

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2013

RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY



Ruralco kicks off
to strong start

Mt Somers fosters
entrepreneurial spirit

Forage Value Index

Angels in
Ashburton

From the CEO

Welcome to the first edition of the Real Farmer, a magazine focusing on bringing you everything farming and family, grown from the ATS News.



ATS is in the midst of some exciting developments with Ruralco that will ensure the co-operative will be around for the next 50 years and beyond. It's somewhat fitting therefore, that this first edition of the Real Farmer is dedicated to bringing you informative stories that celebrate community, hard-work and innovation.

Our cover story looks at two generations of farming at Mt Somers Station, and the entrepreneurial spirit, sense of adventure and hard-work which continues to set it apart. Mark Acland talks about the early years on the property, his relationship with his brother, John, and off-farm ventures, before he handed the reins over to eldest son David. David and wife, Kate, are now guiding the property into the next phase of its development, while younger brothers Ben and Hamish have established successful off-farm ventures of their own with a strong wool connection.

The community theme is evident in the feature on Carew brothers Bob and Alan Johnston and their big-hearted commitment to the Advance Ashburton Community Foundation. First thought of in 2003, Advance Ashburton is dedicated to benefiting the Ashburton district. Recently it was involved in facilitating \$1.5 million towards the redevelopment of the earthquake-ruined Ashburton Hospital. It has nine trustees, including ATS Chairman Phil McKendry.

Throughout its 50-year history, ATS's commitment to community, hard-work and innovation has kept it at the forefront of farmer co-operatives, and the launch of Ruralco will see it move to a whole new level as it goes national. You can read all about Ruralco and the story behind on it on page 7.

Tools for the Dairy Sector focus on the Forage Value Index in this issue, while Methven farmer Don Hart helps get the basics right, knowing what you have and what you need in regards to soil chemistry.

By the time this goes to print the ever-popular ATS Instore Days will have been and gone, so included in this issue is a wrap up of photos and coverage on this event inside. It is always an opportunity for members to catch up with others in the farming community, and take advantage of some of the unbeatable deals on offer in preparation for a busy spring, and this year was no exception.

Neal Shaw, Group Chief Executive

Upcoming Events

5-7 August

New Zealand Institute of Primary Industry Management Conference: Lincoln

Supported by Beef + Lamb New Zealand, this three-day conference runs from Monday 5 to Wednesday 7 August.

For more information, go to NZIPIM website www.nzipim.co.nz

14 August

Beef + Lamb New Zealand Sheep Industry Awards: Invercargill

If you are interested in attending the second annual showcase of New Zealand sheep farming excellence.

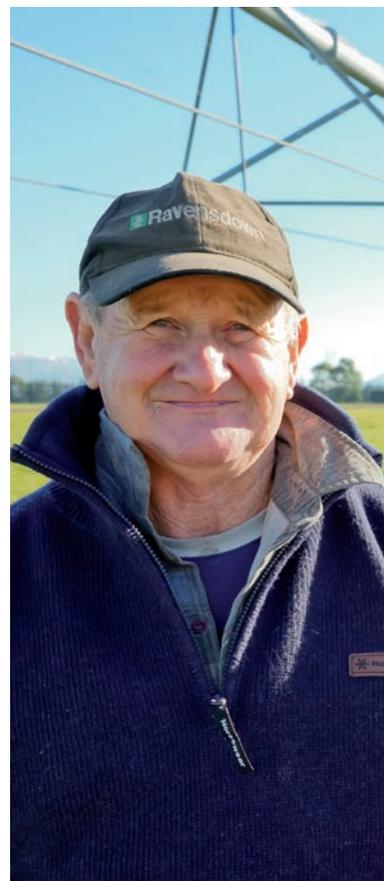
Contact Paul McCauley on 027 522 3499 or paul.mccauley@beeflambnz.com

12 September

Dairy Holdings Canterbury Discussion Group

The purpose of this group is to discuss relevant seasonal topics to aid decision making on farm in a timely manner.

Contact Juliette Lee on 021 323 834 or juliette.lee@dairynz.co.nz



Contents

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Johnston brothers, Bob and Alan



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Mt Somers fosters entrepreneurial spirit



An entrepreneurial spirit, a sense of adventure and hard work all underscore Mark Acland's take on life, farming and business—all qualities he can proudly see evident in his three sons as they expand their own ventures through Canterbury and beyond.

BY RICHARD RENNIE

The Acland family have owned Mt Somers Station since 1983 when Mark and late wife Jo took on the property with the generous support of Bob Burnett, owner of Burnett Transport. It was a big step for the couple at the time. Mark had a 10,000su share in Mt Peel and Waikari Hills stations with his brother John.



Farming at Mt Peel at the time, Mark says Bob, a good friend of Mark's parents, asked him over to the station for some advice at Mt Somers one day. "I made the comment to Jo on returning I thought Bob would probably sell the place if we made him an offer, and she said 'so why don't we?'."

They stunned everyone, being well set up where they were, initially buying two thirds of the property, and being grateful to Bob for helping fund the transaction. "That was at a time when interest rates were heading over 20%, and we were fortunate to avoid that, thanks to Bob."

Coming to the Mt Somers property was something of a return to the past. Back in 1855 London lawyers John Acland and Charles Tripp arrived in Canterbury and wrote their names into high country history, taking up land incorporating Mt Peel, Orari Gorge, and for a brief period Mt Somers. Today Mark's brother John's eldest son Johnny continues to run the original property.

Assuming ownership saw the couple embark on a major redevelopment programme, continuing on Bob's initial work on the 4,000ha property. "From there we did a lot of subdivision and deer fencing, upgraded the houses and building a new homestead in 1992."

It also included installing 8km of laneways through the middle of the property, and 5km of roading, thanks in part to Bob's loan of heavy machinery to help with the task.

The extensive deer fencing development was needed, for in the 70s, Mark was involved with his very good friend Sir Tim Wallis in the use of his helicopters capturing deer for the station herd. The deer were first farmed at Waikari Hills, and then on purchasing Mt Somers, trucked over and the herd built up to over 6000 head.

Extensive water reticulation meant waterways could be fenced off. It is reticulation work that has become even more intensive since son David has embarked on a dairy conversion.

In mid July 80 troughs awaited Mark's attention to be installed and hooked up for the dairy season.

Mark has maintained a fruitful and enduring business and farming relationship with his brother John over the years. He attributes the strength of that relationship to enabling them both to pursue interests beyond the farm gate.

For John that has included chairmanship of PPCS (now Silver Fern Farms), NZ Meat Board, and more recently the Walkways Access Commission in the mid-2000s. It was a tough job on a controversial subject that earned him much respect from the public and government alike.

John's work over public access has Mark's full support, and the family has been exemplary in literally "walking the walk" when it comes to public access on family land.

He is also proud to have played a part in helping secure access for the renowned Mt Somers walking track, including turning a farm road into a public road and allowing the walkway through some of the station land. The family friendly 1.5 day walk attracts 7,000 people a year to the district.

Mark has pursued various areas of business, including working for an Australian company live sheep exporting out of Timaru, building the feed lot facility to handle 120,000 sheep. Mark and John's other joint venture is their on-going involvement in Lynn River.

The company started from humble beginnings back in 1959 with the first walk through head bail, originating from the US and made and marketed by Hayes Engineering. Ten years later the very successful Ritchey ear tag, also originating in the USA, was a breakthrough in animal identification.

Mark's eye for good ideas helped shape Lynn River into a market leader in glove and safety products. He is proud that the company introduced the first cut resistant gloves to the meat industry, reducing knife accidents significantly.

Mark says it is fun and rewarding to see Lynn River products on the shelves of ATS and in many other

LEFT: Mark maintains a strong interest and participation in his son's businesses

BELOW: David and Kate Acland



retailers in NZ and Australia. It is also fun to hear from family and friends how much they love their Showa gardening gloves, one of the many glove makes the company markets.

Far from describing himself as retired, Mark's sense of adventure and eye for opportunity remains as strong as ever and he maintains a strong interest and participation in his sons' businesses.

"Succession in farming is a significant issue facing all farming families and I have been fortunate to be able to support my sons in their various and varied endeavours."

Mt Somers moves to next step...

Mount Somers Station is poised to launch into the next phase of its long farming history, led by the next generation of innovative, hard working Acland family members.

David Acland and his wife Kate are behind the station's dry land dairy conversion project which starts putting the first litres of milk into the silo this month.



ABOVE: Hamish Acland

The 350ha conversion project on the station's river terraces is only a small proportion of the station's 3,800ha, 2,900ha effective but it brings some shifts in livestock numbers and stock types with it.

As with any first year project nothing is certain, and David says the balances of stock and area will remain fluid as the dairy unit becomes established. However, the station's velveted stag herd has already gone, and cattle numbers are down to enable the dairy herd to be wintered. Ewe numbers are also expected to ease back from 11,000 ewes wintered this year to 10,000 next.

It was only 15 months ago the button was pushed to start the conversion at Mt Somers, after the family had also considered other options, including purchasing a dairy unit down country.

David says conversion at the station was a relatively obvious choice, but it came back to assessing the risk, and setting a family succession plan for the property.

"We talked of putting a dairy farm on the station for a couple of months and then finally decided that we had to make a decision, so put a line in the sand and said by Sunday night the next weekend (May 2012) we either had to go for it or focus on other projects."

Sitting between 450-700m above sea level, Mt Somers is too high to take advantage of irrigation systems on the Plains, including the RDR. The upside has been relatively lower up front conversion costs, with expectations of around 1,000kgMS a hectare production.

The station's altitude is also a benefit in making it relatively summer safe, with a window of around six weeks from late December to mid February the greatest at risk dry period.

The extensive winter cropping programme at Mt Somers means the dairy country starts with strong, young pastures across the majority of the land area, helped by having 180ha of new grass put in after last winter's crops alone.

While using a typical rye-clover mix, David says he may consider lucerne as a crop option in coming seasons, along with fescue on the lighter country. The couple have plans to increase cow numbers next season to 1,000, keeping the stocking rate the same.

David admits a level of caution around what the Canterbury Land and Water plan will bring to Mt Somers' catchment area, shortly due for assessment. "We do have the potential to milk another 1,000 cows at Mt Somers on the heavier soils, but it would depend on what the Plan brings with it in terms of controls."

David has appreciated having a wife with a Masters in Farm Consulting helping out as project manager for the conversion, ensuring resource management consents are sorted and stages are completed on time. His Dad Mark helps out with general tasks, and David acknowledges his father's love of "big projects" has helped push the conversion project over the line. "We will have to find another one for him now this one is done," he jokes.

David has worked to develop a good team behind him at Mt Somers, and has managed to draw in some promising management and operational staff for the dairy conversion. Part of the appeal he believes is in taking a "whole station" approach to the positions, offering staff the opportunity to participate in a wider level of farm operations the station's scale affords.

Alongside the busy conversion at Mt Somers, Kate has retained her ownership of Sugar Loaf Wines in Marlborough.

Earlier last decade, after completing a wine makers degree at Lincoln she had originally decided the business was not for her, and returned to Lincoln to complete a Masters in Farm Consultancy. However, after spending time in Marlborough she "fell in love with the place"—as winemakers are to do.

She set about establishing her own wine label, and in 2007 converted an abandoned apple juicing plant into the winery and establishing a



ABOVE: Hannah Aubrey

reputation for creating quality Sauvignons, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir wines.

Today the label consists of an 8ha estate winery, and processes around 1,000t of grapes a year, both for her own label and on contract for other wineries, specialising in niche, high quality wines.

The label has earned a loyal following through Victoria and high praise here at home.

In his Wine Buyers Guide, Michael Cooper describes the Sugar Loaf Sauvignon Blanc as a wine with "good intensity, ripe herbaceousness, with plenty of drive and depth." The 2013 vintage is one Kate describes as punchy, with plenty of potential.

After a tough few years post 2008, the wine sector is looking more positive again, with strong export potential opening up in Asia particularly.

