairy will help meet a critical need to fill roles on-farm for the calving season and beyond.

DairyNZ is working with the Government to continue offering the training in the coming months. The two weeks of practical hands-on training are being held in a wide number

of locations to meet local demands. If you know someone who's keen on working on a dairy farm—or you've recently employed a career changer who might qualify for the training—you can visit dairynz.co.nz/godairy



HUGH JACKSON,
DAIRY NZ TRAINEE
CONSULTING OFFICER,
SOUTHLAND

other fields. We've had both young Kiwis and those in their thirties or forties who have families participate.

Through GoDairy we aim to give people a realistic view of what working on a farm is like—that there are a lot of positives, but that it's also hard work at times and it involves getting up early.

“Some people on the training are already getting interviews and job offers from farmers.”

Some start the training unsure about what work on a farm involves. We get questions about the type of work done on farms, rosters, living rurally and farming terminology. After some good discussions they are ready to move on to practical



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Beef genetics add value to dairy beef

Dairy beef makes up the bulk of this country's beef exports and by using the correct beef genetics, significant value can be added throughout the value chain.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND

The latest results from Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics' Dairy Beef Progeny Test shows that up to 45kg of additional carcass weight can be achieved by mating dairy cows to the right beef bulls.

Dan Brier, General Manager of Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics says the latest results from the progeny test just reinforce the value of selecting the right beef genetics to use across dairy cows.

He says there is a huge pool of bulls available that can be safely used over dairy cows and offer an improvement in gestation length and calf value, hopefully reducing the number of calves that become bobbies.

"The progeny test shows we can have our cake and eat it. We can select bulls for short gestation and low birth weight, important for dairy farmers, and we can still get fast growth and superior carcass traits, important for beef finishers and processors."

In the 2016 and 2017 seasons, 39 Hereford and 34 Angus bulls were mated via AI to crossbred dairy cows on Limestone Downs, Port Waikato. The resulting calves were run in large mobs until finishing at 23-31 months at an average of 500kg for heifers and 600kg for steers.

Bulls in the trial were selected on breeding values and the focus was on lighter than breed average birth weights, gestation length and 600-day weight.

Dan says they were conscious that while dairy farmers want short gestation, finishers

want heavy carcasses, so the science team selected a range of EBVs to assess whether the numbers mirrored actual performance. This proved to be the case and EBVs were found to be good predictors of birth weight and gestation length. There were no calving problems reported.

Scientists found that while the majority of sires followed the expected pattern of heavier calves at birth growing into heavier carcasses, there were outliers that produced above average carcasses despite the calves being below average weight at birth. The inverse was also found.

"This means that while farmers can select sires to produce calves weighing 36-37kg, the final carcass can vary by more than 30kg. The key is targeting EBVs for both birthweight and 600-day weight."

After being weaned at 90kg, the calves were run into their lifetime mobs based on weight and sex. The calves were weighed at 200, 400 and 600 days old before processing. The mean age from birth to processing was two years and four months.

Processing data showed 97 per cent of the 1017 cattle graded P2 while the remainder were L2. Again, genetics proved their worth with carcass weight, dressing-out percentage and eye muscle area all being affected by the sire.

"This means that for carcasses of the same weight, there was a variation in the weight of the high value muscles according to sires."

A meat quality analysis carried out at Massey University found that the dairy beef meat was tender, had good colour and held its own against traditional beef.

"These results highlight the potential to increase the value of NZ's dairy beef at every stage along the supply chain. It really is as simple as selecting the right beef genetics to use across dairy cows."

The Dairy Beef Progeny test is on-going and B+LNZ recently announced a collaboration with LIC, this country's largest supplier of genetics to the dairy industry.

This season, 26 bulls will be used across 1600 crossbred cows at Pamu's Wairakei Estate. These cows are milked once-daily.

Each bull selected will be used across at least 60 dairy cows. A minimum of 45 straws will be used in the first year a bull is submitted.

