

RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2018

New legacy
in North
Canterbury
hills

Zeke
to the
rescue

Hort sector rides
fresh boom times

Perseverance
paying dividends

Ruralco
Supplier
Awards
2018

Meeting the next
generation of young
farmers at Geraldine
High School



From the Group CEO



Farming legacies, new generation farmers, boom times ahead for horticultural, and search and rescue superstars—and that's only some of the great reading featured in this issue of Real Farmer.

Since moving to our new publication format earlier this year, we have been able to increase the capacity of Real Farmer, and this has meant we have also been able to bring you more of what you want—great farming stories featuring people from your communities along with informative industry and technology commentaries and updates.

In this issue we visit a North Canterbury farming family with a history stretching back to the 19th century. Hugh and Tanya Bethell share their dry stock farming journey with us and how they have navigated challenges, especially over recent years.

For Russian immigrants, Sergey and Elena Bogatyrev, dairying in New Zealand is starting to pay dividends thanks to their quiet determination to succeed against the odds. They share with us how they fared following the Kaikoura earthquake and what's next for this hard working, Mid Canterbury based couple.

Hard work and a passion for agriculture also feature in another article, this time focused on our farmers of the future. Geraldine High School's primary industry academy is attracting and developing young farmers who are well and truly holding their own on a national level, as results from recent National Young Farmer's and Teen Ag's Competitions show.

One of our regular agricultural contributors, Richard Rennie talks to Horticulture New Zealand Chief Executive, Mike Chapman about the sector's bright future, where it is heading, and why it is on track to achieve its goal of \$10 billion of earnings by 2020.

We also celebrate with the winners at this year's Ruralco Supplier Awards, and we hear about what it takes to be part of a successful search and rescue dog team when we catch up with handler Murray Bowden and his Dutch Shepherd dog, Zeke.

Happy reading and we hope you enjoy this issue of Real Farmer.

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RealFarmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

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ON THE COVER:
Hugh Bethell continues a tradition of exception dry stock farming in North Canterbury

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New legacy in North Canterbury hills



The Bethells have been synonymous with North Canterbury farming for almost as long as there have been farms in the region. It is a history that stretches back to the purchase in the 1800s of Pahau Pastures, first farmed by Hugh Bethell's great-grandfather Marmaduke in 1899.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE, IMAGES BY STU JACKSON

Today the family continue a tradition of exceptional dry stock farming in the region, taking the demands that go with modern farming in their stride, and adapting to the challenges the North Canterbury climate in particular brings with it.

The Bethell's history starts on the 2,400ha Pahau Pastures block east of Culverden (see accompanying article) but today is based around the 1,200ha Hugh and Tanya Bethell own in the Waikari Valley district.

Shifts in family needs 10 years ago prompted a reluctant sale of historic Pahau Pastures, whose value had also taken a lift thanks to the surge in dairying the region was experiencing at the time. It was a tough decision, but one necessary to deal with the challenges succession can bring to family farming operations.

“With the beef schedule remaining relatively buoyant through the season, the bulls provide greater flexibility when dry weather starts to bite in terms of how many he quits, and when.”

“We wanted to stay in the district and initially moved to a 20ha block in the Waikari Valley. Then the Shellrock block came up, and another alongside, making a good sized pastoral block to own.”

The property has spent this season getting back on its feet in terms of stock numbers, having weathered the tough North Canterbury drought that only ended last spring.

“This year we are back up to what we should be running. We were down to 4,000su at one stage, against our usual level of 7,500–8,000su.”

The incessant drought had forced them to not only send cattle as far south as Otago, but to also quit about 1,500 ewes and drop the breeding cows they had been running. In response to the drought's impact, Hugh has decided to opt out of breeding cows and focus on bull beef, buying in 100kg weaners finishing them through as two-year olds. With the beef schedule remaining relatively



buoyant through the season, the bulls provide greater flexibility when dry weather starts to bite in terms of how many he quits, and when.

“Lucerne has come to play a key part in helping the stock get to weight.”

Similarly, with the sheep side of the operation the focus is on getting lambs up to weight as early as possible, aiming to quit them at the annual Glenmark Drive in late November—early December. Most years they are selling about 3,000 lambs out of the Romney flock, keeping the smaller ones and hogget lambs.

Lucerne has come to play a key part in helping the stock get to weight in the lead up to the drier weather with about 50 ha planted

ABOVE: The Bethells have been synonymous with North Canterbury farming for almost as long as there has been farms in the region

TOP: In response to drought, Hugh has decided to focus on bull beef

out each season. They are working up to having 100-120ha over the next two years. As a crop Hugh finds it relatively easy to grow, provided paddock fertility is adequate and it is not grazed too early.

His focus with his ewe flock has been on quality rather than quantity in recent years, as numbers have been pegged back from 4,000 to 3,200.

“We have just been focusing on trying to get ewe weights better and consistent through the season. We have also been looking harder at the wool returns, the most disappointing aspect of sheep farming at the moment, and how we could possibly fine our wool up a bit.”



ABOVE: A key focus has been better subdivision throughout the farm

TOP: Hugh has focused his ewe flock on quality rather than quantity in recent years

The Romney flock consists of strong performing Wairere genetics, and he is conscious there are multiple options when it comes to seeking out a finer wool profile.

“There is always the risk there though that you will go too fine and affect lamb growth rates too. The property is well suited to growing lambs out early.”

“We basically want to keep a simple operation here, working on getting better weights

on the stock we do have, and hopefully the bottom line will improve every year.”

Despite the proliferation of dairying through the Amuri district, Hugh has stuck with dry stock, conscious of the high feed demands dairy stock can bring with them in country that can be compromised by weather patterns. He has, however, started to rear some additional Hereford bulls for dairy mating use.

When Hugh and Tanya took on the property a decade ago it needed some investment in time and capital, and two years of tough drought conditions have inevitably slowed down their rate of progress.

A key focus has been better subdivision throughout the farm, and much has been accomplished with a couple of bigger blocks remaining to be split up. The drought also revealed how adept stock could be at pushing through older fences into neighbouring paddocks, also requiring some investment in improving.

Fertility is also being gradually improved, and the optimistic prospects for red meat returns at least in the medium term are a good incentive to continue pushing productivity within the block's 1,200ha footprint.

“A key focus has been better subdivision throughout the farm, and much has been accomplished with a couple of bigger blocks remaining to be split up.”

Inevitably the least controllable variable in North Canterbury is rainfall, and even in early spring the country can dry out by mid-October.

The farm has irrigation to 40ha from the Weka Pass water scheme. It is not a significant area, but sufficient to grow some fodder beet for finishing stock on.

Hugh and Tanya's property would not have a large area captured under the proposed Hurunui irrigation scheme whose fate is now hanging in the balance after the government pulled the plug on the Crown Irrigation Investment fund. The scheme is presently being reviewed in terms of alternative funding that could be sought out to see the \$200 million-plus project.

“The farm has irrigation to 40ha from the Weka Pass water scheme. It is not a significant area, but sufficient to grow some fodder beet for finishing stock on.”

Hugh is unsure if the family will continue farming, but his oldest son Richard is studying viticulture at Lincoln. The Waikari district is one of four distinct sub-regions for grape growing in North Canterbury, but it can be tough country to get consistent yields from, with late frosts a risk.

“I do think if he wants to continue, he might find he's better off in Marlborough, it's a tough crop here, but can be done.”

Longer term Hugh is happy with the operation's current size, he and Tanya have broken the back of the block's main development needs, and the focus remains on getting more off the land they have.

“We are aiming to keep things simple—we have interests off the farm with children at school in Christchurch, and I enjoy skiing when we get the chance.”

Long legacy in north Canterbury

Hugh Bethell's great-grandparents Marmaduke and Thyra Bethell brought a sense of aristocracy and good grace to the Amuri region that had them respected and liked by local settlers and Maori throughout. Marmaduke returned in 1899 to farm the 2,400ha Pahau Pastures block his father had bought and leased out some years earlier. He was far from an aloof only son on the land, and soon established a reputation as a skilled sheep farmer.

His wife Thyra was bestowed a special Maori name by local leaders, Ruarauhanga, with Maori attending her wedding and bestowing gifts upon her children in years that followed.

“Marmaduke ran a tight ship with rates held down, minimal public services and he even regularly cleaned up Culverden’s main street himself.”

Marmaduke quickly rose to the rank of Amuri council chairman, and the historical encyclopaedia site Te Ara notes he ran a tight ship with rates held down, minimal public services and he even regularly cleaned up Culverden's main street himself. He must have cast a character across the landscape, with a distinctively English wardrobe, a tendency to address men by their surname and a strong sense of dignity and courtesy.

It was an influence that remained well after his 18 year-long chairmanship ended,



leaving a legacy as a district well served, and with minimal debt.

Meantime his wife Thyra also left her own indelible mark on the Amuri district.

She was a tireless leader, establishing a local Red Cross at Hanmer Springs, and spent 50 years heading up the Culverden centre. She also fought to establish the Amuri hospital in 1922, and fought equally hard to keep it open fifty years later.

The Culverden branch of the Women's Division of the NZ Farmers Union owed its existence to her hard work, and she was the “go to” women when a local cause needed a champion. But her talents did not stop at leadership.

She was an avid horsewoman, tennis player and golfer, and today Maori motifs carved by her can be found on the homestead fireplace.

“Thyra was a tireless leader, establishing a local Red Cross at Hanmer Springs, and spent 50 years heading up the Culverden centre.”

Thyra outlived Marmaduke by 17 years to die in 1972, ending the reign of a couple who provided leadership over an incredible length of time in the community, undertaken with grace and dignity.

ABOVE: Lucerne has come to play a key part in helping stock get to weight in the lead up to the drier weather

BELOW LEFT: Hugh with Monty and Axel at the top of the farm

BELOW: The property has spent this season getting back on its feet, having weathered the tough North Canterbury drought that only ended last spring





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Working Dogs

Pause for a moment and wonder what life would be like on a stock farm without working dogs. Day after day they are there, ready and willing to work, not arguing or demanding a pay increase, not being late or absent without leave. Always happy to be told what to do, and because of their genetics, only ever want to please their master.