Kate has expanded the winery five fold in only five years, this has given it enough scale to support full time staff, and enabling her to focus on the dairy conversion at Mt Somers with David. She continues to spend 20 hours a week working on it, and travels up once a fortnight.

Adding their three small children aged between six months and three years makes for a busy, interesting time. She says she looks forward to being part of the Mt Somers next step, while also retaining her own interests in the wine making industry.

Wool links brothers to past and present

Creating an edgy, fashionable merino clothing business aimed at the action sports market proves the Acland spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship is alive and well in the next generation.

Hamish Acland created the Mons Royale merino

BELOW: Ben Acland



layer and undergarment label five years ago, and it has been a fast run ever since for the world ranked free ski champ.

After many years of travelling, competing and living out of a ski bag around the world, Hamish knew what gear worked, and what didn't. He also had one eye on the day he would stop competing, and be looking for the next step.

"Sponsors would provide me with all the gear, I was given everything except a good base layer. It was gear you would not wear to the pub at the end of a day's skiing." That simple brief provided the prompt for the creation of Mons Royale—technical layering you could wear all day skiing, and then go out in without anyone "thinking you were wearing your pyjamas."

Merino wool lent itself well to the brief's parameters. It was "non stink", absorbing the sweat from a day or two on the slopes, it was an excellent insulator, and well suited to the multi-purpose fashionable garments Hamish had in mind.

"You had this amazing fibre product, but the thing was, none of my friends were wearing it."

His initial garments were simple enough, with a T-shirt, and a long sleeve/bottom underlayer.

However, a fortunate encounter with his now fiancé Hannah Aubrey at launch time helped push the brand and the range further. Hannah bought experience from a leading brand development company in New York, and helped define Mons Royale.

The brand developed a global look that matches reality—it is placed in over 400 stores around the world today, and is as far afield as Russia. The Mons Royale range has expanded rapidly, with plenty more ideas in the pipeline and an online store recently opening. It is also the under-layer provider for the New Zealand Winter Olympic team, competing in Sochi, Russia in 2014.

Hamish is finding himself once again hitting the airport departure lounges of the world, this time touting product samples and a sales spiel, rather than a ski bag.

Hamish and his brother Ben have also now teamed up under the Mons Royale label, and the union between the brothers has echoes of their Dad's partnership with his brother John. But there is also an arc back to their childhood there—the two grew up in hand made clothes tailored from sheepskin by their Mum, and the link back to where they are today, marketing wool based garments is not lost on Ben.

Ben and his wife Sara also started BO Boots, "ugg boots that aren't ugly", some years ago. They were inspired by Ben's Mums tailored wool efforts, and developed after Ben ran a leather and sheepskin business.

"I started creating some unique designs and patterns out of wool for sheepskin boots, I guess in part inspired by growing up head to toe in sheepskin."

The business grew with strong online sales, and has developed a strong niche in Japan.

After the Christchurch earthquake Ben and his



family moved down to Wanaka where Hamish is based, and a proposed three day a week job in Mons Royale immediately kicked off with full on 10 hour days instead.

Ben bought his business and logistics experience and some good business advice with him that has strengthened the back room end of the Mons Royale business. Hamish oversees brand and sales, Ben finance and logistics.

Sara, Bens wife, runs the www.boboots.com web business juggling two young children.

Ben is optimistic the work he and Hamish have been doing in Mons Royale, attending multiple trade shows around the world and expanding store contacts, will also pay dividends for the boot business in coming years.

"I feel as a brother, coming into his business I am there to back him up, and watch out for him."

He sees his father's ability to take the long view on developing a product and a market as an invaluable example for growing their business.

ABOVE: Mark's sense of adventure and eye for opportunity remains as strong as ever

"Dad did not constantly shift around, chasing the next big thing, he stuck to his knitting and took it as far as he could. It will be the same for us here, we are in for the long game. Things will move around in the market, but if you have developed a brand, and loyalty, you will last."

Hamish also attributes the years of seeing his father take an innovative, "outside the square" approach to business helping inspire his efforts with Mons Royale. He also appreciates the strength of the relationship between Mark and his brother John.

"I think Dad provided us with a great example to follow, how he and John got on and worked together. We were bought up to look laterally at life and business, and see the opportunities that were there."

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John Baird - Ashburton

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Grant Hood - Ashburton

"Systems working well and we are very pleased with it".

"Getting savings from Meridian already and we are able to see what credit they are giving back from their on-line information".

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About solar power . . .



We've all heard the terms: renewable solar energy; photovoltaic solar systems; sustainable eco-friendly housing etc; but you may not be aware that these terms are now being used and understood by a far greater number of New Zealanders.

This is because electricity prices have increased, and the price of solar panels have fallen (by up to 70%). As a result it has become a good investment and many householders and business owners are choosing to have their own solar

electricity generating systems installed on the roof of their home, garage, shed or business.

In New Zealand we get high quality and quantity of sunshine hours. Solar energy relies on daylight through solar radiation (not just sunshine) to generate electricity so even when it's cloudy electricity will still be generated. Reports from existing users of photovoltaic solar systems are confirming the systems are working efficiently across the country (even in Bluff) and that they have considerably reduced their electricity spend.



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Ruralco kicks off to strong start

Only a month after its launch the Ruralco charge card has growing numbers of members and suppliers, as the rural community recognises the value of the card's services.

BY RICHARD RENNIE

Ruralco is the result of two years of hard work between Ravensdown and ATS to create a joint venture charge card service that promises to set a new benchmark for shareholder benefits and supplier services.

"We are seeing Ruralco develop as a very efficient solution for both our co-operatives. We have two established, trusted rural co-operatives joining forces without the need for expensive mergers, and messy re-organisation," says Group CEO Neal Shaw.

The Ruralco venture has played to the strengths of both co-operatives. Ravensdown has bought its extensive nationwide shareholder database, while ATS brings a high level of charge card expertise developed through its long-serving ATS Card service.

Canterbury ATS and Ravensdown shareholders are the first in the country to benefit from the Ruralco launch, as the card service is progressively rolled out through the South Island, and ultimately New Zealand over coming months.

The focus of Ruralco draws on the shared values of both co-operatives. That is a desire to deliver the absolute best priced product to valued shareholders to enable them to maximise their farm business's potential.

For card suppliers the Ruralco philosophy means those companies that are a key part of shareholders' farm operations and lives are supported, by being eligible to become approved suppliers.

"Ruralco is expanding on the philosophy that made the ATS Card such a success here in Canterbury. It provides the buying power of ultimately 20,000 national farmer members to the market, ensuring the absolute best deals possible can be secured," says Neal.

The Ruralco Card is focussed on the needs of Ravensdown and ATS farmer shareholders, and also reflects the needs of farming families, by offering a broad range of card supplier outlets. Typical farm needs like vet services and hardware are among suppliers, but the card also meets the broad needs of a farming family. Card suppliers include outlets as varied as accommodation services and fitness centres.

Over coming weeks and months the Ruralco team of card professionals are working hard to expand the network of card suppliers accepting the card. Despite the national reach Neal says the

Ruralco card philosophy remains closely aligned to the ethos behind the ATS Card.

"That is to ensure we are offering the card supplier opportunity to those businesses in every local community who are very much part of that community. They are usually owned and operated from within the town they are in, and play an important part in the lives and businesses of our farmer shareholders."

Both Neal and Ravensdown CEO Greg Campbell have emphasised the Ruralco card venture is to stand on its own feet as a business unit. Greg says Ravensdown remains focussed on providing nutrient management services, fertiliser and other products to farmer shareholders on a sustainable basis.

Neal also says it does not distract ATS from continuing to provide high quality service across all other aspects of the business to shareholders.

ATS technology has made the Ruralco card easy to use at either retail outlets or for fuel purchases, with the discount applying at the point of payment and clearly visible on the Ruralco statement.

"It is an exciting development in ATS history, and only appropriate that it comes as we celebrate our 50th year of business, this keeps the business moving forward into the next 50 years," says Neal.

To learn more about Ruralco please visit: www.ruralco.co.nz.



BELOW: Neal Shaw, Group CEO





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Thoughts from across the rivers

Time travellers transported from 1963 to 2013 would get a cultural and technological shock. BY ELE LUDEMANN

If many of us went back 50 years we would experience a similar feeling of discombobulation.

Just as a visitor from the 1950s would struggle with today's culture and technology, a time traveller from today might not have the skills for life, and farming, in the early 60s.

“...a time traveller from today might not have the skills for life, and farming, in the early 60s.”

Most sheep, beef and dairy farmers would still have relied on four legged horse power to get around their properties although the very first motor bikes were appearing. The more progressive farmers might have had a step-through Honda 90 but they probably didn't worry about helmets.

Tractor safety was well behind today's too. None had cabs, few if any had roll bars, many were crawlers and those who find themselves hard of hearing now can blame the absence of ear protection.

Other farm machinery was a lot less sophisticated than today's. Self-propelled headers would have been introduced but many farms were still using tractor-drawn ones. Hay was baled in small, square bales and picked up by hand.

“Tractor safety was well behind today's too. None had cabs, few if any had roll bars, many were crawlers and those who find themselves hard of hearing now can blame the absence of ear protection.”

Mixed stock and cropping farms were very common and properties were smaller; the average farm being only 200 to 300 acres.

Farms were measured in acres back then and imperial measurements were used for everything else—gallons for fuel, ounces, pounds and tons for weight, and pints and gallons for liquid. Working with those required considerable mathematical skill, without the assistance of calculators.

Rain was measured in points or inches and when there wasn't enough there was little if any irrigation to provide insurance. Climate change hadn't been thought of but there were hot, searing summers with prolonged droughts.

Seasons were more defined and the pace of life slower but work was less mechanised and therefore generally more physically demanding.



Fencing, for example, began with digging the hole for the posts by hand.

Things were built to last back then but if something broke or broke down it was fixed if it possibly could be—with or without a piece of number 8 wire.

Farming was more regulated too. If wheat met the baking score set at the time it would receive a guaranteed payment that was set by the government.

“Things were built to last back then but if something broke or broke down it was fixed if it possibly could be—with or without a piece of number 8 wire.”

Railways were subsidised and protected by restrictions on road transportation. Trucks could only carry freight a set distance so fertiliser, livestock and machinery were commonly carried by train.

The rabbits which had plagued earlier generations were kept under control by rabbiters who were employed by local rabbit boards. Catchment boards did a lot of the work now covered by



Regional Councils and county councils were grass-roots driven and dominated by farmers.

Most areas would have had active branches of Federated Farmers, Women's Division (now Rural Women) and Young Farmers which provided both political engagement and social interaction.

Fifty years ago, the grapevine did a pretty good job of keeping people in touch with neighbours and friends. That's one thing that hasn't changed, although the technology that enables it certainly has.

Ele Ludemann
homepaddock.wordpress.com





Bachelor brothers Bob and Alan Johnston say they are just a couple of conservative old farmers. BY MARIE TAYLOR

But their big-hearted commitment to the Ashburton district is nothing short of radical.

The Carew farmers have gifted the Advance Ashburton Community Foundation a substantial amount of money to help educate medical students from the district.

Bob and Alan never had to pay to educate children, so this is their way of helping educate other promising students. And they want to encourage others to donate money or make bequests in their will to the valuable foundation.

Bob, who is 67, says: "Family comes first, but maybe people might think that they could put something aside for Advance Ashburton and the work that they do. Any little bit will help."

Thanks to the medical profession, both of them are still around. Alan has had a heart valve replaced, and Bob had a bad allergic reaction to antibiotics, and several operations, which is why they chose to help fund medical students through university.

The first beneficiaries of their generosity will be next year's students. "We are not putting someone through medical school; we are helping along the way, and we are happy to do this," they say.

These days Bob and Alan are winding down their farming business, which used to be a 289ha sheep, beef and cropping property.

They sold the farm, and have a flexible lease with the new owner. Currently they farm 87ha and now concentrate on dairy support. "We're reducing paddock by paddock," they say.

