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Contents

DECEMBER / JANUARY 2016

Cover Story



2

Calf rearing passion brings southern options



24

Garlic holds its own against a sea of grapes



35

PKE guidelines hard for farmers to swallow



37

Climate Change: What's a bank got to do with it?



43

Unlocking the feeding secrets of sheep

Features

- 2 Calf rearing passion brings southern options
- 24 Garlic holds its own against a sea of grapes
- 35 PKE guidelines hard for farmers to swallow
- 43 Unlocking the feeding secrets of sheep

Profiles

- 11 All the building materials and tools you need
PlaceMakers
- 19 Taking the heat off farmers
Patterson Contracting
- 23 Setting up for summer
Tinwald Canvas
- 39 A comfortable life on the road
Lifestyle Motorhomes

Regulars

- 7 Combatting skilled labour shortage of benefit to all
- 9 The eyes have it
- 13 Big shifts underway in NZ power portfolio
- 17 Maintaining productivity in hot weather
- 31 Future here now for water management
- 37 Climate Change: What's a bank got to do with it?
- 45 Studying: Thinking about the Dollars and Sense
- 47 Tech Tips
- 49 Ruralco Kids
- 52 Co-op News
- 55 Out & About
- 56 Classifieds



ON THE COVER:
Palmerston farmers Brent and Susan McEwan with daughter Olivia





Calf rearing passion brings southern options

When it comes to a calf rearing business anyone brave enough to take it on can well feel they are at the riskiest end of the livestock industry. Costs are loaded upfront well before any income is received, market prices can shift between the start and end of the season turning budgets into fantasies, and animal health issues can send losses soaring.

BY RICHARD RENNIE

But none of that stopped farming couple Brent and Susan McEwan from starting their calf rearing operation near Palmerston, East Otago from scratch. Three years on, their business Rednalhghih Udders is starting to see rays of success fall across it, and they can appreciate just how much they have achieved in a short time.

No strangers to hard work, Brent and Susan purchased the 84ha property just over three years ago after they finished up a sharemilking contract in the Maniototo region. There they had been sharemilking 3,000 cows across three operations. The 23 staff they employed totalled more than the population of many of the district's villages, and keeping the operation fully staffed and running smoothly was a constant juggling act for the couple.

"We were both born on the Maniototo and it's a great place, but it's also a tough, cold one, and getting staff can be really hard to do."

Susan admits her passion had always been calf rearing, and by the time they left the region she



had regularly reared hundreds of replacements. It was a passion she discovered when the couple lived near Oamaru with her working for Reid Farmers Limited and Brent then driving trucks.

"Rearing calves was a bit of a sideline for me. For Brent, he discovered his passion for dairying when I had some calves that needed to be paid for and in return the farmer asked us if we would milk over Easter for him—Brent was taken by it from the first time he did it."

Multiple sharemilking jobs and a careful eye on savings helped them build their equity, stepping

ABOVE: Susan with Olivia on their 84ha calf rearing property in Palmerston

BELOW: Susan admits calf rearing is her real passion while Brent's is growing grass and turning it into milk

OPPOSITE: Brent, Susan and daughter Olivia on the Heriot dairy farm where they sharemilk 430 cows

up with a series of 800 cow sharemilking jobs over the years and culminating in the big Maniototo operation.

"After that I knew there was a gap in the market down here for a professional calf rearing business. Calf rearing just does not seem to have the same recognition down this way that it gets in the North Island, despite the slide in breeding cow numbers over the years and difficulty in sourcing stock."

That lack of recognition extended to finance, with their bank backing out from supporting them when it learned they were opting for a calf rearing business over a supposedly less risky dairy farm conversion.

"So we quickly found we had the prospect of having to self-fund the whole operation, from equity and cash flow, with limited overdraft either which has certainly made it an interesting and challenging time."

After hunting around the Taieri and even back in the Maniototo the couple found the property at Palmerston, 55km north of Dunedin that ticked all



the boxes for an operation, including being a size they could afford on their own.

"We wanted a place that was close to the main road for calf delivery, had a northerly aspect to it and had good contour."

What they got was an ex-sheep property that at 84ha was too small to convert to dairying, on light soil with northerly facing paddocks that are ideal for keeping calves warm and dry.

However it was only split into 12 paddocks and the couple needed about 60 to ultimately handle the 3,000 calves they reared that first year.

"We had a great team of fencing contractors, they would ask me 'how many paddocks do you need today?' and I would tell them five, and by the end of the day I would be putting the calves into these new paddocks, just as they were hanging the gates."

It was a tough first year with troughs not hooked up they had to be filled by hand out of a 20mm hose dragged around. Races were not sealed and rearing sheds were pitched up in rapid time, starting on July 27, and by August 12 all three new sheds were full of calves.

"The support we had from the local community here was wonderful, they welcomed us and helped us wherever possible, they could see the value in having a business like this and did all they could to help us make it happen."

Feeding was not as refined as it is now, with 60 mobs of calves fed using four mobile towed feeders.

At the end of that season the McEwan's travelled to the North Island on an ideas trip, gathering hints and layouts from some large scale operators there.

"One of the best ideas we saw was someone feeding all their calves in one place on a concrete pad from a fixed feeder. We headed home, gutted the sheep yards and concreted an area and set up four 15 teat feeders with a view of ensuring 'every calf every day' got the feed it should get."

BELOW: Distance is the sacrifice for Susan with Olivia and husband Brent who sharemilks on a property two and a half hours away



They set up two training paddocks to funnel calves to the feeding pad, after spending their first three weeks inside the sheds.

"It initially takes three days to train them to come in, but after that they are away with one of us bringing the calves in, while the other supervises the feeding."

Brent and Susan incorporated a straight feed system rather than the traditional circular pattern, rotating calf mobs back and forwards similar to a herringbone dairy shed.

"Having the calves come out means we see each calf moving every day—if a calf does not come out of its paddock, you know there is something wrong, and they will end up in the 'sick shed'."

That is split into seven pens for every day of the week, with a record kept of treatments and recovery.

"Basically if they are not right by the end of day seven they will never be right. It is an efficient way to remove any sick animal and any possible infection from the main mobs. Meantime having two people feed the calves every day means even if one of us has an off day, the other is likely to spot anything that is wrong."

It is a low margin, high number business to succeed, with Susan feeding once a day and targeting a six week period to get calves to weaning weight of 70kg.

To help get the business on a sound cash flow footing Brent opted this year to take up a sharemilking job on a 430 cow farm two and a half hours south at Heriot (see accompanying article). For Susan this has meant even greater reliance upon her good friend and employee Jodie Kemp to help rear this season's 1,500 calves.

"Jodie loves the calves as much as I do, and she is absolutely critical to the operation here with Brent away."

They also have two part time workers to help with feeding the 1.5 tonne a day of meal the calves need plus all the straw, lucerne baleage and every day calf jobs

Another vital part of her team this year has been the support received from calf nutritionist



Dr Bas Schouten and Sloten Sprayfo whey based milk powder distributor Warren Tanner of Agri-vantage.

"Bas's advice this year has made a lot of difference—he recommended we add straw to the calves' diet, along with lucerne balage into the calves' feed along with pellets. On cold days they really hoe into the straw, and the lucerne is an excellent source of protein, coming out of Central Otago."

She says ATS also played a big part in helping out this season. When their previous supplier couldn't accommodate their needs on their massive powder purchases, things were looking grim so they looked elsewhere for an alternative.

"But our Methven calf client put us onto ATS who said they would be happy to assist on our powder purchase, and that made a huge difference, it would be hard to operate without that."

Susan's aim is to get the calves as accustomed to a pasture type diet well before being sold on, avoiding the transitional growth check that so often sets calves back by 10kg or more when they hit pasture at their new home.

While the numbers of calves reared can seem dizzying, the quality of care they get is closer to individual treatment than many ever get on smaller operations.

Susan and Jodie weigh the calves as often as twice a week to monitor growth rates from 50kg onwards. They are mobbed in similar weight bands and once outside after three weeks inside receive a lined canvas cover to help preserve body heat and therefore maintain weight gain.

"Bas has said a Friesian calf will start to shiver at about 9-11C, and if they are then their growth rate can drop right back to less than 200g a day, we need them to be achieving 600g a day, and there are plenty of days the temperature does not get over 10°C."

Susan believes the colder temperature regime helps keep the bugs and infections common in calf operations up north to a minimum, and



summer's high temperatures help bake off any lingering infection risk, helped by the dry Otago climate.

"We are also very conscious of hygiene, with every pen sprayed out with Virkon every second day, we use river stones in the pen, the sheds are purpose built and we are pretty strict about what weight of calf we accept to rear."

They have a 40kg cut off weight for taking calves to rear, something that took a while to be accepted by farmers and agents, but one that ensures she can meet their six week weight targets, and ensure the final weaned calf is one they are happy with.

"We have to have them at 100kg by 12 weeks. We also keep traumatic events like de-budding limited to one event at a time. Touch wood, we have had no infection issues over the three years."

The catchment for the McEwans sourcing calves stretches from Ashburton to Dunedin, and they are the southern rearers for 500 of Fonterra's export heifer trade. A large bull farming client in Methven also contracts to buy 600 Friesian bull calves, appreciating the consistent quality that ensures he can finish the calves through to 16 months.

She admits getting the numbers this year has been trickier, in part she thinks because dairy farmers have bobbied more calves in the tougher payout season, but those calves have come in heavier at 44–47kg.

With Brent contracted for another season in Heriot after this one Susan is also considering her options as the operation starts to come into its own.

That includes possibly rearing autumn born calves, splitting the work load (and cash flow) more evenly through the year.

Contract rearing calves for dairy farmers who lack the skilled staff to do it themselves could also be another option. With four leased blocks also running bull beef her day is a full one, with an early start that has her accompanied by their four year old daughter Olivia.

"I can see now how the really tough early days have bought us to a point where the business is going well—I think we have something to offer the South Island and its farmers, and it's something I am absolutely passionate about."