WORDS BY IAN HODGE. GM TECH SERVICES. VETERINARY ENTERPRISES GROUP, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY RURALCO

All stock farms most likely have one or more dogs. Even dairy farms use dogs to help move cattle around. Flat farms, rolling hill farms and steep high-country farms all use them. They run alongside motor bikes, trucks or horses, and even ride in choppers. They ride in stock trucks and from time to time have their own sports day—The Dog Trials.

I once knew a farmer whose dog was like his right arm. When she lacerated a major tendon in her hind leg and couldn't work, life suddenly became so much more difficult for him. There may have been other dogs to use, but this one had a stock sense that was invaluable.

The health of working dogs is therefore very important. They should have access to the same veterinary care that “pets” have access to. They make a monumental contribution to our nation's agriculture, yet we often neglect to take proper care of them.

When did you last ask a veterinarian to check all your working dogs? If it has been a while maybe now, before the busy summer season begins, would be a good time to ask your vet to check all your working dogs.

Working dogs need to be fit and mobile. For this they need healthy eyes, hearts, lungs and legs. An examination of the cardiovascular system and the lungs would indicate to you if all is well or if there is something that needs attention. Older dogs can develop heart disease (as humans often do) and become slower and more breathless. It may be as simple as some tablets to rectify any issues.

Musculoskeletal problems and trauma are common in working dogs. Wire lacerations, skin tears, fractures and dislocations occur often. Veterinarians spend considerable time operating on traumatic injuries. Rupture of the knee ligaments (cruciate) is one of the most common injuries. This can now be very successfully repaired using titanium wedge implants. The dogs walk out of the clinic often the same day.

Working dogs need to eat good quality food. Often their diet is inadequate to meet their nutritional requirements. Meat alone is not sufficient for working dogs. Even humans could not last too long on meat alone. Why

not ask your veterinarian to examine the teeth of your working dogs to check all is OK? At the same time, you could discuss nutrition. There are some very high-quality dog foods available now. Dental care for dogs is now similar to human dentistry. Have you ever considered that your working dogs may be in pain? Arthritis is common in working dogs. There are medications available now that are safe and very effective. A check up at your vet clinic would highlight any problems with joint health and provide solutions to manage the disease. So maybe now is a great time to have a “working dog wellness” session. Your veterinarian would be happy to examine your dogs on farm if that is easier. Some clinics asset aside days when they focus on working dogs. Why not give them a call? A finally don't forget that working dogs should also be vaccinated against all the horrible infectious diseases that are definitely alive and well in this area.



Hort sector rides fresh boom times

For many years New-Zealand's horticultural sector has played second fiddle to the country's major pastoral sectors but is now emerging rapidly from those shadows to surge ahead in export earning ability. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

This is thanks to growing investor confidence in the sector, some super smart operators and an ever widening pool of produce demanded by the rest of the world.

Horticulture New Zealand Chief Executive Mike Chapman is positively buzzing over where his sector is heading in the next decade, particularly as the industry's declared goal of achieving \$10 billion of earnings by 2020 looks like it will be easily achieved.

In 2017 the sector generated \$8.8 billion in both domestic and export earnings, with wine and kiwifruit vying for the top spot, generating about \$1.66 billion each.

It's that growth that prompted an upbeat Chapman to tell this year's Hort New Zealand

conference that in addition to its economic story, the industry has a great provenance story to tell the world.

"We are producing health food, have high standards of food safety and environmental sustainability is a strong focus."

With more people around the world turning towards a more plant based diet and seeking food that makes a positive contribution to their general health, Chapman is adamant New Zealand horticulture is in a sweet spot, presenting plenty of opportunities.

Prospects are for global demand to grow strongly due to the world's population hitting 9 billion people by 2050. That demand will require an eye-watering 4 billion tonnes of fruit, vegetables and

pulses a year, at a time when resources including water and land are under increasing pressure.

While kiwifruit and wine have long been the big hitting glamour categories for the industry, there are also some rising stars emerging into the export arena that once had limited export presence and a fragmented approach to markets.

In the past seven years the New Zealand apple industry has moved to be the 8th largest global exporter, moving 343,000 tonnes in 2017, up a massive 32% on eight years ago, whilst also managing to lift the average Free on Board (FoB) value of the fruit per tray equivalent 55% from \$22.93 in that time.

All up the industry exported a record \$691 million of fruit last year, 80% more than in 2005.

World leading growing systems, the lowest spray residues of any export country and consistently high quality fruit have all helped achieve that, and make New Zealand the number one ranked apple producing country in the world last year.

The rise in global demand for quality apples

is feeding through to apple growing regions like Nelson and Hawke's Bay, as growers plant a million new trees a year.

Hawke's Bay is developing pathways to fill more than 700 new permanent jobs that the plantings will generate over the next seven years.

NZ Apples and Pears Business Manager Gary Jones said the job demand was projected out to 2030, with little let up.

"If anything it will increase, given current planting plans."

He said the industry has become highly corporatised from growing to marketing now with very few "mum and dad" orchards around.

"There are a lot of very diverse jobs across the spectrum, so we need to demonstrate this to our local community that there are really interesting careers in horticulture."

The labour issue in the apple sector is echoing throughout the entire industry, with severe shortages of pickers reported for apples and kiwifruit this season.

One hope is the government will increase the intake of seasonal migrant workers through the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) programme.

But the industry is also working on a range of scholarships, training initiatives and apprenticeships to encourage more young people to engage in a sector that combines technology, outdoor work, management and horticulture in a variety of challenging positions.

Down south, cherries, long a summer fruit delight of Otago, are rapidly becoming discovered by the rest of the world.

In a sector usually based on inter-generational ownership interest has been growing from larger fruit growing interests in the past years.

The region's delectable stone fruit have found strong markets not only among Asian consumers but also here at home.

Total production is about 5,000t off a relatively small horticultural area of 650ha, compared to 110,000t grown in the United States, and two thirds of New Zealand production is exported largely to Taiwan and China.

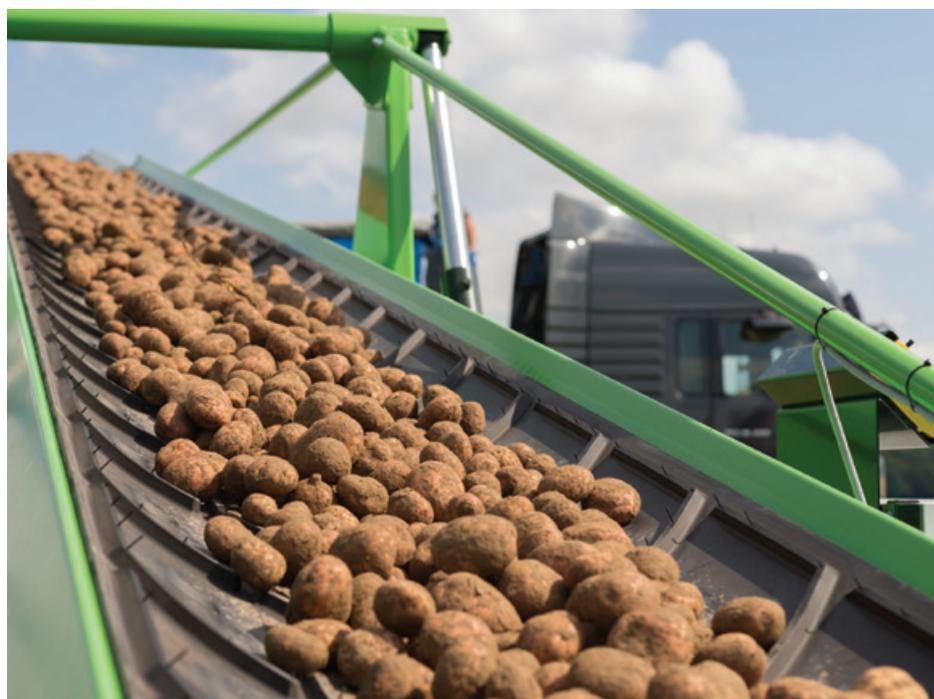
Summerfruit NZ Chief Executive Marie Dawkins says the Central Otago region has firmly cemented its reputation for growing premium grade cherries.

"As a market crop they also have a novelty element to them, they are only available for a certain length of time, making them particularly sought after when they do come onto the shelves."

An efficient distribution system linked to good air freight links mean New Zealand growers are able to command a premium for optimal quality fruit their Chilean competitors struggle with.

Real estate agents in Otago report growing interest in blocks of land for planting the fruit, with non-traditional districts also finding favour as a wider variety of cherries suited to different conditions become available.

Perhaps surprisingly it is the humble potato claiming the top growth spot as an earner for



vegetable growers, with the stable vegetable chalking up \$111 million in export sales in both processed and fresh form last year. An additional \$150 million of spuds are sold domestically.

With a tightening up of land supply in traditional growing areas like Pukekohe, more North Island growers are leasing land in Canterbury, where potatoes can play a useful role in crop rotations.

But the threat to potato growing areas underlines a broader issue, the high growth industry is struggling with the tension between land for urban sprawl versus food supply.

The issue was highlighted in August with the release of the "New Zealand Food Story—The Pukekohe Hub", a report outlining the value of the elite soils in the Pukekohe district, and how best to preserve them for food supply.

Auckland's insatiable demand for housing is now cutting into that valuable land, to the extent the region is likely to lose 10,000ha of high value soils before 2040, and at present only has 2,000ha of "elite" growing soil protected through the city's unitary plan.

The relatively small soil area punches well above its weight in production and value, producing 26% of the country's vegetable revenue and contributes quarter of a billion dollars to the country's economy.

Changes in council rules around cropping in regions outside Auckland, including Canterbury and Waikato also mean it is difficult for operators to simply move away from Pukekohe and set up production on good soils in those regions.

