

RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2020

KELSO, WEST OTAGO:
Welfare and
production a
sustainable
recipe

High hopes for
sector's new year

Making their
own luck

Understanding
heat stress

New partnership
supports sustainable
future for
New Zealand farming



From the Group CEO

Welcome to our first edition of Real Farmer for 2020. We hope you have had a great start to the year and found some time for family and friends over the Christmas break.

This February we will once again be heading to the Southern Field Days at Waimumu. It's a major event on the annual calendar, and has gone from strength to strength over recent years to become a three day event. This year it runs from February 12 and features more than 700 exhibitors showcasing the latest in rural technology and innovation. Fencing competitions, tractor pulls, innovation awards, a digger competition and a scavenger hunt are also on the agenda, so there's bound to be plenty to interest and inspire everyone.

It is a great opportunity for us to meet with our farmers and remind them that we service areas outside of Canterbury with our online store and card supplier network. If you are at the Field Days, please come and say hello. We'd love to see you.

Staying with the southern part of the country, it's appropriate we showcase one of our southern farming operations, White River Dairies as our cover story for this edition. Kyliee and Paul Henton of Kelso, West Otago, share their inspirational journey on how they have lifted the bar when it comes to cow welfare, herd performance and environmental sustainability, proving farm production and protecting the environment do not have to be mutually exclusive. Their story comes on the back of a difficult season for Otago-Southland farmers and shows there are positive ways forward.

Another positively focussed farming family is the Currie's of Methven. Russell and Karen and their grown up children, Anna, Glen and Braden were all home at Kimberley Farm for Christmas and they share their story of hard work, love of family and their mental discipline of positivity and how it applies to both their work and their sporting endeavours.

Also in this issue, agricultural reporter, Richard Rennie shares with us an industry outlook for 2020 and what commentators are predicting for the coming months. In addition to these features there are plenty of other articles dedicated to all things farming and rural and we hope you find a quiet time to sit back and enjoy this edition of Real Farmer.

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RealFarmer

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ON THE COVER:

Cow welfare, herd performance and environmental sustainability form a strong bond on the property of West Otago couple Kyliee and Paul Henton of Kelso

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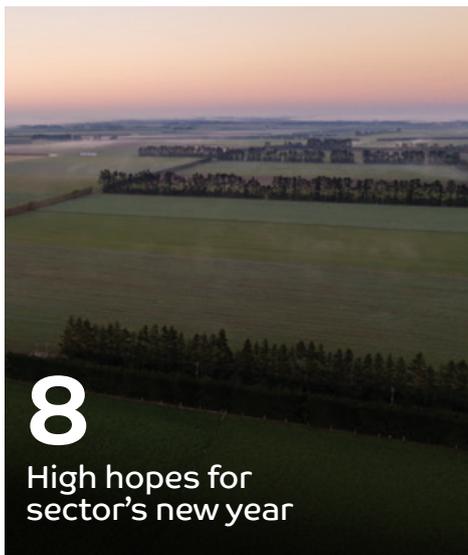
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Welfare and production a sustainable recipe

Cow welfare, herd performance and environmental sustainability form a strong bond on the property of West Otago couple Kyliee and Paul Henton of Kelso. The couple have raised the bar not only for average per head production, but for what farmers can achieve when making a concerted effort to protect the environment – and they prove the two do not have to be mutually exclusive.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

Otago-Southland farmers have faced a tough season, and not only climatically. While spring proved to be a stop start affair, affecting pasture growth and the ability to get crops in the ground in time, the entire region was also under the spotlight for winter cropping practices and livestock welfare.

The result has been the release of regulations around winter cropping standards, put out by the government for consultation and requiring among other things that farmers provide a soft dry surface for cows to lie on for as long as required.

Another requirement was to ensure cows have an adequately balanced diet, including appropriate supplements and nutrients to prevent metabolic problems. The recommendations also require farmers to ensure cows do not give birth in muddy conditions.

But the Henton's have put themselves a step ahead, thanks to some earlier and significant



investment in a covered wintering pad, along with dedicated stand off and calving areas for their 575 head Holstein Friesian herd.

The covered winter and feed pad they built four years ago comes complete with soft pliable underfloor rubber matting the couple have developed themselves, and since turned into a growing business (see accompanying article).

The pad comprises of two bays, 135 metres long by 10 metres wide, complete with four feed troughs along the centre and outside and a central tractor lane. The sustainable, comfortable cow environment is assured thanks to a design that maximises ventilation and air movement.

Effective effluent management of the pad where most of the herd spends much of its time once dried off is managed via a "green wash" flood wash system.

ABOVE: Kyliee and Paul Henton have a focus on herd performance and environmental sustainability
BELOW: The ability to grow good grass after Christmas and the absence of facial eczema where strong drawcards for their move south

The gravity-based system takes wastewater recycled from the farm effluent pond via a "weeping cage" that keeps the solids out and pumps that water into holding tanks above the yard areas.

From here water is released in a timely flood, flushing through the feed-pad area, ultimately to return to the effluent pond system at the bottom of the shed.

"It is a very effective system for an area that can often be pretty problematic on any dairy farm when it comes to managing the waste generated in one place with a pad," says Kyliee. Similarly, fresh rainwater is collected off the farm dairy roof into a fresh-water pond then pumped to holding tanks and used to flush out the pad's feed troughs, removing the hassle of having to physically shovel out each trough section by hand.

Kyliee's veterinary skills and background are reflected in the couple's commitment to ensuring their cows are treated like the true high performing dairy queens they are.

To deliver production of 550kg milksolids per cow per year requires conditions and a feed regime that minimises stress and optimises their energy intake.

This includes a combination of wagon delivered supplements along with pasture. Those supplements comprise fodder beet or (this year) sugar beet, whole crop barley silage, pasture silage, some molasses, soy/DDG and crushed barley.





ABOVE: Paul and Kyliee with their three children
BELOW: To deliver production of 550kg milksolids per cow per year requires conditions and a feed regime that minimises stress and optimises their energy intake

Supplying Mataura Valley Milk, the use of palm kernel is not allowed, and the supplement has been replaced with more grain based inputs.

Sugar beet was used for the first time this year, requiring the purchase of a chipper to chop them up prior to being fed out in the wagon.

"As a feed source, it has a very high energy content, and can deliver high yields as a crop."

The couple have been conscious not to rely on external grazing sources for the herd, having a 46ha support block and a young stock wintering block of 96ha.

"It's important we can control our own wintering, as how well you winter here determines how the cows perform for the rest of the season."

Kyliee says using the farm's wintering pads and the wintering barn revolves around how closely the cows are to calving, and cow age. It means winter can be a busy affair, juggling mobs and feed inputs, but it has also meant production has been able to be increased significantly due to greater pasture growth through less soil damage and no waste of supplements that happens when it is fed in the paddock.

Farm consultant and veterinary nutritionist Bryan McKay of Dairy Production Systems has been involved with the farm for the last ten years and has had a big influence with his advice and mentoring as Paul and Kyliee have developed the farm systems and increased milk production.

That increase has proven to be almost double what they anticipated.

Once the cows are dried off, they come off pasture. The two-year olds will go onto the farm's outdoor pads, sheltered by a

Macrocarpa hedge and to all intents and effective as a barn, with a soft wood chip surface, upon which they are fed silage.

The older cows head out to the winter crops on the support block, then in early transition to calving are bought back to the covered wintering pad, with a silage diet and nutrients to aid the transition to calving.

"Once they are close to calving, they get moved to the 'maternity pad' which is all set up with a head bale and hot water should they have any difficulties. It's a good set up and means we can focus closely on our calvers as they calve in a low stress environment"

The Henton's not only have deep respect for their animals, they are also passionate Holstein breeders, with a registered "White River Holstein" stud.

"With our cows, given the level of production we expect, we are looking for bulls capable of breeding cows with good udder strength, with a breed value for this of greater than seven. We also look for a good protein figure and this also requires a cow with good capacity and with the A2 milk gene."

Mataura Valley Milk is ultimately aiming to have all suppliers providing higher value A2 milk in coming years and the Henton's are in the process of DNA typing their herd for this.

They also pay particular attention to genetic out crosses to help reduce the risk of narrowing the gene pool too much, something that can happen quickly when selecting at the upper end of elite bloodlines.

Keeping a herd of 550 high producing cows happy and well fed doesn't happen on its own, and the Henton's have a good team of three full time staff, two relief milkers and a university student over summer to help make it happen.

"We work to encourage our staff to develop and move on from junior levels and also encourage them to work across all aspects of

the farm, rather than just be milking or tractor driving all the time."

"This is more in line with how farm staff used to be trained, and it helps us create a more well-rounded, flexible and capable team member," Kyliee says.

The staff are encouraged to complete Primary ITO courses, usually entering at Level 3.

"We have seen staff move on and up in the industry, some to go on and manage big properties."

This has included Gareth Dawson who was Farm Manager of the Year for Otago-Southland in the Dairy Industry Awards.

The couple are in their second season supplying Mataura Valley Milk, and proud to be part of the company's South45° quality assurance programme which has a significant sustainability focus to it.

"It is all about producing high quality nutritional ingredients rather than just being a commodity producer as the company looks at 'whole of life' nutritional products. The sustainability focus also includes not using palm kernel, which we have replaced with crushed barley."

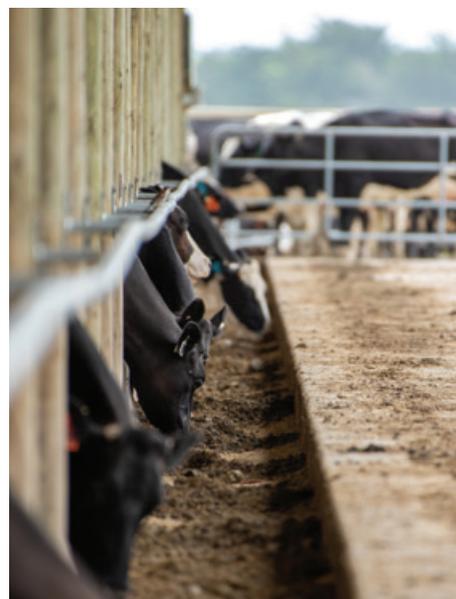
The move to down south back in 2000 was obviously a big one for the couple who had been based in Bay of Plenty. Here Kyliee had worked in an Edgecumbe veterinary practice prior to them deciding to go sharemilking.

"We were probably in that second wave of the migration south from the North Island. I had been down once before while at university, and it was so cold I vowed I would not be back!" says Kyliee.

However, the ability to grow good grass after Christmas and the absence of facial eczema were strong drawcards.

The farm they are on today was converted two years prior to their purchase and they were familiar with its Mataura silt loam soil and how to manage it with its tendency to pug easily over winter.

Treading lightly while also having a high producing farm is a strong theme in Henton's business, and they continue to work hard at improving the farm's environmental footprint.



This includes being members of the Pomuhaka Water Care Group, focussing on the river's Catchment and riparian plantings along its length. They will also soon be working on a farm environment plan, likely to be required by all farmers soon.

It has been a challenging time for Southland farmers wanting to do the right thing by the environment, with the region's land and water plan currently under appeal in the Environment Court, adding to some uncertainty around what level of regulation the region is likely to witness in its final plan. Heading into the future Kylee says one of their aims is to work with Mataura Valley Milk to ultimately have the herd all A2 supply in five years. "And of course we just want to keep farming successfully—Kelso is a good area to be in, and had quite a few dairy farms in the area before the Korean wool boom in the 1950s. Today it's back in cows and there is the ability to keep dairying successfully, with one eye on the environment and the other on cow welfare."

Rubber softens winter's chill

Settling down onto a comfy rubber mat holds far more appeal for cows than standing on hard concrete or mud, and the Henton herd at Kelso are testimony to just how much better that rubber surface can be.

The high producing herd are the best references for the Agri-Tech rubber surface matting developed by their owners Kylee and Paul Henton.

"We got the idea when we could not find a matting product that was really that suitable for own covered feed-pad. We wanted something that was thicker, softer and more pliable, and it was not around so we decided we could come up with our own."

They wanted matting with a minimum 30mm thickness that could withstand cows being on it for long periods as wet weather and management may require. The extra thickness means protection from joint pain and cold is improved.



Calling on the skills of Paul's brother who was involved in manufacturing development in China, they sourced the best rubber processor there to produce the matting which is starting to prove a strong side business to the White River dairy operations.

"It is still a bit of a baby business, but it is coming along nicely. We have had the mats on our covered-feed pad for the past three years and is proving to perform well and still looks like new."

"The 1.8m by 1.2m sections can be easily carried, interlock into place and give farmers the opportunity to create a standoff pad out of their farm dairy's concrete yard. The mats can also be easily packed up and moved to a new farm which is a big advantage for a share milker" says Kylee.

With recent animal welfare rules around wintering requiring stock to be on a compressible dry surface, it is likely more and more farmers will be revising how they manage their herds over winter.

With the added pressure to ensure minimal pasture damage, controls around winter cropping, and constraints on lending to build barns and facilities, more will be turning their minds to better utilising the hard infrastructure surfaces they already have.

The use of rubber matting for cows is growing around the world, helping with mobility,

ABOVE: The high producing herd are the best references for the Agri-Tech rubber surface matting
BELOW: Heading into the future Kylee says one of their aims is to work with Mataura Valley Milk to ultimately have the herd all A2 supply in five years

hygiene, health and ultimately milk production.

"The options for soft surfaces can also be quite limited. Wood chips and bark are getting harder to get hold of. They can also be expensive and do tend to turn to slurry quickly unless the bed is aerated daily."

Kylee says the big advantage of the Comfy Cow rubber matting is that it can be added to as herd size and budget allows, and even covering half a feed pad area could be a good start.

The Henton's even have a farming friend who has found the matting a good gym floor surfacing, with the high-grade rubber easily absorbing the impact of weights dropped on them.

The Comfy Cow rubber mats are also being used in stables, horse floats and trucks, deer sheds, herringbone sheds under both the cows and people and even under sows and piglets.

"We have also seen a bit of interest out of Australia and can deliver out of Auckland for farmers in the North Island."

The Comfy Cow matting is available through your Ruralco card, with Comfy Cow now a Ruralco Supplier. www.comfycow.co.nz



FARM DETAILS:

LOCATION:

Kelso Settlement Road, Kelso, West Otago

SIZE:

Milking platform: 185ha
Herd Size: 575

SOIL TYPE:

Mataura silt loam

PRODUCTION:

550kg milk solids per cow-
326,000kgMS 2018-19 season

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OBSESSED WITH AGRICULTURE

High hopes for sector's new year

New-Zealand's primary sector prospects enjoyed an upbeat march for the first half of the farming year and appear to be holding their own for what remains of the second half of the season. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



The latest Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) situation and outlook report for primary industries (SOPI) that came out just before Christmas paints a positive picture for the sector. It will be very welcome, coming after a year that has left many farmers feeling under siege despite their more promising prospects.

While commodity prices across the board have trended upwards nicely, they have almost become a background topic as the farming sector was forced to get to grips with an almost overwhelming amount of government policy announcements around water quality and green-house gas emissions.

Regulations set new expectations

These are bringing an entirely new set of parameters for New Zealand farmers, with challenges around recording, auditing and compliance that fortunately the government has recognised.

A funding package of almost a quarter of a billion is to assist farmers transitioning to higher environmental standards. This includes funding for farm environment planning through its sustainable land use package, that also provides funding to improve water quality in at risk

catchments and wetlands, and improved scientific knowledge to aid regional plan development.

Meantime the sector has also bought itself some time to demonstrate it is capable of reducing its green-house gas emissions, with five years' grace providing a tight timeline for the pastoral sector to reduce emissions by 10% in the ground breaking Zero Carbon Act.

In announcing the industry He Waka Eke Noa agreement, Federated Farmers vice president and climate change spokesman Andrew Hoggard said the initiative is a better alternative to farming entering the Emissions Trading Scheme.

"We will adapt to climate change, while enhancing our reputation for safe and sustainable food production, and maintaining our competitiveness in international markets."

"New Zealanders also need to realise that any reduction in emissions achieved here through reduced production, will likely only be replaced with production in countries that have higher emissions per unit of output, and usually by subsidised farming sectors."

Primary sector looks positive

The strong upside in commodity prices captured in the SOPI report includes overall export

revenue reaching \$47.9 billion to the end of June this year, up 3.3% on last year.