A long distance farming affair

There would be few farming spouses who would tolerate their partner shifting 2.5 hours away to run another farm, only able to visit between milkings once a week.

But that distance is the sacrifice Palmerston farming couple Brent and Susan McEwan made in July this year to make their future more secure, and pursue their respective passions.

The McEwans committed everything they had to their Palmerston calf rearing business, with limited bank support they have had to self-fund the operation into the success it is today.

But Susan admits the calves are also her real passion, while Brent's is growing grass and turning it into milk.

"I know Brent would have happily stayed in the Maniototo milking, but he also appreciated how committed I was to making this business work, despite not being a big fan of rearing calves himself," says Susan.

Two years into the rearing business they have managed to find a compromise that fits,

even though it has involved Brent taking up a sharemilking position on a 430 cow farm at Heriot, 2.5 hours south.

Susan admits it was "a bit weird" at first seeing her partner and husband of 23 years drive off to a new job without her, but they have managed to carve a routine out for their individual weeks' work, with Brent making it home once a week to see her and daughter Olivia.

"He is on a 16 hour milking routine, so if he gets up here at 9.30pm he can get Olivia off to kindy and does not have to leave until 10am. It won't be long before we are able to go down and see him in the weekends too."

She admits they did it tough over late winter-early spring when neither saw the other for eight weeks as their respective operations got into full swing through calving.

But the extra income Brent's position generates is invaluable in putting their business onto a sound footing, given the inherent risks that calf rearing businesses face every season.

"Even though dairying is going through a bit of a down patch, that extra income is enough to really make a difference."

She admits she misses him the most for tasks she calls the "blue jobs", including recently having to make the decision to shoot a horse, and for certain tractor jobs.

Meantime, to mark the months of their long distance marriage and much to the delight of Olivia, Susan is dyeing her hair a different colour every month they are apart—so far she has worked through shades of pink, green, blue and orange.

"I am working my way through them, and promised him I would have a rainbow of them in May, to mark our first year!"

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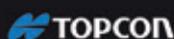
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Combatting skilled labour shortage of benefit to all

Provincial New Zealand is facing a skilled labour shortage. Many of us have first-hand knowledge of the problem but do we understand why it is happening or what we can do to combat it?

NEAL SHAW, GROUP CEO

Traditionally provincial and rural New Zealand has had low rates of unemployment, with few potential employees to choose from when a vacancy arises. To mitigate this, farmers have often employed overseas workers through a variety of visa options, whether it be on a seasonal basis or to fill vacancies via New Zealand Immigration's recognised skill shortages lists.

This brings its own set of issues for employers as immigration criteria have tightened, especially over recent years. Employers have had to become more au fait with legal requirements when looking to appoint staff within their farming or business operations, and sometimes outside expertise is sought to facilitate this process.

Recent reports in the media following the arrest of a woman over allegations involving the provision of false visa documents to Filipinos has highlighted the reliance agriculture has on the immigration process running smoothly, the opportunity for fraud and exploitation of the system, and the skill shortage currently being faced within the dairy industry.

But dairying is not the only agricultural sector facing skilled staff shortages. Federated Farmers' latest six-monthly Farmer Confidence Survey shows the labour market remains tight, with many members across all sectors reporting continued difficulty in finding skilled and motivated staff. This is despite a slight improvement on the previous survey which can probably be attributed to the seasonal nature of farming and the weaker rural economy taking a bit of steam out of the labour market. Regardless of the number of staff being sought, farmers are still finding recruitment very difficult.

So why do we have to look overseas for staff when our bigger centres have higher levels of unemployment? Provincial New Zealand is still the back-bone of the New Zealand economy, but the population drift continues to be to our cities or overseas. And according to a leading New Zealand economist, that is creating vulnerability. Shamubeel Eaqub has been quoted as saying the provinces are in decline because of technology, urbanisation, globalisation and aging. Technology can be detrimental for economies which rely on labour, with smaller centres more likely to lose jobs when centralisation occurs. He also says there's been no rural population growth in 100 years, with agriculture employment numbers remaining steady throughout this timeframe. He attributes this to specialisation of technology,

industries and transport which has contributed to the flocking of young people to the cities for jobs. Globalisation sees many goods produced offshore, again having a negative effect on employment in our regions.

His other area of concern is our aging population which he believes will be the mainstay of residents in the regions while our shrinking under-40 year old population will continue to move to the bigger centres. He says the outflow of young people will have a big impact on rural areas that already struggle to attract and retain talented labour.

When faced with all of these challenges, it is obvious we have to work hard at promoting our regions, the quality of life we enjoy, and we have to be forward thinking and innovative in our business endeavours and employment practise to ensure we attract skilled and motivated staff.

Many within the rural sector are already working towards this goal. One such example is the

recently launched joint initiative by DairyNZ and Federated Farmers, which aims to attract the skilled workforce needed by dairy farmers. The joint workplace action plan recognises the sector is competing with global career opportunities and dairying needs to become an attractive option so as to develop and retain the necessary workforce. The plan focuses on good people management, especially in the areas of balanced and productive work time, fair remuneration, and health and safety. These sorts of initiatives are necessary to combat our skilled labour shortages and ensure a bright future for provincial New Zealand.

Those of us who live in the provinces already recognise the many benefits rural New Zealand has to offer and so it falls on us to ensure others are made aware of the positives we take for granted every day.

BELOW: Neal Shaw, Group CEO





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The eyes have it

In this article I will take a look at something very important to our production animals—their eyes.

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

Think of how important vision is to a production animal. They need to be able to see to communicate with each other (and with farmers), graze and forage, seek out mates, rear their young, establish social structures and defend themselves. Sheep and cattle have eyes similar to our own but there are differences in the way things are perceived by animals, and colours are seen slightly differently. Many animals perceive movement very accurately and respond quickly, some can see extremely well at night and ruminants have very good peripheral vision. These attributes have evolved over time so the animal can defend itself. Consider the fact that cows, sheep, goats etc. are prey to animals to large carnivores when in the wild. To counter this, ruminants will stick together in large herds, reject sick or injured animals in the group and maintain excellent vision. I have personal experience with peripheral vision after walking up behind a cow, thinking she can't see me, and getting kicked very hard on the knee.

Farm animal eyes can be affected by a number of diseases which affect clarity of vision and cause blindness in some cases. I have seen many bulls that are supposed to be working but have severely reduced vision and cannot see the cows. Imagine the effect this may have on pregnancy rates.

Pinkeye (infectious keratoconjunctivitis) can affect sheep and cattle. As implied, it is a highly infectious disease, and will transmit from eye to eye on the legs, feet and mouthparts of flies.

The bacteria and viruses that cause pinkeye will damage the eye so the cornea becomes opaque. The lesion begins in the centre of the eye as a white spot, and with time the white of the eye becomes inflamed and turns pink, hence the term pinkeye. There is a characteristic ocular discharge and that is a sure sign of active infection. Pinkeye is worse when flies are abundant and when grass is long and stalky. Dust also contributes to pinkeye outbreaks by irritating the eyes and eroding its natural defence mechanisms. In severe cases animals will go completely blind or the eye may rupture. Treatment is with antibiotics, vaccines for prevention and surgical techniques to cover the eye while it heals.

Ocular squamous cell carcinoma is common in summer. This is a cancerous lesion affecting the eyes of cattle. The lesion can begin on the third eyelid or on the cornea and it can spread very quickly. The first signs are a watery eye discharge and a small pink "nodule" on the third eyelid. If nothing is done the nodule will enlarge quickly and invade the tissues around the eye including the bony orbit. The time for this to happen varies but I have seen cancerous lesions on cows eyes deteriorate over a period of a few weeks. Some cattle may be more susceptible than others to eye cancers. We tend to see them more in Friesian cows and in Herefords with white rings around the eyes. They are perhaps less common in sheep and deer. Treatment for these cancers can be difficult. In simple cases the third eyelid

is surgically removed. In those cases with more invasive lesions the eye is removed. Failing that, the animal may have to be destroyed. Ocular cancers can potentially become animal welfare issues. Do not let these lesions go untreated.

Malignant catarrhal fever (MCF) is a viral disease which can cause ocular lesions very similar to pinkeye. However in MCF the corneal opacity starts at the edges of the eye and moves in to the centre. Also in MCF both eyes are affected (in the head/eye form of the disease) and the animals will generally be very sick. Characteristically the rectal temperature of these animals is over 40 degrees centigrade. If you suspect MCF call your vet without delay.

Other systemic infections can sometimes result in blindness. In these cases an immune reaction takes place in the eye producing "pus" in the chamber of the eye. Unfortunately these cases can take some time to resolve and animals may be blind during this period.

In lambs, in-growing eyelids can result in severe irritation of the eye. This is an inherited condition called entropion. It is often mistaken for pinkeye. These in-growing eyelids need to be surgically corrected by a vet.

Foreign bodies and scratches can affect eyes of grazing ruminants, and they can get corneal ulcers. Summer is often the time when we see more eye lesions. This may be due to the longer grass scratching the eyes as the animals forage, it may be due to flies, dust, allergens, sunlight etc.

It is important to regularly check the eyes of your herds or flocks. This can be done at milking time or at drenching times etc. A common finding in ocular lesions is a watery discharge down the side of the animals face. If you notice this, or if you notice any animal that seems lost or disoriented please check the animal and call your vet for advice.



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All the building materials and tools you need

PlaceMakers know you don't have time to run around town. BY LINDA CLARKE

Whether you need fence posts, culverts, another generator, a new shed or even a new kitchen, you'll find all the building materials and tools you need at PlaceMakers.

As New Zealand's largest building materials supplier, PlaceMakers has over 30 years' experience and understands what it means to be a reliable supply partner.

PlaceMakers is the trading name of Fletcher Distribution Limited, the retail trading arm of Fletcher Building Limited in New Zealand, and has 56 stores from Kaitaia to Invercargill. They employ over 2,100 people and assist over 300,000 customers annually; selling over 74,000 products lines from concrete to paint and plasterboard, and making frames and trusses at 8 manufacturing plants nationwide.