It was former Methven farming leader Graham Robertson who shoulder-tapped them about the foundation some years ago. The brothers had known him for years, since they hosted international agricultural exchange students on their farm, and Graham was involved in the exchange organisation. Graham describes the brothers as great examples of "angel donors".

Bob and Alan are both very positive about Advance Ashburton and its benefits for the district. They are also very pleased Advance Ashburton has facilitated \$1.5m towards the redevelopment of the local hospital, which is helping fund one new operating theatre, a procedure room and ward upgrades.

The funding has been a catalyst for the District Health Board to speed up rebuilding the earthquake-damaged theatres.

Despite getting a great deal of publicity, they don't mind too much because they want more people to know about the charitable foundation. "We have had dozens of people tell us they didn't know Advance Ashburton existed."

First thought of in 2003, it took quite some time to get the systems and legal aspects set up says Advance Ashburton's Executive Officer Margaret Rickard. "Accountant Neil Sinclair—now retired—was the person behind this foundation. It is his baby."

Margaret says in the last five or six years the foundation has really got rolling, and its progress in the last two years has been amazing. "We currently have more than \$4 million in capital invested, and more than \$16 million in bequests that we know of."

"We use the interest from the invested money for grants, and we take off 1% for administration. And we inflation-proof the funds."

A small investment committee is headed by Don Church, with wide-ranging investment criteria.



Margaret says in the past year just over \$50,000 was given out in grants. Of this, \$23,000 went out in 13 scholarships either for university or for trades, and ranged in size from \$1,000 to \$4,000. In the current year the grant level is expected to almost double, she says. That's because additional funds have been donated.

Apart from scholarships, Advance Ashburton is also funding education, health and social needs. For example money from the closed Lismore School is being used for literacy assistance.

The Tindall Foundation partners Advance Ashburton, and each year puts \$10,000 into funding for social projects such as Plunket carseats and parents groups. Margaret says the foundation doesn't yet have any particular funding for the arts or for environmental projects.

Advance Ashburton is grateful for the support it receives she says. Not only do the trustees give a huge amount of pro bono work into the foundation, people like the Johnston brothers are really good ambassadors too. "They are wanting to do good in the community, and wanting to do it in their lifetime. It is a great story."

Graham Robertson says a lot of people in the Ashburton district have appreciated the economic opportunities offered here. "It is a

prosperous district. So Advance Ashburton is an opportunity for our people to leave some resources for the community to go on working after they have gone."

"There are many of us in Ashburton who have appreciated living, working and running businesses in the district, and who would like to see something ploughed back into the community." And the foundation will always have people to help, he says.

"There is always a big gap in the voluntary sector. Much of the social cohesion in any community is in the hands of voluntary and not-for-profit organisations."

"These organisations are often struggling for funding and some rely entirely on donations. Their work is too often constrained by lack of funds."

"An agency such as Advance Ashburton is able to empower these people working for the community good to achieve some good results."

"Advance Ashburton is an opportunity for these voluntary organisations to have some funding to carry on their good work without continually running cake stalls or raffles."

The last word goes to the Johnston brothers: "We have done all our education locally, played sport locally, and still do, so what better can you do?"



ABOVE & RIGHT: Brothers Bob and Alan Johnston

One of the nine trustees on the board is ATS Chairman Phil McKendry who joined about a year ago. "It is a community trust that funds empowerment of the local community," he says.

It was a big attraction to work with someone like Neil Sinclair, Phil says. "There's never any doubt about his integrity."

Phil explains that the original idea for community foundations came from the USA. Ashburton is quite a wealthy corner of the country, where property values have grown substantially, increasing people's equity. "But you can't take wealth with you when you go, so leaving it in a trust may be a good option for some."

Phil says the foundation has a very low cost and very professional trust management. "Advance Ashburton enables people to return something to the community in a way that they can have confidence in, and which gives a lasting benefit."

Donations can be used for general causes, or can be tagged to specific projects. "Advance Ashburton is going to be a long lasting foundation, and it's going to be a very powerful force for good in our region."

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Time to tick something off your bucket list?

Ever wanted to complete a running event, but never knew where to start? **OVER THE LINE**, an Ashburton based 12 week group running training programme, could be just what you need! BY RACHAEL RICKARD

Two years ago Rachael Rickard, co-owner & group fitness instructor at Studio FIT Ashburton, with the support of Stephen and Donna Mealings of The Frontrunner, developed the OVER THE LINE group running programme. "I saw friends and gym members start training but struggling to stay focused and motivated. The miles of training requires a level of discipline that after a few weeks on your own, many people lack. But by being involved in a group training programme, in a fun and supportive environment, the odds of an individual's success increases exponentially."

Stephen and Donna have owned and operated Ashburton's The Frontrunner store for over 9 years. They have both put their apparel and footwear to the test. Donna completed the Dunedin Half marathon in 2012 OVER THE LINE programme and Stephen recently competed in the World Triathlon Champs. Balancing training with running a business, and coaching their children's hockey teams, means Stephen and Donna understand you need to be smart with your training time. "By getting the right tools for

the job, being surrounded by motivating people and by making a plan, increases your chances of success", says Stephen.

The Frontrunner offer 'Treadfit Analysis', a service which enables customers to get the best fit shoe for their feet. "Taking the time to get the right footwear, especially for new runners, will help reduce the risk of injury", says Donna.

OVER THE LINE has trained over 90 people and this year the team goal is the ATS Longbeach Coastal Challenge – giving participants the goal of training for the 12km or 21km event.

OVER THE LINE will be coached by Rachael Rickard, Stephen Mealings and Brendan Sheehan. Brendan was a participant in the 2012 OVER THE LINE programme and has recently become a LES MILLS BODYPUMP for Studio FIT's group fitness programmes.

OVER THE LINE runs from Sunday 1 September - Sunday 24 November 2013, training sessions will be in Ashburton 6pm Mondays & Wednesdays as well as five 9am Sunday runs and entry to the programme includes race fee, training programme, The Frontrunner store discounts and FREE access to LES MILLS group fitness classes in Ashburton.

To register or for more information contact:
gfm@studiofit.co.nz or phone/text Studio FIT Group Fitness Manager Anna Johnson on 027 311 5265.

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Register your interest by contacting
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or phone/text on 027 3115 265



2013 ATS Instore Days



ATS Instore Days are one of the biggest days of the year for the co-operative and this year's event was no exception with members flocking through the doors. BY ANNIE STUDHOLME

Now in the 19th year, the ATS Instore Days play a key role in ATS's commitment to lowering farm input costs for members, with Ruralco and ATS retail suppliers coming on-board to provide great deals for members over the two day event.

"It was a huge success. Our Ruralco and retail exhibitors were extremely pleased with how the event went. Everybody was tremendously happy," said ATS General Manager Operations, Jono Pavay.

He said feedback from Ruralco and ATS retail suppliers showed members had taken advantage of the deals on offer with strong sales and interest shown across the many products and services on display from the moment doors opened on Thursday and this continued on Friday.

The improved and spacious marquee layout, which was introduced last year, again proved popular for site holders and members alike providing many positive comments.

"There was a really positive feel to this year's event," said Jono. It was a feeling that was also experienced at both the Rakaia and Methven stores, which had also enjoyed a busy two days.

Jono commended exhibitors for the standard of their exhibits noticing a significant improvement across the board, which made this year's Best Site Awards all that more difficult for the judging panel.

Judged by long standing ATS members and farming representatives Jack Allen, Doug Anderson and Helen Heddell the awards went to:

Ruralco Supplier Winner

Ashburton Licensing Trust

Ruralco Runner Up

The Toolshed

ATS Retail Winner

Castrol NZ Ltd

ATS Retail Runner Up

Stallion Plastics Ltd

Business Partner Winner

Meridian Energy

BELOW: Nina, Marcel, Theo & Elsie Vlaanderen with Morgan & Reagan Lilley; Phoebe Harbutt



ATS INSTORE DAYS SITE HOLDER COMMENTS:

Anna Taylor, Meridian Energy

"It's been a fantastic catch-up with a lot of our existing customers and also a few new ones. It's a really great way to lift our profile and also strengthen that relationship between ATS and Meridian, and reinforcing that we have this great partnership as one of its preferred suppliers. Compared to ATS's competitors this is the best (Instore Days); most attraction, most professional and the customers too are really willing to talk. It's got a really good feel and a great atmosphere."

Dean Crosson, Smith & Church

"We are getting a really positive spin on our beds. We've had them on the market for three months, but despite advertising in the paper every week people still didn't realise. We have a very strong relationship with our Ruralco customers and we need to be here because we probably know 80-90 per cent of the people that come through. We might not make a sale today, but it's all recognition for the future."

Jo Smith, Ultimate Broadband

"We provide broadband services and up until recent times there has been no other

option for the majority of rural Canterbury, and with the Ruralco partnership it's important for us to get our name out there. It's about putting our brand out there more, meeting some of our clients, and putting a face to our business. It's been great this year."

Paul Rowland, The Toolshed

"This is the first time we have come with The Toolshed. It's a good way of promoting our products, and it's also a great way to touch base with all our Ruralco clients, which is also important. It's a great promotional tool. The more we can wave the flag, the better. We had deals on everything."

Craig Coulter, Coulter Seeds

"It's a PR exercise for us. We started the business two years ago so it's a great way for us to get our name out there and let farmers know what we are up to."

Glen France, Bell Booth Limited

"We have got a fantastic site this year; it's amazing but having a vehicle up for grabs makes all the difference! Everything is all about relationships. Whether it's out on the farm with the relationship or seeing us working together with ATS, I think people value that. The ATS customers are very loyal,

and it helps us that the staff understand our product, so they endorse what we do. It works both ways."

Mike Cox, Nufarm

"It's just nice to catch up with members all the time. It's good to get an opportunity to talk about using your product in a new or different way. If you have new products it's a great way to get it out there. At the end of the day the ATS Instore Days are a great way to sell a lot of product to genuine farmers, and good value for our marketing budget."

Richard Kettle, Animal Health Direct

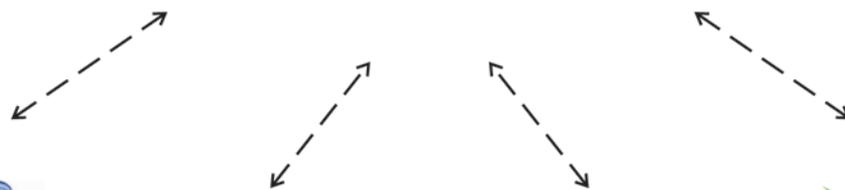
"We've been coming for about 10 years. Every year it gets bigger and better. This year the orders placed for the ATS Instore Days were double last year, which not only reflects the growth in dairy, but that ATS has a good recipe. It's quite unique. It's just fantastic to be able to communicate with the end user, getting their feedback and thoughts on your products. It's nice to be able to come back year after year and catch up with the same people."

BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Lee McIntock with Josh and Al Harkness; Fergus, Victoria and Alice Butterick; Holly, Craig and Lucy Coulter; Grant Bennett with Peter Clarke



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Forging fluid links between water and farmers

Farmers have stopped thinking of their water meters as just regulatory tools to monitor water use and are now using them to save both money and water, says Watermetrics General Manager Andrew Neill.

BY LINDA CLARKE

Meters are being used alongside soil moisture probes and other data collectors to help farmers decide when and where to irrigate.

Andrew said knowing how to read the water data meant farmers could decide not to turn on expensive pumps and spray irrigators when they did not need to. This translated to savings on farm and showed the wider community they are using the precious resource carefully.

Watermetrics is helping farmers over the technology hump. The business was set up seven years ago to import quality, reliable water meters and is now switching focus to services that help farmers analyse the data these meters and other devices provide.

Environment Canterbury regulations requiring ground and surface water takes to be measured were the catalyst, but Andrew says farmers now see the financial and social benefits.

"We were set up to supply meters and gear for farmers and the big peak for this has passed. Now we are moving into the next phase of the company and the natural progression for us is to bring web information services and compliance monitoring in-house rather than through a strategic partner."