The heavy lifting has been provided by dairying, up 8.4% to almost \$20 billion for the year while meat and wool exports have continued their good momentum up 2.5% to \$10.4 billion.

Ray Smith, the MPI Director General, also points to some of the other rising stars in the primary export sector, particularly horticulture experiencing a 4.7% rise, driven by the likes of kiwifruit, wine, apples and pear exports.

Forestry has not quite managed to shrug off the jitters a slide in Chinese log prices caused earlier in the year, and is expected to end the June 2020 year down 12.8% at \$6 billion of exports off the June 2019 record high.

However that decline is less than first anticipated, with log prices now starting to recover more quickly than expected from their earlier lower prices.

Strong dairy gains expected

Taking a closer look at each of the main sectors, the prospects for dairying will be particularly welcome as farmers continue to grapple with historically high debt levels and increasing pressure from banks to reduce the principal owed on loans.

The Reserve Bank has raised its concerns repeatedly for the sector that collectively owes about \$41 billion or two thirds of total rural debt. An anticipated payout of \$7.00-plus a kg milk solids provides farmers with sufficient after tax profit to make further headway into their loan amount.

In its last Financial Stability report of the year, the Reserve Bank noted some progress has been made by some borrowers to reduce debt and restore sustainability to their balance sheets. It noted banks continue to closely monitor a



significant number of loans and that the share of “non-performing” has increased somewhat.

The fortnightly GDT dairy auctions are also proving a reassuring indicator that hopes for continuing strong prices are well founded, with the year’s first auction up 2.8% on the last one in 2019. Importantly the auction’s values lifted across all categories with smaller overall supply volumes available.

Farmer confidence in the dairy sector has also been boosted by Fonterra’s acknowledgement of its losses and a resetting of co-operative strategy that has it downscaling its global ambitions to focus on its Kiwi source milk and the farmers who supply it.

Putting the significant losses incurred in assorted overseas ventures behind, it was acknowledged by CEO Miles Hurrell at the company’s new strategy announcement.

“Many of these calls were painful but they were needed to reset our business and achieve success in the future.”

He said the new strategy recognises Fonterra is a New Zealand co-operative, with a focus on healthy people, healthy environment and healthy business.

A focus on New Zealand sourced milk will be matched with a focus on dairy ingredients and

food service, playing the co-operative’s proven strengths around logistics, innovation and quality. Meantime dairy farmers face more choice than ever for supply options, as Synlait commissioned another plant in the North Island, and some smaller processing plants have also opened around the country.

The preparedness to make the high capital investment required for such projects indicates continuing strong interest by overseas customers for a source of quality milk ingredients.

Red meat boosted by pork disease

Thanks in part to the outbreak in China of the African Swine Fever (ASF), the red meat sector has enjoyed an added boost to already upbeat sales income.

A continuing slide in global sheepmeat supplies and static cow numbers have meant red meat has faced strong price tension, even without Chinese consumers having to default to another protein option as ASF wiped out over a third of that country’s pig population. This came on the back of what was already rising demand in China for both sheep meat and beef.

New Zealand beef sales to China have gone ballistic in the past eight years, soaring from near non-existent in 2011 to be worth \$1.29 billion last year, almost equal to the United States, traditionally our largest beef market. Since September 2017, exports of red meat to China have soared from 21% of New Zealand’s total red meat exports to almost 40%.

With China accounting for almost half the world’s pig population, the loss of 30% of its herd constitutes a major protein shortage that needed to be filled. Coupled with the ongoing trade war with the United States, previously a source of imported pork, consumers’ appetites have been prompted to turn to other meats.

Even as China works to eradicate the disease and breeding sow numbers start to rise again, the interest in New Zealand red meat due to the shortage will play strongly in New Zealand’s favour, even as ASF fades.

Industry analysts hope consumers’ introduction to our red meat as a meal option will see it continue to be purchased out of choice, rather than necessity.

Forecasts for the coming year are for that growth to continue, anticipated to be up 7% year to date by June.

That lift is coming largely through price rises, rather than absolute increases in volume sales which have remained relatively flat, and reflecting the major surge in volumes already experienced over the past two years.

Interestingly analysts are seeing a growing sophistication in the Chinese market developing with the chilled beef trade nearly doubling in the past 12 months to \$60 million.

Price premium across all red meat is anticipated to remain relatively high, thanks in part to New Zealand’s beef herds and sheep flocks remaining relatively steady in numbers,

and in the case of beef, actually down slightly by .5% on the year before.

Overall, this optimistic market outlook is playing well for dry stock farmers, and estimates by Beef + Lamb New Zealand are for them to be close to last year’s net farm profit, with an average of \$130,000 expected, well up on the historical lows experienced by farmers as recently as 2008-09.

That average is based upon an average exchange rate of USD.66, but should the exchange rate fall to US.59, the expected profit could be as high as \$180,000 per farm.

Beef + Lamb economist Andrew Burttt has calculated the inflation adjusted profits of the past year were the highest since the early 70s hey days for sheep and beef farming.

Horticulture moves to No.3

By the end of the 2020 season horticulture will have also enjoyed a profitable year, and as a sector will have pushed itself into the number three spot for export earnings, edging out forestry and driven largely by the continuing success of kiwifruit, expected to rise by almost 9% this season.

However wine, apples and pears are all expected to grow by about 7% in export revenue to be worth almost \$1.0 billion.

Arable prospects strong

For Canterbury’s arable farmers the year has had a positive start, with a massive 40% increase in export revenue for the year’s first quarter. Export sales in all parts of the sector are up, with high value vegetable seeds being the main driver of those sales.

As a sector, the export seeds market flies below the radar nationally, but is in fact a strong earner, generating \$800 million of income last year, the majority of this grown in Canterbury.

Ryegrass, fescue and clover pasture seeds along with carrot, radish and beet seeds are the largest seed crops by value.

An economic impact report out last year highlighted how this sector has one of the smallest footprints in the primary sector, accounting for only 37,000ha, employing 4320 people.

Industry spokesman Thomas Chin said the sector is not only generating premium offshore sales in Europe, Asia and Australia, but also contributing to the success of New Zealand’s other primary exports in the red meat and fibre sectors that in turn generate \$7 billion in GDP.

Overall the sector is expected to increase its export revenue by 10% to the year ended June, and further albeit small increases expected out to 2024.

Last year New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Adern told United Nations delegates New Zealand intended to be the most sustainable food producer in the world.

With global prices looking positive and the primary sector picking up on New Zealand’s leading green-house gas and freshwater reforms, it appears 2020 sees the country well on that journey.



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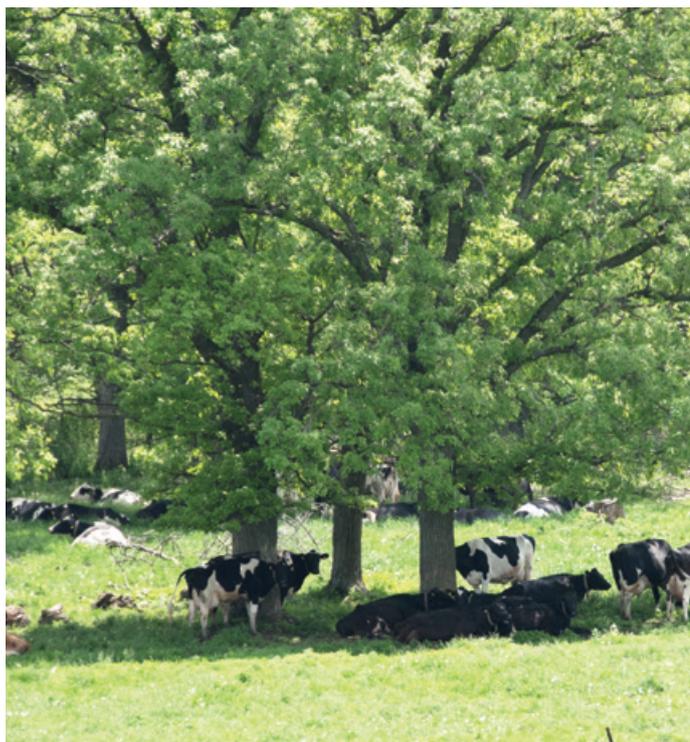
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Understanding heat stress



Temperature	% Relative Humidity																				
	°F	°C	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90
72	22.0	64	65	65	65	66	66	67	67	67	68	68	69	69	69	70	70	70	71	71	71
73	23.0	65	65	66	66	66	67	67	68	68	68	69	69	70	70	71	71	71	72	72	72
74	23.5	65	66	66	67	67	67	68	68	69	69	70	70	70	71	71	71	72	72	73	73
75	24.0	66	66	67	67	68	68	68	69	69	70	70	71	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	74
76	24.5	66	67	67	68	68	69	69	70	70	71	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	74	75	75
77	25.0	67	67	68	68	69	69	70	70	71	71	72	72	73	73	74	74	75	75	76	76
78	25.5	67	68	68	69	69	70	70	71	71	72	73	73	74	74	75	75	76	76	77	77
79	26.0	67	68	69	69	70	70	71	71	72	73	73	74	74	75	76	76	77	77	78	78
80	26.5	68	69	69	70	70	71	72	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	76	77	78	78	79	79
81	27.0	68	69	70	70	71	72	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	77	77	78	79	80	80	81
82	28.0	69	69	70	71	71	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	77	77	78	79	80	81	81	82
83	28.5	69	70	71	71	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	77	78	78	79	80	81	82	82	83
84	29.0	70	70	71	72	73	73	74	75	75	76	77	78	78	79	80	81	82	83	83	84
85	29.5	70	71	72	72	73	74	75	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84	84	85
86	30.0	71	71	72	73	74	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84	85	85	86
87	30.5	71	72	73	73	74	75	76	77	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84	85	85	86
88	31.0	72	72	73	74	75	76	76	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	83	84	85	86	86	87
89	31.5	72	73	74	75	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	87	88	89
90	32.0	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91
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101	38.5	77	79	80	81	82	83	84	86	87	88	89	90	92	93	94	95	96	98	99	100
102	39.0	78	79	80	82	83	84	85	86	87	89	90	91	92	94	95	96	97	98	100	101
103	39.5	78	79	81	82	83	84	86	87	88	89	91	92	93	94	96	97	98	99	101	102
104	40.0	79	80	81	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	91	93	94	95	96	98	99	101	102	103
105	40.5	80	80	82	83	84	86	87	88	89	91	92	93	95	96	97	99	100	101	102	103
106	41.0	80	81	82	84	85	87	88	89	90	91	93	94	95	97	98	99	101	102	103	104
107	41.5	80	81	83	84	85	87	88	89	91	92	94	95	96	98	99	100	102	103	104	104

Do you know at what point heat stress becomes a factor for your animals and do you know what the cost of heat stress is in your system?

WORDS SUPPLIED BY RUMINATE

We measure heat stress using a calculation called the THI (Temperature Humidity Index), the table above shows the results of the calculation, so the calculations haven't been included in detail in this article. Essentially, at a THI above 65 we start to see the early signs of heat stress—cows bunching, lethargic, crowding the water trough and of course a drop in milk production. The second table highlights the potential production cost of heat stress, and as it shows it can be significant. The drop in milk production is driven by a drop in feed intake and consequently rumination levels. Because rumen fermentation is the primary driver of heat production the quickest way for the cow to reduce heat production is to reduce her feed intake.

Aside from shade and infrastructure you might think there isn't too much you can do but there are significant dietary influences to consider. We can influence the heat produced by rumen fermentation by altering the diet. Diets that are high in fibre and/or diets that are high in non-protein nitrogen will cause greater heat production in the rumen whereas diets that have higher proportions of bypass energy and/or protein and more dense sources of energy typically allow the cow to consume the energy and protein she needs to keep milking without the associated increase in heat production.

Here are a few things to consider this season:

1. WATER

Make sure it's clean and they have enough. Clean your troughs and find alternatives to water additives, you don't want to inhibit intake.

2. EXCESS NON-PROTEIN NITROGEN

Avoid it. Go sparingly with the urea if you have to use it and always follow the cows rather than a blanket application.

3. PKE / SOYA HULLS AND OTHER HIGH FIBRE LOW, DIGESTIBILITY FEEDS

Again, avoid using too much. Keep a hold on the high fibre (and low digestibility) feeds if you can.

4. NUTRIENTS

Look for nutrient dense feeds like grain for starch and soy or canola for protein.

IMAGE: Heat stress can impact production significantly, be sure to consider options to reduce the impact on heat on your animals

5. FAT

Consider bypass fat as an energy source.

6. ELECTROLYTES

Make sure you keep these levels up.

7. WATCH THE PH

Manage rumen pH, especially with high carbohydrate diets. Subclinical acidosis will contribute to increased heat stress.

8. ADDITIVES

There are additives available that have a specific effect on managing heat stress.

If you're looking for more information about managing heat stress, talk to your local Ruralco representative.

HEAT STRESS LEVEL	PRACTICAL EXAMPLE OF [TEMPERATURE ; RELATIVE HUMIDITY]	EXPOSURE DURATION	MILK LOSS UNDER HEAT STRESS [KG/H ; KG/COW/DAY]
Stress Threshold THI [68–71]	[22°C (72°F) ; 50%]	4 hrs/day	[-0.283kg/h ; -1.1kg/cow/day]
Mild–Moderate Stress THI [72–79]	[25°C (77°F) ; 50%]	9 hrs/day	[-0.303kg/h ; -2.7kg/cow/day]
Stress Threshold THI [80–89]	[30°C (86°F) ; 75%]	12 hrs/day	[-0.322kg/h ; -3.9kg/cow/day]
Stress Threshold THI [90–99]	[34°C (93°F) ; 85%]		Not measured



Good sleep: THE BEST HEALTH CARE YOU WILL EVER GET

WORDS BY MICHAEL HEMPSEED

WHEN WE TALK ABOUT WELLBEING, WE TALK ABOUT EATING WELL AND EXERCISING. YES, THERE IS SOMETHING THAT HAS MORE BENEFITS THAN ALL OF THESE THINGS AND THAT IS SLEEP! WE TEND TO TALK A LOT ABOUT EATING WELL AND EXERCISING, THESE THINGS ARE IMPORTANT, BUT RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT GOOD SLEEP IS, AS OR EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THESE THINGS. FOR YEARS WE HAVE TREATED SLEEP LIKE A DISEASE AND TRIED TO GET AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH SHOWS JUST HOW IMPORTANT SLEEP IS, WE NOW KNOW THAT EVERY SINGLE BIOLOGICAL PROCESS WITHIN THE HUMAN BODY IMPROVES WITH GOOD SLEEP!



You can go years with poor diet before it really affects your health, but just a few days without sleep and you become at risk of a fatal car crash or psychosis (irrational or delusional thoughts or actions). Fatigue is the leading cause of fatal crashes on our roads and it is the leading cause of workplace accidents! A disproportionate number of workplace accidents happen on night shifts. We talk a lot about the dangers of drugs and alcohol yet we don't talk much about the danger of fatigue.

Researchers have found a strong link between poor sleep and weight gain, when you eat a meal your body tells you that you are full. We have found that when people are sleep deprived, they don't get the signals telling them they are full, so they eat and eat yet still feel hungry.

We also know that when we are really tired, we have a lot more arguments with other

people. Couples with poor sleep often have higher divorce and separation rates!

As well as this, good sleep improves memory, decision making and problem solving.

Teenagers have a delayed sleep phase, they produce the chemical melatonin, the chemical that puts your body to sleep, 2-3 hours later than an adult. So, if they want to stay up late, they are not being difficult or defiant, they are doing what their biology tells them. We should try and avoid having teenagers do milking jobs at 4am. The teenage brain is not fully developed until age 30!

My specialist field is mental illness and suicide prevention. In the past we used to think that if someone had a mental illness then poor sleep would be a result of that. We now think it is the other way around; poor sleep is a significant causal factor in mental illness and suicide. We all know that if we don't get a good night's sleep, we often feel worse the next day. It is only in the last 20 years that scientists have figured out just how devastating poor sleep is to our wellbeing. I recently met a farmer in his 50's. He said late one night he was overwhelmed by all the problems he had on his farm, he thought about ending it all. He changed his mind and went to bed. When he woke up after a good night's sleep, he realised all his problems were solvable. He was amazed at how tiredness made everything seem so much worse than it really was. We also know that if you have poor sleep you feel much more anxious.