PlaceMakers is one of the largest suppliers of farm sheds in New Zealand. They have a wide range of sizes available and can supply a kitset for you to build, or design and build one to your requirements. The farm shed range includes the classic lean-to, and gable roof shed, both with lock-up options. They know that no two farming operations are alike and are happy to consult and custom design to accommodate stock or machinery. Sheds are designed to withstand high winds, temperature extremes and snow using treated pine and coloursteel cladding.

If the farm cottage or house needs a make-over, there's plenty of help at PlaceMakers too. They know that home renovations can be tricky, especially when you've got a lot on your plate.

So staff make it their mission to ensure your projects are as stress-free, professional and affordable as possible. Whether you're building a kitchen, revamping the bathroom, reflooring the lounge, putting up a new fence or simply after a fresh coat of paint, they can help.

PlaceMakers stocks a broad range of hardware and accessories to meet the needs of not only renovators, but tradies and DIYers.

They stock a good range of gate hardware, with latches and catches, gate springs, hooks and hinges of many different sizes and styles, in zinc, galvanised and stainless steel finishes.

And they are not limited to just gate hardware, they support other categories that you would expect to find in a hardware store.

If you're not sure about what you'll find in their stores, check the PlaceMakers' website. There, you'll find a list of products, and catalogues to help you decide.

One catalogue being viewed a lot at the moment features outdoor furniture and barbecues. With summer here and the holidays ahead, there are plenty of outdoor dining suites and umbrellas in stock, all made of top quality components designed



ABOVE: No two farming operations are the same, you have the ability to design and build a shed to your own requirements

MAIN IMAGE: New Zealand's largest building materials supplier, with 56 stores nationwide

to withstand New Zealand's extreme climate.

And with Christmas around the corner, a PlaceMakers gift card is the perfect gift for any serious DIYer. Cards can be loaded with any value between \$20 and \$1000, giving plenty of options for the gardener in your family, or the handy man or woman.

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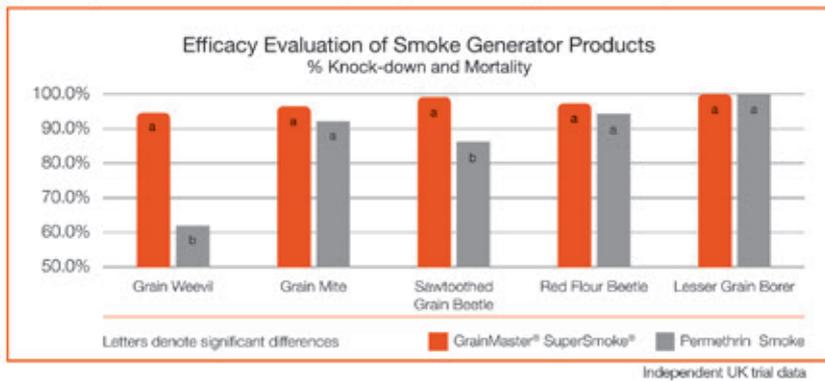


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Big shifts underway in NZ power portfolio

New Zealand's big power generators have spent this year cleaning out their generation portfolios, with gas and power plants all in the gun for shutdown. BY RICHARD RENNIE



The shifts out of gas and coal represent a changing of the guard for these fuel sources in New Zealand. Their main replacement comes in the form of renewable geothermal energy, and more “do it yourself” power generation as solar photo voltaic units drop in price, and battery storage becomes ever more affordable.

These changes are also coming in an environment of flat user demand, and inevitable over supply and capacity has prompted a sharp review of plant efficiencies.

The first to go was Contact's Otahuhu B gas fired power station near Auckland, taken off line in September.

In commenting on the shutdown Chief Executive Dennis Barnes pointed to the growth in renewable energy alternatives, including the new Te Mihi geothermal power station near Taupo.

Barnes highlighted a shift in the industry to more “fast start” gas fired peak power stations capable of being quickly fired up to meet peaking demand at different periods, rather than reliance upon large base load generation plants.

Meanwhile further down State Highway One, the iconic landmark coal fired generators of the Huntly station are also destined to be shut down.

The Genesis owned station is New Zealand's largest thermal power station, generating up to 20% of the country's needs.

2018 has been identified as the shutdown date for the station's two coal burning generators that will remove 500mW of capacity from the national grid, leaving only the station's 403mW gas fired “Unit 5” and smaller 50mW “unit 6” in operation on the site.

This shutdown marks the end of an era in large scale coal fired generation in NZ, and has won a thumbs up from environmental groups, given the station has contributed to half of NZ's emissions of greenhouse gases from electricity generation.

Like Contact's CEO, Genesis Chief Executive Albert Brantley has pointed to lower cost renewable options available for generation, a more efficient Cook Strait Cable link and relatively flat growth in total demand for electricity.

The move away from coal and gas has New Zealand firmly among the world leaders for sourcing its electricity from “renewables”, with hydro forming 60% as of 2014, geothermal 16%, wind at 5%.

These numbers have the country well on track to achieving the government's target of 90% renewables by 2025.

NZ is already well up the rankings for the percentage of renewable energy sources, sitting third behind only Norway with its substantial hydro resources, and Iceland with its geothermal generation capacity. For geothermal alone NZ ranks sixth, after Costa Rica.

Investment in renewable sources of energy involves significant initial upfront investment, for lower future operating costs than non-renewables like coal—typically a hydro-electric scheme or geothermal site will require significant infrastructure capital investment, compared to “plug and play” gas turbine systems that are relatively easily constructed and commissioned.

Partly due to the major costs, and in the case of hydro public unease at damming significant rivers,

wind generation has increasingly become the renewable of choice for NZ generators.

Expectations are wind generation will expand to be 20% of NZ's generation source by 2030, or about 2750mW of supply with clusters in areas including Wellington, Central Otago and Southland.

While the choice of generation is clearer for achieving the renewables target, the future pathway for electricity demand is less so.

The NZ Institute for Economic Research (NZIER) in a report released earlier this year pointed to a growing level of uncertainty over where NZ's electricity demand will track. For the past five years that demand has been relatively flat.

This came after a sustained period of growth buoyed in part by strong regional expansion in demand.

The report notes per household demand for electricity is declining, and that it is a complicated engine driving those changes. Reasons include greater concern for climate change, strong growth in local generation renewable electricity, energy storage systems, and the use of smart technology to operate grids.

The report notes all these factors are the “most profound” changes the sector has ever witnessed, and it will only get messier and more complex. These changes are likened to the disruption also being experienced in the telecommunications sector.

Regions are also expected to experience their own unique changes based on unique demand loads. Canterbury for example is undergoing a revamp of irrigation supply systems, with large scale scheme systems replacing individual deep well submersible pump systems, and their subsequent electricity demands.

Demand forecasts for coming years differ depending upon what body is conducting those forecasts, and the forecast conducted by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment (MBIE) released in 2013 was criticised by NZIER in its submission as being overly optimistic.

NZIER maintained MBIE's forecast of a 1.2% annual growth for the next five years, ranging between 1.3-9% did not reflect the realities of the increasingly complex supply and demand profile. Ultimately the electricity supply market is moving towards more sustainable, renewable generation sources, but is also bringing more fragmentation and complexity with it.

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

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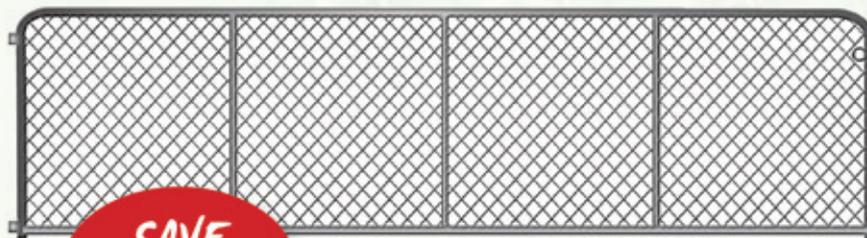
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Maintaining productivity in hot weather

Hot and humid weather affects the dry matter intake of lactating dairy cows.

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY SEALESWINSLOW

The combined effects of elevated ambient temperatures and humidity can make for an uncomfortable environment, particularly for high producing dairy cows. These higher producing dairy cows have greater metabolic heat production—the heat energy that is produced from digestion - than lower producing cows. Heat stress occurs when the cow's ability to dissipate excess body heat is compromised because the environmental temperature is high. Humidity further impacts this by affecting the cow's ability to cool herself by sweating and panting.

The three signs of heat stress in lactating cows are obvious:

- lethargic behaviour;
- reduced feed intakes;
- reduced milk production.

The primary reason for the drop in milk production during hot and humid weather is that the cows eat less. Minimizing the environmental effects on dry matter intake (DMI) is critical to maintaining productivity in times of heat stress. This response is thought to be a survival mechanism as digesting and processing nutrients generates further heat. Ensuring cows have ready access to fresh, clean water and lots of it is paramount.

Since cows will be consuming less as temperatures rise, increasing the energy density of the diet can in part compensate for the decreased DMI.

To increase the energy density of the diet, consider providing a suitable fat source, e.g. a coated or bypass fat and/or offer feeds, such as SealesWinslow Maxi Pro 20%, that produce less heat from digestion.

Heat production increases following a meal. This is a result of the heat energy from fermentation and heat of nutrient metabolism. Different types of feeds produce varying levels of heat from their digestion, largely because of the efficiency of utilisation. Fibre produces more heat in the rumen than other carbohydrate feed sources. Feeds that have high oil content also require more energy to digest and reduce the efficiency nutrient metabolism. Low fibre feed sources usually result in less heat of digestion than feeds that are higher in fibre.

The quantity of quality protein over the summer months becomes important, particularly as pasture quality drops. Protein in the diet not only supports milk production and milk protein content but protein also plays a hand in stimulating intakes or hunger. Protein sources, like SealesWinslow Maxi Pro 20%, that are higher in bypass protein or rumen undergradable

dietary protein (RUDP)—which passes through the rumen and digested in the lower intestine, require less energy for digestion and hence produces less heat.