"Our customers will have more products available to them and more management information."

Farmers will be able to sign up to receive alerts sent to their smartphones if soil moisture being monitored by Aquaflex soil tapes on their farms

drops or rises past set trigger points before they get into stress of past field capacity.

Andrew said it was important farmers were not overloaded with data about their water use and compliance and Watermetrics' new services were about delivering concise, precise and easy to understand information.

"People have realised the value of all this information. They could spend \$300,000 on an irrigator and a few thousand more for a soil moisture probe, but they could save between \$500 and \$2,000 a day on electricity costs if they don't have to run the irrigator because the probe says there is enough water in the ground for optimum growing."

He said farmers needed to show best management practice around water use, data from meters and probes helped prove that they are efficient and effective operators.

"We are not making decisions for them around water use, but making the information for farmers easy to access and understand."

Andrew says being able to produce water use data will be important for all farmers going forward.

"Lots of farmers are using water very efficiently and effectively, but there is always room for



ABOVE: Andrew Neill, General Manager

improvement and that comes from better technology and information."

He said the big quantum shift was moving from border dyke to spray irrigation, now farmers were embracing technology to better manage their takes.

"When I started four years ago, logging on to check their water use was some farmers' first use of the internet. It was scary for them, now they have smart phones with high speed access and want to be able to access all data on the move" "That whole technology side has grown and become more professional, and farmers are receptive to it. It is the right thing to do socially and economically and there are benefits for them and their families and the greater community."

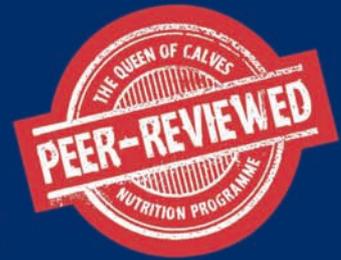
The proposed Land and Water Plan will create a lot of questions and Watermetrics would like to be part of the solution and help guide farmers through the proposal. Knowing what irrigation water you are pumping and the use of soil sensors such as Aquaflex will be essential tools under the plan.



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¹ National dairy statistics, ² Margerison et al, Massey 2011, ³ Peter Fraser, Economist, Ropare Consulting, based on a \$7 payout.



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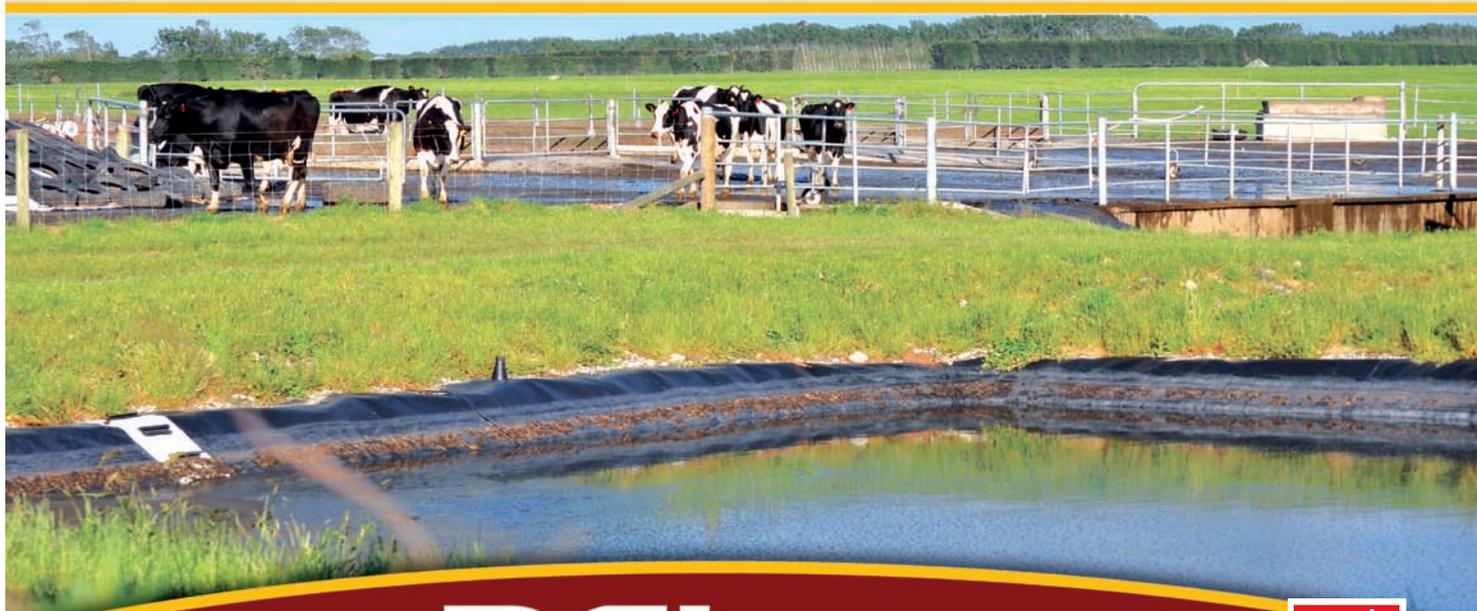
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Soil testing—first step to fertility boost

Good soil testing is the foundation for getting the basics right for good soil management, and maximising crop or pasture yields. BY RICHARD RENNIE

The main impediment to improve our farming productivity on New Zealand farms (both dairy and dry stock) is the ability to do the basics well, and this starts with fertility.

We have discovered and documented which plants need which minerals and elements to grow to optimum health. Through our understanding of the periodic table, we are able to pinpoint specific elements (e.g. manganese, copper, boron, etc.) that are important to plants in trace amounts. We have developed fertilizers to replace the major elements (macronutrients) plants need for basic growth—Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium (N-P-K).

Use of fertiliser is vital, not only to individuals farming our land, but also to the well-being of New Zealand as a whole.

Under use of fertiliser that provides these key elements means landowners are not making the best use of the resources available.

It is important to measure the existing soil nutrient status to assess whether a farm is in a development or maintenance phase.

Soil testing, and taking into account fertiliser history, is the only way to do this. The following soil tests are available from most commercial laboratories:

- PH—a measure of soil acidity and hence a test for lime requirement
- Olsen P—a measure of plant available P.
- Quick Test K (QTK)—a measure of plant available K.
- Quick Test Mg (QTMg)—a measure of plant available Mg.
- Quick Test Ca (QTCa)—a measure of plant available Ca.
- Sulphate-S (SO4-S)—a measure of the immediately plant available S.
- Organic-S (Org-S) or Total S—a measure of the long-term supply of S.
- Anion Storage Capacity (ASC)—a measure of the capacity of a soil to store nutrients such as P and S (previously referred to as phosphate retention).
- Cation storage capacity (CSC)—a measure of the capacity of a soil to store nutrients such as Ca, Mg, K and Na (also referred to as cation exchange capacity).

However as simple as soil testing may sound, it can be made more confusing by the array of tests farmers can choose from when trying to determine how many thousands of dollars to spend each year on the most effective fertiliser applications.

Because fertiliser is the major item of discretionary expenditure on the farm, soil fertility should be monitored regularly. However, soil tests, like all biological measurements, are variable and therefore a single soil test taken at one time is of limited value.

In the normal farm situation, soil sampling should be undertaken at least once every two to three years.

Taking samples six to eight weeks prior to fertiliser application will allow the results of laboratory testing to be used to decide what and how much fertiliser should be purchased. Maximum advantage from soil analysis will be achieved by repeated testing over a number of years. In this way, a picture of trends in soil fertility status of the farm is built up.

The advent of inexpensive, hand held GPS (Global Positioning System) units has meant that permanently recording the sampling lines (transects) is made easy. This allows soil samples in future years to be collected from the same sampling lines which helps reduce spatial variability of soil test information.

Soil tests are unreliable for assessing trace element status because they are present in small quantities in the soil making the relationship between soil content and plant and animal requirements hard to define. Pasture analysis is essential to assess trace element status, and a useful back up to soil tests to confirm soil nutrient status.

When trace-element deficiencies have been identified by herbage and/or animal liver tissue (or body fluid) analyses, they may be corrected by the addition of the required mineral (s) to the normal fertiliser application. Alternatively, some trace elements can be directly administered to animals.

Some tests for certain elements can be unreliable in terms of the information they provide. Mineral N tests for example can be notoriously variable across paddocks, and down the soil profile. N tests are best used as a guide only.

The tried and true Olsen P test continues to provide a consistent benchmark indicator of P levels.

Canterbury soils typically enjoy high reserves of potassium (K) minerals, so demand for potassium fertiliser will depend on the types of crop being grown and the farming operation. Unlike their North Island counterpart's dairying on volcanic soils, farmers in Canterbury dairy farmers may go many years before requiring fertiliser K.

TBK tests for K availability need to however be done at every soil test, particularly in dairy and dairy support situations

If there are any one problematic mineral in Canterbury and much of the South Island, it is sulphur (S), a problem former North Island dairy farmers are less familiar with.

Sulphur analysis can be tricky to get right but Organic S is tested for in soil tests and is the base on which S is required. Sulphur is a critical element for rye and clover growth.

Lime is important and must be used to get the PH levels into 5.8 to 6.2 zone, as our pasture species

(ryegrass and white clover) have been bred to perform best in this range).

The simplest problem to correct is soil pH, and thanks to a plentiful supply of soft lime in Canterbury it is also one of the cheaper problems to fix. Typically cropping soils will require a pH similar to pasture, ideally between 5.8-6.2, although some crops like maize will tolerate lower pH readings and legume seed crops slightly higher pH readings.

The use and rate of nitrogen used on crops and pastures will tend to lower the pH quicker.

The old "one ton to the acre" (2.5t/ha) rule for two to three yearly application is still as valid as ever for pasture when pH levels need adjusting. Thanks to their friable, stony nature most Canterbury soils respond relatively quickly to lime applications.

Alternatively, applied as a maintenance dressing lime need only be applied at 300-500kgs per ha to keep PH at optimum levels.

Changes in land use in Canterbury are being reflected in changes to some soils' physical structure. Soils are experiencing a build up of organic matter on lighter irrigated soils that have had dairy cows on them for 8-10 years. Wintering dairy cows on traditional arable farms has also brought some issues around soil compaction (pugging) and drainage, often requiring regular deep ripping to help rectify.

Whatever situation faced if cropping, winter cultivation and fallowing is the worst option, as this leads to greater N losses. Similarly early spring application of N to crops too young to take it up can lead to increased N losses.

How to test:

- Sample areas that reflect the farm's variability ie hill vs flats, terraces, north facing versus south facing slopes, cropping vs pasture areas.
- Use soil maps, aerial maps/Google Earth, EM scans to identify variances on the property.
- Sampling may involve sampling most paddocks or major zones every 3 years or one third every year. On large farms one paddock may represent several similar paddocks. On cropping farms paddocks may represent the major crops being grown, with some being annually tested and others less regularly.
- Sample pasture 0-7.5 cm, cropping soils 0-15 cm, in moist but not overly wet conditions, avoiding where stock or fertiliser have been recently.
- GPS transects can help identify sample areas for future reference.

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Calf health is important

As we start the calving season it is prudent to remind ourselves of some of the key issues relevant to raising good calves.

BY IAN HODGE

There is a considerable genetic investment in calves and any disease that affects calves is likely to result in a longer period to weaning, lower weaning weights and possibly reduced lifetime production.

Of all the possible calf diseases, scours (diarrhoea) is probably the most prevalent in Canterbury and throughout New Zealand. In some situations scours can affect 20–30% of calves or more. The disease is highly infectious and as well as making calves very ill can result in longer lasting damage in the gut lining which will affect the daily growth of the calves for several weeks after they have recovered.

Calf scours can be caused by several different bacteria and viruses. These affect calves from a few days of age right up to weaning. Mostly however, we see calves in the 4–30 day old age group affected.