Both Waikato and Canterbury now have tight nitrogen caps and land use controls in place that make changing from pastoral farming to intensive cropping nearly impossible.

"So it means we are running out of land up there, and can't move anywhere else to continue growing for an increasing demand," says Mike Chapman.

He said 10% of high class land is also occupied by lifestyle blocks, and the area has been increasing to the extent New Zealand has lost 30% of its vegetable growing land in the past 15 years.

He is hoping the report provides enough empirical data to back up Horticulture New Zealand's call for a National Policy Statement for Versatile Land and High Class Soils, recognising the need to balance housing demand with protecting prime growing areas in all parts of the country.

"There is a balance that has gone too far towards urban development and needs to be reset."

HORTICULTURE A BOOMING INDUSTRY—THE NUMBERS.

	2015	2017	% CHANGE
FRESH FRUIT	\$1.9 billion	\$2.65 billion	40%
WINE/JUICES	\$1.56 billion	\$1.70 billion	9%
FRESH VEGIES	\$216 million	\$251 million	16%
PROCESSED VEGIES	\$375 million	\$366 million	-2%
OTHER	\$134 million	\$136 million	.5%
TOTAL	\$4.27 billion	\$5.11 billion	20%
% OF NZ EXPORTS	8.8%	10.3%	

Source: Fresh Facts, 2017 edition.

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FUEL



Plan ahead with fuel on the farm

As arable farmers and contractors are gearing up towards their busiest months of the season, it is always wise to think about forward planning your fuel needs on the farm.

WORDS BY RURALCO FUEL ACCOUNT MANAGER SARAH WELLS, IMAGE BY HELE POWER

Know your volume

Understanding your fuel volume is very important to our distributors. At the peak of the season, distributors need to ensure they can schedule your deliveries, particularly during industry stock shortages, so you don't run out at those crucial times. Depending on demand and the amount of fuel you use, the Ruralco Fuel team can also discuss options to monitor your fuel volume, such as an automatic tank gauge system. This allows more visibility to not only yourself but to the driver delivering your fuel.

Storage life of fuel

Some of the most important parts of storing bulk fuel on farm is to keep it clean, allowing for a longer fuel life span. With common rail engines, a direct fuel injection system for diesel engines, the need for clean fuel is important. You should regularly change your filters to ensure there is no water build up in the tank which will reduce the risk of diesel bug growing. To check you are running clean fuel through your machinery, you can use water finding paste or by draining a sample from the sump plug of your tank.

Another way to help maintain clean fuel in your tank is the Chornco 2082 Diesel Fuel Additive that treats, cleans and lubricates the engine fuel system. The combustion of fuel is more complete, improving efficient energy output while providing substantial reduction in harmful exhaust gas emissions.

Chornco 2083 Cold Flow Diesel Fuel Conditioner is another great additive to prevent the waxing of diesel fuels in colder climates, improving the combustion efficiency in diesel fuels. It also provides easier starting, increased fuel economy and offers greater available power. This allows your summer diesel to still be used in the winter months and reduce the output of service costs on your machinery.

Future proof your storage options

Most farmers are now thinking ahead for affordable fuel storage options that will future proof their needs on the farm.

Ruralco Shareholder Jason Rickard from Barford Farms is future proofing his business by investing in a tandem axle braked trailer tank. Jason says he uses the trailer to take the fuel to the machine rather than the machine to the fuel. "There is so much downtime bringing the machines back to the main yard." He sees the trailer tank as an investment to his business, as they have multiple blocks so moving the fuel to those blocks provides great time management for himself and he is confident he is pumping clean fuel into his machinery.

By using a trailer tank, not only can this be refuelled by a bulk distributor, but this also allows you to refuel at the pump at our Ruralco Card accepted sites.

Compliance

The most common fuel tank on the farm may not be the most compliant tank. Ensuring

you are following Worksafe requirements ensures less risk of injury, infringements and denied fuel deliveries from our suppliers. These requirements include the location of your fuel tank, and the type, structure and height of your fuel tank.

Security

With an increase in reported on-farm fuel theft nationally, security around fuel storage is very important. Our local tank suppliers always provide the best options to ensure your fuel tanks are safe. There are different types of lockable ball valves available for gravity and on-ground tanks.

Service is best

Ruralco Fuel work closely with our distributors and suppliers to provide the rural sector with a holistic service. Contact Ruralco today for advice on the right fuel, fuel storage, accessories and HSNO requirements to ensure your fuel needs are well prepared for the busy season ahead.

For further information please contact the Ruralco Fuel team: Sarah Wells 027 360 9535 or Don Joseph 027 839 7351.



ABOVE: Fuel conditioning treatment
TOP: Farmer Jason Rickard and Ruralco Fuel Account Manager Sarah Wells with one of the many tank options available with Ruralco

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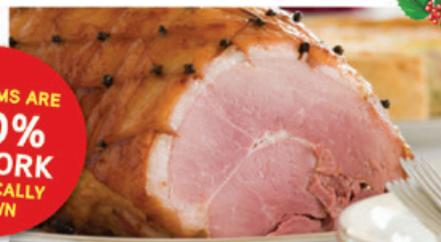


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Agriculture under the spotlight

Thanks to technology we now have access to more information at our fingertips than at any time in human history.

WORDS PROVIDED BY ANDREW MORRISON, CHAIRMAN OF BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND

The accessibility of so much knowledge throws up its own set of challenges around finding the credible “oats” amongst the chaff and ensuring balance in debates.

Consumers in New Zealand and globally are increasingly interested in the environmental and ethical impacts of the products in their lives. Whether it's the clothes they wear, the plastic bags they carry their shopping in, what's in their food and how it's produced.

This greater interest in the provenance of the food we produce is the ‘new normal’. We must embrace the opportunities and challenges it brings.

We're uniquely placed to take advantage of those opportunities. There is increasing demand globally for grass-fed, free range, hormone-free and GMO free red meat, which matches New Zealand's natural advantages and our farming systems perfectly.

But with these higher consumer expectations rightfully comes increased scrutiny too. We need to acknowledge where we have issues and call out bad practices when we see them, as well as be prepared to take action to address problems.

Winter grazing practices have been in the headlines recently.

Cows in high levels of mud and poor environmental practices around winter grazing are unacceptable.

But what was lost in the debate was how important winter grazing on crops is for pastoral based farming, and that those poor practices are the exception rather than the rule.

“Cows in high levels of mud and poor environmental practices around winter grazing are unacceptable.”

In many countries the norm is for animals to be housed in-doors over winter which brings its own challenges (specifically around anti-microbial use due to intensity of housing). We like to try and keep our animals outdoors all year around, but that is challenging. Pasture growth is low in winter, and winter crops like fodder beat, kale or swedes provide the energy cattle need over the winter months. Break feeding animals

in a more confined space on a crop also preserves the soil over the rest of the farm so that the pastures can grow and feed animals well in the spring.

While winter feed crops are a vital tool in our country's outdoor pastoral farming systems, they need to be well-managed to minimise their potential environmental and animal welfare impacts. Most of our farmers do a good job, but it is challenging when a storm comes through, and recent events demonstrate improvements need to be made.

Like every industry, we are continually striving to do better. Advances in technology have allowed us to monitor and measure the impact we have on the environment. We can quantify how our management decisions and practices impact on animal productivity, and we know that to run a profitable business, we need livestock to be happy and healthy.

Ultimately, we all share the same goal as the rest of New Zealand. When these issues arise, we need to avoid being defensive and instead get better at telling our story about why we farm the way we do, and how we're working hard to do this in a more sustainable way.

Zeke to the rescue

Dutch Shepherd (Malinois) dog Zeke might live on a dairy farm but his purpose is much more specialised than rounding up stock and when he is at work, his area is far larger than the average dog.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY NZ LAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Zeke is a specialist search and rescue dog trained by handler Murray Bowden and his search territory goes from the Rakaia River all the way down to the Waitaki River. Murray and Zeke work under LAND SAR—New Zealand Search and Rescue which operates under NZ Police.

There are two categories of LAND SAR dogs; avalanche and wilderness and within wilderness search dogs there are two specific divisions—area search and tracking dogs. Handler Murray explains the differences between area search dogs and tracking search dogs, “basically if you had a big paddock to search, the search dog and handler would break the paddock into blocks and methodically check each block of the paddock working into the wind looking for any airborne scent, whereas with Zeke I would work him around the perimeter to find the entry or exit point of a person looking for their ground scent and then we would track from there.”

“It’s not about the success of Zeke, it’s about the team as a whole and the service they can provide when people are in need.”

Murray has a history of community work and as a teen learnt a lot of outdoor and back country skills through his love of hunting and fishing so working with LAND SAR felt like a natural step for him.

Murray and his wife Hannah moved from Christchurch almost 10 years ago and Murray signed up as a member of the Rakaia SAR group, “within 6 months I knew I wanted to train a dog.”

Murray is now Chairman of the Rakaia branch but for him it’s not about the success of Zeke, it’s about the team as a whole and the service they can provide when people are in need.

“I’ll always help out even if Zeke isn’t needed, for example doing a stretcher carry out of



the back country, it isn’t always about the tracking and I’m very lucky that I’m able to give something back thanks to my very flexible employer The Rylib Group.”

It was a relatively long journey for farm manager Murray and Zeke to become operational, Murray spent a lot of time looking for the right dog who was capable of performing in often very stressful situations. He chose Zeke for his energy and drive, “dogs in a way are like humans, they will choose the easiest scenario or way through something and I wanted a dog that would keep going and going, sometimes our searches can be

ABOVE: Murray and Zeke train continuously. They are required to train with Westpac every year for Zeke’s helicopter winch training and according to Murray he handles the harness like a pro

very long and if it is life or death, you don’t want your dog just giving up.”

It took two years for Zeke to become operational and he has now been in action for LAND SAR over three years.