How to beat the heat this summer:

- keep cows cool by providing shade;
- have a plentiful supply of cool, clean, fresh water;
- increase the energy density of the diet.

A feed option like Maxi Pro 20% helps compensate for the difficulties of achieving target intakes on pasture alone. There are obvious advantage to including a protected fat in the diet over this period to improve the efficiency of energy use and the greater energy density (2.25 times greater) when compared with carbohydrates (not exceeding 5 to 7% total fat in the diet). Whether cows exhibit the signs of heat stress or not, cows will benefit from greater energy density during periods of depressed intake.

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Taking the heat off farmers

Weather forecasters are predicting a hot and windy summer with El Nino conditions so Canterbury farmers should have Kurt Patterson on speed dial.

BY LINDA CLARKE



The Ashburton man is in the business of controlling rural fires, from stubble burn-offs to offal pit clean-ups. He can run the whole operation or guide farmers through the strict rules that now surround farm fires.

Kurt has a mechanical background and firefighting experience and he hopes to take the headache and risk off farmers wanting to burn. With 90,000 hectares of arable crop grown in Canterbury, stubble burning is a cost-effective and non-chemical way to reduce weeds, pest and disease pressure.

"Stubble burn-offs are still the best way to prepare the ground for new crops but there are strict rules about burning now," he said.

Kurt has his own 6,000-litre fire suppression truck, equipped with three high-pressure water cannons and foam laying capability. He can be a firefighting force on his own, or back up other fire crews.

He is serious about reducing the risk of out-of-control fires and says many fires that escape could have been prevented. He can both educate and train farmers about best fire lighting practice or take the job on himself; his business has \$10 million in public liability and fire suppression insurance.

He said many farmers found their fire suppression insurance inadequate when they had to pay for

firefighting costs if a burn-off or rubbish fire got out of control. In Mid Canterbury alone, emergency services are called to an average of nine out-of-control burns a year.

Kurt said many rural firefighting crews were made up of volunteers and they could be away from their families and jobs for days putting out vegetation fires.

"I did six years in the New Zealand Fire Service, four of which were in rural communities. Fire has an interesting behaviour and if you don't understand that behaviour, things can go wrong very quickly."

Regional and territorial authorities now have strict rules around rural fires and those breaking them could end up in court. Rules include containing the area to be burned with fire breaks, having fire suppression (like water) on site and taking winds and weather into account before lighting a match. NIWA and New Zealand Fire Service chiefs are already warning that El Nino weather conditions over the next three months could result in increased drought conditions.

Kurt said the adverse effects of both smoke nuisance and risk of fire escape could be managed and minimised with good management practice. Education is key.

"There is definitely a lack of education about crop burning and people lighting any fires. There is not enough advice out there and ideally I want to be doing it for them."

His fire suppression appliance holds 6000 litres of water and can be refilled from any water body, from creeks to irrigation ponds and swimming pools. It has the same fittings as those used by the New Zealand Fire Service so other crews can connect their hoses if need be. "It has one water cannon at the front and two at the sides and they can all be remotely controlled from the cab. It also has foam capability, which is better for dampening down fires and taking away the oxygen, which is one of three elements a fire needs to burn."

Patterson Rural Fire is the only private firefighting force in Mid Canterbury but Kurt is available for jobs throughout Canterbury and the South Island. "The service I provide benefits farmers and the community by providing more resources."



ABOVE: Kurt has a mechanical background and firefighting experience which he brings to Patterson Contracting

MAIN IMAGE: Many fires that escape could have been prevented with the right precautions in place

The fire business is based at an Elgin farmhouse, where Kurt also runs a general engineering business. He builds trailers and takes on all types of engineering projects, from custom-making calf-crushes to repairing metal gates and hydraulic hoses. He also offers a mobile service for items too big to come to him.

Originally from Nelson, Kurt grew up in a farm around machinery. By 18, he was running his own business and contracted to work on vineyards. He is enjoying the Canterbury area and looking forward to meeting more of its farming inhabitants.



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Setting up for summer

Summer, the season of sun, barbecues and outdoor fun.

BY LINDA CLARKE

But, say the good guys at Tinwald Canvas, also the season for sunburn, nor'westers and faded furniture. Taking precautions against the elements can be a stylish affair, says experienced upholsterer Brendan Patrick, and the latest sail shades and umbrellas can cleverly add to the value of homes and outdoor spaces.

Brendan and business partner Justin Pickford have a combined 50 years' experience in the trade and say this summer's range of high-spec sun sails is exciting, with technologically engineered fabric that looks good too.

December is a busy time, with people wanting shade sails, repairs to boat seats and caravans prior to the school holidays getting under way. It is also a time when people want that special piece of furniture recovered in time for Christmas, or patio and outdoor furniture repaired ahead of planned barbecues and gatherings.

"Come Christmas, we get a lot of people looking for sail shades or furniture as a gift. There is a trend to retro styles of the 1960s and '70s at the moment, and antiques are always popular," Brendan said.

The seasonal work adds to the busy schedule of the five specialist upholsterers and canvas fabricators that work from a showroom and factory floor at the Tinwald Shopping Centre. The business is now 12 years old and growing all the time; they'll tackle any size job from big agricultural contracts to handbag repairs, carpet binding and hay or seat covers.

The friendly face at the front counter is Ronda Bellew, who can help with fabric choices and other job specifications.

Brendan said there was a growing interest in renovating and recovering furniture, from dining chair seats to ottomans and armchairs, and it was often cheaper to recover than replace.

A core service that remains popular is carpet binding.

The popularity of home decorating shows on television and upholstery courses like those run at the Methven Summer School encouraged people to take on projects, he said. Brendan is a tutor at the summer school and is happy to help those wanting to do a bit of DIY—he is also there for help if a home project gets out of hand!

Another side of the business that brings customers from all over the country involves car restoration. Tinwald Canvas has a specialist welding machine that makes interior door panels for cars, recreating the original factory look that is important for enthusiasts. "There are a lot of people into restoring old Valiants and cars of the late '60s and we can help with the full upholstery."

Brendan said staff were happy to travel to give advice about jobs. Location and weather



ABOVE: There is a growing interest in renovating and recovering furniture as it is often cheaper than replacing it
MAIN IMAGE: Their shade range includes shade sails, sun blinds, roll down blinds, sandpit covers and umbrellas

extremes, like the harsh temperatures seen in Twizel or high winds in inland Canterbury, were important considerations when deciding on fabric type and location.

He said shade sails in particular were prone to ripping if incorrectly positioned or tensioned. Their shade range also includes sun blinds, roll down blinds, sandpit covers and umbrellas.

Tinwald Canvas also has a mobile repair van that can be sent around the district to repair PVC panels or upholstery in large farm machines that cannot be brought to the store.

"The only gear needed for some of these jobs on big tractors or bin covers is the magic touch, which we can attend onsite and make the necessary repairs," Brendan said.

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Garlic holds its own against a sea of grapes

A lifetime of involvement in horticulture has led to a thriving business for Marlborough brothers Robert and Alan Harrison-Jones.

BY KATE TAYLOR

Their first-choice crop is garlic, which has been grown in Marlborough for more than 30 years, before the region became famous for its grapes and wine. One of the early companies was Piquant Garlic, now known as Garlico. Second generation growers, Robert and Alan, now dedicate 70 hectares of land to growing garlic, shallots and onion seed.

The company was originally started by Peter and Lorna Jones and Tony and Marion Tripe. Peter's sons took over 15 years later and the business has continued to grow from strength to strength with new crops added development work to keep the machinery busy in the off-season and a new business investment that started as a cost-cutting measure.

Robert and Alan's father moved the family from Picton to Blenheim before they were teenagers with the aim of using 16ha of process crops as a stepping stone to a sheep farm.

"Then our neighbour started growing garlic and the rest, as they say, is history," laughs Robert.

"Our dad Peter and his cousin Tony, who had a property down the road of a similar size, decided to grow it together."

They named the business Piquant Garlic. Robert and Alan later changed the name to Garlico for marketing reasons and also to put a stop to questions about spelling and pronunciation, he says.

"All the land was leased then and it was relatively easy to get because there were no grapes in the area. We still lease, but it's getting harder to find as new vineyards are still going in. Penfolds came to town and our home farm was put into grapes. It later became Montana and now Pernod Ricard.

We sold the home farm when the vineyards were at their peak in price, which was about four or five years after we took over the garlic business."

Under the auspices of Garlico, the brothers have also been doing vineyard development work for wine companies for about 10 years.



ABOVE: Robert Harrison-Jones with his children Olivia (left) and Quinn

BELOW: & OPPOSITE The Harrison-Jones first-choice crop is garlic, which has been grown in Marlborough for more than 30 years

"We might be phoned to develop 200 or 300 hectares at a time. We break it in, spray and do all the ground work so it's left in a plantable state for someone else to come in and plant it. This aspect of the company utilises our down time when we're not involved with the garlic, shallots and onion seed. There's a gap after everything has been planted so it's good to put our machinery to beneficial use."

This season they have developed 600ha of vineyard in the wider Blenheim area—sometimes they're 20 minutes away from the yard and sometimes they're an hour away. They also do the same groundwork on their own leased land, which covers 70ha belonging to eight landowners.

"We lease land from the farmers and are totally involved with making it crop ready including breaking it in, planting, fertilising and setting up water. We used to plant 30ha into garlic and shallots and then a company approached us five years ago about growing some onion seeds and we realised it would fit nicely between garlic and shallots planting-wise."

The management of the onion seed is more detailed, however.

"One block is 0.8 of a hectare and another is 8ha. They're two kilometres apart so we don't get cross pollination. That's a real hard one to try to find those blocks of land—2km apart—we don't want them to be any further apart or we will spend too much time on the road with the sprayer."

The business has four full-time employees plus Alan and Robert. With Alan in charge of the machinery and harvesting, Robert is in charge of the spraying, fertilising and irrigation of the crops.

"Making sure they're fed and watered with no competition from weeds," Robert says.