Initially affected calves seem dejected. They stand on their own in the pen, fail to suckle properly and develop profuse diarrhoea. This quickly (within hours) leads to severe dehydration, electrolyte disturbances and if not treated, will cause death very quickly. In calves less than one week old bacterial diarrhoea can lead to extreme damage to the gut and bacteria will be present in the blood stream resulting in septicaemia, shock and death if not treated. In older calves viruses are a

more common cause. Rotavirus and Coronavirus are ever present and will both result in similar findings—diarrhoea and dehydration. Again the damage to the gut is very significant and is often the reason the animals do not fully recover for some time.

Calf scours prevention starts with the vaccination of all cows and heifers before they calve. There are several vaccines available for this and hopefully you have vaccinated your cows and heifers. Calf scours vaccines have been proven to result in the production of hyper-immune colostrum which will prevent a great deal of calf scours if calves receive adequate quantities of this colostrum at the correct time after birth. The general recommendation is to feed colostrum at the rate of 2L within 6 hours of birth and a further 2L within the next 6 hours so that an average 40kg calf will have received 10% of its body weight in colostrum within the first 12 hours of its life. Vaccinated cows will continue to produce antibodies in their milk for some time after they calve so if all cows and heifers are vaccinated there should be enough hyper-immune colostrum for the first 8–10 weeks of the calving period.

Other prevention strategies include minimizing all foot and vehicle traffic between cow sheds and calf sheds, keeping protective clothing and feeding utensils VERY clean at all times, having

a disinfecting foot bath present for all people to use before they enter calf pens, keeping the calf stocking density per pen to sensible levels, using clean well drained bedding, feeding at regular times twice daily with consistent milk volumes and having north-facing draught free calf sheds.

If your calves develop diarrhoea it is critical that you engage a vet to diagnose the cause straight away and help you treat affected calves successfully. Often it is not as simple as just using oral electrolyte replacers. In some cases these can make the situation worse by affecting the calves' ability to form a good milk clot in its abomasum, and by not supplying enough energy for the sick calf. Your vet will also advise if you need to be using antibiotics and advise on the safe use of antibiotics if they are required.

Finally, remember that many of the infectious causes of calf scours can be transmitted to people. It is wise to keep young children out of calf sheds especially if the calves are sick. Good personal hygiene is critical for all those making contact with calves.

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You won't end up in a call centre when you contact Brosnan Transport to arrange your next on-farm delivery. In fact, it is the personal touch Brosnans are proud of.

BY LINDA CLARKE

The Timaru transport company was started by Greg Brosnan and his wife Lyn seven years ago. Greg had previously worked for another locally based transport company and decided to go out on his own; he bought Timaru-based Jackson Transport, renamed the business and has spent the past seven years expanding.

"Greg is still hands on in the business and on many occasions he speaks directly to people when they ring up. There are only four of us in the office and we generally know most of the customers pretty well."

"With the business being the size it is, we can focus on customer service and not be lost in the corporate side of things."

Brosnan Transport is the first transport company to join Ruralco as a supplier and general manager Reon Park says the company prides itself on being able to cart anything, from massive concrete pipes to fertiliser, farm implements and shipping containers.

Reon says they specialise in services for the rural and industrial sectors with a staff of 23 working from Brosnan Transport's Washdyke base. The company runs 17 trucks, including daily freight lines between Christchurch and Timaru and regular routes to Nelson and Invercargill, alongside its deliveries to farms.

Brosnan Transport also operates three heavy trucks with cranes or hiabs, which are in demand around

town and on farms for moving anything from silos to bulk fertiliser supplies.

Technology plays an important role in assigning delivery tasks over the fleet. Brosnan Transport is trialling a paperless system in two of its trucks, where drivers receive pick-up and delivery instructions via a tablet in their cabs. This means members can be given a precise delivery time.

"That means when members ring up to find out when the truck is coming, we can see immediately on-screen where the vehicle is instead of having to ring up the driver. It has really streamlined our operation."

The company is based on the brewery side of State Highway One through Washdyke, with two large sheds used for day-to-day operations and storage.

"And it's not only the rural sector that is doing well, but industrial too."

Reon said the company transported all manner of goods, with sometimes unusual dimensions or weights.

"The trucks with crane lifters are kept very busy with a lot of on-farm work like shifting silos and implements or bulk fertiliser or cement. We do a



ABOVE: The crane lifter in action
 MAIN IMAGE: Brosnan Transport can cart anything, including tractors

lot of work for Humes moving concrete pipes.

"The rural sector is quite a big market for us, with deliveries onto farms. We pick up bales of wool and deliver them to stores all around Canterbury. We get a few unusual shapes and sizes to move but we can respond to those requests. There's nothing yet we haven't been able to move!"



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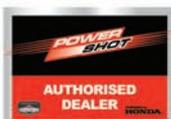
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Pastures get tick from Index

For two generations New Zealand dairy farmers have advanced production and dairy herd quality, thanks to detailed genetic information linked to actual daughter production performance.

BY RICHARD RENNIE

However just as “nature” is important to herd improvement, “nurture”, or feed, is equally important for any herd to fulfil its genetic potential.

DairyNZ researchers are working closely with the NZ Plant Breeding and Research Association, seed companies and AgResearch to develop a Forage Value Index (FVI) for ryegrass cultivars.

It is almost a “Production Worth (PW) for grasses”, to help farmers determine what cultivars are the best for their particular farming location and management practices.

Head of NZ Animal Evaluation Limited Jeremy Bryant says the reasons driving the creation of a pasture performance index are not unlike those behind the creation of a genetic evaluation system for dairy cattle many years ago.

His extensive understanding of genetics, production systems and practical experience meant the FVI was one of the early projects on his plate when he started working with DairyNZ two years ago. The initiative has broad cross industry support, calling on the resources of DairyNZ, AgResearch, and the seed companies.

For Dr Bryant the challenge was not unlike an animal genetic evaluation issue, in terms of interpreting information generated by assessing the performance of cultivars in a uniform, scientific, statistical manner. It is one that Dr Bryant says farmers will welcome.

A standardised, independent assessment evaluation will make it easier for them to determine what pasture cultivars are best for their situation, in an intensely competitive and often confusing marketing environment.

Last May marked the first release of FVI assessed cultivar lists, with a one to five star rating system to rank the assessed cultivars.

Around 70% of the commercially available cultivars have been assessed in a system based on expected economic and seasonal dry matter production merit.

The FVI data has been generated from the long running National Forage Variety Trial (NFVT) programme. Operated by the NZ Plant Breeding and Research Association, the NFVT system commenced in the early 90s. The system measures cultivar performance in small plots for three years in multiple trials around NZ. Not unlike a dairy cow's Production Worth (PW) it provides an economic index rating for each cultivar's performance, with a “five star” ranking

cultivar in the top 20% of performance, and a “one star” at the other extreme, in the bottom 20% of performance.

Cultivar ratings within four regions—upper and lower North Island, upper and lower South Island can be found at the DairyNZ Forage Value Index website (www.dairynzfvi.co.nz).

Importantly, at this point the FVI only reflects seasonal performance production of the cultivars, at specific seasonal points of winter, early spring, late spring, summer, and autumn for each of the geographic regions.

The addition of economic values for each season specific to each geographic region in the FVI star rating adds even greater impetus to breeders' goals of developing cultivars that will perform better at certain times of year, particularly around shoulder growth periods.

But the current FVI values are also based on well managed, protected pasture swards that are ryegrass only.

To increase the robustness of the index figures, six farms across the country are involved in trialling how cultivars perform under more typical farm management with clover, grazing, and the addition of nitrogen fertilisers. This trialling system might be expanded over time.

These plots are alongside the NFVT's pure ryegrass plots, enable researchers to study the degree of variation in yield between pure, and more realistic mixed, swards.

Additional work by DairyNZ senior principal scientist David Chapman is also studying species interaction on four sites, comparing cultivars grown with and without clover and at two different nitrogen application levels.

Over time the index will be adjusted with the inclusion of persistence and cultivar nutritive value, once this data has been amassed from trial sites.

Persistence studies include data from swards intensively grazed by dairy cows around NZ. These are being monitored for five years to track dry matter yield, changes in physical survival, and any changes in genetic composition of the ryegrass.

Dr Bryant says while still in the early stages, initial indicators are that the rankings in the current FVI are holding up well against data from the grazed trials that sit closer to farming reality.

In Canterbury nutritional value of cultivars is also being assessed, and will note cultivar digestibility, fibre content and metabolisable energy levels.

Dr Bryant believes in the future an ideal development would be to have farmers collecting dry matter production on pastures, recording the type of cultivar it is from, similar to what is done with maize hybrid data.

“Ultimately we want to see plant breeding companies more actively promoting FVI, just like we do with BWs in bull catalogues now.”

Index a valuable work in progress

If many farmers are not entirely aware of the FVI, it is understandable. DairyNZ head of strategy Dr Bruce Thorrold says the index has flown a little under the radar, being very much a “work in progress” as more and more data is fed into it.

However, he is very confident in a few short years the FVI will be the industry standard for pasture assessment, and no seed company will be selling pasture seed without the Index's logo and star assessment attached.

“Just as you wouldn't buy a bull without a BW, or fertiliser without an NPKS analysis on it, this will be no different.”

The development of the FVI represents a significant and co-operative step forward for the pasture forage and dairying sectors. Coming into the sector from outside forage technology, Dr Thorrold says he appreciated the benefits having an integrated breeding worth index meant for genetics, and what the same might mean for pasture species' productivity.

“It took the issues experienced with the launch of AR37 endophyte to really bring groups together. We could have had a big bust up, but instead built trust, sorted it out and gained the foundation for the FVI.”

Thanks to good volumes of data held by all parties, he is confident the pasture industry will have an index similar to the breeding sectors BW system within 10 years. “We have a very good template to follow in that.”

Meantime he is urging farmers to interpret the present data with some caution, but in the knowledge more is being added, thanks to excellent cross-industry efforts by all parties.

Tim Dale, General Manager for ATS Seed, welcomes the development of the FVI, and believes it will bring greater clarity for farmers when choosing the right cultivar for their pastures.

“A lot of farmers do get confused by the claims made and the information out there on grasses. This is an excellent resource, particularly for dairy farmers needing something that is independent.” Particularly important is the designation of economic performance by region, making results more valuable and relevant.

“We are encouraging more farmers to use the FVI, it can help them identify the right grass variety a lot sooner, and simpler,” says Tim.