We must start making good sleep part of our well-being. Adults need 7-9 hours sleep, most people under the age of 30 need 8-10. It is a myth that you need less sleep. The problem with sleep deprivation is you don't realise what affect sleep deprivation has on you. Study after study shows that even if people "feel" okay, poor sleep significantly affects all the things mentioned above.

We know that continuous and full sleep is really important. The most restorative part of sleep happens in the last 60-90 mins of sleep, so losing one hour at the end of sleep has a much greater impact than the percentage lost. We know that being woken up many times throughout the night is worse than short sleep! So full and continuous sleep is vital.

Phones have had a disastrous impact on our sleep. Ideally, we should not have phones in our rooms at night. But if we must, put them into flight mode or on silent at night so you are not constantly disturbed by notifications.

If you experience poor sleep make it a priority to address it, go and see your GP. There are many causes of sleep problems from racing thoughts to sleep apnoea to delayed sleep phase. All are at least manageable, and many are curable.

Sleep apnoea involves waking up many times during the night because of breathing issues. It is very common; some people are reluctant to get help for this because in the past there were bulky uncomfortable masks to manage it. Today the masks are much smaller and more comfortable.

Hypersomnia or oversleeping can also cause the above-mentioned problems, so this should also be addressed.

The biggest cause of poor sleep is racing thoughts, this is almost always manageable. There are counsellors who specialise in this with a special form of counselling called CBT for insomnia. You can buy online courses in this for less than \$100 and many counsellors around New Zealand also offer it.

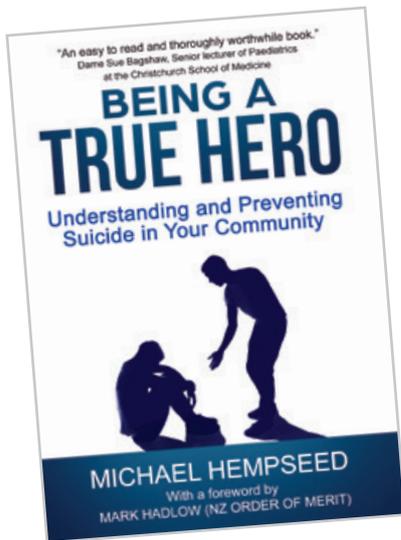
Farming in the past has been an industry where poor sleep has been accepted, this must change for the well-being of the industry.

If these suggestions don't work, try watching parliament TV—that will put you straight to sleep!



INTRODUCING MICHAEL HEMPSEED

Michael Hempseed is the author of *Being A True Hero: Understanding and Preventing Suicide in Your Community*. The book is being used by the New Zealand Police, Fire and Emergency NZ, GPs, Counsellors as well as many parents and teachers. He has trained everyone from army medics to social workers to health and safety companies. Michael gained an honours degree in Psychology from the University of Canterbury in 2008. In 2016 he spoke at TEDx. Michael loves to travel, having visited over 34 countries, including Cambodia, Morocco, China, India, Brazil and many others. In addition to this he hosts a weekly radio show called Lighthouse of Hope.



Michael Hempseed is the author of *Being a True Hero: Understanding and Preventing Suicide in Your Community*. Sleep is a major theme in the book. www.beingattruehero.com

Two great books to learn more about sleep are *Why We Sleep* by Matthew Walker and *Chasing the Sun* by Linda Geddes. Both are available as audio books for those who prefer.



The battle of the lunch box



TIPS AND TRICKS FROM MELINDA DRISCOLL, RURALCO ON-FARM ACCOUNT MANAGER

1. Freezing yoghurts and fruit like berries and grapes is a great way to help keep lunchboxes cool on a hot day. Don't forget you can always use frozen veges for a snack like peas or corn.
2. Make vege sticks more exciting by adding a dip like hummus or salsa.
3. Make your own pre-packed snack packs with reusable pouches or snaplock bags—much more cost effective than buying ready-made. Popping your own popcorn is a great snack to do this way.
4. Lunch Boxes don't have to be expensive. You can use a snap lid container and get your child to decorate it with stickers or book covering to make it their own. You could even upcycle an old lunchbox this way.
5. For a treat in the lunchbox, have the kids help you to bake some biscuits for their school lunch. Get creative with an easy basic biscuit recipe and then you can freeze the biscuits for later.



Keeping your workplace well



Ruralco

WORDS BY SARAH GREEN CMHRINZ, RURALCO GROUP MANAGER PEOPLE AND CAPABILITY

THERE IS A MINEFIELD OF INFORMATION OUT THERE AROUND WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE, STRATEGIES FOR THIS, POLICIES FOR THAT, BUT AS A BUSINESS HOW FAR DO YOU TAKE IT? IF YOU ARE A SMALLER OPERATION YOU MAY NOT HAVE THE ENDLESS FUNDS TO INVEST IN SPECIALIST WELLBEING PROGRAMMES OR GIVE YOUR STAFF HEALTH INSURANCE AND GYM MEMBERSHIPS.

In any organisation it is my belief that wellbeing in the workplace starts with culture. It starts with how your staff feel every day, when they get up and come to work. Are they engaged? Are they passionate about your business and happy in what they are doing? As employers we can be conflicted, we can encourage healthy eating and exercise but ultimately those decisions are down to the individual, but what we can control is the culture in our workplace. We can educate, we can encourage, and we can create a culture where employees are engaged and where they talk to one another. Where we all strive for performance, celebrate success and importantly support each other when things may not quite go to plan.

The recent Workplace Wellness Report identified that New Zealand lost 7.4m working days to absence in 2018 costing NZ businesses \$1.79bn. Of the factors behind absences, minor illnesses were the primary cause but interestingly, work-related anxiety/stress and depression increased by 15.8%, non-work-related stress was up by 12.6% and caring for a family member or dependent rose to 4th place for causal factors in the survey.

These survey results highlight the blurred line between home and work and our duty of care to our employees. Simple but effective practices in the workplace, that ease the pressure at work, can and will have a knock-on effect in building resilience in order to deal with life's knocks when they occur.

Knowing you have a supportive workplace is key.

In the recent Deloitte "Health and Safety Leadership Survey" it identified that 28% of organisations provided an Employee Assistance Programme, while just 1% addressed the work environment as a resource to keeping their employees well both physically and mentally. Surely this is providing the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff rather than addressing issues that as leaders we can have influence over?

As businesses we can all start with some simple tactics that cost nothing:

- Saying thank you;
- Talking—share your stories, your successes and your failures, let staff see that you are human;
- Encouraging regular breaks;
- Set up a wellbeing committee—let your employees feel empowered to help each other;
- Don't be afraid to speak about mental health—no one is immune;
- Be aware of pressure points and busy times in the business; Communicate with staff to let them know you are there and to see what they need;
- Lead by example—take your breaks, encourage holidays and turn your emails and phones off at night.

Partnership challenges traditional thinking

RURALCO IS PROUD TO LAUNCH A PARTNERSHIP WITH BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY STILE INC LTD. BASED IN GORE AND DELIVERING THEIR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMME ACROSS THE SOUTH ISLAND, STILE FOUNDERS SHEREE AND DYLAN DITCHFIELD DEVELOPED THE PROGRAMME TO FLIP THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL ON ITS HEAD.

Sheree said “traditionally, business leadership has been the position at the top of the pyramid, where their job is to ensure all those below them are contributing positively to the business. At Stile we believe that a true leader provides a stable base from which others in the organisation can contribute from.”

Understanding and establishing a solid foundation for any business to reach its potential involves having a clearly articulated purpose, values and a structure that enables the team to operate autonomously without fear of failure. The Stile ‘Freedom in Business Workshop’ is a programme which challenges current thinking and behaviours whilst also providing life, leadership, and business tools to support personal growth and development.

Sheree said “the Stile team have been very impressed with Ruralco’s genuine desire to meaningfully contribute to their members businesses beyond what they currently do with the tangible. It is a significant point of difference and stance they have taken, a very holistic approach to business. A partnership we value.”

Ruralco Group CEO, Rob Sharkie was impressed by the programme, “after hearing about and meeting with the Stile team, I was impressed with the programme. It has been rolled out using industry experts and by people who have been there and done it. Real people who have made mistakes, reassessed their business and personal goals, and then ultimately done something about it.”

“Throughout my career I have seen solid farming families lose their way and make decisions without critically assessing all aspects of their personal and farm lives. This programme provides that pathway to an outcome with longevity and purpose.” Rob said To find out more and to register for the programme, visit website www.stileinc.co.nz or please contact Sheree or Dylan Ditchfield on 0800 404 101.

Stile’s programme is made up of eight modules, each facilitated by independent experts:

1. UNDERSTANDING WHY DESIGNING YOUR FUTURE ALWAYS BEGINS WITHIN

The rules of the game of life and business are constantly changing. In a world where uncertainty and chaos are constant, and markets more cynical and selective than ever we are being challenged to redefine leadership and business.

A business really gains momentum when both the people and the business have real clarity of purpose and direction. In this workshop learn to identify and articulate core purpose and values unique to you and your business. This will be matched with an understanding of the leadership behaviours needed to make your aspirations a reality.

Facilitated by Sue Lindsay

2. IT TAKES ALL SORTS!

People are different and because of our differences we are often misunderstood.

Being able to present information in ways that recognise, respect and meet the needs of others is crucial to effective teamwork and leadership.

This workshop module will help you to understand why we think and act the way we do. It will also help you be better able to identify another person’s communication style, so you can get onto their wavelength more quickly and leverage the strengths of diverse thinking in your workplace.

Facilitated by Claire Harvey & Kathy Jamieson

3. LEADER RESILIENCE & MINDFULNESS

If we do not take care of ourselves, we are no good to our business, our team or our family and friends. Becoming a resilient leader means to be able to come back from the setbacks and disappointments we face in business. Mindful decision makers assess issues, gather and process information more effectively and respond wisely and more compassionately to others and to life.

This module allows you to experience mindfulness and to learn skills that allow you to become more aware, productive, creative, flexible and effective and enable you to live in a more meaningful way. This will take ownership, discipline and a willingness to get uncomfortable.

Facilitated by Kris Mac & Katie O’Connor

4. RECRUITMENT

The people you select to engage in your team play a significant role in driving business performance and outcomes.

In order to become an employer of choice, this workshop module will assist you in identifying a recruitment and selection process which works for you and your business. You will develop the skill set that will provide a strong and sound platform to improve the probability of hiring the best people and help you create real people success stories in your business.

Facilitated by Lee Astridge

5. GOVERNANCE AND MEETING RHYTHMS

Work on the business not in the business.

This workshop module will provide a framework for a deeper understanding of your business, learning how to distinguish and separate out governance, management and operations. You will also develop a platform for safe delegation in establishing your meeting rhythms.

Facilitated by Brendon Harrex

6. DELEGATION, SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

Success and enduring growth in business is often capped by a leader’s capacity to effectively let go of the day-to-day tasks and delegate responsibility throughout the team. In this module you will develop a framework to formalise your unique business knowledge and allocate responsibility accordingly to ensure whole business coverage.

Facilitated by Dylan & Sheree Ditchfield

7. FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

The financial parameters that drive our businesses are often poorly understood.

Learn to establish real clarity around what drives financial success and translate that understanding into what financial resilience truly means and looks like in your business.

Facilitated by Brendon Harrex

8. COACHING, MENTORING, LEADERSHIP

A resilient business has its people leading by example at all levels.

In this workshop module you will learn what it looks like to lead, mentor and coach. Understand the significance your behaviours play and ensure they are consistent with your business and personal values.

Facilitated by Dylan & Sheree Ditchfield

Past participants have experienced a renewed sense of purpose, an improved work life balance and have moved into the next stage of their lives with a more people-centric approach to business.



“The biggest impact for us personally has been how it helped to shape and expand how we not only view ourselves and our abilities, but how we view, understand, interact and have relationships with others. From staff to work colleagues, to family and each other. There was a true shift in the conversations we’re having with each other plus others around us, coming from a greater self-awareness. This new understanding, then in turn flowed through into business, how we set up policies and procedures. It all became a more people focused approach rather than starting and finishing with just a business outcome view. We soon realised it had been the ‘people focus’ that had been the missing link.

The influence Farming to Freedom had on our team dynamics both then, and within the teams we work with now can’t be overstated.”

Vicki Jensen & Daniel Mattsen



“The biggest thing that really hit home from the first session was the fact that everything could be applied to a much wider spectrum than just farming.

The things we have learnt from the course have allowed us to head in a direction that we never envisioned when we started out by allowing us to step back and allow others to take more leadership within our business and for us to then pursue other avenues within our careers.

Our lives are now headed in a very different direction to where we were four years ago when beginning the course we feel that we can make the right decisions that will lead us on whatever path we choose for our futures.”

Callum & Hanna Stalker



“This is not just another course. You have teamed up with some very strong leaders to put together an unforgettable course.

It didn’t just finish after the last class. It is still taking us on a journey two years down the track. Originally this was to help us within our business but fast forward to now it does much more than that. It puts a different perspective on life. We now have a purpose and a why for not just our business and farm life but our personal life.

A big take home was that not everyone has the same goals and ambitions but more importantly share the same values. Supporting each other on their journey is very rewarding for everyone.”

Tracy and Steve Henderson

WELCOME TO THE FITNESS SECTION OF REAL FARMER, WHERE YOU WILL GET A RANGE OF IDEAS, TIPS AND INSPIRATION FOR KEEP YOUR MIND AND BODY WELL.

Getting Back into Routine



The holiday period often throws routine out the window. Alongside the post-holiday blues, getting the balance back between work, farm, life and family can be hard. Here are some tips to get you back on track:

1. Put yourself to bed early

After late nights, broken sleep in holiday houses, camper vans or a tent, prioritising sleep is an important step to get you back to your normal. A good night’s sleep can calm the internal chaos and make the days much more manageable.

2. Make lists and prioritise jobs

Everyone has an endlessly revolving to do list, so when getting back into routine it’s important to prioritise. Work out which jobs can wait until the end of the week or next month and remove stress.

3. Plan your day, then lock it in your calendar

Having a diary and keeping it current, helps life be manageable. Whether you are a paper person or like the fact your phone can give you reminders, put important dates, deadlines and family events in this calendar. Use apps to add in your bed-time routine, exercise and meal ideas!

4. Time to move

If you have had a break from exercise then restart by giving yourself a goal, work on one fitness session at a time and build up from there. If you are starting out, begin with low impact and build up the number of sessions and intensity over time.

5. New Year nutrition

Holiday time often calls for constant treats! It can be hard to get back into regular eating patterns, so make a plan and be prepared. Spend 10 minutes sorting snacks and lunch the night before and always have a water bottle handy to cure any false hunger.

Don’t be too hard on yourself, allow yourself a few weeks for a routine to kick in and the healthy habits will form again.

INTRODUCING REAL FARMER FITNESS CONTRIBUTOR, SOMMER O’ SHEA, PERSONAL TRAINER GARAGE GYM, METHVEN.

Sommer is a young Methven local who recently returned home after studying, working and traveling for the past seven years. Over Sommer’s 10 years in the industry she has extended and grown her knowledge, including spending time running a specialist Cancer Exercise Rehabilitation. Sommer loves getting into the outdoors having competed in adventure races including the Coast to Coast.



ACHIEVING THE RIGHT BALANCE: MENTAL AND PHYSICAL WELLBEING IN 2020

AFTER A CHALLENGING 2019, WE HOPE THAT ALL OUR READERS FOUND TIME TO RECHARGE AND DECOMPRESS OVER THE CHRISTMAS BREAK.

Farming has always been an all-consuming occupation and one that is demanding both physically as well as mentally. Given that our farmers commitment to their work is always 100%, the ability to take a break, and physically and mentally recharge is as important to do as it is difficult to achieve.

Maintaining our patient's health at an optimal level is the foundation upon which our business is built upon. Too often we see patients who have ignored the warning signs of a developing condition and as a result present to us or their GPs with conditions far more advanced and more difficult to treat than if they had presented earlier. This is as true for physical illness as it is for mental issues, which we would like to address in this article.

Stress levels in the rural sector have been running high for some time and the effects of stress can be as debilitating physically as they are emotionally; while invisible to the human eye, the effects of stress are every bit as real as a physical injury and can be serious, having both short-term as well as long-term effects on both your emotional and physical well-being.