He is also in charge of processing and marketing to local and export destinations.

Garlic is planted at the end of June/early July and essentially forgotten about until it starts coming through at which stage fertilisers are put on and maybe herbicides for any weeds. Shallots are planted in the first or second week of September once the ground temperature starts to increase.

"Meanwhile we're still monitoring the garlic as it can go through what we call the October blues. It will sit there and not grow. Garlic needs food in the ground and loves fertiliser. You have to have





ABOVE: Both the garlic and shallots are picked, dried and cleaned before being shipped nationwide

BELOW LEFT: Brothers Robert and Alan dedicate land to grow shallots as well as garlic and onion seed

BELOW RIGHT: Garlico has four full time employees, with family helping on the farm as well

the fertiliser in the ground and for the soil to be nice and moist. It's a high yeast thing. If you're not ready for it to go when the temperature gets up you miss your window. You have to drive it and keep an eye on it for that window."

Thinking ahead is important as it's too late once yellow appears in the leaves.

"You can't play catch up... so we start irrigating almost before we think we need to. It's a make or break moment for the garlic. The onion seed's the same. If you don't have all the food on in August and good, moist soil conditions, the bulb is making its mind up—"am I going to send up two or three pipes or just one?" That determines how big the humble or head is going to be. You can't wait for it to show above the ground at the start of September. It's too late. It has already happened underground."

This season irrigation started in mid-October, which was several weeks later than the previous season but still early compared with the traditional early to mid-November start point.

"We normally get 30–40 millimetres of rain a month and as we get into November that part of it starts dropping away and we start irrigating. Rainfall is about 10–15mm month over summer. There is usually one good rainfall before Christmas; in fact, you can almost set your clock to it.

Marlborough has a large cherry crop and while everyone else wants the rain, sadly it's bad news for them."

While this conversation with Robert is taking place (mid-October) it is 26 degrees outside and there's a howling nor'westerly wind.

"We don't want to turn the irrigators on sometimes because they would just battle into

the wind. We might have to just pin our ears back and turn them back on at some point though. Anything is better than nothing."

The business has two guns and one boom irrigator putting on 30–35mm of water at each run—two shifts a day, seven days a week.

When Alan finishes his ground development work, he turns his attention to the harvesters.

"We're still pouring the water on, but by then we've stopped the food to the garlic. It's a day-length plant—it gets to a certain point and it knows that's the point it needs to dry off. So the harvester gets ready and we get the bins out to the garlic fields, as well as organising extra staff for the harvester. Basically just making sure everything is ready to go when we start harvesting about the 15th of January."

The garlic is first. Depending on the weather, harvesting can take between 10 days and 3 weeks.

"Sometimes we get a couple of days to get things tidied up and other times we walk from the garlic paddock and straight into onion seed,



which is all done by hand, everyone in a line with a 20 litre plastic bucket and secateurs collecting the heads or the humble as they go. We follow them with a wooden bin with a hessian-type liner and when that's full, it goes straight back to the drier at the yards."

The bins sit about half a metre off the ground in the grain driers for two to three weeks, depending on how green the heads are picked.

"The seed is then thrashed through a header in a little paddock next to the sheds. We feed them through the header and have to wash it down after each line is finished as we don't want to cross contaminate any of the eight varieties we grow."

Garlico supplies SPS or South Pacific Seeds in Christchurch and Enzazaden, a Dutch company also based in Christchurch.

The shallots are next on the calendar. They are dug at the end of February/early March and left on the ground to dry for week to 10 days before being picked up with a harvester and put in the driers for another week.

"If it's warm, dry, beautiful weather, we will leave them out. Natural drying is better for the plant and they last better."

By now it's mid-March and the garlic is also out of the drier and going to the pack house to be clipped and cleaned for the local markets. Both the garlic and shallots are sold to MG Marketing and Fresh Direct and distributed to restaurants and supermarkets in cities such as Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch. The shallots are sold loose or put into 250g pre packs.

"Restaurants don't like them loose and supermarkets like a bit of both. It depends what the market wants. We don't prepare them beforehand as they start deteriorating once you cut the roots off."

This work with the garlic and shallots goes right through until October, sometimes February. In between, the brothers are looking for land for the following year and securing paddocks for planting.



This has to be done by early June with the onion seed company sending 400 tonne of onion bulbs to Garlico's yard.

Onion seed and garlic usually don't go back into the same paddocks, although garlic could if it had been disease free the previous year.

"We've been three times into one garlic paddock because it was such a good paddock," says Robert. "But you don't go back with onion seeds because of the high risk of any seeds being left in the ground."

The brothers believe in supporting their region so Garlico buys local items as much as it can, whether that is from Renwick Township itself or Blenheim.

"Our garlic harvesters and planter come from France, but we can source parts locally, whatever we can, we do. If we have a part missing on the tractor we can order it and it's here the following morning so we don't have any down time. That's important"

The driers are one of the most important cogs in the wheel, so Robert says they can't afford not to have the services of local electrician Kevin Thompson.

"They are turned on in mid-January and don't get turned off again until the end of March. We can't have them out of action. The other we-can't-do-without firm is Cuddon's engineering and irrigation. They're a Marlborough company with 70-plus years' experience with top service."

Robert and Alan grew up in Marlborough with Sister Rhonda and attended Renwick School.

Alan and his wife Kimberley have daughter Emma, 9, who is at Wairau Valley School. They own 10 horses and are involved with hunting and show jumping. Both Alan and Kimberley have been successful at local shows and this year Alan also rode at the Christchurch A&P Show. Prior to Garlico, Alan had a trucking firm carting coal from the West Coast into Blenheim.

Alan, Robert and Vicki previously owned Thyme Bank hydroponic lettuces and fresh-cut herbs for about six years.

"It was small scale although we had expanded and added more tunnel houses. Then the opportunity came up to take the garlic business over with our parents wanting to slow down and head for retirement. So we bought it and continued from there," says Robert.

Robert and Vicki have three children. Zac, 19, is studying psychology and PE at Otago University. Quinn, 17, is in Year 12 at Marlborough Boys' College and planning on engineering at Canterbury University and Olivia is 14 and in Year 10 at Marlborough Girls' College.

They are a rugby-mad family and Olivia is a successful netballer.

Robert played all his rugby for Renwick and is now a life member of the club. Vicki is the rugby administrator at Marlborough Boys' College and both are on the 1st XV committee. Zac had three years in the 1st XV and Quinn started in the team this year.

"It takes a lot of time and effort, but we love it and it is definitely rewarding."



Garlico invests in pollination

If something costs too much, sometimes the best option is to do it yourself.

Garlico has invested in Marlborough apiary Putake Honey and together they have begun Marlborough Pollination Ltd.

Robert Harrison-Jones says Garlico used to hire bee hives for use for pollination with the onion seeds side of the cropping business, but the cost was getting out of hand.

"So after discussions with newly established local company, Putake Honey, we invested in it, which helped with the purchase of a couple of hundred hives. We use 450 hives now and we get to pollinate all our own onion seed.

"They have the know-how and we have the contacts for the fields for the honey. They have the expertise and look after the bees. Alan and I are still learning."

He says the bees essentially control their own calendar. "You don't have to go out at five o'clock and put the bees in a new field. They are mobile and do that themselves."

Robert says Marlborough Pollination is also raising its own queen bees now.

"To buy a queen costs about \$50 and we use 450 hives, which each need a queen. Putake has a couple of thousand hives and needs queens too so it was a sound business decision to raise our own."

He says a small amount of honey is gathered out of the onion seed.



ABOVE: The work for garlic goes from planting in June, to harvesting in January, to drying and delivering in March
ABOVE TOP: Garlico have invested in Putake Honey from which 450 hives are used to pollinate all their own onion seed

"It has a wee bit of onion flavour in the honey but it loses that flavour after a couple of weeks. The bees are really only there for pollination. We want the crop as weed free as possible and the onion seed flowering about 15 per cent when the bees go in so there is food for them straight away. Put them in too early and they'll go elsewhere and not into the crop."

Winter manuka honey is also now being produced.

So Garlico has moved from paying about \$50,000 a year for bee pollination to being the proud investor in another Marlborough company. Putake Honey was started in 2011 by a young couple new to the industry at the time—Renee and Dale De Luca.

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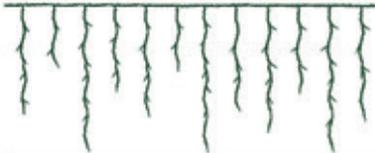
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Future here now for water management

Wednesday October 21st 2015 was Back to the Future Day.

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY WATERFORCE

In the classic 1989 movie "Back to the Future II" Marty McFly and Doc Brown fast forward 30 years in their time travelling DeLorean to visit 2015, and are greeted by an array of weird and wonderful gizmos, a future full of hover boards, flying cars and Nike trainers with laces that tie themselves. It is now 2015. We live in this future world—has it met the outlandish predictions brought to life on the silver screen?

Well possibly not quite yet. But New Zealand farmers are constantly striving to utilise technology to aid in their farming operations to reduce work load on staff and improve efficiency in their operations through greater levels of control and information.

Their need to continue to adapt to new technology is also being driven by pressure on their natural resources, including soil and water. Environmental constraints and council requirements mean farmers have to be more exacting and "data wise" when it comes to how they manage those resources.

Technology available from WaterForce and Valley aids farmers today in irrigation control and management that delivers on exactness and effectiveness. Farmers are now able to remotely control and operate their irrigation pivots from anywhere in the world via an application called SCADAfarm.

SCADAfarm manages to link the everyday use of cellular connections, Cloud based storage, smartphones, tablets, laptops and the internet,

and applies this technology to run efficient and effective irrigation on farms.

What results is an application that is familiar, straight forward to operate and very user-friendly. All good modern farmers are aiming to utilise water in smarter and more efficient ways, and gain greater value from their resources. The technology available for fitting to existing irrigators, or including with new has proven to deliver returns many times greater than the capital cost of that technology.