Murray remembers how nervous he was getting called to a job to find a missing woman, Zeke had only been operational for a few weeks but thanks to a clean

uncontaminated site he picked up the scent and she was found quickly thanks to Murray and Zeke.

Sometimes it isn't as easy as that however, factors such as the length of time it takes Zeke to get on-site and if the scene is very contaminated can all make Zeke's job much harder.

“Zeke will work non-stop until he finds a scent and follows it.”

Murray explains it isn't like the movies when the dog is given a piece of the missing persons clothing and they simply trot off—that doesn't happen, Zeke will work non-stop until he finds a scent and follows it.

In terms of call outs Murray says they come in waves, sometimes being every other month and other times every other week and believes this winter they have been relatively lucky with call outs thanks to the mild weather.

They are occasionally required to do multi day searches but not too often and as Murray puts it “we will stay there for as long as the Police ask us to and at the end of the day if you aren't successful, you have to move on and find closure, once I know Zeke and I have ticked off every box and done our very best then we have to move onto the next task, I can't do anymore as it would consume me, it's hard sometimes but you have to be matter of fact.”

“In order to keep their specialist skills razor sharp, Murray and Zeke train continuously.”

In order to keep their specialist skills razor sharp, Murray and Zeke train continuously. They meet the Christchurch dogs and handlers once a week for training and at home Murray does short drills with Zeke every other day. Zeke has been trained to be rewarded for work—be it a multi-day search or a 20-minute exercise and for him the greatest reward is to have a play with his tug toy.

They attend LAND SAR camps in the North and South Island as Murray says its very beneficial for Zeke to experience new scenarios and train with other dogs. They are also required to train with Westpac every year for Zeke's helicopter winch training and according to Murray he handles the harness like a pro.

This year the air force even came to the farm and did helicopter training with all the Rakaia SAR group as well as Zeke, “things like that are a definite bonus to the job, not everyone gets to train with the police or the air force and see their skills in practice, I really enjoy those training sessions.”

Murray explains that these days with a changing society and new technology, the job of a LAND SAR dog and handler is



changing. Hunters very rarely go missing now thanks to Personal Locator Beacons, although they do get the odd lost tourist who has underestimated the territory and has no location device.

“Not everyone gets to train with the police or the air force and see their skills in practice.”

Mental health and missing persons are something that unfortunately Murray and Zeke have to participate in more and more often, “if someone doesn't want to be found that makes our job much harder but it makes no difference to Zeke's tracking skills, if that person is hiding in a bush he will find them.” While situations like that are difficult to handle, Murray confirms there are many great aspects to being a handler for Zeke

ABOVE: Murray and Zeke visit schools regularly to put LAND SAR in the limelight, they are always looking for volunteers and despite what people think everyone has some skill to offer

TOP: Zeke has been trained to be rewarded for work—be it a multi-day search or a 20-minute exercise and for him the greatest reward is to have a play with his tug toy.

and they both enjoy doing community work, “we actively try and be part of the community as at the end of the day that's what we are there for.”

They visit schools and rest homes and earlier this year they took part in Ashburton Emergency Services Day. “It's always nice to go and meet the public and also to put LAND SAR in the limelight, they are always looking for volunteers and despite what people think everyone has some skill to offer. Zeke and I are no better than anyone else, he's an asset there to help and we'll help out for as long as we can in any situation, good or bad.”

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Property Brokers rebranding paving way for future

At Property Brokers we have rebranded. Our long-established well-known name is the same, but Property Brokers has a freshened look.

WORDS BY MARK LEMON RURAL DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT PROPERTY BROKERS

Property Brokers

This process started at the beginning of the year with the decision to rebrand. Release date was 1st August for the new look. It will take until the end of the year for all Property Brokers offices around the country to have the external signage work completed.

The new look logo has the banner of the fluttering flag replaced by a stylised version of a flag, with a clever PB logo incorporated within it. When it was first released at our company day, I was a bit underwhelmed and I know some others were also. But, it grows on you, the more you look at it, you realise how clever it is. I like it.

What really is in a name and a brand.

Google says "Simply put, your brand is your promise to your customer or client. It tells them what to expect from your products and services, it differentiates your offering from your competitors. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be."

My take on it is that it is a recognition point for a range of thoughts and emotions that an individual may have about a particular company, the products or services of the company and of the people who work within or under the banner of that company. In our case this is independent contractors working as commission agents under the 'banner' of the company.

As individual contractors, real estate agents will then, by their actions and activities,

develop their reputations. This in effect, is their own 'brand' within the company brand. Real Estate is a people business, and because our business is about supporting people in their property transactions, I guess we are part of the 'Service Industry'.

How an agent performs with his tasks in farm transactions will develop their reputation. There are many elements in this process and a key prerequisite is a good knowledge of and feel for farming, and an empathy with the rural community.

So over time a reputation grows and this is in essence a Real Estate agents personal brand.

Due Diligence requirements with a farm purchase have grown enormously in recent years and understanding what is needed here is crucial for the rural salesperson. On top of this is the contacts base and transactional skills of an agent must have. These facets are all needed but there is also an intrinsic element to the job also and it is best described in the following comment. Anyone can show a farm but not everyone can sell it.

So over time a reputation grows and this is in essence a Real Estate agents personal brand.

ABOVE: The new sleek and simplistic look
BELOW: The old Property Brokers branding



A new Rural Agent has one chance to develop his reputation as a Rural Salesperson. Their brand starts from a combination of experience and reputation from past employment. This is added to as they develop in their new role. But it can still take some time for people to see them in their new role. It has been said that it can take as long as two years.

With a new agent there is no usual pathway of previous occupations to make a successful rural salesperson. We have former stock agents, farmers, bankers, spraying contractors, hunting guides, valuers, shearers, sharemilkers, topdressing pilots and coal mining contractors within our wider Property Brokers rural team. But there is one common denominator for success and that is hard work.

And just a note to finish on. Congratulations to our Ashburton rural team in winning the Rural Office of the Year [Small Rural Office of the Year] for 2017/18 at the Annual REINZ Awards.

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Perseverance paying dividends

A quiet determination to succeed against the odds is the driving force behind a Russian couple making inroads in the dairy industry.

WORDS AND IMAGES BY ANNIE STUDHOLME

As he wanders through a paddock of cows, contract milker Sergey Bogatyrev, can hardly believe how far he's come. "If you told me 20 years ago that I would be living in New Zealand, milking cows and speaking English, I would have said: you're dreaming."

Sergey grew up in a small village outside of Russia's second biggest city, St Petersburg, where his father had a small-scale rabbit meat farm, before selling up to go into the tourist business. After school, Sergey graduated with an agricultural degree, but with limited opportunities in his homeland, he found work as a welder and plumber. "It was never really my scene though," he says.

Elena, meanwhile, grew up as a "townie", but was always surrounded by animals. She had always harboured dreams of living overseas, hoping to move to Germany.

Sergey first came to New Zealand to visit his brother, Andre, whom he had not seen for almost a decade since he'd left Russia to follow a career as a fisherman in the 1990s. Sergey wanted to stay, but with limited English, he struggled to get the necessary visas despite studying at the Wilkinson Language School in Christchurch. There were numerous obstacles standing in his way, but he never gave up, determined to make a better life for himself at the bottom of the world, more than 16,780km away from his homeland.

"Immigration was extremely strict. Because I had a university degree I was over-qualified for the points system, and to stay in New Zealand I needed to get a job offer, but with little English and no New Zealand experience it was really hard to get a farming job. Because I had graduated with an agriculture degree, the only way to stay was to get a job in the dairy industry," he explains.

Elena faced a similar uphill battle. She too knew little English on arriving in New Zealand. But their perseverance paid off. Sergey was awarded a two-year work permit, before they were eventually granted New Zealand residency.

The Bogatyrev's owe a huge debt to Culverden dairy farmers Martin and Vanessa Smith, who took a punt and gave the couple their first dairy job. Milking 850 cows on the home farm, with a further 780 cows on the property next door where they used to be 50/50 sharemilkers, Sergey started off at the bottom, working as part of an almost entirely foreign crew.

He was a quick learner but found it extremely difficult at the beginning. "I was used to a more indoor-based system, when New Zealand was more about pasture. There was just so much to learn. Martin taught me everything."

The language barrier was a problem initially, but Sergey's determination and strong work ethic, coupled with his high attention to



RIGHT: If you told Sergey 20 years ago that he would be living in New Zealand, milking cows and speaking English he would have said you're dreaming
LEFT: Sergey and Elena with their children Polina (2.5) and Maksim (6)



ABOVE: When Elena wasn't working raising calves, relief milking or looking after their growing family, she works for LIC as an assistant AI technician

detail, saw him climb up the ranks. "I love the work. It's demanding, but I enjoy it. I'm not focused on the numbers, I just do it. What can be done today should not be left until tomorrow is my motto," he says.

In the 12.5 years they worked for the Smiths, Sergey moved up from dairy farm worker to being in sole charge of the home farm. He didn't just have to master the English language but had to contend with new cowshed operational systems from herringbone to rotary. Meanwhile, when Elena wasn't working raising calves, relief milking or looking after their growing family, she worked for Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) as an assistant AI technician. "I couldn't say anything when I started; now I am a chatterbox," she laughs.

But while they were settled and loving life in North Canterbury, with the Smith's children returning home to take on the management roles, Sergey and Elena decided the time was right to move on.

In 2015, they moved north to Kaikoura, to contract milk 400 cows for a Russian-owned operation. "We had two options—go south or Kaikoura. South was too far for us. The Kaikoura farm was in a beautiful place, in a nice community with nice people. He'd been trying to get us to go and work for him for about five years. It was a big step up, but the timing just seemed right," says Sergey.

The couple ploughed all their energy into the farm, bringing it up to scratch. While it was well-known for its state-of-the-art harlequin-styled, black and white tiled cowshed, they relished the opportunity to put their own procedures in place.

Everything was going well, until the night of 14 November 2016, when Mother Nature delivered a mighty blow, flinging people from their beds, just as she had to Christchurch in 2011.