Stress related illness presents in many forms including serious mental health issues such as Depression and Anxiety, as well as physical conditions such as Heart Disease, High Blood Pressure, Stroke, Obesity, Sexual Dysfunction, Gastrointestinal problems as well as issues with your skin or hair.

Probably the most important thing to recognise is that stress related illnesses are like any other illness and that early diagnosis is important.

EARLY SIGNS OF STRESS

The signs of stress can manifest themselves in different ways, affecting the entire range of our skills and abilities, below is a short list of some of the possible symptoms.

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS:

- Memory problems;
- Inability to concentrate;
- Poor judgement;
- Seeing only the negative;
- Anxious or racing thoughts;
- Constant worrying.

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS:

- Depression or general unhappiness;
- Anxiety and agitation;
- Moodiness, irritability, or anger;
- Feeling overwhelmed;
- Loneliness and isolation;
- Other mental or emotional health problems.

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS:

- Aches and pains;
- Diarrhoea or constipation;
- Nausea, dizziness;
- Chest pain, rapid heart rate;
- Loss of sex drive;
- Frequent colds or flu.

BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS:

- Eating more or less;
- Sleeping too much or too little;
- Withdrawing from others;
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities;
- Using alcohol, tobacco, or drugs to relax.

MANAGING THE EFFECTS OF STRESS?

There are many different things you can do to help manage your stress levels and you need to find the things that work best for you:

- Know yourself and your limits;
- Have a plan to maintain balance in your life, whatever that may mean for you;
- Take time for yourself;
- Do something other than work;
- Rest your body and mind;
- Stay connected with family and friends;
- Be vigilant re the signs of stress and be diligent in protecting your emotional as well as physical wellbeing;
- Eat healthy well-balanced meals;
- Maintain your body's balance. Your local Pharmacy can help you consider some natural supplements that may be of help. There are multiple proven stress relief products that can help to relieve stress,

improve sleep and boost your energy levels, below are a few examples but you should speak to your local pharmacist to see what would suit you best;

- Vitamin B complex helps reduce stress and improve energy levels;
- Magnesium improves sleep;
- Valerian has a calming effect and helps sleep;
- Rhodiola (Arctic Root) improves energy levels;
- L-Theanine helps promote a restful, and relaxed state;
- 5-HTP or St Johns Wort are both known to help balance mood.

These products, and more, are available sometimes singularly, and sometimes only in combination, and can have beneficial effects in managing the symptoms caused by stress.

- Avoid relying on alcohol, tobacco or other similar products to manage your stress;
- Know who to talk to and if you find that you are off your game, seek help. Your GP is always a good place to start a conversation.

If for whatever reason you don't feel that it's appropriate to speak to your GP or if you don't have one, we have listed below a number of organisations who you can contact for help, many of which operate 7 days a week, 24 hours a day:

National helplines

- Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
- Healthline – 0800 611 116
- Samaritans – 0800 726 666

Depression-specific helplines

- Depression Helpline – 0800 111 757 or free text 4202 (to talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions)
- www.depression.org.nz – includes The Journal online help service



WORDS SUPPLIED BY WISES
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- SPARX.org.nz – online e-therapy tool provided by the University of Auckland that helps young people learn skills to deal with feeling down, depressed or stressed

Help for parents, family and friends

- Commonground – a website hub providing parents, family, whānau and friends with access to information, tools and support to help a young person who is struggling.
- Parent Help – 0800 568 856 for parents/whānau seeking support, advice and practical strategies on all parenting concerns. Anonymous, non-judgemental and confidential.
- Family Services 211 Helpline – 0800 211 211 for help finding (and direct transfer to) community based health and social support services in your area.
- Skylight – 0800 299 100 for support through trauma, loss and grief; 9am–5pm weekdays.

Other specialist helplines

- Alcohol and Drug Helpline – 0800 787 797 or online chat
- Are You OK – 0800 456 450 family violence helpline
- Gambling Helpline – 0800 654 655
- Anxiety phone line – 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)
- Seniorline – 0800 725 463 A free information service for older people
- Quit Line – 0800 778 778 smoking cessation help
- Women's Refuge Crisisline – 0800 733 843 (0800 REFUGE) (for women living with violence, or in fear, in their relationship or family)

WORDS SUPPLIED BY
COMPLIANCE PARTNERS

MACHINERY MAINTENANCE

MACHINERY IS A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF OUR FARMS AND IS USED DAILY. BUT WITH THAT HARD WORK COMES A FAIR AMOUNT OF WEAR AND TEAR. WHEN MAINTENANCE IS DELAYED IT CAN LEAD TO ACCIDENTS FROM MACHINERY BREAK DOWN, AS WELL AS INCREASED COSTS AND BUSINESS INTERRUPTION, STRESS AND PRESSURE.

The Health & Safety at Work Act requires us to ensure our machinery and equipment is in a safe working condition. That's why it's essential to make sure all maintenance, repair, servicing and cleaning activities on machinery and equipment on farm is scheduled and planned and is carried out in a healthy and safe way.

The best way to start is to write up a maintenance plan for each piece of machinery or equipment. Remember, each item is going to be slightly different with what needs to happen and when, so this is a good way to get the team on the same page.

A maintenance plan basically illustrates how a competent person will regularly inspect, test and maintain the machinery or equipment. Maintenance programmes should detail things like the following and be put together in line with the manufacturer's operation manual:

- Name of equipment;
- Isolate/tag out procedures (for while the servicing is happening);
- Where on the machine requires servicing;
- What type of servicing is needed;
- How often it needs to be serviced;
- Who is responsible for the servicing and maintenance;
- How defects will be fixed, by whom and when.

The plan should be reviewed regularly to ensure its effective and that it is being carried out as it needs to be. And make sure you keep all service and maintenance records.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THINGS THAT SHOULD BE COVERED IN THE PLAN?

Each piece will be slightly different, but here's some key things that should be considered:

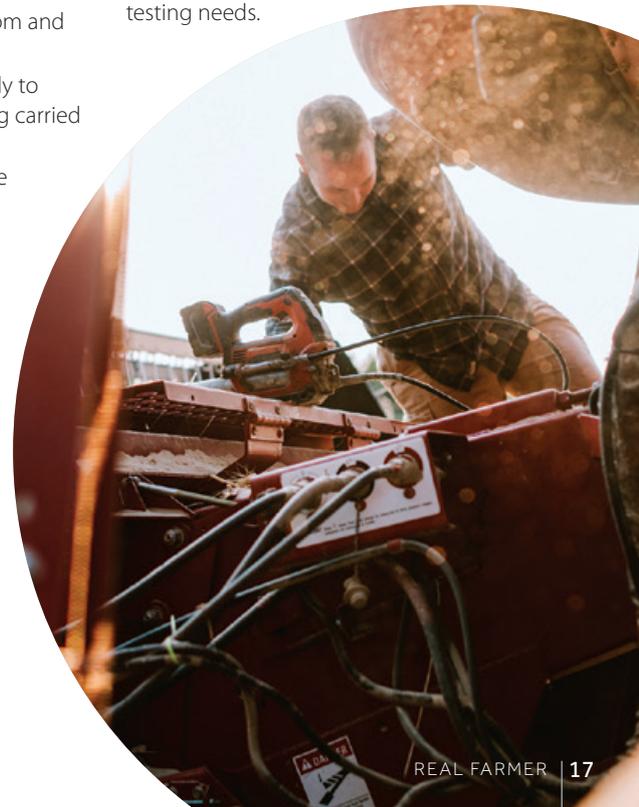
- Controls—these should work as the manufacturer intended;
- Emergency stops in place and working;
- Roll over and falling object protective structures—bolts, condition, etc.;
- Personal protective equipment readily available;

- Air filters and air conditioners in good working order;
- Brakes—pads, fluid levels, adjustment etc.;
- Exhaust—no holes etc.;
- Nests etc. in engines;
- Tyres—roadworthy, tread, pressure;
- Wheels—nuts, rust weep, grease, alignment etc.;
- Seatbelts—provided, adjustable, working etc.;
- Guards—PTO, safety all in place;
- Drive belts—condition and tension;
- Greasing points;
- Battery;
- Fluid—radiator, transmission, oil, battery, brake, fuel;
- Hydraulic hoses—not leaking or worn;
- Lights—field, head, tail, warning, indicator;
- First Aid kits and Fire Extinguishers in place and well stocked.

It's important to remember that even small things, like mud and dirt, can build up on the cab floor and get under the pedals. A brake pedal depressing onto five centimetres of caked dirt is a pedal that has five centimetres less travel.

A bit of time spent now making the plan and getting into the habit of doing this will definitely save time in the long run, as well as keeping everyone safe around working machinery.

Contact Compliance Partners on 021 942 150 to discuss all your machinery maintenance plan questions—as well as all occupational health, safety and drug testing needs.



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NZ Pork working to highlight the risks of ASF

Since late 2018, as African Swine Fever continued its spread across Europe and the first outbreaks began to appear in China, NZ Pork and the commercial pig farming industry have been working hard to raise awareness of the threat the deadly pig disease poses to this country.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY NZ PORK

As well as regularly highlighting the growing risks of ASF, as the disease moved ever-closer to New Zealand, NZ Pork—with support from MPI—produced a series of information campaigns providing details about the global spread of ASF and precautions farmers with pigs need to take to prevent the disease from reaching New Zealand and spreading. It's estimated that between 50,000 and 80,000 pigs are kept outside the commercial industry.

NZ Pork General Manager David Baines says the industry is taking the threat of the disease extremely seriously.

"Watching the disease spread through Europe and Asia demonstrates how devastating ASF could be if it reached New Zealand," says David Baines.

"Although the disease has no effect on human health, the only response is to cull infected herds, which could wipe out our \$750 million local industry. That's why we are doing everything we can to raise awareness about the risks of ASF."

As well as targeting farmers, NZ Pork has also produced information for hunters and trampers, to alert them to the signs of ASF they might find in infected wild boar—a major source of outbreaks in Europe.

"We have also worked with our border security agencies to highlight the risks for people travelling from infected areas—and in particular to discourage anyone from bringing pork products into New Zealand from these countries," says Mr Baines.

"Travel is also a concern for farm workers who may come into contact with the disease overseas and bring ASF back with them on clothing and equipment."

ASF is an exceptionally hardy virus and can survive almost indefinitely in frozen meat. It can also be carried on clothing, footwear, equipment and vehicles.

David Baines says one of the things the industry is strongly emphasising is the importance of not feeding untreated meat scraps to pigs.

"People have to be extremely careful about feeding food scraps to pigs, as it is very easy for meat that's not been properly treated to get caught up in it. In New Zealand, it is illegal to feed meat to pigs unless it has been cooked at 100 degrees—boiled, essentially—for one hour."

"This is a key biosecurity measure, as ASF is a very hardy virus and can survive in pork products that might not have been cooked thoroughly, as well as various types of processed pork products. It can then infect the pigs that eat them."

BBQ Beer Ribs recipe

With Hannah Miller
(AKA A Lady Butcher)

PREPARATION TIME:

10 minutes plus 45 minutes to marinate

COOKING TIME:

45 minutes

EQUIPMENT:

Cob barrel BBQ
1 chopping board
1 tray
2 tongs
1 non-metallic deep dish

INGREDIENTS:

1kg NZ pork rib rack – American style
60g brown sugar
2 tsp smoked paprika
2 tsp ground cumin
2 tsp mustard powder
1 tsp flaky sea salt
1 tsp cracked black pepper
2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
200ml Behemoth CHUR NZ Pale Ale (or similar)



METHOD:

In a bowl, mix the brown sugar with the spices (smoked paprika, ground cumin, mustard powder, salt and pepper) until well combined.

Rub the NZ pork ribs as a whole rack with the sugar/spice mixture—ensuring to cover all sides. Place in a deep dish, cover with plastic wrap and set aside for 45 minutes.

While the ribs are marinating, set up your BBQ/smoker and preheat to 190°C.

Place the ribs in a piece of foil and seal all the edges, leaving only a small opening. Place the ribs on the BBQ and pour the pale ale and vinegar into the small hole. Seal the foil completely, close the BBQ and cook for 30 minutes.

Remove the ribs from the foil and place them directly onto the grill to crisp up. Let cook with the lid closed for 7 minutes either side.

Place the ribs bone-side-up on a chopping board and slice between the bones. Serve with ranch-style dipping sauce.

Co-operative sponsors international grazing workshop

Ruralco is delighted to announce Platinum sponsorship of the Lincoln University Centre of Excellence Designing Future Productive Landscapes first international workshop on “Grazing in future multi-scapes: From thoughtscapes to landscapes, creating health from the ground up.”



From 1–4 December 2020, Lincoln University will host the workshop with the goal of bringing together world leading scientists, academics and consultants across multiple disciplines with top leaders, policymakers, farmers and urban dwellers as a community to discuss specific local and global issues. In this way, the thinking and ideas that come forward from the workshop will be a global call to action to reimagine and establish a new era of our grazing lands and agricultural systems.

The topics of the workshop will include the multiple “scapes” of grazing: thoughtscapes, socialscapes, landscapes (including air, water and soils), foodscapes, healthscapes and wildscapes, as well as systems design and future thinking for pastoral industries.

Mental and practical models of pastoralism and agriculture are, in general, continually evolving natural, social and political environments. There will be a series of talks which will cultivate a shift in thinking towards future models of sustainable multipurpose pastoralism and these will be synthesised to establish how a multifunctional pastoral system could be re-imagined and designed with a view to sustainable future multi-scapes.

Conference Chair and Head of the Lincoln University Centre of Excellence, Professor Pablo Gregorini said “In other words, the main purpose of bringing all these people together is to create a space where top-notch pastoral leaders and academics from around the world and from multiple disciplines, that stretch from grazing management to philosophy, sociology, design, animal and plant nutrition, rangeland ecology, landscape architecture, and pastoralism, can have a space where we can think and reflect together on current issues and future alternatives. Such a reflection and dialogue, not only among scientists, but with farmers, policymakers, and members of the industry, aims to create a new way to re-imagine the future of our grazing lands and agriculture. Most of our grazing lands are dedicated for food and fibre production, thus providing wealth to New Zealand, like grasslands around the world provide wealth to other cultures and communities.”

In developing this workshop, the invited speakers from all corners of the world are

very happy and excited to participate in the workshop. The point of difference is that this will not be a 'symposium or conference' where the random questions or five-minute question time after the talk are provided. This workshop is not designed 'to lecture', it is designed to facilitate a space where participants can all think together. With the backdrop of New Zealand, a country with a grazing tradition which goes back more than 100 years, support from world leaders in pastoral livestock agriculture, a re-imagination and focus on the future of grazing lands and pastoral industries, will present New Zealand farming and scientific communities with the opportunity to lead the way. There is no other scientific convention in the world that offers such breadth of topic coverage.

Professor Gregorini said "in having all these international speakers in one room thinking together with us, will enable agricultural science at Lincoln University and around New Zealand to start leading the way forward for "grazing lands" here and around the world. To have all these people in one place dialoguing with policymakers and farmers is something that few times, if ever, has been achieved here in New Zealand."

"It is no secret that land users, policy makers and societies are globally calling for alternative approaches to pastoral systems, as well as other agricultural practices. There is a call for diversified-adaptive and integrated pastoral systems that work on a small or large scale. To achieve this there needs to be a paradigm shift in pastoral production systems, and agriculture in general, and how grazing livestock are managed and grazed within them, derived initially from a change in perception of how grazing livestock provide wealth. There needs to be a change of "thoughtscapes!" he said.

Professor Gregorini explains, "building off the definition of landscape—a specific view of a space or scenery from a specific perspective—by "thoughtscapes" we are referring to the geography of the mind; the interaction of the thinker and his or her perception(s) of space and time, i.e. the spatial and temporal mindset of the observer, applied to their land, people, food, society, communities and their role in life."

"In pastoral spaces, alternative thoughtscapes will include paradigm shifts where graziers move away from the one-dimensional view of contemporary pastoralism, where the animals grazing our grasslands are perceived as a source of meat, fibre and milk products only, existing in isolation to the wider landscape function. Alternative future landscapes are thought and re-imagined-as ethical, creative and sustainable with adaptive regenerative management to put in place and achieve multidimensional visions and purposes. From this will come a change in collective thinking and practices of agriculture of livestock, crops or both mixed together and how we perceive our relationships with the land."