Adding technology to new and old pivot irrigators is assisting in greater precision and understanding of their irrigation scheduling, and with it savings in water and electricity costs.

SCADAfarm provides a "virtual control panel" from your office & mobile devices.

SCADAfarm can operate as either a standalone application, or can be coupled with Valley's other technology products, like GPS location and guidance systems.

It offers options including variable rate irrigation for 'Zone control' and 'Individual sprinkler control' (VRI-Z & VRI-IS).

SCADAfarm is empowering farmers to make quality informed business decisions regardless of where they are, and what they are doing.

Farmers are using SCADAfarm for various on farm management operations including:

- Effluent pump control;
 - Loading and selecting Variable Rate Irrigation (VRI) prescriptions (plans);
 - Day to day operations such as: remote stop/start and forward/reverse control of the pivots;
 - 'Stop in slot' functionality, assisting farmers with planning field works, ensuring safe parking positions when on farm works need to occur, and adding to the wind safety planning;
 - Monitoring pivot operation and fault finding.
- Farmers can get an insight to every detail of their irrigation system at any given time. This includes knowing the current state of their pivots, including its water on/off status, its movement as to whether it is running/stopped, direction of travel, pressure, speed/application depth and position. Peace of mind comes knowing if they should leave the farm for whatever reason, they can still login and find out how their irrigation system is performing.
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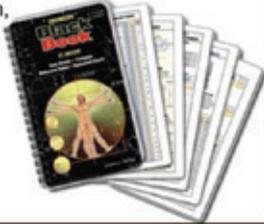
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PKE guidelines hard for farmers to swallow



What is the reason behind Fonterra's move to limit PKE use, AbacusBio farm consultant Kevin Wilson weighs in on the issue, and how a win-win outcome between Fonterra and farmers can be achieved?

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY ABACUSBIO

Palm kernel expeller (PKE) is widely used by farmers throughout New Zealand as a main source of supplements to support cow production. PKE plays a key role in feeding cows during adverse weather conditions such as droughts or periods of poor pasture growth. It is also one of the cheapest quality feed options (apart from pasture).

In September this year, Fonterra released recommendations that the maximum amount of PKE used per cow each day should be 3kg.

Fonterra's actions are an attempt to reaffirm consumers of their world-leading position in producing pasture-based milk, in line with New Zealand's "green and natural" image.

More and more, modern consumers around the world, are demanding to know where their food comes from and clarity around what is in their food.

However, the co-operative's handling of the issue has not been going well with farmers—many of whom were not consulted—leading to accusations of Fonterra interfering in their farming systems and telling them "how to farm" (nzherald.co.nz; Palm kernel knotty issue on Fonterra agenda).

The lack of clarity about how and why the 3kg PKE restriction has come about—and how

suppliers would be affected – has put the co-operative in a bad light among some farmers. Is there strong evidence of a premium for pasture-based milk products in the world market? If so, this would be a strong incentive for farmers to adapt to the proposed guidelines. The general consensus of farmers was that there had been little explanation—and science reasoning—behind the PKE feeding guidelines (radionz.co.nz; 'No discussion' on new PKE guidelines).

Currently, high PKE input farms use up to 6kg PKE per cow each day (on top of 70% pasture), which is widely accepted in the industry to still qualify as a pasture-based diet. This level of use will change milk composition, which has caused speculation around end-product use. Again, there is no feedback to confirm this.

While farmers are open to new ideas on improving productivity and adding value to their milk, as business people, they expect the ideas to be practical and evidence-based—before implementing them on-farm.

In this instance, it seems almost illogical to decrease PKE use, unless there is strong evidence supporting the proposed guidelines and clear realisation of a market premium for the product (stuff.co.nz; Fonterra wants farmers to cut back on palm kernels).

Both Fonterra and farmers have similar business aspirations of producing the best milk in the world – through sustainable and good environmental practices. It is essential to maintain transparency between both parties—in order to create a mutual relationship based on trust, respect, and support.

Perhaps if there was a two-way communication process—in terms of an open dialogue—between Fonterra and milk producers, where issues are discussed and comments taken into account (regarding the concrete facts concerning PKE), then a solution would arise where there would be a win-win outcome for farmers, processors, and consumers.



Kevin Wilson,
AbacusBio farm
consultant

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Climate Change: What's a bank got to do with it?

Bank of New Zealand Chief Executive Anthony Healy recently gave a speech at the Australia-New Zealand Climate Change and Business Conference. He explains here what the CEO of a bank is doing talking about climate change. ARTICLE PROVIDED BY THE BNZ



Some people raised an eyebrow when they heard I was intending to make a speech about climate change and I understand why people are a bit perplexed.

They wonder what climate change has got to do with the bank. They probably think I should 'stick to my knitting'; but I believe BNZ has a responsibility to help tackle issues that matter to New Zealand.

As a bank, we're often painted as a big, faceless entity, but we're made up of thousands of faces: 5,500 BNZers, 1.2 million customers and a score of suppliers and partners.

That means we've got a connection to people across all parts of the country so I'm thinking a lot about the role we can play in supporting a sustainable future for New Zealand.

I am passionate about tackling the issues that matter to New Zealanders. And climate change is one of those.

There's a real commercial connection here that we also need to face. We lend against residential and rural property, a lot of which will continue to be

affected by climate change.

The sectors expected to be most impacted by climate change in New Zealand are farming, forestry and fisheries - which are all sectors BNZ is involved with. The implications for us and our industry are likely to be massive over the next generation.

Bank of England Governor Mark Carney recently said we need to ensure we're facing the financial challenges of climate change right now, while we're able to do something about it.

I talked to a lot of people about doing this speech. We surveyed our customers and asked them what they thought a bank should do about it.

I also took inspiration from people like Z Energy's CEO Mike Bennett and Toyota's Alastair Davis, who are in the middle of this issue too. They acknowledge their business is part of the problem but they're part of the solution too and their staff and customers are the key drivers. This really resonated with me—it affects everyone and everyone has a part to play.

I also asked my kids what they thought. My 10-year-old son Patrick was well versed in polar ice caps melting and greenhouse gases bouncing around in the atmosphere. He told me "hydro is quite big now dad". I have to say I was pretty proud of my kids and it highlighted for me the awareness of climate change issues in younger generations today, compared to when I was a teenager.

The problem we face doesn't have a simple answer, so it makes sense for BNZ to be sitting at the table as part of the conversation right now.

The more parties we have at the table, the easier it will be for us to face how we ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

Our farming customers are always top of mind for me. We bank for a quarter of farmers in New Zealand and they're at the coalface of the issue.

They see it in weather events each day and in regulation, which has a direct impact on their bottom lines.

And it's fair to say that with changing dairy prices and El Nino looming, they might just be focused on getting through this year.

But, as we are seeing more and more, there are proven links between good environmental management and business resilience.

BNZ is working to upskill our Agri bankers on climate change issues so they can be better partners to their Agri customers.

We're helping upskill our agri customers, too—we work with Doug Avery and sponsor his resilience workshops and we are supporting our customers to take direct action to improve on sustainable practices, such as riparian planting, fencing water ways and precision agriculture.

Our customers are showing us what best practice looks like, which is knowledge we—and they—can share throughout the industry.

An example of this is Canterbury firm Agri Optics, with their highly innovative, world-leading approach to precision agriculture.

There's room for BNZ to do more to support customers and work collaboratively to bring about positive change, and the bank intends to make announcements in early 2016 about what's next.



The speech was originally delivered at the Australia—New Zealand Climate Change and Business Conference in Auckland on 21 October and can be read in full here: <https://www.bnz.co.nz/about-us/media/2015/climate-change-whats-a-bank-got-to-do-with-it>.

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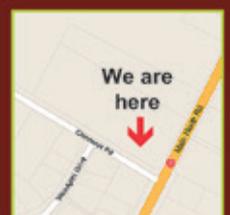
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A comfortable life on the road

Driving off into the sunset in your motor home this summer just got easier, with Lifestyle Motorhomes in Ashburton expanding its range of recreational vehicle services.

BY LINDA CLARKE

They have everything you might need on the road, from solar panels to pop-up washing baskets and kettles, and TVs with built in Freeview that run straight off a satellite dish, unlike normal TVs.

The one-stop shop for motor home owners has quadrupled the size of its showroom on Chalmers Avenue to display a range of quality RV (recreational vehicle) gadgets and essentials, including waste and fresh water roller tanks, self-contained portaloos and chemicals, solar panels, robust crockery, camp chairs and all manner of space-saving gear ideal for motor homes, caravans, glampers and campers.

Lifestyle Motorhomes owners Murray and Margaret McPherson are well known in the industry and work closely with insurance companies due to their professional work on luxury motor homes, caravans, fifth-wheelers, corporate and food trailers. Their experienced team can build, revamp, refurbish and repair all manner of vehicles. In the motor home and caravan community, they are the go-to people for trusted advice and workmanship. Murray said the new shop would give the business a higher-profile entrance from Chalmers Avenue and allow customers to see an extensive range of Camec gear they now stock. Lifestyle Motorhomes is the sole Camec agent in the Rakaia-Oamaru area. He said the shop products were especially designed for motor home and caravan use, with the latest space-saving features and technology.

Changes to the transport laws have also had an impact on the motor home industry in the past two years. Drivers with a car licence can now drive vehicles up to six tonne (it was previously three &

half tonne), meaning it is easier to get behind the wheel of a RV.

Murray says people's RV dreams come in all shapes and sizes with budgets to match. Lifestyle Motorhomes can build a motor home from scratch and refit older and imported ones, as well as giving treasured family caravans a new lease of life. In fact, there is a noticeable trend to restore old caravans to their former glory and hand them down the family tree as a sort of heirloom.

Large or small, the work is able to be carried out on the one site on Chalmers Avenue, with a qualified, experienced and knowledgeable team collaborating on spaces and designs that can be small or downright tricky. Under the same roof, the business employs people across the trades able to do design engineering work, plumbing, electrical wiring, gas fitting, upholstery and joinery.