To learn more visit the FVI website at: www.dairynzfvi.co.nz

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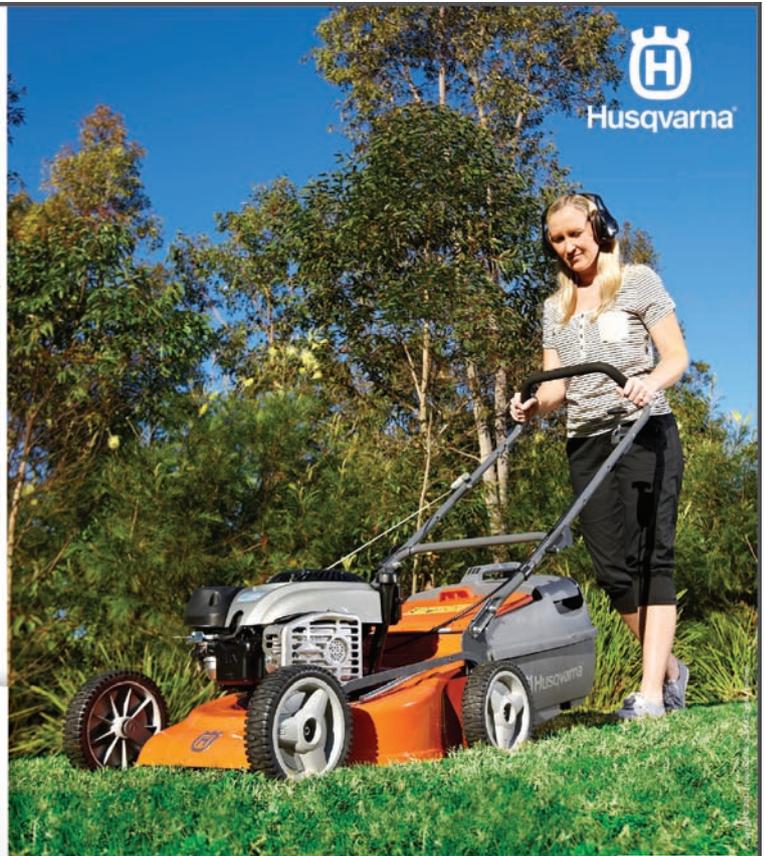


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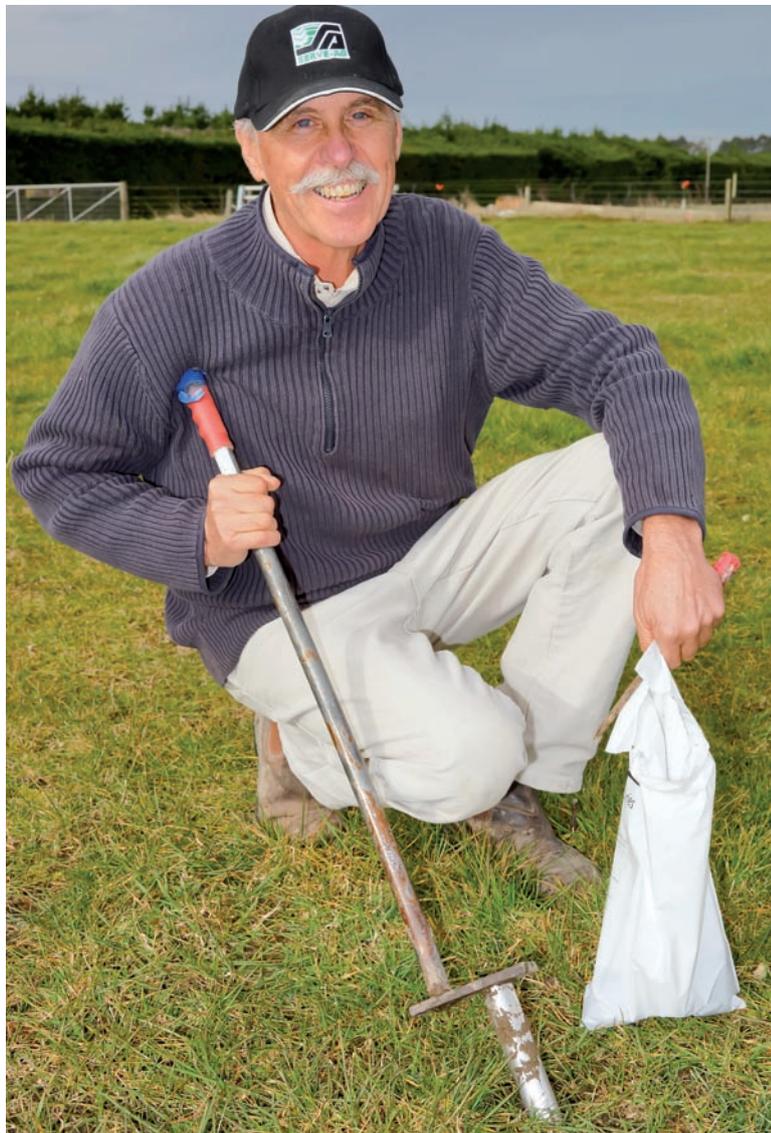
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Biological farming offers alternative view to fertility

Arable farmer and biological soil advisor Don Hart urges farmers not to seek a “silver bullet” when it comes to improving their soils’ productivity. BY RICHARD RENNIE



Don has spent his life as an arable farmer with his wife Sandy at Methven. He also has first-hand experience with the fertiliser industry, having owned topdressing company Skyfarmers, now in the capable hands of his son Duncan.

Frustrated by static crop prices and ever rising costs, Don has nevertheless avoided the rush to dairying and opted to look outside the square to lift farm production and sustainability—and started from the soil up.

After attending conferences in the United States on biological farming, he became convinced combining aspects of the system with conventional approaches would broaden his toolbox, and improve the farm’s viability.

The approach was to focus on balancing the “three legs of the biological stool”—chemical, physical and biology. It involves “resetting” the

soil’s mineral balance, building humus to provide an environment for microbiological activity, and enhancing photosynthesis in the plant above.

Today he advises a number of farmers across all types of farms, incorporating biological systems.

“I put us in the middle of the two extremes, with high input intensity farming in one corner, and extreme organic farming in the other.”

His advice starts with soil testing, and knowing “you can’t manage what you can’t measure.”

The tests he conducts measure soil, forage and blood levels in stock, to determine trace element levels and “macro” nutrient status.

He urges farmers to question everything about soil tests and recommendations, and he spends time educating farmers on all aspects of test results.

Unlike conventional approaches, biological systems

take on pH it is only an indicator of hydrogen ions in the soil, not an indicator of calcium levels.

“But it is about getting the cation nutrients in balance. Get them in balance and the soil structure will open up, allowing better movement of air and water through it, and greater microbiological activity as a result.”

The biological approach also involves focussing more on trace elements that produce essential vitamins and proteins invaluable for soil, plant and ultimately animal health.

“Soils and nature operate on a simple system. I think it is just the human element that has complicated them over the years. I think we need to increase our understanding on what really happens in the soil, and how it affects the plants and animals dependent upon it.”



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Electric cars to save planet?

There is no denying Kiwis are car crazy. So much so, this tiny country sits at number seven globally for car ownership, claiming 712 cars per 1,000 people in 2010 and almost one car for every licensed driver. BY RICHARD RENNIE



This has us nudging the bumper of the United States at 797, but well short of the tiny republic of San Marino that claims 1,200 cars per 1,000 people.

It is hardly surprising, an island nation strung out across the latitudes with small provinces often isolated by geography that leaves little but to make our own way to and from destinations. But the bill for this freedom is mounting fast. Back in 2002 New Zealand's fuel bill was \$2.7 billion, almost the equivalent of our sheepmeat export value at the time. However by 2012 the bill had climbed to \$8 billion, claiming the earnings of not only our sheepmeat exports, but fish, beef, vegetables and seafood export earnings. Just over 80% of that bill is for transport fuel, and over 90% of that is for light vehicles less than three tonnes. The environmental cost is also moving upwards for the country. The Ministry for the Environment data is recorded an increase of 22% in NZ's greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2012. Transport accounted for the most significant sector increase, up by 39% over that period, with the bulk accounted for by light vehicles. This comes as the World Bank has issued dire warnings over risk to life on earth if the world lurches into a 4°C plus rise in temperature over the coming 70 years.

Here in New Zealand, the result of additional carbon emissions appear to be already having an effect on our weather. NIWA data highlights the increasing occurrence of drought here, with

ABOVE: CEO of Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Agency Roger Sutton with the Mitsubishi MiEV electric car being trialled in Christchurch.

four of the last 10 years in the top six for worst soil moisture deficits.

The International Energy Agency lists four points to avoid the 4°C plus melt down. One relevant to aging vehicle fleets like New Zealand's is to target energy efficiency in buildings and transport, with the additional investment cost more than offset by the fall in fuel consumption.

For New Zealand, with our population still strung over a vast distance, the private car is often the only option for work and leisure access, making it harder to wean ourselves off fossil fuel than more densely populated urbanised countries.

But that fleet is aging. A 2010 Ministry of Transport report indicates the fleet presently averaging 12.6 years will get older again, possibly touching 13 years by later this decade.

This brings not only repair headaches for owners, but on-going and worsening problems around carbon emissions for the environment, and fuel efficiency losses for the economy.

Electric cars have been touted by some as a way for New Zealand to scoop some big pluses on the economic and environmental front, saving on imported fossil fuel and utilising a clean source of hydro energy as the replacement "fuel" source.

The possible closure of Tiwai point aluminium smelter has added to the allure of electric cars, given the smelter generates sufficient energy to charge hundreds of thousands of cars. Interest has also stepped up thanks to work done by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) trialling electric cars in a commercial environment with multiple users.

The agency has run a trial on the cars in Wellington, and a lower profile one in Christchurch.

The work in Wellington helped highlight both concerns and advantages in the cars.

Advantages included ease of parking and quietness. However, users remained concerned about the limited range of the vehicles, the ability to recharge, and the cost of the vehicles.

EECA Transport Partnerships Manager Jon Scherzer said "fuelling" the vehicle was cheap at the equivalent of 26c a litre fuel equivalent, but showroom price tags remained prohibitive.

He said NZ had sufficient renewable electricity resources to cope with 20 years of demand growth which could also absorb electric vehicle (EV) uptake.

AA cool on electrics

AA's motoring advice manager Andrew Bayliss says electric vehicles (EV) still have a long way to go before they can be an option when shopping for a new vehicle. "You are looking at cars almost twice the price of the equivalent petrol vehicle, typically \$60,000 to \$70,000."

He agrees the difference can buy "a lot" of fuel. Even the interest lost on the extra money tied up in the EV could buy enough fuel to travel thousands of kilometres in a conventional car.

"We also have some very, very fuel efficient petrol and diesel vehicles now. Cars like the Ford Fiesta claiming 5.1 litres per 100km make EV's even harder to justify."

Range remained an issue, with few extending beyond 100km, making them an "unlikely" option for rural users he says.

He says the prices here in New Zealand are likely to remain significantly higher than overseas.

"In many countries, including through Europe and the United States, governments are subsidising the EVs, to the tune of \$10,000 a vehicle."



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One stop tool shop

Tradespeople and DIYers in Ashburton have discovered a new tool heaven. BY LINDA CLARKE

Palmer Agri Parts Direct Ltd owners Paul Rowland and Nicky Horrell have expanded into the tool market with their new venture, The Toolshed. The two businesses run from the same building in the Riverside Industrial Park and have become a one-stop shop for Tradesmen, farmers and town people alike.

With so many new products to display, the showroom has tripled in size, but the agri parts business remains an important feature. Palmer Agri Parts has around 5,000 agricultural replacement parts in stock, ready to repair everything from calf feeders and horse floats to trailers, ploughs and grubbers.

Palmer Agri Parts has a long history in the district and while it does some work for the dairy industry, its core business remains meeting the cultivation and ploughing needs of arable and cropping farmers. They supply and manufacture a big range of farm equipment parts from cultivation points and tines, plough parts and combine croplifters. They are also sole NZ agents for Spaldings UK earth engaging parts and consumables.

Their qualified engineers can make or repair most things, and recondition farm machinery.

Paul says adding The Toolshed range complements the engineering business started by Des Palmer back in 1958. The Ashburton Toolshed is one of 17 ToolSheds in New Zealand, and one of four in the South Island.

The Toolshed was started by Hamilton brothers Graeme and Wayne Giles, and Paul says they are enthusiastic supporters of the tool trade, from the home handyman to full-on tradesmen.

"They were keen to have a Toolshed in Mid Canterbury because it's such a go-ahead place with a lot happening," Paul said.

The Toolshed sells power tools, air tools, hand tools, outdoor tools, workshop tools and accessories. The Palmers' building has been altered internally to cope with the huge range, which includes the Makita, Dewalt, Powerbuilt, Bosch and Hitachi brands alongside The Toolshed's house brands, Arges and Toolshed Trade.

Paul says the range is impressive. "From an engineer's point of view, the quality of the equipment is exceptional, with a price range to match. The buying power of the franchise is huge."

While Paul and Nicky see The Toolshed as a natural complement for their existing Palmers' customers, who are mostly farmers, it has also generated a new clientele of town-based handymen and local tradesmen.

"I had a guy come in the other day for a bale fork. He walked out with two grinders. We are a one-stop shop for our existing customers. We are also a new outlet for the tradesman and DIYer wanting anything from a woodworking machine to power tools and much more."

Nicky is now working full-time in the business, it's her friendly voice that will welcome you when you walk in the door. All the workshop staff are able to give technical advice about the tools they are selling.