Like so many farmers, the 7.8 magnitude Kaikoura Earthquake had a devastating effect on Sergey and Elena's livelihoods. Overnight, the wonderful farming environment they had worked so hard to create, was destroyed right before their eyes. "It was a very stressful time for us. While we didn't lose anything major in the house, the land took a serious hit. Around 70 per cent of the farm was underwater afterwards, and the infrastructure was heavily damaged—irrigation pipes broken, tanks ruptured, effluent ponds breached, the diesel tank up-ended and underground cables severed," explains Sergey.

Despite excessive damage, Sergey was one of the lucky ones. Once the platform was put back on its rollers, milking continued as normal the next day using generators and gas, putting to good use the engineering skills he had learnt in Russia.

"Over time I had put spare parts aside. You never know when you are going to need them. If you look after the gear, it will look after you. I started

the milking machines and they were functional. I put lubricant on their working parts and just hoped they wouldn't stop," he says.

Being able to milk was one thing, but with the Kaikoura district completely cut off from the outside world, Sergey and Elena, along with 21 other properties, were forced to dump hundreds of thousands of litres of milk into effluent ponds or spread it judiciously over pastures for weeks until the roads reopened.

But they were not alone. "We locals stuck together. We stand shoulder to shoulder. I helped my neighbours and they helped me. The community banded together to help each other, and there was also lots of support and help from the team at Fonterra."

Once the roads reopened, things started to get easier. "Nineteen Fonterra tankers were left on farm, because of easy access and large territory to move trucks. Roads were opened for specific periods so that items could come in and out," explains Sergey.

However, the after effects of the Kaikoura Earthquake lingered. The following season Elena finished runner-up in the Kaikoura Calf Growing Challenge, in which four calves are weighed right through from 6–12 weeks. The winner was determined by those who achieved the closest percentage of live weight any 12 weeks against mature live weights for the average of the four calves.

"That was a good challenge and I can see that our way to feed calves works well," says Elena. With the Kaikoura farm up for sale, the

Bogatyrev's were forced to move again. This season they've excitedly moved to Vincent and Robyn Lobb's Westerfield 164-hectare property as contract milkers, milking 550 cows. While Sergey is in charge of the day-to-day running of the farm, Elena is charged with rearing calves. They've employed their own staff and are now seeing the immigration department from the other side. They're eternally grateful to the Lobb's for giving them an opportunity to further their careers.

Even though they now have more than 16 years of New Zealand experience, finding the right position remains their greatest challenge. Like many Kiwis, they dream of one day being able to put down a deposit on their own property.

"We've tried hard to build up a good reputation, but it doesn't matter what we do, we are still foreigners. It is getting easier though. Now I just take it as it is and go with it. I used to get wound up about things, but I've learnt to just go with it. Once people know you, it's fine but it's getting that foot in the door. We don't want to keep moving, we are looking for long-term relationships and want to stay," says Sergey.



ABOVE: A recent move to Mid Canterbury has given the family the opportunity to further their careers
BELOW LEFT: Despite the many ups and downs since their arrival down under, the Bogatyrev's are content to call New Zealand home

It's difficult for any family to upend their family for a new position in a new town, but as foreigners, it's even harder. Although New Zealanders are by and large extremely welcoming, it takes time to settle into a new community, make new friends and getting to know where everything is.

"It's a new place, a new farm, everything is new. We've been in Ashburton for three months and I still don't know where everything is. It's not hard, we just don't know what to expect," says Elena.

They were thrilled with the speed at which Ruralco was able to set up their new card, which has made life a lot easier.

Despite the many ups and downs since their arrival down under, the Bogatyrev's are content to call New Zealand home. Their children Maksim (6) and Polina (2.5) are both being raised as Kiwis. While they speak Russian at home, they are fluent in English.

"I don't want to lose my language," says Elena. "It's important for them to be able to speak Russian because our families who still live in Russia, don't speak English. They are bilingual. They understand Russian, but often respond in English."

While they would dearly love to take their children back to Russia for a visit, at the moment they're focused on their new job. A self-confessed workaholic, Sergey struggles with holidays at the best of times. "We don't have time to travel," he laughs.

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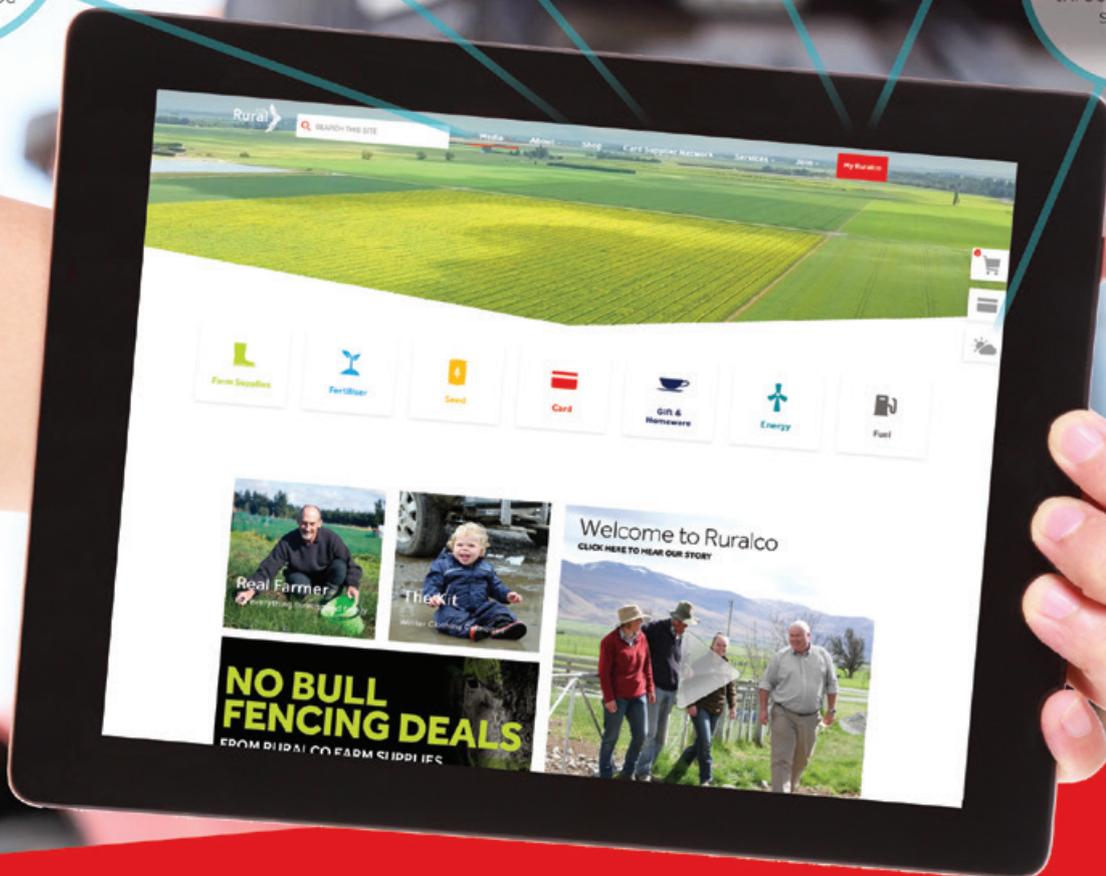
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Go Further

Time to plan for food security

It's time to act on food security for New-Zealand. We cannot take for granted that our fruit and vegetable growers can continue to feed New-Zealand, as well as generate increasing export returns to benefit the economy.

WORDS BY MIKE CHAPMAN, CEO OF HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY HORTICULTURE NEW ZEALAND



It is essential that we have a holistic view of our food supply chain to ensure informed decision-making around critical areas such as land use and water allocation. To meet environmental and health imperatives, as well as consumer expectations, it makes sense to protect growing hubs close to our main population centres. They not only provide food that contributes to the physical health of New Zealanders, but also jobs, and vibrant businesses and communities.

Food and housing are competing for land and water. We need both, so now is a good time to be smart about long-term planning for food security and domestic supply. We will not always be able to source food from other countries—look at the extremely hot summer the northern part of the world is having and the impact it is having on food production because of drought.

In the report, Deloitte makes six recommendations, having analysed the Pukekohe hub's absolute value using the Treasury's Living Standards Framework four capitals: social, natural, human and financial, which are explained in their report.

These recommendations lead to creating a National Policy Statement, under Resource Management Act, as a first step to developing a comprehensive food security policy for New Zealand. The Government is committed to this and we are working with them on it. The National Policy Statement is a direction to all the councils around the country, and will be a step in ensuring consistent policy New Zealand-wide to enable growing food by making sure that elite soils are identified, and water and nutrient allocations are secured. When it comes to protecting elite soils, the goal is to achieve a sensible balance between building houses and growing our food. What we need to establish is the framework for the future so that there is certainty around what land is reserved for growing our food and what land is for planting houses. Only five percent of our land is suitable for growing vegetables and fruit. That leaves 95% for houses, so surely we can reach an accommodation.

We are not asking for the earth—just enough earth to feed you.

ABOVE LEFT: Pukekohe growers who were interviewed by Deloitte for the report and attended the launch at Parliament. Front row (left to right): Andrew Keaney, Sarah Webster, Kylie Faulkner, Bernadine Guilleux, Kiran Hari, Rob Craig and Bharat Jivan; Back row (left to right): Kevin Wilcox, Pravin Hari, John Sutherland

TOP LEFT: Pukekohe not only feeds Auckland, but at certain times during the year feeds New Zealand



We need to take a strategic and measured assessment of where we grow our food, and protect those areas so that we feed our future generations with fresh and healthy food. We need a food security policy.

To inform how we might go about developing this policy, Horticulture New Zealand commissioned Deloitte to look at the economic contribution the Pukekohe horticulture hub makes to both the Auckland and the New Zealand economy, and its role in feeding New Zealanders. The resulting report, New Zealand's food story: The Pukekohe hub, was released in August at an event at Parliament hosted by Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor.