Calves will be reared at Renown farm (or by a commercial calf rearer) and then transferred to Orakonui, within the Wairakei Pastoral Group, for growing out.



DAN BRIER,
GENERAL MANAGER
OF BEEF + LAMB
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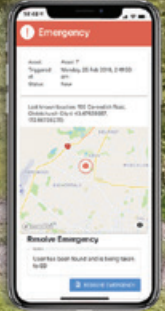
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Three waters reform and irrigation



Not only is irrigation important to us—but water and all its facets.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY ELIZABETH SOAL, CEO, IRRIGATION NZ

In one way or another all the different ways we use our freshwater resources are linked whether that is for irrigation, stock water, turning on the tap to boil the jug for a cup of tea or watering the garden and so much more. Having reliable access to water in our daily lives is more important than we give recognition for.

Over the past three years, central and local government have been considering solutions to challenges facing delivery of three water services to communities. This has seen the development of new legislation and the creation of Taumata Arowai, the new Water Services Regulator, to oversee and enforce a new drinking water regulatory framework, with an additional oversight role for wastewater and stormwater networks.

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis the Government had invested into water infrastructure and construction reform was underway, including the management and funding of drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater—known as Three Waters.

In early July, the Government announced funding to provide \$761 million to assist local Government to upgrade three waters

infrastructure and more than \$5 billion of infrastructure investment allocated to help improve the economy. While the Government's intention is for publicly owned multi-regional models for water service delivery, with a preference for local authority ownership, final decisions on a service delivery model will be informed by discussion with the local government sector and the work of the Steering Committee

What does three waters have to do with Irrigation?

IrrigationNZ is pleased to see the Government will be stimulating investment in the water sector. Water infrastructure development will be a key part of New Zealand's post COVID recovery. The proposal to reform the water service delivery into a large-scale multi-regional provider (for three waters) will provide greater opportunities for investment in water infrastructure such as water storage. That will in turn improve outcomes beyond three waters, to include water for irrigation, reallocation, and the environment.

Projects that can address water issues across all outcome areas and sit within catchment—specific regulatory framing will potentially be more achievable and viable under a changed service model. This is because smaller local authorities have been constrained in the past from larger-scale investments due to restrictions on borrowing ability, smaller

balance sheets and small rating bases.

It is inevitable that climate change will have significant impacts on communities across the country. This coupled with aging infrastructure, and burgeoning populations mean that doing nothing is no longer an option, it is crucial that we invest now and have stringent plans in place that are going to be sustainable.

The Government has identified that the current three waters system and delivery models do not necessarily align with catchment-based regulatory systems. This reduces our ability to manage our water in an integrated manner, ki uta ki tai—from the mountains to the sea. The Government has also signalled stimulus funding for rural drinking water supplies. The irrigation sector already owns water infrastructure that provides drinking water for rural communities and regional towns, so the sector looks forward to working with the Government when this funding is allocated.

For IrrigationNZ, it has been a priority for us for some time now that New Zealand needs to develop and overarching water strategy—I might be starting to sound like a broken record, but it is so important and this is why.

We are seeing something of a coalescing of issues—three waters reform, a new strategy for the primary sector (Fit for a Better World) which emphasises the 'transformational opportunity' provided by investment in water infrastructure and storage, the Essential Freshwater policy package, and the creation of the drinking water authority Taumata Arowai—which all involve water policy.

The time is therefore ripe for these different strands of policy work to be brought together under a national strategy and framework for the future of water in Aotearoa. This will be particularly important if we are to have a national conversation about water allocation and are to address the still unresolved issue of Maori rights and interests in freshwater.