ABOVE: Paul Rowland and Nicky Horrell
BELOW MAIN IMAGE: Part of the extensive tool range
MAIN IMAGE: The Toolshed and Palmer Agri Parts building

Paul says Kiwis have a great DIY attitude and will attempt many jobs, on the farm or around the house. He says the new Toolshed range will benefit both serious tool users and those needing tools for the occasional job.

All The Toolshed stores feature on the website www.thetoolshed.co.nz which allows customers to see the full range of products available, and buy online. Customers can also sign up in store or online to become Toolshed "Goodmates". They receive Weekly Ripper Deals and Tool Talk by email and receive the latest Specials Pamphlet and Catalogue by post.



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Feed conversion for profitability

Feed Conversion Efficiency (FCE) is a highly important measure of how well our stock convert feed into saleable product, yet in milk production the average herd lags well behind the targets. BY JAMES HAGUE

Much of this gap is due to a lack of balance in the diet and the performance of individual cows within the herd. Pointers to improve FCE are discussed below.

Profit can be defined as *'the efficient conversion of cost into income'*. In the case of dairy farming a large element relies on the efficient conversion of feeds into milk to produce a margin. The more margin that is produced, the more likely all other costs are covered and profit results.

Feed Conversion Efficiency is a useful measure which is rarely discussed in the dairy industry, and yet is everyday parlance in the pig, poultry and intensive meat industries. Work done by Eric Kolver showed that the average dairy farm in New Zealand was achieving a FCE of only 77gMS/KgDM, whereas the target is to achieve 100gMS/KgDM. This shows that there is huge potential for extra production from what we are already feeding and by extracting more from what we have already paid for, a huge potential for extra profitability.

So why are we failing to achieve high levels of feed conversion? Part of the answer lies in the

number of productive 'days in milk' that we get from the herd. At a national average of 275 days in milk¹, a cow calving every 365 days with a dry period of 60 days should be milking for 305 days. This loss of 30 days of milking time means that the feed required for maintenance is not being offset by production and therefore FCE looks poorer. Fewer days in milk also results in a loss of around 36KgMS per cow (assuming that the cow was still doing 1.2KgMS at the tail end of lactation). At a payout of \$7.00 this is worth a whopping \$252 per cow, \$189,000 for a 750 cow herd. For many of these cows the difference between a milking ration and a dry ration would only be 4-5KgDM, which at a cost of say 30c/kgDM would be an extra cost of \$1.20 to \$1.50 per day, but with an income of \$8.40 per day it can be worth looking at strategies to keep cows milking on longer.

We also have to look within the herd to see how many animals are not good feed converters. Heifers entering the herd typically produce 75% of the production of a six year old, so do not appear to be good feed converters. However, they do grow by around 80kg within the first lactation which is not accounted for in FCE. Bringing heifers

into the herd better grown will help ensure that the feed eaten during the lactation goes towards production, not growth. Some of the older cows in the herd will be low yielding and have lower FCE. These cows should be viewed as culls and replaced by more efficient feed converters.

A large part of improving Feed Conversion Efficiency lies in balancing the diet. Often diets become unbalanced for energy, protein, physical fibre and minerals. This leads to a reduction in how well the diet is digested and converted into milk. SealesWinslow analyse a large number of diets each year and often find a discrepancy between what is offered and what is achieved. Selecting the right mix of feeds is important to ensure the cow and the rumen gets the nutrients needed to unlock the potential of the diet. Those that get it right achieve FCE's into the mid to high 120gMS/KgDM, those that don't can be half of that.

¹ New Zealand Dairy Statistics 2011-12

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Dreaming of motorbikes

When Brendan Price dreams, it is of motorbikes. The Ashburton Honda Country owner has spent the past 36 years riding, racing, selling, fixing, modifying and tuning motorbikes. They are his work and his hobby.

BY LINDA CLARKE

Brendan has been riding bikes since he was 15 and came to Honda Country in 1986 after working as an automotive and diesel engineer. He was in his element as a motorcycle mechanic and when the then owner, Eddie Bray, put the business on the market in 1993, Brendan was one of a partnership that bought it.

Three years later, he owned the business outright and has built it up over the years selling and servicing to the local farming scene, recreational and racing bike owners.

He says the increase in dairying throughout the district brought changes to Honda Country and has driven how the business developed. These days he has a crew of nine, including two office staff.

"Dairy bikes need more regular servicing because of the conditions in which they are used. It used to be mainly four-wheelers but that has changed recently, and 125cc two-wheelers are now popular as they are cheaper to run and easier to ride."

Road bikes are a more specialised field and an area of the business developed by Brendan, who has a keen interest in racing. He competed this year in the national road racing championships, coming "not last" in his 600cc class.

Honda Country also sponsors top Christchurch riders John Ross and Dennis Charlett, and is helping top young Mid Canterbury rider Bailie Perriton in his pursuit of national honours.

Brendan bought a dynamometer to tune these high-spec racing bikes and Honda Country has become the leading venue in the South Island for this service. He says racing gives him a first-hand look at how bikes he has serviced and tuned are performing and areas for improvement.

Understanding the history of the Ashburton Motorcycle Club has given him an appreciation of the motorcycle in years past. He says two-wheelers were a popular and affordable option prior to the 1950s but went out of favour with the commercial production of the motorcar.

But he says there will always be room for motorbikes on-farm and for those who love the thrill of the ride. The top of the range bikes are almost as complicated electronically as a late-



ABOVE: Brendan and Michelle Price
BELOW MAIN IMAGE: A motorcycle being tuned on the Dynojet dyno
MAIN IMAGE: The Honda Country store front

model car and engineers are constantly working on safety features.

"Certainly bikes are a lot more powerful now but they have bigger brake systems and better handling. There's still plenty of scope for improvement though."

Brendan says motorbikes of the future will likely run on battery and riders will simply plug them in for recharging overnight. You can guarantee Honda Country will be keeping up with the trends.



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Shogun makes more pasture renewal a reality

On dairy farms with many poor producing paddocks, renewing 10% or more of your farm into new pasture each year is best practice, with great productivity gains. But for many highly stocked Canterbury dairy producers, it remains an elusive goal.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY AGRISEEDS

This spring, however, the game has changed. That 10% goal is now well within reach, and with it the opportunity to significantly lift production.

The difference this year is Shogun with NEA endophyte, a new hybrid ryegrass from Agriseeds with the yield, establishment speed, winter growth and longevity to change the way farmers plan and implement 'normal' pasture renewal programmes.

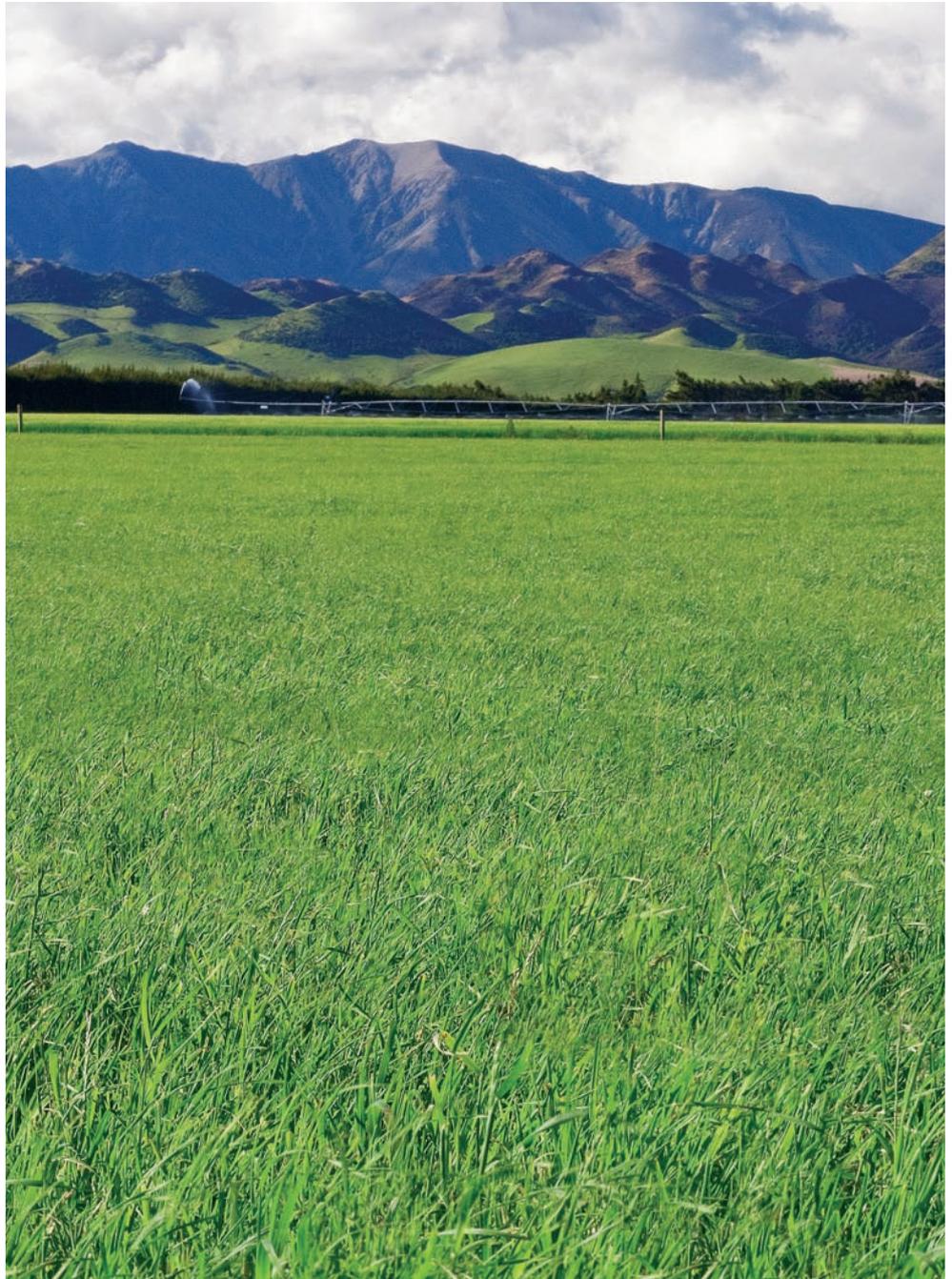
Up until now, the most common challenge with renewing 10% or more of your pasture each year has been keeping cows well fed while those extra renewal paddocks are temporarily unavailable for grazing.

Shogun helps overcome this with exceptional dry matter (DM) yield. It grows so much extra feed it creates a surplus to free up more paddocks for renewal. It grows more DM than many perennial ryegrasses in summer and autumn, and in winter and early spring its growth is comparable to an Italian ryegrass.

Shogun establishes at a similar speed to Italian ryegrass, so paddocks have less down time after sowing and can be rotated back into the grazing round more quickly than those renewed with perennial ryegrass or other hybrids.

Shogun also shows good persistence for a hybrid ryegrass. Managed well it will last three years in most regions, and under ideal conditions can last up to five years.

ATS shareholder Hamish Monk, who works with ATS Dairy Key Account Manager Lauren Sandrey, says Shogun has led to a new way of dealing with an old pasture renewal problem on the 560 cow border-dyked dairy unit he manages at Methven. "We wanted something that would get out of the ground fast, like an annual, and grow a lot of feed on its own without clover in it. Being border-



dyked, we have real issues with flat weeds like dandelions and plantain in our new grass, so we have to be able to spray, sometimes two or three times, and you can't really do that to clover."

Previously new grass paddocks were worked up and cropped to reduce flat weed pressure, but straight Shogun grass to grass is a better option, Hamish says.

"We sprayed out one paddock in autumn, and sowed Shogun on its own. Six weeks after it was up, we went through with 2,4-D and killed all the flat weeds and it's just taken off since then. The cows love it; they would eat it into the ground if you let them."

This follows four Shogun paddocks sown in spring 2012. "We actually did those with clover but the weeds were so bad we had to spray, and ended up sacrificing the clover to save the grass."