Although this report is focused on the Pukekohe hub, it is a proxy for many other towns and cities around New Zealand. The report gives us facts, figures, analysis and

modelling to use in submissions to central and local government. Just one fact explains how important the Pukekohe hub is as a growing area for not only Auckland, but all of New Zealand: the Pukekohe hub is 3.8% of New Zealand's vegetable and fruit growing area but produces 26% of the value. Pukekohe not only feeds Auckland, but at certain times during the year feeds New Zealand—this is because it is too cold, or perhaps too wet further south to grow some vegetables throughout the year.

If decision-makers don't have a clear view of the value of the Pukekohe food hub, we run the risk of an economic hit to Auckland of up to \$1.1 billion in 25 years, with the loss of up to 4,500 fulltime jobs, less fruit and vegetables available, and prices up to 58 percent higher. During that time Auckland will also be hungrier, with population set to rise to 2.3 million.



Andrew Neill
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Providing the finest quality agricultural lime for all your on-farm requirements

Jon & Jack Harmer owner/operators of Mt Hutt Lime are extremely proud of the quality of ag lime they can supply and rightly so. WORDS SUPPLIED BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY MT HUTT LIME



The lime has been independently tested and the results are very impressive, the lime coming out of his Mt Hutt quarry is in the top 5% of any lime available NZ wide, "the quality is astronomical and combined with our expert processing technique it's definitely a premium product" Jon confirms. A division of the larger Harmer Earthmoving group, Mt Hutt Lime was founded in 2015 and specialises in ag lime and also dairy tracks.

With three quarries in operation and a processing plant at Mt Alford, Jon and the team offer a range of solutions depending on your dairy track requirements. Mt Alford dairy track is a soft product and excellent for protection of cows' feet, a harder more durable option is basalt which is a darker and a more long-lasting product. "Basalt is a real hardwearing product and sets almost like a tar-seal, the Council around here use it in a lot of roading projects and it lasts a long time on tracks as well as stopping the dust and the corrugations on roads" Jon explains. Mt Hutt Lime also offers a third option for tracks which is claystone, it resembles pottery clay and also sets very hard and offers a lot of durability. The company processes about 200,000 tonnes of product between the three quarries and have gained a significant amount of expertise in dairy tracks and Jon and the team are happy to guide customers through the track options depending on their preferred result and budget. Mt Hutt Lime also offers an extensive supply chain network with depots in Methven, Ashburton and Mt Alford as well as offering direct on farm delivery.

The superior quality ag lime offered by Mt Hutt Lime is also another drawcard for customers.

"Our product has been tested independently and its proven to be 96.2% active lime content, that's huge considering a lot of other quarries are between 80-90%. That percentage gain in active ingredient may not seem a lot but if you are spreading several applications a year that percentage can really affect your bulk tonnage cost, you obviously need less of our product to achieve the same PH change." Another reason for the high quality of the lime is that all Mt Hutt lime is screened prior to crushing so that eliminates a lot of unwanted components and keeps the lime as pure as possible. The lime is also extremely dry on extraction at the quarry so having a high-quality raw product is essential to achieving a fine, dry, high concentrate lime product, but they can also add moisture to the product evenly to lower dust if required. A by-product of this ag lime is lime chip and according to Jon this product is useful for lining tanker tracks, driveways and centre pivot ruts. The recent outbreak and containment issues surrounding Mycoplasma Bovis disease has also seen Mt Hutt Lime assist with any biosecurity measures needed. The Ministry of Primary Industries has ordered lime chip to be spread on farms around sheds and tracks as it assists with stopping any potential harmful germs and disease, "lime can be very beneficial in circumstances like this and we are keen to help out farms if this issue arises" Jon confirms.

The latest innovation from the business is a new lime flour for calving cows. Mt Hutt Lime



ABOVE: A division of the larger Harmer Earthmoving group, Mt Hutt Lime was founded in 2015 and specialises in ag lime and also dairy tracks.

TOP: The company processes about 200,000 tonnes of product between the three quarries and have gained a significant amount of expertise in dairy tracks

is already used in feed so selling their own lime flour was a natural progression for Jon and the company. The lime flour will be available in 1 tonne bags and Mt Hutt Lime offers a delivery service which will deliver throughout the Mid Canterbury region, "it's a top-grade product and the delivery service makes it very accessible for farmers." Anyone interested in this service can phone 0275427637 for details and cardholders wanting to use Mt Hutt Lime should talk to their fertiliser spreader service or contact Mt Hutt Lime directly.



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Meeting the next generation of young farmers at Geraldine High School

It's a bright crisp Canterbury morning and despite the chill in the air, the Geraldine High School Year 11 students are buzzing around a corner of the rugby field constructing their fences.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY GERALDINE HIGH SCHOOL

Boys and girls, town kids and country kids, sharing tools, twisting wire and generally getting stuck in. Learning how to fence is just one of a range of practical skills offered through Geraldine High Schools' Primary Industry Academy (PIA). The PIA has been running at Geraldine High School for several years and according to Head Teacher, Sarah Foley-Smith, the Academy is a fantastic opportunity for both urban and country students to learn practical on-farm skills that may lead to a career in agriculture. It's open to Year 11 and 12 students and runs at Level 1 and 2. Level 1 students participate in field trips and get a general insight into numerous

aspects of the primary industries, while Level 2 students complete on-farm work placements every week and achieve their NZ Certificate in Primary Skills.

The aim of the course is to get students passionate about agriculture and farming. Students are also encouraged to participate in the national TeenAg challenge which runs alongside the annual Young Farmer of the Year competition. The students' competitive spirit has certainly taken off, with the school having a huge success in the last few years. Last month the school was hugely proud of getting a team to qualify and compete in the National TeenAg finals and a further two students to qualify for fencing at the Young Farmer of the Year competition in Invercargill. TeenAg competitors Ben Chambers and Jacob Stachurski faced a multitude of tough challenges including a quiz, drafting and performing a speech, building a pivot fence and stock judging. They placed ninth overall in the TeenAg National Final. In the Young Farmer fencing challenge students Mitchell Sowden and Patrick Foley-Smith placed fifth, which is extremely impressive considering they

were sixteen-year-old boys facing men up to age thirty and having years more practical fencing experience. The top three placings went to professional fencers, so the fact that these two boys got to fifth place is a fantastic achievement.

Geraldine also did extremely well this year on a regional level and entered a record nineteen TeenAg teams out of forty-eight at the Aorangi Regional finals and placed first and third. In the Young Farmer fencing Regionals, they placed an amazing first, second, third and fourth despite competing against much older and experienced competitors. The younger students have also gotten in on the action and last year the school won the national AgriKids event. AgriKids runs alongside the TeenAg and Young Farmer competitions and is open to children between 8 – 13 years. The schools' 2017 Ruralco sponsored team comprised of Jessica Furrer, Angus Wallace and William Wilson and the young champions were tested on a wide range of agricultural knowledge from theory to hands on skills.

According to Sarah studying with the PIA and competing in challenges like TeenAg



and AgriKids really assists in bridging the urban rural divide between students, and the interest from urban pupils has been huge. About 40% of the students come from an urban background, "the great thing about the course is now we have lots of urban students wanting practical farm skills because they can see that primary industries in NZ is a pathway to so many interesting careers and often great pay packets. There's the obvious careers such as farm management and ownership but support services like stock agents, irrigation and the whole environmental aspect." Sarah is very proud of all her PIA graduates, some have gone on to university to focus on agriculture while others have gotten jobs on high-country stations or local farms.

The PIA is a government funded initiative running in 35 schools nationwide and allows for flexibility within the course to suit the students interest "it's not as restrictive as NCEA and each year I adapt it to suit the students, but fencing is definitely popular, maybe it's because you can see your success and it's easy to improve if you work hard. Plus, fencing is a skill that farmers say these days very few people have when entering the industry." As well as a series of fencing courses the students focus on motorbike and quad bike safety and water supply during Level 1. Level 2 study animal handling and chainsaws plus advanced fencing and advanced bike handling and safety. "We try to give them a good grounding on basic skills and working on a farm, the good and bad sides for example tailing lambs in awful weather, it's important they get a real picture of life on a farm" Sarah explains. The

PIA courses the students attend are on their own time at weekends, are done through Agri Learn and are the exact same courses that farms send their staff on. Sarah believes this extra training ensures her PIA students leave school with the very best chance of employment in the industry, "the courses are fantastic, and the students graduate high school with a CV that is years ahead of many other schools."

As well as the time spent at school learning through the academy the students have learned lots of essential skills through volunteer work and fund raising. This year the students have raised over \$20,000, going towards expenses such as funding Agri Learn courses and outdoor gear. Money has been raised through quiz nights, selling firewood and of course undertaking fencing projects for the community. Sarah and the students would like to thank Rylib Group, Ed Body Fencing and Al Johnston Farming Solutions for all their assistance. They have also had the honour of being invited to attend the Young Farmer final as the volunteer work force and are the only high school to be invited to volunteer this year. Sarah believes their time at the Young Farmer final was invaluable, "the students learn so many skills that they don't actually earn credits for thanks to these events. For example, being organised, showing initiative, learning how to talk to older people. I really do believe skills gained at these events are worth months in the classroom." Their volunteer work in the community is very impressive and most weekends the PIA are busy at some event, they organise the Future Farmers and Country Kids events at all the local A&P shows and assist at events such as the rodeo and Winchester pet show.

Sarah herself really enjoys seeing the students develop an interest in the industry as well as valuable life skills. Sarah has a Bachelor of Science and over twenty years teaching experience. She became the Agriculture teacher at Geraldine High School just as the Primary Industry Academy began so it was perfect timing for her. This year she has been invited to assist with the National Review Panel for the Academy, specifically Practical Skills for Level 2 students. While the course allows for flexibility, Sarah is keen to add in some Soils and Pastures education for the students which she believes is crucial "it's all very well having great practical skills, but you need some theory behind it, you can't farm if you can't grow grass!" A mum herself to three boys she has first-hand experience of motivated students. It is Sarah's son Patrick who exceeded expectations at the Young Farmer fencing challenge and other son Quinn was a top Agri Kids competitor, "with my own sons in competitions I'm definitely more of a hands-on teacher and I think the students get a better deal!"