Professor Gregorini said "the single objective of unidimensional grazing managements, maximizing animal production and/or short-term profit, has transformed landscapes, diminishing biodiversity, reducing water and air quality, accelerated loss of soil and plant biomass, and displaced indigenous animals and people. These landscape transformations have jeopardized present and future ecosystem and societal services, breaking the natural integration of land, water, air, health, society and culture."

"The development of new integrative and real systemic research approaches in agriculture of livestock and crops will help answer the current questions and farmers dilemmas, as well as address the future needs of next generation farmers. The relationship between Ruralco and the Centre of Excellence at Lincoln University, will catalyse new and applied science with focus on enhancing and accelerating the transition to multifunctional agroecosystems. This is tailor-made to promote new views and ways of agriculture for the future benefit of the whole of New Zealand and, I would say, the whole world" said Professor Gregorini.

The local and international organising committees are looking forward to four days of fascinating presentations and discussions. Beyond the scientific programme, talks and workshoping sessions, the organising committee will provide an exciting social programme, as well as an additional farmers-stakeholders-policy-makers forum in the field. This forum will take place on two sites/farms and stations across Canterbury... from the Sea to the Mountains, "ki uta ki tai." This will be an additional opportunity for all participants to network, discuss and dialogue, as well as get in touch with international associates.

The organising committee are welcoming Ruralco members, many of who will be Lincoln graduates, and anyone interested to attend the workshop in the oldest agricultural university in the Southern Hemisphere, only a few hundred metres from Lincoln township and few minutes from the vibrant city of Christchurch.

In speaking about Lincoln University as place for this workshop Professor Gregorini said "as a 'house of knowledge' and the academic heart of New Zealand Agriculture, Lincoln University is strategically placed to respond to what future forms and functions production landscapes could take. Working in partnership with key local industry stakeholders like Ruralco is imperative! This sponsorship is very valuable to the Lincoln University Centre of Excellence for Designing Future Productive Landscapes. The platinum sponsorship will provide us with the chance to get a more direct access to New Zealand's community of farmers."

Ruralco Group CEO, Rob Sharkie is excited about Ruralco's sponsorship of the workshop, "this is an opportunity for Ruralco to be associated with world leading academics. It

demonstrates Ruralco's commitment to our purpose of 'supporting a sustainable future for New Zealand Farming'. This sponsorship sees us involved at a very intimate level whilst exposing future thinking to farmers and people associated with future of agriculture in New Zealand."

"One of the most important things we can do as an industry is to discover and explore what we don't know! This workshop will offer education and internationally recognised expert opinion on a very broad topic. With pressure building, as an industry and as an agriculturally based economy we cannot ignore issues around land, climate, water and the environment."

"It is fantastic for Ruralco to be involved and to assist in bringing together what will be an excellent forum of international, multi-disciplinary speakers, leaders and thinkers who would normally be extremely difficult to attract and expensive to solicit by ourselves. Platinum sponsorship of this workshop is co-operation in action!" said Rob.

This is an opportunity for co-operative members, family, friends, farm discussion or farm working groups, consultant and advisors to come together with academics and scientists to be part of the leadership of the agricultural and pastoral industry. Registrations are open via the website. There are several options, including for the event only, for the event and dinner, or for the event, dinner, and accommodation. Booking as soon as possible will ensure organisers can best prepare attendees.

CONTACT DETAILS

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Phone: +64 3 423 0658

Mobile: +64 21 851 250

Email: pablo.gregorini@lincoln.ac.nz

Website: <https://web.cvent.com/event/3bcbdfc4-ff78-4f6d-804d-7bde2feb8c8d/summary>



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Making their own luck

For the Currie family of Methven, the capacity for hard work, the love of family and the mental discipline to stay positive is paying off on the farm, in the gym and on the world multi-sport and triathlon stages.

The view from under the veranda at the homestead of Kimberley Farm couldn't be a more typical kiwi summer day. The backdrop is the majestic Mount Hutt, in the foreground, a high-octane game of backyard cricket. The wickets are two crates tipped on their side, of the seven children self-rotating in and out of the game, at least three are shirtless and it appears the rules are New Zealand backyard standard. Over the fence on the full is out, no LBW and naturally, it's tip and run. And since they are all Currie's, if you decide to tap in, you'd better have an accurate throw because there's no doubt, they're all good runners.

It's one week until Christmas and today Russell Currie has been out testing his mower and getting prepared for the upcoming grass seed harvest. He's been weighing cattle and had to draft up a line of mixed breed two-year-old Primes who will get picked up tomorrow. Karen has been in organising mode, with children and grandchildren rolling in the door all day, and everyone home for Christmas. Cattle are about one-third of the Currie's farming business. As well as the home farm, which is 300ha the Curries have a block at Pudding Hill where they finish cattle on grass. Russell buys and sells cattle all year round and is not breed specific. He is a long-time, loyal supplier to Silver Fern Farms as the processor for his animals and says, "I'm a supporter of co-operatives, I just stick with one and believe in the supply or buying power for the farmer." Russell chases the Prime market buying 400-500kg liveweight stock and taking them through to finishing weight at Prime. Over winter the cattle come back to the home block



and are transitioned onto fodder beet. Russell has used fodder beet for the past five years and he is pleased with the great yields he gets per ha of land. "It's very efficient land use and with careful management, we've had good success with the cattle, and we have used it for some winter lambs."

Having been at Kimberley Farm for 60 years, bringing his wife Karen there and raising their children, Russell has no doubts it was the right thing to do. "I was on my OE, travelling through Europe and Africa—well I worked so I could travel, and then I travelled until I had to work" he laughs, "and my parents told me to come home or the farm would be for sale. I have no regrets in coming home, but I would never put that kind of pressure on the children. We want our children to follow what they want to do and if they want to come home and farm then that'll be up to them."

ABOVE: Russell and Karen with Tarn Currie, Pat Johnson, Bella Currie and Braden Currie; Tilly Johnson, Tom Currie and Mackenzie Currie sitting BELOW: Bradens next goal is qualification to Kona through the New Zealand Ironman in February 2020

Russell's parents Tom and Natalie Currie moved to Kimberley Farm in 1960 from Highbank. Russell attended primary school in Methven then went onto St Andrews College in Christchurch. At 18 he went travelling and by 21 he'd had the call to come home. Russell and Karen met when they were each the groomsman and bridesmaid at a mutual friend's wedding, and one year after that wedding, they were married.

Karen Currie grew up in Dunedin. She trained as a kindergarten teacher and after training college had gone to the North Island for a job. Having been there a while a friend encouraged her to take a job at Thomas Street Kindy in Ashburton and this led to different opportunities in Early Childhood education.

Taking over Kimberley Farm, Russell and Karen were initially in partnership with Russell's brother Campbell and his wife Thirza. Eventually, Russell and Karen bought Campbell and Thirza out and they bought a farm across the Rakaia river.

Irrigation has been a big change and has created opportunities for new farming practices for the Currie's. Although the farm is situated in a reasonably high rainfall area—it also gets the nor west rain—the addition of irrigation, even a limited amount, has enabled a changed land use from sheep and mainstream crops to a focus on cattle and high quality, niche and specialist seeds. Five years ago, the Currie's made the decision to sell the sheep and just focus on cattle and high value crop, and for Russell there is no looking back as change, he proclaims is the only way forward.





ABOVE: Tilly helping her Grandmother with the berry picking

"It was a significant day. We stopped at Sheffield, sold all the capital ewes then, jumped in the car and carried on to the West Coast to watch the kids competing in the Coast to Coast. Little did we know that this change for us was also signalling a change for all our children, as this race has helped influence the direction of their lives" Russell said.

Like many farmers the Currie's have also been immersed in the local community, following their children's interests. Karen was on Board of Trustees, involved with Plunket mothers, floral festivals and A & P shows and Russell is very proud of his 46-year service to Search and Rescue.

For Anna, Glen and Braden, growing up on Kimberley Farm meant jobs in the summer holidays. "I would keep the shearing, tailing and rouging for school holidays, Anna didn't like the woolshed much, the boys never minded, however they were all pretty keen when they needed money," Russell laughs. On family, Russell is quick to point out "my parents always encouraged us to get off the farm for a decent break. In the summer holidays every year we went to Wanaka for a week, then later for two weeks in the Sounds. This was important for us as farming is not a

five day a week job, so when we were away, we really got time to be together as a family. Camping, tramping and water skiing."

One of the very special things about the Currie family is their mental strength and the ability to recognise that you need a relentlessly positive mindset to take on big challenges and thrive. Through the downturn of the 80s and in tough times Russell said "you have to get your mind centred on the positive as soon as you can. Get to work and focus on what you need to do, and it all starts to work out."

Russell and Karen's daughter Anna Johnson, has had a journey which inspires many locals to change their lifestyle, join the gym, set a goal and get out there and do it. Her bubbly attitude and infectious nature motivate people to believe in themselves. Through her role as a gym trainer and instructor she has inspired hundreds of people to take on their bucket list challenges.

Anna lives in Methven and is married to Jeremy. They have two children Tilly (11) and Pat (8). After Mount Hutt College, Anna trained at the College of Education in Dunedin, completing a Bachelor of Education. She played netball at school, "it was an era when rugby, netball and cricket were pretty much your only choices for sport, not like our kids have today." After having children Anna joined the gym and decided to become a LES MILLS

Body Balance Instructor. From there she added the RPM programme, then took on Challenge Wanaka, went from managing a small studio fitness business to the role of EA Networks Gym Manager when the facility first opened in Ashburton. From there it was on to competing in the Coast to Coast and a full ironman distance race at Challenge Wanaka.

Anna's dream has been to be able to do what she loves in the community she loves. In November 2019 she took a leap of faith and opened Garage Gym in the Methven township. The gym employs one other full timer and operates group fit classes. Anna's emphasis has changed "my focus now is not so much on being fit to race but on being fit for life. I have no need for an end goal right now. If it's a walk day, great, or a five-hour run then, cool. For right now it's about maintaining my fitness, so I have a good quality of life, rather than having a point in time fixed in my mind. It's nice to have the pressure off."

Russell and Karen's son, Glen Currie, is the current Race Director for New Zealand's most prestigious multi-sport event, the Kathmandu Coast to Coast. He considers himself fortunate to have grown up in Methven as it allowed him, Anna and Braden to be exposed to both a traditional rural upbringing as well as the influence that tourism has on the area. "I was never really very good at traditional sports; they didn't come naturally to me due to a lack of genetic speed and size! However, I discovered a passion for snowboarding in my early teen years and would be up the mountain whenever I could. This was probably where I developed a real passion for the outdoors which later stemmed to multisport." Glen studied and taught Physical Education, Geography and Outdoor Education, taking up multi-sport when he was at University. In the ensuing years Glen became a competitive multi-sport athlete – twice coming third place in the Longest Day Coast to Coast and with Team NZ Adventure, winning all four stages in the world's most prestigious multisport event, the Wulong Challenge in China.

Glen's time is now split between the Coast to Coast, a role that is all about people—including five people working on the event all year, over 250 staff and volunteers on race day, sponsors and over 1000 competitors—and farming with father Russell. Glen said, "At times the farm is the perfect place to troubleshoot challenges in terms of the Coast to Coast. I find shifting break fences on frosty mornings the perfect way to unravel the challenges of the event and clear my head."

Glen met wife Bronwyn at University and they both travelled to Colorado to teach skiing. Bronwyn continued work as a ski instructor for the next eight years until Glen finally convinced her to come home permanently. They have three sons, Mackenzie (10), Tom (8) and Nixon (5). "My family and I are really fortunate to have so many options and opportunities both working for Coast to Coast and with the farm. Dad has taught me, in my



short time working on the farm, that you need to be able to adapt, and often when things in farming are looking all doom and gloom, there are other opportunities just around the corner. After two years I would be embarrassed to call myself a farmer. However, I think the ability to adapt is going to be critical in agriculture in the future, especially as we face the challenge of society continually voicing how they want their food produced" Glen said.

In the world of triathlon, adventure racing or multisport Braden Currie is a household name. He's also quite understated "growing up we were sporty, but we weren't into endurance based sports. I was the smart alec younger brother and Glen could beat me up if he wanted to, but I'd always give him a run for his money."

Running seemed to be a natural thing for Braden to do, and he was fast. As a teenager at Mount Hutt College, a teacher saw potential in Braden and encouraged him to run. His speed plus seeing what Glen was doing lead Braden to have a go at the Coast to Coast, a race he's now won three times. Braden says "I'm a great believer in luck. And I find the harder I work the more I have of it". The hard work has paid off and from success in multisport, then adventure racing and onto Xterra (off road triathlon), Braden has found his way to triathlon and has set himself the goal of doing what no other Kiwi has done, win the World Ironman Champs in Kona, Hawaii. In 2018 Braden placed 5th and in 2019, after a tough bike leg where he'd come off 23rd, he went on to run the marathon in the 3rd fastest time that day to give himself an overall 7th placing. But nearly, for Braden, is not enough.

Now a fully professional athlete Braden, wife Sally and their children Tarn (11) and Bella (6) are all fully immersed in the way of life it takes to win. Sally is no stranger to sport, having grown up in Methven, she and Braden met on the OPC course, where she was an instructor. She had completed a degree in Physical Education at Otago. Furthering her studies, Sally also has a Bachelor of Naturopathy giving her a holistic approach in supporting Braden.

For now, it's all eyes on training with the next goal of qualification to Kona through the New Zealand Ironman in February 2020. Wanaka is home for Braden and Sally and they appreciate the support of the community there. "Tarn and Bella are lucky to be able to travel the world with us. They are thriving with the mix of home school and classroom based. Wanaka is a unique place as there are other families who have semi/professional sportsmen and women, and the school and teachers have respect for what we are doing" said Sally.

With three successful children and their families all chasing big dreams, Russell and Karen are very proud of their children and excited for the future ahead. "I still want to physically farm every day, but nowadays I do seem to have a game of golf on the days when the lambs need dagging" Russell jokes. "I get asked when I'm going to hand over and stop driving the header, but I've realised if I do that, then I'm going to end up driving the trailers carting the grain and I'd still rather be in the header. I'm not ready to let go yet."

"Farming has been good to me. To make money in farming you need longevity. My Mum said, 'don't keep all your eggs in one basket' and over the years when one thing was down, then another was up. When people

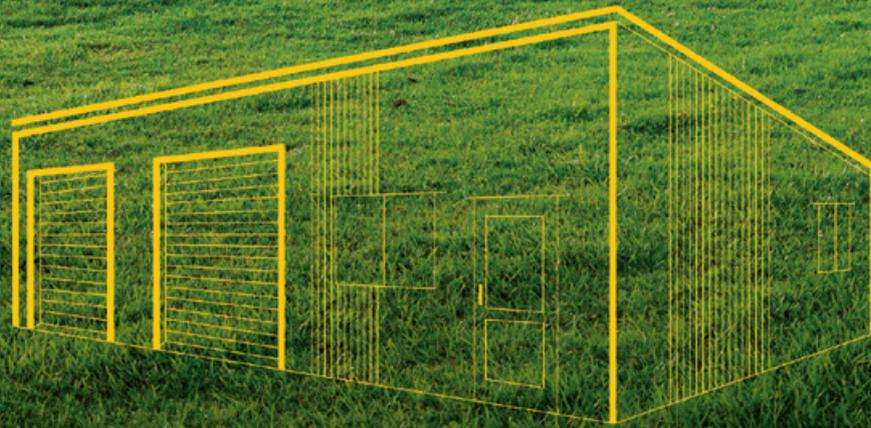
speaking badly about farming, I always say, well they're going to need food. Yes, there is more administration and more auditing. But if we have hungry people that's when we really have trouble. I foresee there will be changes in the types of food we eat and therefore in what we grow. Some people are worried about the move to synthetic meats, but I think the world is well entrenched in natural meats. What concerns me most is the amount of plastic agriculture is now using, it has changed so much and I'm pleased China stopped taking our rubbish... now New Zealand must face up and find solutions to our own environmental problems" Russell said.

As in agriculture the Currie family are determined to keep growing and getting better at what they do. Twelve months ago, the family purchased a block near the Methven Golf Course and this year are undergoing consent to subdivide 20 blocks. With races around the world to follow, events to win, a race to direct and a new business to run, there is no doubt each of them will be working hard at making their own luck.