ELIZABETH SOAL
CEO, IRRIGATIONNZ



Ruralco Kids

Kids online competition Instore Days 2020



OVERALL WINNER



WINNER MOST FUN

WINNER MOST CREATIVE

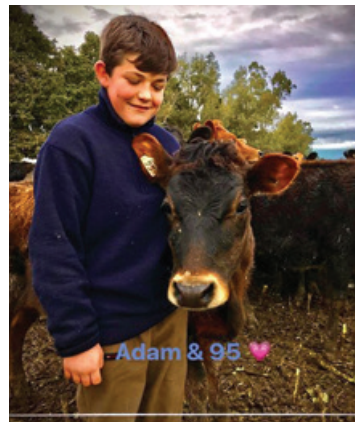
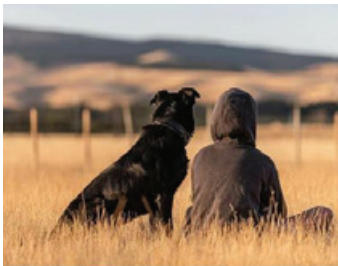
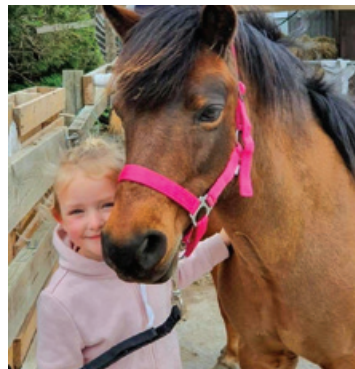
Mason Kingan & Lupe the Lamb

The winning video, along with all other entries can be viewed on the Ruralco Facebook and Instagram pages.

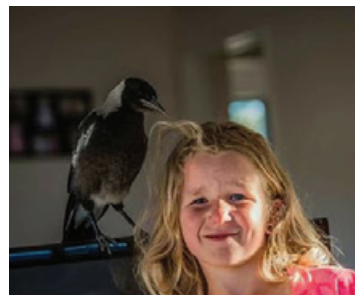


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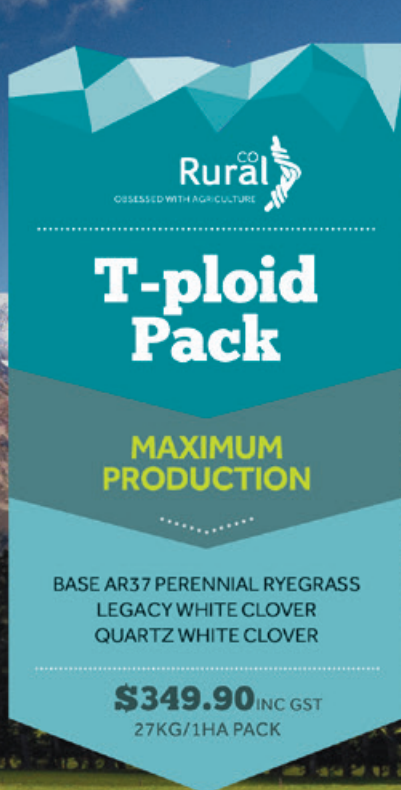
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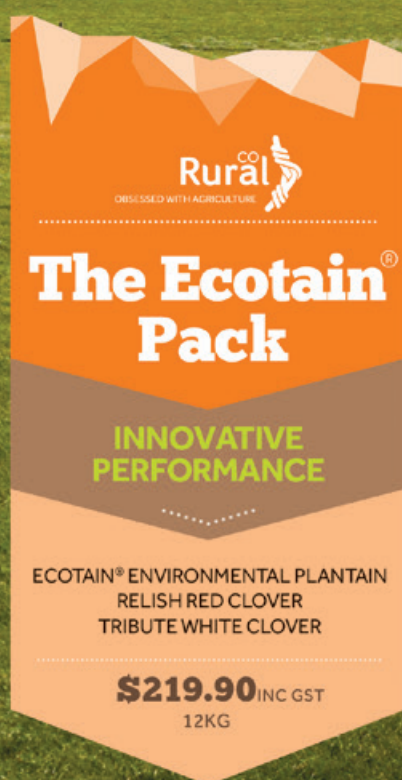
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