Competitions and success aside, at the end of the day for Sarah the joy is always in watching what the students can achieve. "Some of my students haven't had a lot of success until now, and when they find success be it in fencing or animal handling or whatever it is fantastic, they have that lightbulb moment and suddenly they are all over it. We have a very promising bunch down here and I enjoy being a part of that."

IMAGES: Some of the many students participating in the Geraldine High School Primary Industry Academy and Young Farmer Competitions

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Behind the scenes—setting achievable nutrient rules

In August an appeal to ECAN's Plan Change 5 was resolved.

WORDS BY ANDREW CURTIS, CEO OF IRRIGATIONNZ, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY IRRIGATIONNZ

IrrigationNZ invested a lot of time on this appeal because it would have required irrigators with older systems to spend \$300 million upgrading their irrigation across Canterbury as a result of the nutrient modelling rules relating to irrigation.

When the Plan Change was notified such a significant change wasn't proposed at all, instead only older irrigation systems operating on light soils would have needed replacement at a cost of \$80 million. The change in rules was made by the Hearings Commissioners at the request of nobody. In pursuit of some common sense, IrrigationNZ lodged an appeal on this, and was joined by a number of parties. This resulted in a lot of time modelling and discussing impacts. Our organisation commissioned a study on the cost of the change which identified the \$300 million cost.

The decision was resolved in our favour, but there is still a lot of work ahead on more detailed requirements around nutrient modelling rules for irrigation. Good management practice will vary from farm to farm depending on irrigation systems, soil types, crop types and rainfall zones and the

rules need to be flexible to reflect this.

Locally, we have also completed some work within the Selwyn and Hinds zones. These two catchments have some of the most ambitious nutrient loss reduction rules in Canterbury. They were also tied up in confusing Good Management Practice rules around nutrient management which needed to be resolved.

Two earlier ECAN Plan Changes (PC1 and PC2) set targets for irrigators to reduce nutrient losses by up to 36% in Hinds and up to 30% in Selwyn through Good Management Practice expectations. However, in Plan Change 5 tougher rules around Good Management Practice nutrient losses were introduced. This meant that irrigators in Selwyn and Hinds would have had to achieve significantly more nutrient loss reductions than those agreed to in PC1 and PC2.

Clearly these changes would have been neither achievable or fair, considering irrigators were already aiming for agreed nutrient loss reduction targets which were already challenging.

To address this issue IrrigationNZ convened a working party involving ECAN, irrigation

schemes and other primary sector stakeholders to identify how the original reduction nutrient targets could be provided for.

After several months working through these issues a solution has been found which allows the original nutrient loss targets to be kept—the same targets irrigators have already been aware of for some time and have been working towards. Guidelines have been developed for irrigation good management practice modelling rules and ECAN have now circulated these around all consultants involved in developing nutrient budgets.

I guess the moral of the tale is that there's a lot of value in having a membership organisation for irrigators. It's busy enough on the farm without having to worry about a raft of poorly thought through regional rules upsetting your life and costing you a lot of money!

We will continue to work on providing advice to help irrigators achieve good management practice. If you want to upskill your team on GMP irrigation requirements, we have upcoming training events at Lincoln, Ashburton and Darfield, see www.irrigationnz.co.nz/events for details.



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Sovereign kale proves a good winter performer

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:

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Over the past decade, father and son team Rod and Jared Opie have stuck with Sovereign kale, which has a very good fit in their farming system, offering consistent and reliable yields. “We have used it for the last 10 – 12 years and have never seen a reason to move away from it. It has been a proven performer on our property,” explains Jared.

On their beef finishing and mixed cropping farm on the Canterbury plains, the Opie's are able to use Sovereign in conjunction with their intensive cropping rotations to ensure that they have a product that fits their system and provides consistent, good quality feed for their livestock over the winter months.

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

until the start of October, before the onset of flowering.

In a system where cattle are brought in as R1's, taken through the winter on kale and finished on grass in the spring as 2 year olds, the Opie's need a winter feed option that they can rely on. The late flowering trait of Sovereign works extremely well within their rotation given that their goal is to drill at the beginning of January, following Watties peas in order to have a good yielding, high quality crop that can be grazed right up until the beginning of September. Rod's conclusion is simple, “Sovereign provides us with a good quality, consistent yield that can almost be guaranteed year in, year out.”

Sovereign has been a solid performer across Canterbury, becoming very popular in the 2000's showing good yield potential and outstanding quality. In any kale, the leaf component of the plant is where the quality is at its greatest. With Sovereign's leaf making up nearly 50% of total yield along with it producing a thin stem, Sovereign is able to hold quality, resulting in high intake and

utilisation while achieving an average yield of 12 – 14 t DM/ha and a yield potential of 18 + t DM/ha. Sovereign will hold its quality right through the winter.

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

Sovereign has proven to be a reliable performing, user friendly kale over a long time and is an attractive investment for consistent, good quality winter feed on farm.

For more information about how Sovereign could fit your farming system talk to Ruralco Seed today.



Photo: From left, Jared Opie, Jarrad Mehlhopt Ruralco Seed, Fraser Harrison Agricom and Rod Opie.

SEED

Stop insects making a meal of your spring seedlings

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



FARM SUPPLIES



Photo: Brassica damage, with no controls.

‘Three lines of defence’ is a risk management and mitigation model most often associated with corporate governance, particularly in finance. But Canterbury-based agchem specialist Jeff Hurst says in his experience, it’s just as relevant to farming, particularly at this time of the year.

With thousands of hectares about to be planted in new pasture, forage brassicas and/or fodder beet, Jeff’s version of three lines of defence is all about protecting spring-sown seedlings from hungry insect pests.

As territory manager for Nufarm, he’s often called out to look at paddocks of young crops or grass that have ended up being

‘grazed’ by something other than the stock they’re intended for.

Unfortunately, there is no effective way to recover lost dry matter (DM) yield after one or more pest species have eaten their fill.

“That’s why farmers have to defend their paddocks from day one. Once the damage is obvious, it’s too late to go back and protect that new grass or crop.

First in Jeff’s three lines of defence is slug protection. Ryegrass, clover, kale, rape, turnips, swedes, fodder beet – slugs will eat them all, starting with the seed itself.

“Slug populations were high in many areas this past autumn, meaning farmers had to be vigilant with their newly sown seed, and conditions were good for overwintering and egg survival, so monitoring and appropriate control will be a must this spring,” he says.



Photo: An aphid.

After slugs, farmers’ second and third lines of defence for spring sown paddocks relate to pests with an appetite for newly emerged forage brassica and fodder beet seedlings.

Included in this group are springtails, greasy cutworm, aphids, leaf miner, Nysius, Argentine stem weevil, and caterpillars of diamond back moth and white butterfly.

Like slugs, they can destroy a lot of potential DM in a short space of time, but with monitoring and the right products they can also be effectively controlled before making a mess of newly sown paddocks.

“The most costly insect pests are usually small and good at concealing themselves, so you’ll get the best indication of what’s around by walking through the crop and inspecting the underside of leaves and the plant crowns for damage and pests,” Jeff says.

1. THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE:

SLUGOUT. Check slug populations before sowing, and always use SlugOut when direct drilling. It has high bait numbers for superior ground coverage and fast knock down (see FAR Crop Action 95), is IPM friendly and very cost effective.

2. THE SECOND LINE OF DEFENCE:

ATTACK. Best practice monitoring is to check paddocks every one or two days for the first three to four weeks after sowing, to spot the first signs of infestation. Attack is registered in forage brassicas for control of aphids, springtails, ASW, Nysius, leaf miner, white butterfly and diamond back moth. In fodder beet, it can be used to kill ASW, Nysius and springtails.

3. THE THIRD LINE OF DEFENCE:

KAISO 50WG. The only synthetic pyrethroid insecticide registered for control of cutworm in fodder beet, it is also registered for cutworm control in forage brassicas.

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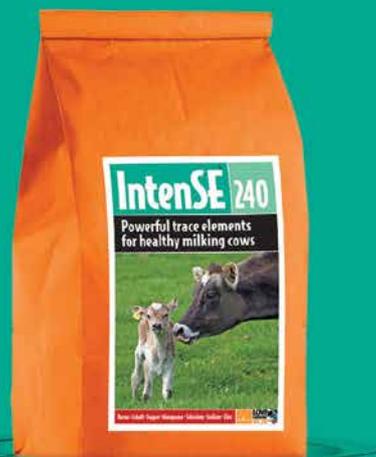
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For the last two seasons the contract milker and farm managers on this large, family-owned corporate have implemented an **IntenSE240 program**. The easily-dissolved, IntenSE-powder product is dosed-daily via waterlines during the lactation period. The staff on this farming group love simple & easy systems; they find no bother adding IntenSE240 to the waterline, it's just part of the daily routine. The farm's owner has a straightforward policy when it comes to expected outcomes: *"If you expect cows to perform close to 500kg milksolids, you need the support of a good trace element and mineral program and IntenSE is formulated to support these goals. The results speak for themselves"*.

Farm 1

1,850 cows
6 week in-calf rate: 77%
Empty rate: 9.5%

Farm manager Barry recognises the value of a cow in good condition and is confident that the IntenSE program has contributed towards this objective. Barry says *"The staff and I strive to do the best and the IntenSE program is part of the strategy. **Our blood test results come back great and we know going into mating the cows are primed and ready.** We only have the odd case of metabolic issues and somatic cell counts sit below 200,000 all season"*.