ABOVE: In the world of triathlon, adventure racing or multisport, Braden Currie is a household name
BELOW: The next generation of Curries ready to go; Tarn Currie and Pat Johnson



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Consumers vs trade barriers

Waitrose supermarkets in the United Kingdom have announced that they will only sell UK farmed lamb as it is important to 'invest in British agriculture'.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND



Waitrose is now phasing out New Zealand lamb, which was stocked during the UK's winter months when UK lamb was not available. Tor Harris, Waitrose's Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Health and Agriculture, is quoted in The Telegraph as saying: 'Waitrose has a long history of supporting and sourcing from local producers. The decision to commit to 100% British lamb all year is a continuation of that commitment and means that we can extend opportunity to our existing British lamb farmers while also potentially bringing new local producers into our supply chain as we continue to invest in British agriculture'. Waitrose's move has been welcomed by the National Farmers' Union, noting that it will provide a welcome boost for the UK sheep sector at a time when the UK's future trading relationship is uncertain.

But that is exactly the point. Trade is a two-way deal and Brexit is a trade crisis for the

UK. If one party closes down that two-way trade, there is often a ripple effect and more trade options get closed down. As the UK enters into a brave new world without the European Union, the UK will need to develop new, two-way trading relationships. But if their supermarkets closedown imports from around the world, the world will respond.

We support offering consumers locally grown produce but we also support giving consumers choice and not dictating to them what they can buy. For a number of years, we campaigned for country of origin labelling to become mandatory in New Zealand. Country of origin labelling will finally be introduced in 2020, after yet another round of consultation. This will mean that consumers will be able to identify where produce was grown and make a choice about if they buy it.

Technological developments will take this labelling development further, so

that consumers will be able to also access information about how the produce was grown and who grew it.

The goal is fully-informed consumers making knowledgeable purchase choices. But this outcome will be taken away from consumers if supermarkets decide to make the choice for them and not provide a choice. We cannot support that.

The Waitrose decision is short-sighted for at least two reasons. First, it will not promote trade at a time when the UK needs new trading arrangements and second, it denies UK consumers choice.

In today's world, we strive to bring the best possible produce to market and we want consumers to make informed choices on what they buy. The Waitrose decision runs against this and is likely to have the opposite effect on the UK's economic prosperity.

Waitrose should be embracing diversity and free trade and giving the UK consumer choice.

Introducing the next generation of perennial ryegrass



Maxsyn NEA4 is an exciting new release from Barenbrug Agriseeds available for sowing this autumn.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BARENBRUG AGRISEEDS

Persistent, robust, densely tillered, with superior summer and autumn growth, and the highest yield of any perennial ryegrass the company has previously released, it also comes with a great endophyte.

That's according to pasture systems manager Blair Cotching.

This new diploid cultivar has been 19 years in the making, with a superb pedigree.

It began as a cross between elite Alto and Arrow ryegrass plants, with the top progeny from this combination then rigorously selected to become the 'best of the best'.

"This lineage is reflected in its name, which harks back to Bronsyn, the best-selling perennial ryegrass in the Southern Hemisphere in the 2000s; and Yatsyn 1, the original game-changer in the 1990s," Blair says.

Maxsyn has excelled in Barenbrug Agriseeds' breeding and trial programme, through heat and erratic weather patterns that now seem to be part of life.

Its genetics are a key reason for this, enhanced by fine, dense leaves (denser than Trojan, similar to Governor). The more tillers a pasture has, the more robust it is.

"Maxsyn has consistently out-produced every other perennial ryegrass we have tested it against."

Its main yield advantage comes in summer and autumn, when extra pasture is highly valued.

"Many farm systems run short of feed during summer and autumn, so we've bred Maxsyn NEA4 to help reduce this gap," Blair says.

"High summer and autumn pasture growth reduces purchased feed in dairy systems, and for sheep and beef systems, extra feed at this time is critical to get through summer, finish stock and set up winter."

Maxsyn comes with NEA4 endophyte which together add up to more than their parts.

Blair says this combination is showing excellent persistence in the field under real life pressures such as moisture stress, heat, insects and overgrazing, at times all at once.

For dairy cows, Maxsyn NEA4 provides ryegrass staggers free pasture.

For sheep and deer, ryegrass staggers grazing NEA4 endophyte is a very low risk. In an extreme situation, (e.g. summer drought where animals are forced to graze close to

IMAGE: Maxsyn NEA4 is a new release from Barenbrug Agriseeds available for sowing this autumn

the ground), a low level of staggers might occasionally be seen, he says.

Well managed, Maxsyn is high in ME (12.0+ MJME per kg DM).

Feedback from farm demo trials is that stock like it, and it holds a good clover content.

The new cultivar is good for farm sustainability too, Blair adds.

Strong persistence means less pasture renewal, soil degradation, and use of diesel.

Maxsyn's fast establishment suits minimum till sowing, which helps protect soil structure; and extra summer and autumn growth lowers the risk of overgrazing and bare soil.

Extra total DM lessens the need for imported feed.

Maxsyn seed is available now. This new ryegrass can be sown with Kotoku and Weka white clovers; plus Captain CSP cool season plantain, to reduce the risk of nitrate leaching.

For more detail talk to your Ruralco representative.

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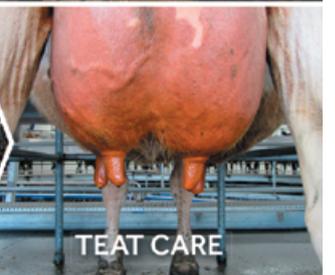
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Maximise autumn sowing opportunities with new high spec herbicide

A new formulation from one of New Zealand's best known crop protection specialists is set to make it easier for farmers to prepare paddocks for autumn sowing this season.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY NUFARM



With CRUCIAL® as the backbone of any pasture spray out or post crop clean up, they will be well positioned to get their new crop or pasture off to the best possible start.

That's the advice from Jeff Hurst, Nufarm, Territory Manager, Ashburton.

Jeff says the breakthrough liquid herbicide has everything farmers need for fast, effective results in NZ conditions.

When applied as recommended with Pulse® Penetrant, CRUCIAL carries a commercial performance guarantee of 15 minutes rainfastness*, setting a new benchmark in terms of flexibility and knowing the job is done properly even when conditions are unpredictable and challenging.

The new herbicide is the only formulation in the world which combines three glyphosate salts - potassium, monomethylamine and ammonium.

It has a high load of active ingredient (600g/litre), meaning more weed killing power per litre, using less product per ha, and the on-board triple surfactant mix ensures glyphosate molecules penetrate and spread through the plant quickly, Jeff says.

The result is fast uptake of the product and excellent efficacy against target weeds.

For Longbeach farmer and spray contractor Angus McKenzie, CRUCIAL has been a logical upgrade from previously available glyphosate formulations.

His contracting business, Wairuna Agri-Services, handles agrichemical applications for dairy, dairy support and arable farming clients in Mid-Canterbury, ranging from Ashburton to the Rangitata River.

Angus also has hands-on involvement with the McKenzie family's Wairuna Farm. This is large scale, irrigated mixed arable business which produces a wide range of seed, grain, forage and horticultural crops.

Additionally, the farm carries trading lambs, a composite ewe breeding flock and trading cattle.

Reliable performance is critical when it comes to crop protection products, Angus says, and along with CRUCIAL's 15 minute rainfastness performance guarantee, this is what has motivated him to start using the new herbicide both at home, and for his contracting clients.

Jeff says paddocks sprayed with CRUCIAL can be grazed, cultivated or drilled just one day after application for annual weeds, and three days for perennial weeds.

This gives fast turnaround, less downtime

between spraying and sowing and more flexibility especially in changeable weather conditions.

The new herbicide pours easily, won't foam and tank mixes superbly with other products. It comes in a range of pack sizes, from the all-new OHS 15 litre pack, all the way up to the larger 640L and 1000L pod pots.

The importance of a good pre-plant spray programme can't be overlooked when it comes to farmers getting the very best out of their investment in fertiliser, seed and paddock preparation ahead of autumn sowing, Jeff says.

A thorough kill of existing grass and grass weeds is a vital step in successful autumn pasture renewal, especially where low value grass species such as browntop or twitch have contributed to the paddock in question being selected for renewal in the first place.

"By then it's too late to remedy the problem, and instead of productive, profitable new pasture farmers can find themselves facing the loss of quality and persistence faster than expected."

The same goes when the paddock is being prepared for crop. Grass and other poorly controlled weeds can become re-established and will quickly compete with the newly sown crop.

Often these grasses or weed can't be controlled in the crop resulting in significant yield loss, or if they can be controlled, it is often a lot more expensive to do so.

To find out more about CRUCIAL, talk to your local Ruralco representative.

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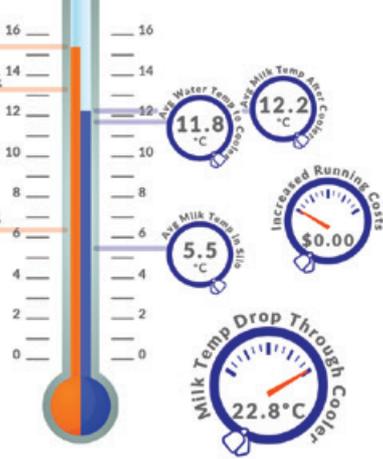
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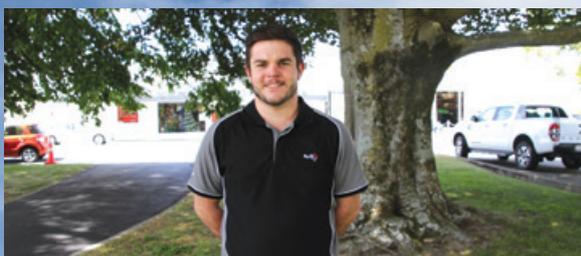
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A POWERFUL YEAR AHEAD FOR THE RURALCO ENERGY TEAM

Tracey Gordon, Energy Sales Manager, who has been with Ruralco for over eight years now, has recently been joined by George Ingham, Energy Co-ordinator.



George grew up around his Aunt and Uncle's sheep and beef farm on Banks Peninsula, where he developed his passion for the farming industry, and he is currently finishing his Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing at University of Canterbury.

Before starting at Ruralco, George spent 3 years at Meridian Energy, the last 18 months of which were in the Agribusiness Team. This time helped develop his interest in electricity for the agricultural sector due to the important role it plays for so many farming businesses, whether in dairy sheds, irrigators or stock water. Going forward, George believes energy is going to play an integral part in a lot of farming enterprises as it will help farmer's move towards a more sustainable future.

George's role entails reviewing members power accounts to see if they are getting the best deal available and helping solve any issues that arise, also liaising with our partner power companies on our members behalf. George is committed to providing a valuable service to assist Ruralco members with their individual energy needs.

"Having a new staff member with the industry experience George has, along with his enthusiasm for the rural sector is a fantastic development for us and will mean we can be more proactive for our members in the future," says Tracey. Ruralco Energy will be joining the Ruralco team at the Southern Field Days, Waimumu, site 133, as well as the March AgFest in Greymouth, site 55. If you are at either of these events, which are great days off-farm, please feel free to catch up with us, grab a drink and a bite to eat.

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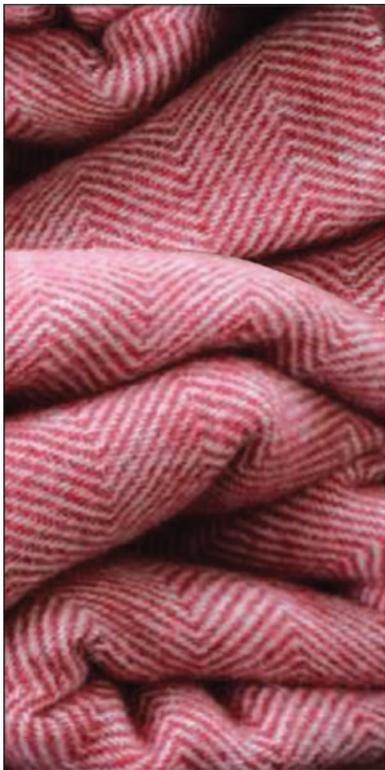


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Local builder creates bespoke pods

What started four years ago as a side-line hobby for builder and cabinet maker Mark Brown, has now become a full-time family-based business, designing, building and fitting out customised small spaces.



Mount Hutt Pods are bespoke handmade, transportable spaces. At 10 square metres they have the advantage of being a size that does not require a consent (although custom built larger versions may). The Pods are a versatile space and can be used as a sleep out, office, shelter, back country hut, extra bedroom, camping ground or glamping cabin, playhouse or tearoom. Each Pod is constructed in Methven, from local quality New Zealand made materials and meet a high standard of construction, insulation and energy efficiency for a small space.

The whole Brown family are now involved in the business. Rachel, Mark's wife helps with internal fitting and does the office work, while teenage children Clancy, Charlie, Jack and William helping lift the iron and lay down floors. "We wanted to make a product that is not only beautifully crafted but can withstand the harsh weather conditions faced in New Zealand's rugged Southern Alps. The idea of building a small footprint cabin came from looking at square cabins and thinking that I could build something a bit different. A friend in the UK had started building similar pods for camping grounds and I wanted to build something to suit a range of environments including urban, rural and remote wilderness" said Mark.

To ensure maximum comfort irrespective of the weather, each Pod is manufactured to

NZ Standard NZS 3604 for timber framed structures and are fully insulated—either standard with polystyrene or with wool or pink bats. They have double glazed doors and argon gas windows, a Colorsteel Enduro roof, multipoint locking security system, water ingress protection, electricity pack with LED lighting, two 240V sockets, smoke alarm, optional solar power system (to go off-grid), internal pine walls, laminate flooring and three phase camping electricity hook up, making Mount Hutt Pods a high spec, energy efficient space.

Te Wepu Intrepid Retreats at French Farm was the first glamping business Mount Hutt Pods helped set up. Due to the unique location and topography at Te Wepu the six pods, three family size and three snug pods that we put Bio composting toilets in, were delivered by helicopter. Mark said, "It was amazing how quickly all six Pods were put into place, although it was a bit tense watching them fly!"

There are Mount Hutt Pods all over New Zealand, including as far north as the Bay of Islands, Nelson, French Pass and recently the team had one helicoptered to

ABOVE: From left, William, Rachel and Mark Brown
ABOVE LEFT: Mount Hutt Pods are bespoke handmade, transportable spaces

the top of Mt Hutt Ski Field. A testament to the Pods smart design and high quality it has so far coped with 260-kilometre winds! Mark likes to deliver each Pod himself to make sure everything is perfect, all that's needed on site is a flat base of either concrete or gravel.

Mount Hutt Pods are available in three sizes with a range of finishes available to suit specific requirements. Each pod is tailored to suit and is hand-crafted with customisation of fixtures, fittings and finishes to suit your own requirements. Pods can be expanded, relocated or rented and they are designed to adapt to suit personality, lifestyle and requirements. The Pod is designed to maximise insulation efficiency and add to improved levels of security. They can be solar powered, have bunks, bathrooms or kitchens, Mark's motto is "anything is possible."

Mark and Rachel welcome all enquiries about the Pods, don't hesitate to give them a call.



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New partnership supports sustainable future for New Zealand farming



Sustainability is at the heart of a new partnership between Ruralco and the New-Zealand Farm Environment Trust that includes alignment with the nationwide Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

Ruralco has become a strategic partner of the Trust that is striving for New Zealand's food and fibre producers to be recognised as global leaders in the stewardship of land and water. This stewardship involves balancing sustainability from an environmental, economic and social perspective—a philosophy that resonates with Ruralco, says Group CEO Rob Sharkie.

"We're committed to supporting credible organisations like the Trust that are focused on building a sustainable future for farming. As part of this, they're helping to share good practice across all aspects of farming and are championing the value of what farmers bring to the industry."

"Like the Trust and the farmers it works with, we care about tomorrow—making this partnership a natural fit for us."

Partnerships such as the one with Ruralco are the lifeblood of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust—an independent body that is built on the dedication of a nationwide army of regionally-based volunteers. Without the support of its partners and sponsors, the Trust simply wouldn't be able to function, says Trust General Manager James Ryan.

"We're passionate about New Zealand agriculture and horticulture, and a lot of what we do is around celebrating what farmers and growers are achieving."

"This is largely done by promoting leadership in environmental excellence. Also by encouraging the uptake of management practices which both protect and enhance the environment while adding value to farming businesses and communities."

"In addition, we're fostering the sharing of knowledge, acting as a conduit between local and regional governments, farmers, growers and the wider community."