Coming into summer, RV owners should be checking their vehicles before heading off on holiday. Check that the gas fittings meet new regulation standards and that the electrical wiring has been given a warrant of fitness (needed every four years). Increasingly RVs must also meet self-containment regulations, especially if owners want to make use of the many pop-stop or park over properties around the country. These are designated areas where



ABOVE: Margaret and Murray McPherson the owners of Lifestyle Motorhomes
MAIN IMAGE: There is a noticeable trend in restoring old caravans to give them a new lease on life

RVs can stay, some up to three nights and others three months, at very little cost to the member—some have power points, some are just paddocks, but all require RVs to retain their own waste water and take it away.

Murray said motor homes and caravans in New Zealand needed to withstand all weather extremes and a major problem was leaking, usually caused when external vents and sealing perished in harsh UV light and let in rain.

Lifestyle Motorhomes has been using a scientifically designed water proofing membrane with great success over a number of years. The Titan Roof Protection Membrane prevents and cures leaks and can be used on caravans, campervans, fifth-wheelers, motor homes and horse floats. It insulates, offers protection from the UV light, is waterproof and rust proof, plus it expands and contracts to suit all forms of material you find on a motor home or caravan roof. It is applied to all risk areas and exposed surfaces and forms a membrane; it comes with a 10-year guarantee. Contact Murray at Lifestyle Motorhomes now to get a no obligation, free quote.



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STANDARD SIZES

- 1800 x 1225mm
- 2100 x 1225mm
- 2440 x 1225mm

EXTRAS

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

STANDARD SIZES

- 2440 X 1225mm ID
- 2440 x 1500mm ID
- 3070 x 1530mm ID

EXTRAS

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

TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



STANDARD FEATURES

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

FINISH

STANDARD SIZES

- 3600 x 1800mm ID
- 4200 x 2100mm ID
- 4800 x 2400mm ID

EXTRAS

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

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STANDARD FEATURES

- RHS frame and bolt on channel drawbar • New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
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FINISH

STANDARD SIZES

- 2400 x 1230mm (8x4)
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Unlocking the feeding secrets of sheep



The first step of a unique trial to understand more about the intricacies of sheep feeding is complete, but scientists at AgResearch who lead the work say it's just the beginning of an exciting four years' research.

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY AGRESEARCH

Feed efficiency - the measure of how much feed an animal actually eats, versus what it should need to eat for maintenance and growth—is being integrated into many worldwide breeding schemes for both beef and dairy cattle and has been shown to be moderately heritable. Given

its importance in these species it is likely to also be important in sheep too, says Dr Tricia Johnson, a senior scientist from AgResearch's Animal Genomics team at Invermay.

While feed efficiency continues to be ranked in the top 10 traits in the "Industry Needs Analysis" carried out by Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics, there is currently no data available in New Zealand that investigates the genetics associated with feed efficiency in New Zealand maternal sheep breeds. In fact, there's very little relevant overseas data either.

A recent trial near Invermay is the first step of the Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics funded programme.

"What we're aiming to do is collect sufficient data over a four-year time period to provide first estimates of the heritability of the trait

and genetic correlations between it and other important production traits. Such data will be able to inform decisions about its integration in to maternal breeding programmes," Dr Johnson says. But, investigation of this trait required the development of automated feed intake machines capable of real time recording of individual feeding events of sheep in a mob situation using EID technology to differentiate animals.

Whilst there are a number of 'off the shelf' machines that could have been purchased from commercial companies, all had been designed for use in cattle or pigs and all had limitations for use with sheep.

Instead, 20 automated feeders specifically designed for sheep were built by AgResearch's Engineering Team at Lincoln and installed, ready for use, in early July.

The feeders are designed to record the number and size of feeding events each day, from which total feed consumed per day can be calculated. They allow real-time access to the loggers, as well as receive text alerts and a daily summary table of data collected per animal, noting any outlier animals which means that the data is equally being analysed in real time.

The feeders are also portable, meaning they can be utilised at other sites if required.

At the beginning of July the first 200 ewe hoggets from the Woodlands Central Progeny Test, and the genetically-linked Woodlands Coopworth Progeny Test entered the facility.

Additional measurements that are being made include full spiral computed tomography (CT) imaging of the animals at the conclusion of their time in the facility because significant relationships between feed efficiency and body fatness have been observed in overseas cattle studies. This data will also provide insight in to the variability in to the genetics of fat distribution (subcutaneous vs. intermuscular vs. internal fat reserves).

An additional aspect of the programme will investigate correlated measurements including heart rate; body temperature (measured using thermal imaging) and methane output (measured using Portable Accumulation Chambers (PAC)), if any are proven to be correlated to feed efficiency, in the long term they will allow for more rapid screening of feed efficient sheep.

This trial will be repeated again at the same time next year. A first look at the data was undertaken in preparation for the Association for the Advancement of Animal Breeding and Genetics Conference in Lorne, Victoria in September, Dr Johnson says.

"Overall the trial went better than we could have hoped for embarking on such a large scale project involving the technology. This first look at the data is pointing towards significant animal variation in the trait of feed efficiency, with some sire variation also existing. There is also very interesting feeding behaviour evident too, with some consistent grazers and gutsy sheep."

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Studying: Thinking about the Dollars and Sense

School days. It's nearly the finish line. Woohoo! It's goodbye to NCEA, the senior common room, and running for the bus.

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY THE BNZ



It's nearly the end of cramming for tests and playing sport with mates on the top field at lunch time. Farewell to packed lunches and adieu to French class and good riddance to homework. It's also hello to the question on everyone's lips:

What next?

"What will you do when you leave school?" Degree? Diploma? Certificate? Apprenticeship? Full time? Part time? Distance study? e-Learning? So many options, questions, decisions... but one thing's for sure:

Studying can be expensive

Getting finances arranged for tertiary study can be stressful for all involved. For many students it's a big step towards financial independence and it teaches them lifelong lessons.

Financial organisation is needed for tertiary study, including managing course fees, course-related costs, accommodation and living expenses such as food and transport. Stepping through a budget with your student

is a great opportunity to share some of your worldly wisdom.

Sit down together and chat through what the likely costs are going to be, and how these will be met. Government-funded options include student loans, student allowances and accommodation benefits. Scholarships are an option too, although the deadline for many of these will now have closed for the 2016 academic year. These are valuable, as alongside student allowances, they don't need to be repaid.

Also discuss part-time and holiday work, and any support the family can provide, such as financial or practical assistance like the use of a vehicle, firewood or food.

From a cost perspective, one of the bigger decisions to work through is where your student will live. Home is a cheap option where possible or there are two main options for out-of-town students: halls of residence or flatting.

The main advantages of living in a hall are: fixed costs (food, electricity, internet etc are included

in the rate); transport (halls are often walking distance to campus) and shorter timeframes (you only pay for the duration of the academic year, unlike rent on a flat which often covers a full calendar year).

Flatting is often cheaper and increases independence, but requires more self-responsibility.

Using bank accounts wisely can be a powerful budgeting tool. It is important to have a solution which allows users to compartmentalise their money. It can be very distressing for a parent to hear that their student has blown their budget on 'wants' and have come up short for essential 'needs'.

BNZ's YouMoney provides for exactly this situation. It allows money to be split up, with multiple everyday and savings accounts. This option enables users to put money into separate accounts, such as 'Food', 'Rent', 'Entertainment' or 'Textbooks', allowing them to know quickly and easily what they have available to spend now, without getting into trouble later when bills are due.

Accounts can be easily opened and closed in seconds.

YouMoney is very popular as it's interactive, allows personalisation, has 'drag and drop' functionality and lets users set savings goals and easily track progress.

You can get instant balances on BNZ's mobile app without needing to log in, transfer money, pay bills, top up pre-pay mobiles, open accounts, upload pictures and set savings goals all while on the run—a common feature of student life.

With the 2016 academic year just around the corner, make it a priority to have a 'Money 101' conversation.

If you have younger kids with time on their side, start them thinking about how they manage their money now and what their plans could be after school. You can also introduce them to an easy to use and helpful banking solution such as YouMoney that will make money management as easy as possible for them and provide you with peace of mind.

BNZ's Disclosure Statement may be obtained free of charge from any BNZ Store or viewed on bnz.co.nz.

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Tech Tips

BECOME TECH-SAVVY WITH RURALCO'S TOP TECHNOLOGY TIPS

Astutely App

This edition we focus on apps essential for travellers.

All apps are FREE and available on iPhone and Android smartphones.



Entrain

Entrain is a must-have app if you are a traveller who struggles with jet lag. The app serves as a high tech alarm clock and provides optimal sleep recommendations to help your body clock adjust to new timezones. Your sleep recommendations are provided in a schedule which will be recomputed if you don't follow the recommended schedule.



Skyscanner Flights

Skyscanner allows you to search, compare and book cheap flights on the go, perfect for a traveller on a budget. Skyscanner pulls in smaller airlines and has other useful function such as searching from "where you are to everywhere". Skyscanner doesn't charge an additional booking fee.



Speak & Translate

Speak & Translate is a voice and text translator app which allows you to communicate effectively in 42 different languages by voice and 100 languages by text. Simply choose the language you want to translate from and to, then either speak into your microphone or write text and the app will generate the translation for you either as text or speak it back to you.



Zomato

Zomato is an easy-to-use restaurant finder app that lets you explore all the dining options in your current city. You can browse through menus, reviews, prices, and pictures to help you decide where you want to eat. You can also search by style of food, such as Japanese. You also have the ability to review restaurants that you have been to and share photos of your foodie moments, directly from the app.

Forgotten your password for the Ruralco website?

If you have forgotten your password for the Ruralco website, don't worry it is really easy to reset it. Simply click "forgot?" in the password box, a pop up will appear asking for your email or member number. Once you have entered this information you will receive an email with a temporary password. Copy and paste this into the password box and you'll be successfully logged in. Once you are logged in, visit your Profile in the My Ruralco drop down, here you can edit your profile and change your password.