Re-growth after grazing has really impressed on these paddocks, Hamish says, and return intervals are up to three days shorter.

Shogun with NEA endophyte will be available this spring. To find out how you can use it to renew more of your farm, talk to the ATS Seed team today.

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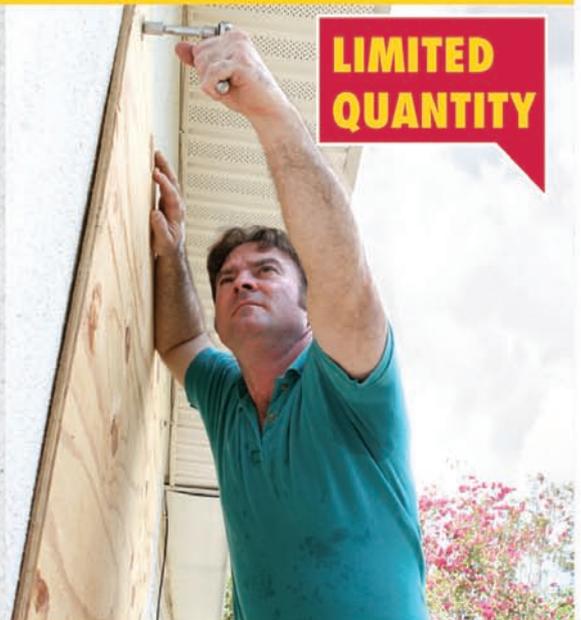
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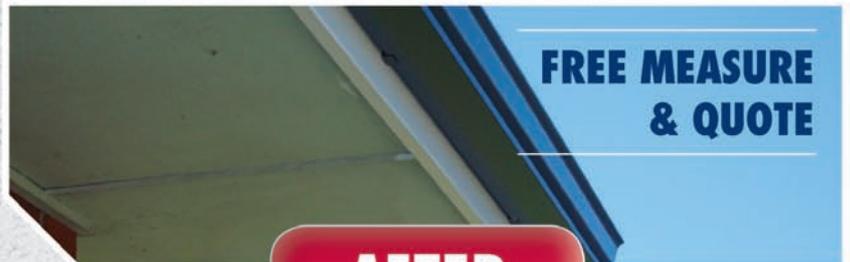
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Choosing the right nitrogen product

Many farmers benefit from using nitrogen to meet production targets; it can help dairy farmers to maximise milk solids production, sheep and beef farmers to support lactation and the growth of young stock, and cropping farmers to achieve optimum yields.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRINUTRIENTS



When it comes to products, there are a number of options to choose from, including n-rich urea, Sustain Green, sulphate of ammonia (SOA) and the Ammo range. So which is best? To answer that question, you need to consider the following:

- Your need for other nutrients, especially sulphur
- How much nitrogen you need to add
- The conditions in which the nitrogen will be applied.

Sustain Green

If you are applying urea you need rain to wash it into the soil, otherwise some will be lost to the air as a gas (by volatilisation). The minimum amount of rain required is 10 mm in the first 24 hours following application. Under typical conditions 10-20% of urea N can be lost this way, rising to 50% if conditions are unfavourable. Research has shown that around 30% of losses caused by volatilisation occur in the first day after application.

Sustain Green has been developed to slow the process of volatilisation. By choosing this product, you increase the chance of the nitrogen being washed into the soil, where it can be used by plants. It's a good choice if you're not certain that you'll get the required rainfall in the following 24 hours, or if you have low pasture cover, or if you are going to be broadcasting high rates of nitrogen, e.g. as a side-dressing for crops. It will be particularly beneficial if you are applying

nitrogen to damp soil but will not get any rainfall after application. In this situation, nitrogen loss by volatilisation will be high. Use Sustain Green exactly as you would use urea, except without the worry of waiting for rain.

n-rich urea

Traditionally, n-rich urea has been the nitrogen product of choice for many farming situations, and it is still likely to be the most cost-effective option if the conditions are right at the time of application. It can be used as long as the grass is growing, but you will get the best economic result if it is applied under ideal conditions, i.e. if you get a minimum of 10 mm of rain within 24 hours of application. In pastoral situations, you are best to have a pasture cover of 1500 kg DM/ha. Warmer temperatures will mean greater growth rates, which in turn promotes greater economic benefit from the nitrogen. In cropping situations, your soil test results and yield targets will drive the amounts of nitrogen you add, and the timing will be determined by the stage of growth at which nitrogen additions are most effective.

SOA and Ammo products

If your soils are low in sulphur, maybe because of a wet winter or because your soils have a low sulphur retention capacity, then you can always add a product that contains both nitrogen and sulphur. To find out if sulphur levels are low, you will need to carry out a soil or herbage test. Once

you have your results then the choice of product will be determined by the relative amounts of nitrogen or sulphur that you would like to add. The table below shows the breakdown for each of the products.

PRODUCT	NUTRIENT (%)	
	N	S
SOA	20.5	23
n-rich ammo 30N	30.5	14
n-rich ammo 36N	35.8	9.2
n-rich ammo 40N	39.6	5.8

It's worth remembering that the sulphur in these products is in the sulphate form, which is immediately plant available. However, it is water-soluble, so it is vulnerable to leaching, so these products should not be applied before heavy rain (heavy enough to exceed the soil's water-holding capacity).

In any case, it is always worthwhile talking to your Ballance or ATS rep about the nitrogen options on the market; they will be able to help you choose the right one for your particular situation.



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Co-op News

IT Tips: Is your computer running slowly?

Internet pages seem to be taking forever to load? It may not actually be your computer, check if it's your internet connection by visiting www.speedtest.net.

Speed test is tool that allows you to roughly see how quick your internet connection is. Of course many things will impact this like the age of your PC or your connection to the router (i.e. wired versus wireless) but it does give you a snapshot of your connection. Most broadband connections will vary from approximately 5 mbps download and .5 mbps upload, to 10 mbps download and 1mbps upload. Compare the speeds you get to what you are paying your broadband provider for.

Things that can help your speed include a quality modem, placing filters on all your telephone jack points to reduce interference, keeping your modem software up to date and keeping appliances that may interfere with your modem; televisions, stereos and microwaves for example; at distance.

Use this tool a couple of times to see what your average speed is; don't rely on a single test to be accurate.

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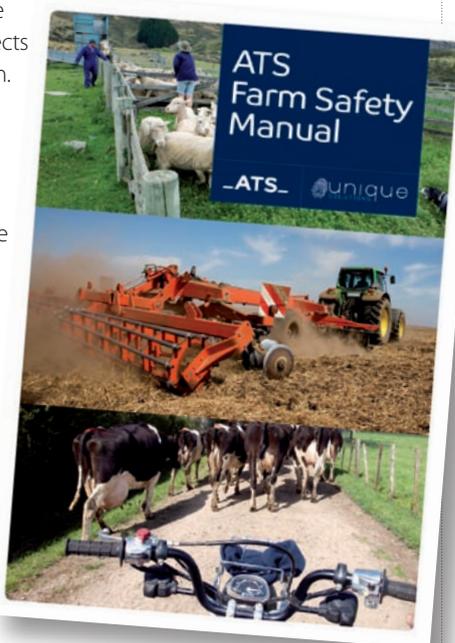
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Training dates are the 20 August, 17 September & 22 October 2013 for \$550 (GST and member discount inclusive). Seating is limited so get in fast. For more information or to reserve your spot please contact Cindy Meadows on 03 423 2273, cindy@uniquesolutions.co.nz, or reserve your spot online at www.ats.co.nz/farmsafety.



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To RSVP contact ATS Seed by calling 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) or emailing atsseed@ats.co.nz before Monday 19 August.

INTRODUCING: Lachie Campbell



ATS is pleased to welcome Lachie Campbell with his appointment as Sales Manager.

Lachie joined ATS in June, and has taken on the new role of Sales Manager where he is in charge of the Key Account Managers.

Lachie brings with him a wealth of experience in the rural sector gathered while working on and managing breeding, finishing, dairy and arable properties in New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the UK.

He has spent time working onshore and offshore in the oil and gas industry both in New Zealand and Australia, worked for PGG Wrightson as a Technical Field Representative in the Taranaki, and more recently as an Account Manager with Ravensdown in the Taranaki District.

Lachie, his wife Tracey, and their four children originate from the Manawatu.

Lachie is pleased to be on board with ATS and says he is looking forward to continuing the traditions established 50 years ago. He will be helping the Key Account Managers to add value to Ruralco members.

Instore Days Prize Winners

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United Travel Hamper—Linda Holland

United Travel Toy Airplane—M Rhodes

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Bell Booth \$1500 Product—Lynton Molloy

Betacraft Alcatel One Touch Tablet—Stephen & Katrina Dellaca

Castrol Chainsaws—Grant Early; Richard Watson; Ross Hibbell; Leo Donkers; Peter & Jean Letham

Castrol Work Station—Chris & Ruth Sheppard

Superior Chunky Dog Roll—Murray McManus

Deane Apparel Jackets—Ron & Adrienne Ferriman; Murray & Lyn Bland; Jim & Jocelyn Petrie; Mark & Andrea Schrader; Gordon & Sharon Duthie

FIL Dairy Acid Chemical Dispenser—Mark & Julie Cressey

Norsewear Ruahine & Gumboot Socks—Paul & Kerry Harmer

Nufarm Coffee Machine—Graeme & Amanda Bassett

Orion Golf Clubs—Craig & Helen Elliott

Purina Powerbuilt Tool Set—Jonathon & Jackie Tanner

Shoof Tailwell2—Selwyn & Raewyn Mundt

Stallion \$400 Gift Basket—Graham Thomas

Tru-Test Stafix X3 Unigizer—Trevor Monson

ATS Membership Winter Brassica Weights—Graham Elms

Instore Days Colouring Competition Winners

Ages 4–7

Winner: Charlotte Middleton, 7

Second: Ashley Pope, 4

Ages 8–10

Winner: George Lill, 10

Second: Ella McSweeney, 8

Members' Choice Award Winner

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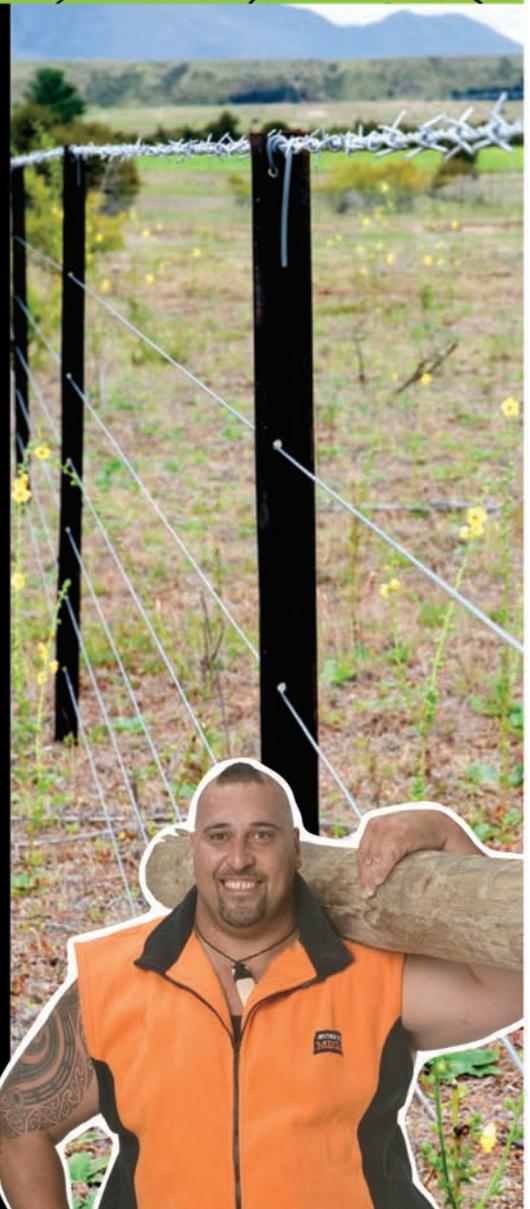
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