The Trust's best-known activity is running the Ballance Farm Environment Awards, with planning for this year's awards functions well underway. Held throughout the country, the events are a fantastic opportunity to celebrate, share ideas and network with like-minded people, says James.

"The functions are a great celebration of some of New Zealand's amazing farmers and growers—not just those who are eligible for the awards but everyone who entered because they're all worthy of recognition for their great work."

Innovative and sustainable solutions

Ruralco are big believers that real people do amazing things, and this is partially due to farmers embracing innovative and sustainable solutions—a notable trait of Award entrants.

"Entrants show enormous skill in tackling the challenges posed by their specific farming environment," says James.

"They showcase New Zealand ingenuity at its best, often finding solutions through innovation—by thinking outside the square. Generally, they are thinkers, linkers, doers and learners."

As the rural community, government bodies and general public's appreciation of the importance of sustainability continues to grow, so is the relevance of the Awards.

"We're delighted that we're now aligned with the Awards by becoming partners of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust," says Rob.

"There's definitely a growing awareness about how the future of farming lies in the way we look after our land and our people. This is one way we can show our support for the incredible work that's being done by our farmers and shareholders."

To learn more about the Ballance Farm Environment Awards and the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust, check out www.nzfeatrust.org.nz

Event dates

All welcome: Ballance Farm Environment Awards functions

Join like-minded people to celebrate, share ideas and network by going along to your region's award ceremony. Buy tickets at www.nzfeatrust.org.nz/2020-awards

EAST COAST: Wed 4 March

GREATER WELLINGTON: Thu 5 March

CANTERBURY: Wed 11 March

WAIKATO: Wed 18 March

HORIZONS: Thu 19 March

AUCKLAND: Wed 25 March

NORTHLAND: Thu 26 March

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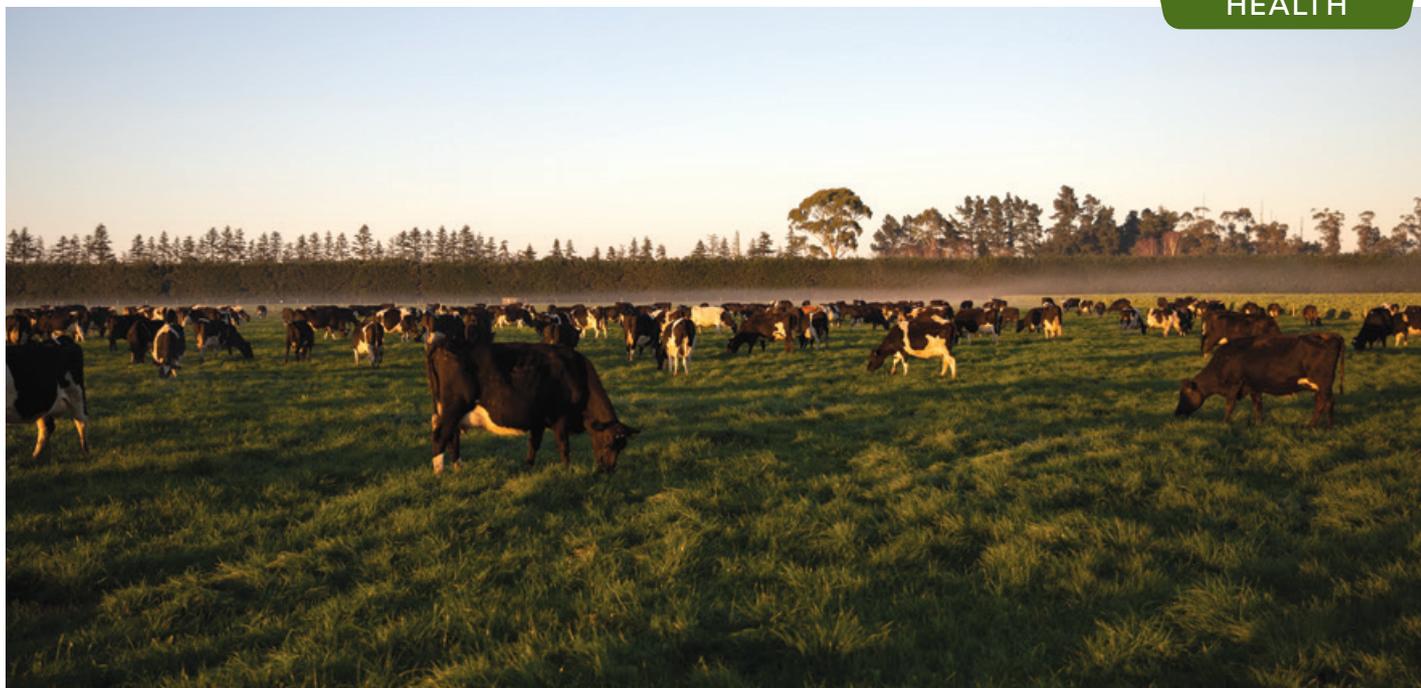
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Stock condition for performance

Good stock management through late summer and autumn can mean animals winter in the best condition ready to perform again in spring.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY IAN HODGE, BVSC., MACVSC. VETERINARIAN. VETENT RIVERSIDE.

Grass staggers

Late summer and early autumn can be a time when stock can be affected by ryegrass staggers, thiamine deficiency, rumen acidosis and parasites. Now is the time to start preparing your stock for the winter autumn period. An animal health programme as provided by your vet will ensure many problems are prevented.

In late summer, pastures can have significant fungal growth on seed heads and in accumulated dead matter at the base of the sward. Ryegrasses are the most commonly affected pasture plants. The fungi produce toxins which affect the animal's nervous system leading to ryegrass staggers. Affected animals lose co-ordination when disturbed, and often have a fine head tremor at rest. Growth rates are also reduced in affected animals as they often don't eat to capacity. Prevention of staggers involves avoiding pastures showing the black or grey discoloration of fungal growth on seed heads and with excessive dead matter at the base of the sward. Some areas in certain paddocks can be more severely affected. The onset of the disease can be very unpredictable. Treatment for staggers involves supportive therapies such as vitamin and energy supplements, and easier access to water. Staggers improves with time and with access to safe feed. Staggers must be differentiated from polio (thiamine deficiency).

Animals affected by thiamine deficiency also show nervous signs (staring, head pressing and seizures). Any nervous conditions in young stock should be seen by a Vet.

Rumen acidosis

Irrigated pastures in late summer have rapid growth as soil temperatures are at their highest. The rapid growth of these pastures makes the carbohydrate (sugar) and protein content very soluble and easily digested. The carbohydrates are rapidly metabolized in the rumen, and the proteins are rapidly assimilated. During the process of carbohydrate fermentation, the amount of acid produced in the rumen can increase rapidly, and the high sugar content sucks water into the rumen. The condition which develops is called rumen acidosis. Affected animals have a characteristic shape to their abdomens. They soon develop diarrhoea, stop eating, become dehydrated and will die if not treated. Rumen acidosis can be corrected by providing a source of fibre such as hay which stimulates increased saliva production. The swallowed saliva helps neutralize acid in the rumen. Older, less improved pastures are lower risk for acidosis. Some animals can be severely debilitated by this condition and require urgent veterinary attention.

Parasitism

In autumn, rising soil moisture levels combined with dense pastures can result in a severe

parasite challenge. Parasite larvae develop from eggs deposited on the grass previously by calves or lambs that may have missed a drench, had an over-extended drench interval or been drenched with an ineffective product. The larvae can quickly become infective in the warm autumn conditions, sometimes as quickly as ten days. Calves or lambs will become infected by these larvae which develop in the intestinal tract into adult egg-laying parasites. Parasitism results in diarrhoea, weight loss and poor feed intake. Lungworm develops in a similar way resulting in a persistent husky cough affecting many animals. Conditions such as this require a veterinary diagnosis. Diarrhoea is not always attributable to parasites.

Flystrike and pinkeye

In late summer lambs can be affected by flystrike. Flystrike is easily prevented with application of a reputable product. Treatment involves shearing the affected area and disinfecting the lesions. Pinkeye affects all stock and is very infectious. Please seek veterinary assistance if you suspect pinkeye.

As autumn progresses it is important to ensure the trace element status of young animals is adequate. Copper reserves can be quickly depleted in winter.

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Change brings experienced vet to leadership role

VetEnt Riverside has new leadership at the helm. Ian Hodge came to Riverside Vets in 1999 as a mixed animal vet, after having spent five years practicing in North Otago. And now he's the lead vet at Riverside.



"Helen, my wife, and I came to Ashburton 20 years ago. At that time there were big changes happening in the dairy industry as the sector was in a huge growth phase. With more and more conversions taking place it was all hands to the pumps. I really enjoyed it" he said.

While submerging himself in dairy cattle work, Ian was also completing a two year post graduate programme in dairy cattle medicine. This programme entitles a vet to become a member of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists. Ian is not only proud of his achievement of achieving admission through examination - the highest standard for dairy cattle medicine - but in his mentoring of four other vets through theirs.

Many farmers will regularly read Ian's animal health articles in Real Farmer magazine and other publications. As a part of Pure Milk - a science-based consultancy service developed to manage mastitis risk in cows, Ian has a plethora of knowledge on the factors which influence the prevalence of bovine mastitis. "Mastitis is a multi-factorial complex disease. In the mid 2000's we could see the antibiotic treatments we were using weren't achieving the outcomes we thought they would. We decided to get a better understanding of milking machines and their interaction with

cows to see what risks and influences there were at milking time that caused mastitis. After 100 dairy shed visits we developed some best practices that have reduced the need for treatment via antibiotic use" Ian said. Ian remains committed to VetEnt Riverside and is excited to have a fantastic team around him who feel the same way, as well as having the support of the VetEnt group. Having spent the past few years as the General Manager for Technical Services supporting the 24 VetEnt clinics in New Zealand, Ian has experience which combines veterinary practice with management skills and he is pleased to bring some of the traditional Riverside Vets values of positivity, respect, inclusiveness, hard work and fun back into the clinic. "We have had some changes to our team this year and these changes have brought us an opportunity to develop a new culture and an improved way of communicating. My philosophy is there are no closed doors here. We are one team. My experience tells me that there is much more to being a vet than looking after animals. We need to listen, hear and act on

what our clients and colleagues are saying and use this to get the best outcomes for our animals."

With four experienced vets and one recent graduate, four vet nurses, four highly skilled technicians, a reliable team of support staff and the scale, capability and technology only a large vet clinic can offer, VetEnt Riverside is now well placed to continue to support its loyal farming and companion animal customer base into the future.

"Mid Canterbury is a unique dairying community. The scale of farming is different to other regions. VetEnt Riverside's scale is our advantage. The work our team does with farmers in planning now, will make life easier during late autumn when setting animals up for the winter, scanning cows to detect empties before winter, teat sealing and drying off cows. The animal health planning tools we have developed at Riverside are very sophisticated allowing us to regularly monitor, change and implement preventive strategies as the need arises. Alongside this we've restarted the Riverside Moos newsletter and we're rebuilding our community focus. The companion animal side of the practice is very well equipped with digital x-ray processing, dental x-ray, advanced orthopaedic surgical techniques and a pet food range backed up by science. We now have a full time experienced small animal veterinarian."

The team at VetEnt Riverside have been Ruralco suppliers for over 15 years. They thank their loyal clients for their support and they look forward to helping all their clients maintain excellent animal health long into the future.



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Are you using an “empty” measure?

Using an empty rate to assess reproductive performance is like only counting calories from food you eat at a table—what about the food you ate sitting on the couch?

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY SAMANTHA TENNENT, DEVELOPER, DAIRYNZ



While the term empty rate is often used on farms to measure reproductive performance, it's actually not easy to compare farm to farm and season to season. The '6-week in-calf rate' gives us a solid indicator that allows you to compare performance with other farms, and season to season.

Not-in-calf rate

The percentage of cows who do not get in-calf during mating depends on a range of factors, but the final figure is heavily influenced by the '6-week in-calf rate' and the length of mating. Without knowing the length of the mating period and the cows that weren't pregnancy tested we don't have the full picture.

When Joe proudly tells his neighbour Mary that his empty rate is 11 percent and she tells him hers is 16 percent, we may not be comparing apples with apples. Joe may have culled 20 cows before pregnancy testing and Mary may have mated her cows for two weeks less than him.

The not-in-calf rate is, essentially, everything minus the final in-calf rate—making it comparable for farms with similar mating

lengths. This makes it ok to use for benchmarking between years as well. An empty rate is not as helpful as it can differ from farm to farm depending on who was present at pregnancy testing time.

Each season we usually see an average of around 5 percent of eligible cows with no recorded outcome. They calved in the correct window and were present at the start of mating, but for whatever reason are not recorded as pregnant or not. These cows contribute to the overall reproductive performance and are included in the not-in-calf rate figure but not a recorded empty rate.

'Six-week in-calf rate'

The research shows us the benefits of high 'six-week in-calf rates' including better production, better future reproductive performance, more AB calves, less non-cycler treatment and shorter mating lengths. It's a figure we can safely compare.

By using the 'six-week in-calf rate', it's easier for everyone to monitor reproductive performance and it can help you to be better able to drill down and identify how to improve this. By ditching the use of 'empty

rate' and using a truly comparable measure we can fairly benchmark our performance from year to year and against other farms.



ABOVE: The benefits of high '6-week in-calf rates' are far reaching, including production, future reproduction and shorter mating lengths
TOP: Samantha Tennent, Developer, DairyNZ

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In true Kiwi fashion, Smith Attachments was formed in Ian Smith's garage. Not long after it became a niche manufacturing engineering company, 'Smith Attachments' introduced carriers, handlebar protectors and towbars for Honda 125cc Motorcycles to the market, before eventually developing a range of small trailers for towing behind these motorcycles. When three and four wheeled motorbikes entered the market, Smith Attachments began manufacturing towbars, carriers, racks and bullbars for a range of ATV's. Today, this equipment is an integral part of farmers machinery and Smith Attachments ATV (and UTV) bullbars are in huge demand.

In 1980 Ray McCormick joined Ian at Smith Attachments and in 1982 began a successful partnership. Ian retired in 1999 and in 2000 Sharyn Amos joined the team. In 2012 Sharyn and husband Bram purchased shares and in 2017 took 100% ownership. When taking ownership of Smith Attachments, the Amos's brought over their history with Ruralco. Bram's parents, Noeline and the late Frank, still hold shareholder number 203 and continue to support Ruralco to this day. After supporting Ruralco through their co-operative membership, two years ago the Amos's decided to partner Smith Attachments as a Ruralco

Supplier. Sharyn and Bram are both passionate about the business and the 50 plus years of knowledge and service among the small crew of eight. By using their experience and attention to detail they can maintain a customer centred approach.

Four years ago, Smith Attachments saw a need for high quality after-market ute decks and lids. Their durable ute decks hit the mark with farmers and contractors, while their ute lids give a pristine finish to your ute, providing easy access and security. As proud agents of Rhino Rack NZ, they can supply a wide range of ute accessories, ideal for hunting, camping, biking and much more. Bram often says to customers "we are not out there to sell the biggest number of ute lids and decks, but we will sell the best."

The hub of Smith Attachments is the full-service metal fabrication shop. From seed screens, to ducting to toolboxes and dog boxes, shop fit outs and kit fit out for vans, to recently securing the contract to build large fish pen frames for an aquaculture farm. Smith Attachments are engineers, fabricators who weld and construct with great accuracy and attention to detail.

Coupled with the Amos family's love of hunting and the outdoors there is a strong entrepreneurial spirit within the family. Sharyn and Bram's sons, Matt and Jack, are cutting their

own tracks and developing skills, products and services that will continue to propel Smith Attachments forward.

Twelve months ago, Matt Amos, a qualified auto electrician and air conditioning technician decided to come work within the family business using his skills to offer contracting and servicing work on farms. This also includes the installation and repairs of TracMaps, a proof of placement product for sprayers, irrigators and four-wheelers. Matt has developed a client base from the Waimak to the Lindis Pass.

Jack Amos is a self-employed, qualified builder and based in Twizel. Keen on all things construction Jack has helped lead the way in the development of a New Zealand made



ABOVE: Matt Amos, Auto Electrician and Air Conditioning Technician
LEFT: Smith Attachments' Alpine Adventurer Tent

canvas tent specifically designed for hunters by hunters.