Make your home network On-Demand ready

PROVIDED BY ULTIMATE BROADBAND



The way Kiwis connect to the internet & the content they access has changed drastically since its first inception in the 90s. We use smart phones, tablets, Ipads, laptops, smart TV's & traditional computers to get online. The myriad of new internet ready devices has allowed us to access content like never before. Along with all of these devices we are seeing the onslaught of on-demand TV such as NetFlix & TVNZ On Demand, the problem is our humble "All in one WiFi router" is struggling to keep up.

It's not that your WiFi router is outdated or poor, but more often that we as users have demands on our in home LAN (network) that outweigh the investment we have been prepared to put into that network. Whilst for many, the single "All in one WiFi router" is going to be fine for every day web browsing, such as You Tube or Facebook. Once you start to watch Netflix or stream any high bandwidth video the humble "all in one WiFi router" often won't cut it.

Why? When high bandwidth is needed, you need an internet connection, router & device that can handle it, you also need to be in optimal signal to achieve the speeds you need. With WiFi performance based on proximity to the router, performance can be vastly different depending on where you are in the house.

Also most New Zealand homes have no Ethernet cabling to TV's & devices so media centric devices have WiFi alone as their path to connect to the internet. For high bandwidth media streaming, the reality is, cable is king.

So how can you improve your home network for on demand?

1. The best way to improve your network and ensure on demand works better is to run ethernet cables to your TV's or media devices. It is probably the biggest single improvement you can make to your network to improve performance. Cable is king.
2. Invest in better gear; if you want the best performance then you will need to invest in the right gear. If your Internet Service Provider (ISP) offers an upgraded router, take it, or find a WiFi integrator or ISP who can help, Ultimate Broadband provides such options.
3. Be prepared to install several WiFi access points in your home to achieve the desired results, the laws of physics prevail & walls are never helpful in propagating WiFi signal so several WiFi access points may be required.
4. Choose your internet provider wisely. In rural areas there are limited options, often DSL (copper broadband) is not capable of delivering the speeds you need for on demand. So if fibre isn't available look for a WISP or RBI Wireless reseller that can deliver faster speeds above 5Mbps.

There are many options out there. Our team can guide you through them along with assisting with improvements to your home network with trained technicians & consultants available.

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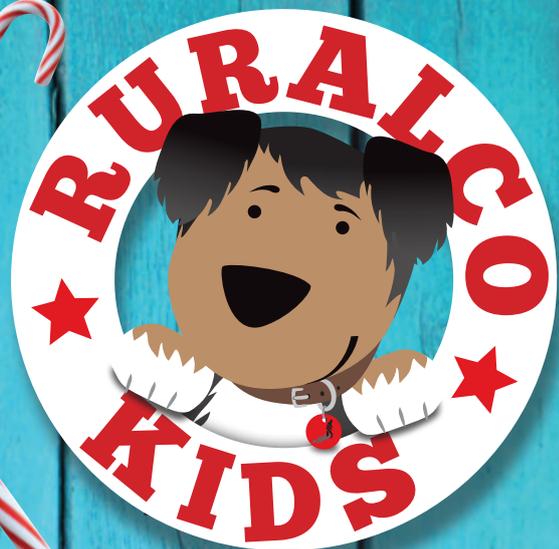
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Cupcake Christmas Trees

- You will need:**
- Cupcake liners/wrappers in any colour
 - String
 - Glue
- Optional:**
- Red ribbon
 - Silver sequins
 - Any other decorative elements



Step 1:
Fold your first cupcake liner in half then press down & stretch to flatten then glue inside the cupcake liner so that it stays in this shape.

Step 2:
Fold the same cupcake liner in half again to create a triangle shape, then glue so that it stays in this shape.

Step 3:
Repeat Steps 1 & 2 with another 2 cupcake liners, then glue all three together in the shape of a Christmas tree.

Step 4:
Time to be creative, decorate your Christmas tree however you like. You'll see some different ideas in the photo above using sequins and red ribbon.

Step 5:
Cut 20cm of string, loop it and tie a knot. Glue the knot of the string to the top/back of your Christmas tree. You can now hang this on your Christmas tree as an ornament.

Reindeer Cookies

Makes 12

- You will need:**
- 1 toothpick
 - 1 microwave safe bowl
 - 1 spoon

- Ingredients:**
- 1 pack of chocolate digestive biscuits
 - 1 pack of ginger kisses
 - 24 Pretzels
 - 12 smarties
 - 24 white chocolate buttons
 - 1 cup milk chocolate buttons (melted)



Step 1:
Break the ginger kiss in half and stick the icing to the chocolate side of the digestive biscuit.

Step 2:
Melt the chocolate in the microwave for 1 minute. Use a spoon to spread melted milk chocolate on to the digestive biscuit above the ginger kiss and quickly stick two pretzels to the melted chocolate, these are the ears of your reindeer.

Step 3:
Spread some melted chocolate on the top of two white chocolate buttons and stick these upside down on top of the pretzels, these will be the eyes of your reindeer.



Step 4:
Spread some melted chocolate onto the smartie and stick it to the middle of the ginger kiss, this will be the nose of your reindeer.

Step 5:
Use a toothpick to dot some melted chocolate onto each white chocolate button, this will complete the reindeer's eyes.

Dot to dot

Start from number 1 and join the dots counting up to 52.





Colour in the picture of Oscar the Ruralco Dog

Once completed, get it to Ruralco by **21 December** and you'll be in to win great prizes!

NAME

AGE

MEMBER NO.

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- There are two age groups and prize packs allocated per age group: age 4–7 and age 8–11.
- Please ensure the family Ruralco account number, age and name of the entrant is submitted with the entry.
- One entry per child only.
- All entries must be received by Ruralco no later than 4.30pm, 21 December 2015. Post or drop off to to Level 1, 18 Kermode Street, Ashburton 7700.
- Winners will be announced on 18 January 2016.
- Ruralco reserves the right to publish all entries and details of the winners. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.
- Once the judging has taken place, winners will be notified by telephone.
- The prize is not transferable or exchangeable and Ruralco reserves the right to change the prize to the same or equal value at any time if the prize becomes unavailable. No responsibility accepted for late, lost or misdirected entries.

Additional copies can be downloaded from www.ruralco.co.nz/kids

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Co-op News

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Farm Safety Manual and Training for Members

The new Health & Safety at Work Act comes into force 4 April 2016. To assist with ensuring you are compliant with the new legislation, ATS provides members with access to a farm safety manual and relevant training. Upon completion of the training, members will also be able to apply for a discount on their ACC levies.

2016 training starts on 23 February. Further training sessions are scheduled for 22 March and 19 April. Training costs \$550 (GST and member discount inclusive) and can be charged to your ATS/Ruralco account. Seating is limited so get in fast. For more information or to reserve your spot please contact Peter Jacob on 03 307 5124 or 0800 BUY ATS (289 287), email book@ats.co.nz or book your spot online at www.ats.co.nz/farmsafety.

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Have you checked your electricity prices lately?

ATS Energy can provide you with a free no obligation comparisons from our energy partners and see if there are any potential savings to be had for your home or business by paying your electricity accounts through ATS. Contact Tracey Gordon today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

2016 ATS Calendar

The 2016 ATS Calendar is out now. Call into any ATS store to pick up your copy.



Charge your Spark account to your account

Ruralco provides you with the convenience of charging your Spark account through your ATS or Ruralco account. This means you can simply pay your monthly ATS/Ruralco account and we handle the payment to Spark.

If you wish to take advantage of this convenient option, simply call 0800 RURALNZ (787 256) or email ruralco@ruralco.co.nz. You'll need to quote your ATS/Ruralco number, your Spark account name, account number and your phone number that appears on your Spark account, and we will organise for this to be set up for you.

Bulk fuel deliveries

On farm delivery of fuel can save you time and money, and with Ruralco you can save up to 18¢ off per litre* of fuel.

Allied Petroleum is a distributor of Mobil fuels and lubricants. Allied supplies bulk fuel throughout New Zealand.

NPD (Nelson Petroleum Distributors Ltd) is a distributor of Mobil fuels. NPD supplies bulk fuel throughout Nelson, Marlborough, West Coast & Canterbury.

To set up bulk fuel deliveries to your business, contact Ruralco on 0800 RURALNZ (787 256) and quote your Ruralco number. This can be found on the bottom right corner of your Ruralco Card.

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Looking for fuel storage tanks?

Contact ATS on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) to organise a fuel tank for your business.



Receive your ATS or Ruralco account electronically

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

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



ATS Kids—Big Little Farm Competition

ATS ran a Big Little Farm Competition at the Ashburton A & P Show, members were asked to design and create their own miniature farm. We had multiple ATS Kids entering their miniature farms at the event and videos and photos uploaded to the ATS and Ruralco Facebook pages. Check out all the entries and images from the event at: www.facebook.com/0800BUYATS or www.facebook.com/ruralco



Visit us at the Southern Field Days

Ruralco will be attending the upcoming Southern Field Days at Waimumu on 10–12 February 2016. Visit us at site 291 to chat with the team and have a cuppa.

Make sure you remember to bring your Ruralco Card with you as we have some great deals on offer. We look forward to seeing you in the Ruralco tent.

Excise tax refund

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

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



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



Travelling this summer?

Travelling around New Zealand these summer holidays? Remember to take your Ruralco Card with you to continue saving as you purchase. Just in case you need a loaf of bread, get a flat tyre whilst driving, even to get that all important re-fuel of the boat.

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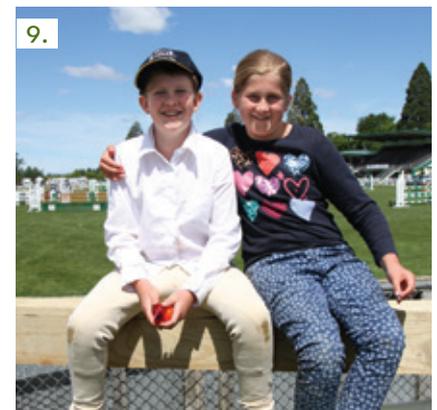
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