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Drone flies as alternative pollinators



Key points

- Drone flies complement honey bees as crop pollinators, especially for open flower species;
- Their larvae feed on a range of vegetation types and/or animal manure;
- They can be mass reared in the field in simple DIY trenches.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY FAR, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY BRIAN CUTTING

Hybrid seed crops are primarily pollinated by honey bees, but some hybrid crops produce little nectar and are not attractive to bees. Drone flies (*Eristalis tenax*) are large flies which closely resemble honey bees, and are often mistaken for them in the field. They are recognised as alternative pollinators, but they are not always around in sufficiently high numbers to do a good job.

With this in mind, the Seed Industry Research Centre [SIRC] began a project with Dr Brad Howlett and Sam Read of Plant & Food Research [PFR] to develop a simple solution; to find a method of rearing the flies in the paddock where the crop is being grown. Phil Rolston of FAR says the trial is using natural drone fly populations to breed and multiply in the field beside crops.

“When we started this project, we chose drone flies as the primary pollinator to evaluate because they are common and relatively easy to rear. They breed and multiply on a range of organic material including effluent and grass clippings in stagnant water, and unlike other fly species that have been evaluated previously as alternative pollinators, they don’t cause fly blow or flystrike.

“Last summer the project tested different methods of raising flies in trenches adjacent

to carrot and radish seed crops. At the carrot site, the flies were bred in trenches containing either cattle effluent or old balage; while at the radish site, the trenches contained roadside grass cuttings and weeds. The PFR team assessed the impact of the drone flies on pollination in the crop close to the trenches, then compared it with the impact on the opposite side of the field.

“Brad and his team have shown that in hybrid seed crops, drone flies move more efficiently between male and female rows than honey bees. This movement is vital to ensure pollen transfer occurs.”

How they did it

Field-scale rearing was undertaken adjacent to a radish seed crop, near Leeston, and a carrot crop near Kirwee. At each site, four trenches were excavated in the first week of December 2018. Each trench was 5m long, 50cm deep and 60cm wide. The trenches



were lined with plastic, then filled with water and one of two different substrates; cattle manure and straw balage for the carrot crop, and roadside grass/broadleaf clippings and straw balage for the radish. Wood shavings were placed on the ground around the trenches to provide a suitable environment for pupae, crawling out of the water, to pupate in. No drone flies were introduced to the farms, so any eggs laid came from existing drone fly populations.

What they found

All of the organic substrates worked well. Most batches of egg were deposited within the first few weeks of the trenches being set up, although no egg batches were observed on or near balage containers until the second week of January. Eggs were deposited right through to mid-late February. These egg laying patterns were matched with larval emergence—drone fly larvae were abundant

in the effluent and grass, and broadleaf weed trenches soon after they were filled, while numbers in the balage trenches peaked much later. Mean numbers of drone flies observed per umbel in the carrot field tended to be higher nearer to trenches and lowest in the centre of the field.

Drone fly counts outnumbered honey bees in all but two locations of the carrot field (both in the middle of the field). In the radish field, mean numbers of drone flies appeared to be more evenly distributed.

What does it mean?

These trial findings show that mass rearing of drone flies around vegetable seed crops is achievable, and suggest that, when using substrate such as dairy effluent and grass clippings, drone fly trenches should be set up about a month prior to the crop's peak flowering.

ABOVE: Drone fly breeding trench
ABOVE LEFT: Drone fly on carrot flower

What next?

The trials are being repeated this year, with some tweaking of the trench designs, and has another year to run after that.

This project has received funding from the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) of the Ministry of Primary Industries (MPI) and is supported by SIRC members South Pacific Seeds and Carter Seed Management.

Context...

In addition, seed production would be vulnerable if honey bee hive numbers and availability were reduced by diseases or parasites.

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Founded in 1980 by Les Christie, Christie Electrical began offering local Ashburton residential, rural and commercial customers electrical solutions. A family-based business, son Brent joined the team in 1989 and he completed his apprenticeship before heading off on his OE. Brent returned home to Ashburton in 1997 and with wife Megan, who was then a vet nurse, began the succession of the business.

In 2003 the Christie's joined the Laser Group and today trade as Laser Electrical Ashburton. Taking on the Mid Canterbury Laser franchise allowed them access to systems software, greater buying power, access to a wide range of product and parts and the support of being part of an established group of like-minded people. Megan, joined the business in 2008 and manages a very busy Lighting & Heating Retail division where she sells a great range of lights, wood, gas and pellet fires.

In subsequent years Laser Electrical Ashburton has continued to grow, expanding with branches in Rolleston, Geraldine and Temuka. The company employ over 40 staff and have more than 25 vehicles on the road offering 24/7 service. Operating with four divisions, each one is a specialist team pooling knowledge base around the rural and dairy sector, residential, commercial/industrial and retail. This ensures the best skills, efficiency and service are placed for each contract or call out.

The specialist rural and dairy sector are well experienced in all electrical issues acute to the farm and offer services including: on call service team; meal feeder systems; specialist programming for irrigation and

feed systems; grain drying & handling systems, maintenance and repair of effluent systems and pumps; Laser are agents for two different brands of milking systems giving them familiarity and product availability of most dairy sheds in our region from older herringbone styles through to the latest rotary technology and having an advanced trade certified engineer on the team ensures fast and efficient repairs!

Megan and Brent strive to maintain loyal and happy customers and in doing so continue to be the 'employer of choice' for their staff. The longevity of these relationships has meant that staff have an in-depth working knowledge across many farms in Mid Canterbury. This, coupled with a farm specific database with remote access, gives staff the ability to understand and quickly identify issues ensuring that Laser Electrical service continues to be totally dependable.

Megan said "I'm incredibly proud of how the family-oriented values of our business have translated into long service by our employees. This year we celebrate Phil Moore, Manager of the Rural & Dairy team having been with us for 25 years. Alongside him Logan Halliday & Cody Horrell 14 years, and Rob Ridden has been with us for 15 years, Craig Hydes our qualified engineer after 10 years with us has decided to also become an

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Rural & Dairy team - Ruairidh MacLean, Craig Hydes, Phil Moore (Manager) Logan Halliday; Amber Rose (Apprentice working on dairy shed); Megan & Brent Christie; Logan Halliday working building a switchboard; Service team - Jacky Meyer, Josh Worsfold, Codey Horrell, Rob Ridden

electrician so starts his apprenticeship soon and Jacky Meyer, manager of the Office, Service & Residential teams, has been with us 11 years. We also have a number of other staff in the company who have been part of the team for 5-10 years"

The incredible level of service is a testament not only Laser Electricals values but acknowledges they take the well-being of their staff seriously offering staff health insurance, health checks and travel vouchers when they hit milestones. A culture of best practice health and safety is intrinsic to the team, including the achievement of a Sitewise Green Certificate for health and safety, passing with 96%, regular updates and toolbox meetings which all ensures any issues are discussed and product knowledge is shared.

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FINISH

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STANDARD SIZES

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- 2440 x 1500mm ID
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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
- 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

- Hot dipped galvanised

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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- Trailcom coupling 1 7/8" std - Front tail door - Std 12 month warranty
- Springs with oscillating suspension

FINISH

- Hot dipped galvanised

STANDARD SIZES

- 2400 x 1230mm (8x4)
- 2400 x 1500mm (8x5)

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Pasture renewal investment pays off

Renewing pasture can improve performance and profits.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

Renewing old, run-out pastures can deliver significant economic benefit, making the investment more than worthwhile.

"Planning and care are essential for the new pasture to establish well and deliver the expected production gains; there are no shortcuts to successful pasture renewal," says Ballance Agri-Nutrients Science Extension Officer Aimee Dawson.

"But on the flipside are the numerous benefits to be had," she says. New grass can grow more on the shoulders of the season and may be leafier, higher in metabolisable energy (ME) and more palatable, resulting in more milk and faster liveweight gains. Renewing pasture with appropriate endophytes can also reduce pest damage and ryegrass staggers.

According to Pasture Renewal Trust figures, the cost of regrassing is low compared to return on investment. Their website, pasturerenewal.org.nz, includes calculators to help estimate returns. For dairy farms, pasture renewal has the potential to double the amount of dry matter and milk solids. For sheep and beef, pasture renewal has been shown to almost double post weaning growth rate, and almost halve the number of days needed for sheep and beef finishing.

Identify paddocks

Paddocks to renew can be selected either by performance (based on measured season pasture growth) or by visual pasture condition scoring.

Pasture condition scoring involves ranking every paddock on the farm from best (full of desirable types of grasses and clovers) to worst (very poor sward and / or severely damaged). If there is a great difference between paddocks, a simple visual assessment is sufficient. The Pasture Renewal Trust website has a simple guide with photos to help score paddocks.

"Identifying which paddocks to renew well before the new pasture goes in will help you sort out any issues," says Aimee.

Prepare paddocks

"Next, focus on the reason the identified paddocks are underperforming," says Aimee. Possible reasons could be low soil fertility or pH, predominance of weedy species, poor soil condition, drainage problems, pasture pests or poor grazing practices.

"This is where having some time built in to your renewal programme can pay off. For example, if you need to increase pH, lime needs 12 to 18 months to take effect."

This is also the time to choose the best grass cultivars and clover varieties for your farm and feed budget needs. Consider flowering dates, diploid versus tetraploid and, especially, what endophyte is best. Perennial pasture can be sown in autumn or spring, after a forage crop and/or winter ryegrass.

When to sow will depend on the previous crop and/or climatic conditions.

Off to a good start

Germinating seeds need key nutrients such as phosphorus (which is relatively immobile in the soil but needed for early root and shoot development) and nitrogen (for tillering and leaf expansion). Di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) drilled next to the seed provides it with these nutrients, promoting canopy cover development and inhibiting weed growth. If soil testing has identified that potassium or sulphur is low these may need to be addressed prior to sowing, or in following nutrient applications. Monitoring and controlling weeds and pests is critical in the first eight weeks.

Post grazing nitrogen

Grazing new pastures early on keeps the sward open, letting sunlight in and encouraging clovers.

Clovers take up to 18 months to establish in new pasture and fix sufficient nitrogen to supply themselves and their companion grasses. After each grazing apply SustainN, at around 55-75 kilograms per hectare (25-35kg N/ha). Providing nitrogen will encourage tillering, reduce weed competition and promote a healthy sward.

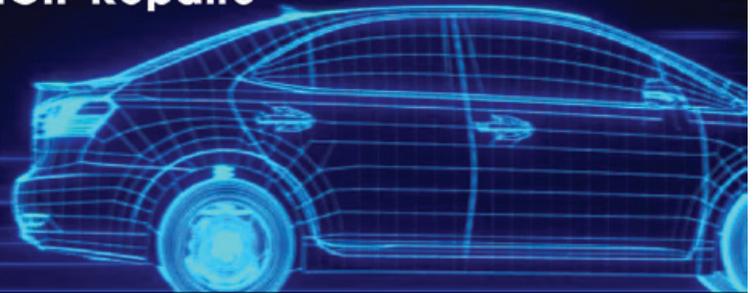
"Pasture is the most cost-effective form of feed, and the time and money invested into renewing pasture can make a real difference to your bottom line."

IMAGE: Regrassing underperforming paddocks will result in higher production and better animal performance



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We need to talk about water infrastructure

There has been a lot of talk about infrastructure of late. The Government has revealed its plan to spend an extra \$12 billion on infrastructure projects and a recently released public opinion poll shows that New Zealanders want the government to be investing in infrastructure.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY ELIZABETH SOAL, IRRIGATION NZ CEO



Absolutely, it is critical that we invest in our schools, health facilities, transport, and technology systems. However, there is an important type of infrastructure left off the spending priority list—water infrastructure. More and more frequently, we are seeing the effects of major weather and climate events. The impacts of these are felt in both rural and urban communities and floods, for instance, have major effects on transport and communication links around the country.

The significant flood of the Rangitata River in South Canterbury, in early December last year demonstrated this clearly. The Mayor of the Timaru District was reported at the time as saying that the event showed just how “resilient we aren’t.”

To be truly resilient, we need to think not only about how our current infrastructure responds to these major events, but we need to think about how we can manage water better in the first place to minimise and prevent negative effects on lives, property, and the environment. We know that climate change will change what “normal” looks like for our precipitation patterns (both rainfall and snow), and therefore river flows, groundwater recharge, and soil moisture patterns. We are seeing this already this summer, with extreme rainfall in some parts of the country, whilst other areas, such as Northland are extremely dry and are close to experiencing major drought conditions.

This will affect not only farmers, but critical aquatic ecosystems, water availability for domestic and commercial uses (including

homes and businesses in towns and cities), recreation, and cultural values.

Predictions in many areas are for an increasing frequency of major flood events, punctuated by prolonged periods of drought. Unless we think and invest strategically to plan for these changes now, we will be forcing ourselves to manage the impacts of these events as they occur—with much greater risks and costs to our communities.

There is currently an increased public focus on water quality, protecting highly productive land (including land that has access to water for productive purposes), improving ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity, and supporting the cultural health of our waterways. By preparing for and managing flood and drought events through investment in strategic water infrastructure, we are ensuring that this range of values is better protected for future generations.

Water storage does not mean just large dams but, includes smaller-scale projects and other types of storage, such as using groundwater aquifers as storage systems, through managed recharge projects.

Storing water when it is plentiful or in over-supply means that flows can be released at critical times to provide for ecosystem flows, hydro-electricity generation, domestic supplies, businesses, tourism, and irrigation for valuable primary production.

We know that our three waters infrastructure (stormwater, drinking water, and wastewater) system needs upgrading across many parts

of the country. If we are to invest in the delivery, treatment, and management of water at this level, it makes sense to also invest in better and more fit-for-purpose storage.

Currently, water storage projects tend to be proposed and determined in a piecemeal, project-based fashion at the regional or district level. This can quickly result in politicisation of the issues, as communities grapple with how costs and benefits are spread, what the effects of changed land-use will be (often required in order to meet the costs associated with privately-funded projects), and philosophical or emotive standpoints on the management and use of water. These viewpoints often become entrenched and decision-making stalls as a result.

What we need is a national-level strategy leading and guiding decision-making.

This would provide high level analysis and guidance—and potentially investment—for these critical projects. And we need this soon. The effects of climate change are likely to accelerate and if we don’t think critically about how we better store and manage water quickly, we are likely to suffer major consequences in the short term, from floods and droughts.

These consequences will be felt across the urban and rural communities alike. With our territorial authorities already stretched in terms of providing essential services from small rating bases, and with increased pressure from growing tourism numbers, these critical issues cannot be left to be determined in a piecemeal project-by-project fashion.

An independent national water commission, providing non-partisan advice, guidance, and strategic oversight, would bring these discussions up to the level at which we need to be having them. Such a commission could also lead our policy responses on water quality, water allocation, and addressing the question of Maori rights and interests in freshwater.

It has been said that water infrastructure issues are not something you fix once and then walk away from; job done. Water infrastructure is something we must be continually fixing, by looking to future needs and the requirements of the community and our environment as a whole and ensuring we can respond accordingly.

Let’s talk about water infrastructure now, before the scars of climate change get too deep.

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Co-op News

Take a break with Ruralco at Southern Field Days

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Swannndri Stories

We have heard a few Swannndri yarns over the years but this Autumn we are on the hunt for the best Swannndri Story. We want to know, who has the oldest, whose has travelled the farthest and we really want to know whose has saved them from a charging bull or a few cold nights out under the stars. We'd love to know your stories, how your grandfather handed yours down to you, how you never leave home without your Ranger or Mosgiel. There's a great prize up for grabs for the best story—a Classic Ranger bush shirt from our new Winter collection.

Email your Swannndri story to info@swannndri.co.nz

THIS SWANNNDRI STORY: This orange and brown Swannndri shirt belonged to Dorene Robinson, who wore it while out tramping. She adorned it with badges from all the different places she walked. And she walked a lot. During the '90s, she and a group of 17 others tramped the length of New Zealand from Bluff to Cape Reinga. It took them 84 days, walking six days a week. Dorene went through four pairs of walking shoes on the journey. We like to think her Swannndri items gave better service.

Image courtesy of New Plymouth's Puke Ariki, from their wonderful collection (PA2016.019).



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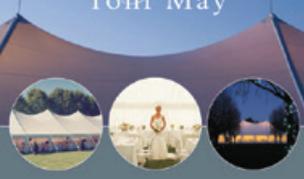
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