Farm 2

2,600 cows
6-week in-calf rate: 72%
Empty rate: 12%

Farm manager Mark is pleased with the outcomes from his IntenSE240 program. *"Large herds have some additional challenges when it comes to getting cows in-calf and with Canterbury average empty rate for spring 2016 mating around 18-20%, for us to secure a 72% 6-week in-calf rate and a 12% empty-rate **we're really pleased with the results"***.

Farm 3

1,750 cows
6-week in-calf rate: 80%
Empty rate: 6%

Contract milker Chris says *"Blood test levels are never low and thanks to excellent mineral levels from IntenSE240 I don't need to boost animals with injections which saves so much time, energy and money. I don't use many metabolic recovery treatments and I didn't even need to call the vet in. I have even had the opportunity to do some voluntary culling so I can sell any late-calvers. **I believe if I do the little things right, the big things look after themselves"***.

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 In comparison, the average *not in-calf* rate for New Zealand herds was 17%.
 The average *total length of mating* for the **Nutrimol 4n1** herds was 10 weeks.
 In comparison, the *total length of mating* for New Zealand herds was 10.7 weeks.

*To read more about the spring 2017 mating results call for a copy of the Nutrimol 4n1 *It's Business Time* brochure.

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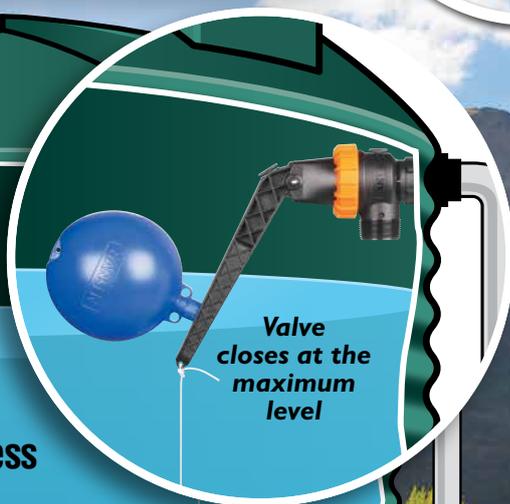
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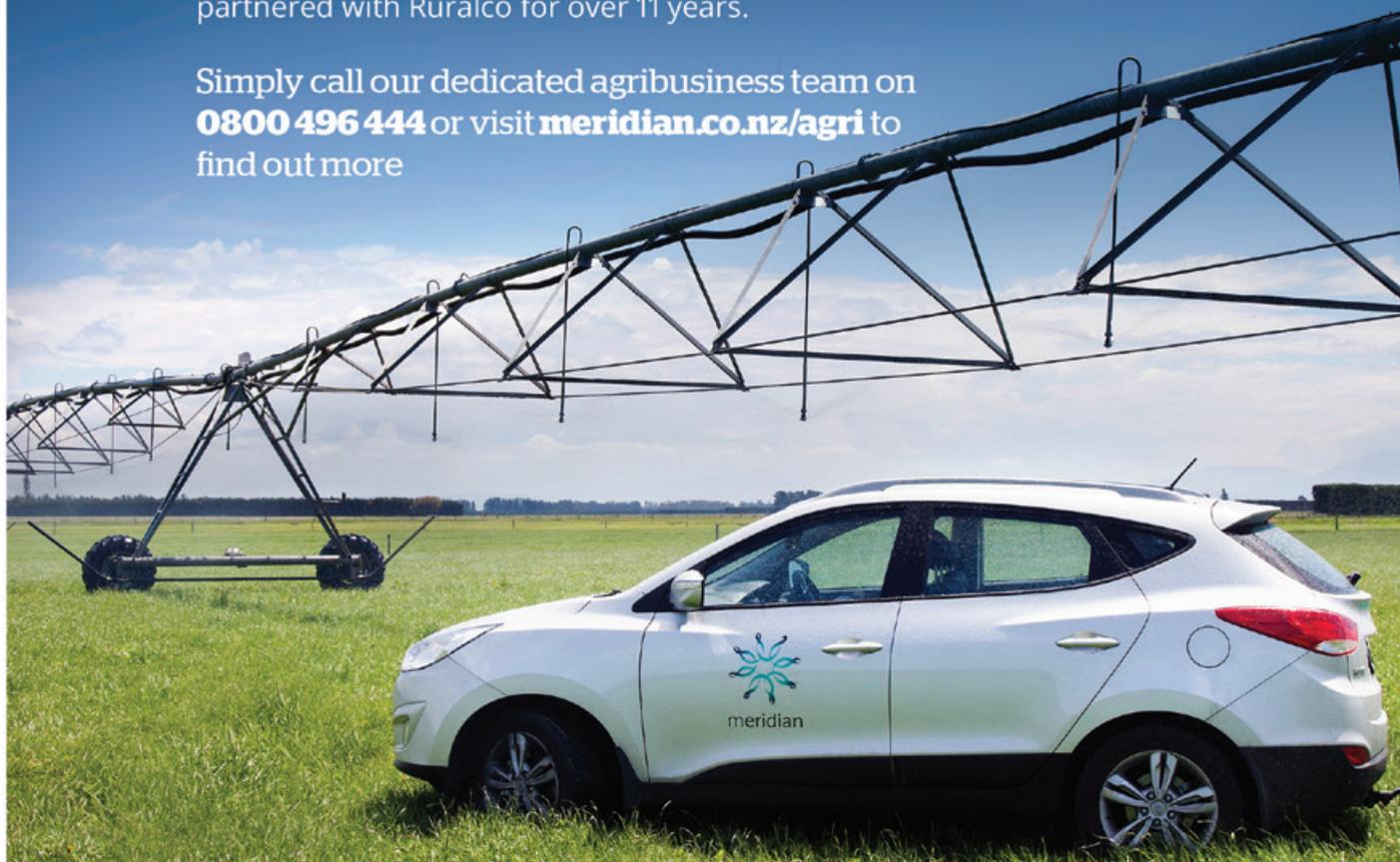
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RURALCO SUPPLIER AWARDS 2018

A new supreme champion crowned and a back-to-back Members Choice winner



Aakland Chemicals have been working with Ruralco for just three years but in this short time they have certainly made a massive impact with cardholders.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY RURALCO

Their sales growth and exceptional customer service were just two of the many reasons for the company being selected as this year's Ruralco Supreme Supplier of the Year award. "All of their customers say their service is second to none, they focus on delivering the right product at the right price and making sure their clients are happy" confirms Ruralco National Sales Manager Lester Chambers. Aakland Chemicals is a 100% NZ owned and

operated business and its primary target is dairy farmers. The business manufactures and supplies detergent sanitisers, teat sprays, molasses, mineral supplements and feed solutions.

"All of their customers say their service is second to none, they focus on delivering the right product at the right price and making sure their clients are happy."

All of their products are manufactured on-site in Christchurch and are MPI approved and certified. They have an extensive sales agent network throughout the South Island and are busy extending their presence in

the North Island. "One of the advantages of the Ruralco network is being able to extend our sales reach to new potential sales territories and Ruralco have been great to work towards that goal" confirms Stephen Glassey, Managing Director at Aakland Chemicals. Aakland also offer great value for money as they are one of the only retailers of chemicals selling from the factory direct to the farm gate which means significant savings for the customer. Ruralco Cardholders also receive additional discounts ranging from bulk discount savings as well as percentage discounts up to 12% on certain products.

Convenience for busy farm operations is also a key point of difference at Aakland Chemicals. They offer a free delivery service on products and offer a recycling service for all their containers which the company

LEFT: Ruralco National Sales Manager Lester Chambers with Geoff Bryant and Staurt Robinson of Aakland Chemicals, the 2018 Supreme Supplier Award winner



Looking after their employees is also something Alan and Ian believe is key to a winning formula, and they are obviously doing something right as there a few long-standing staff members who've started as school boys and decades later never left! They also take any customer feedback on board and do their very best to keep their customers satisfied.

The Neumann brothers confirm however, that despite their multi award winning success they are always keen to improve, "we don't want to rest on our laurels, we can do better."

"They also take any customer feedback on board and do their very best to keep their customers satisfied."

These days in a changing tyre market Alan is keen to emphasise customers have a much better range of options depending on their aim whether it's fuel economy or mileage and now even offer 4WD tyres that can do 100,000 kms before replacement. "Anyone can sell a tyre, but it's a matter of putting the right tyre on the right rim at the right price that will do the right job."

Alan, Ian and the entire Neumann's team would like to sincerely thank all the Ruralco Cardholders for their continuing support and loyalty and contributing to their business success.

BELOW: Vinnie Neumann of Neumanns Tyre Services Ltd winner of the Members Choice Award for 2018

believe in the current climate it's important to be as environmentally correct as possible. Stephen and the team at Aakland Chemicals were honoured to receive the award and intend to keep up their commitment to looking after customers "we're a family business and we like to think our values reach throughout the business and how we treat our clients. I also think our customers enjoy supporting Ruralco and accessing the many great products and services on offer, it definitely has mutual benefit". Cardholders can phone 0800 100 350 if they are interested in any Aakland Chemical products.

a great team here, they are good at their jobs, they know what's expected of them and they have a great rapport with the Mid Canterbury community."

"It's obvious that Neumanns Tyres are continuously raising the stakes on customer service and exceeding Cardholder expectations."

Neumanns Tyres are committed to providing the best service possible and Alan and Ian give full credit to their staff for receiving the award. Alan acknowledges it's the little things that go a long way for customers, "getting out of your chair and saying hello, giving our customers a coffee and helping people carry tyres from their cars are all small ways we like to keep our clients happy."

"We're a family business and we like to think our values reach throughout the business and how we treat our clients. I also think our customers enjoy supporting Ruralco and accessing the many great products and services on offer, it definitely has mutual benefit".

"Back to back, just like the Crusaders!" is how Alan and Ian Neumann proudly describe Neumanns Tyres winning the Ruralco Members' Choice Award for the second year running. Technically it's actually a triple win as the long-established family business won the Supreme Award in 2016, and if you take into account their 2011 People's Choice win it's obvious that Neumanns Tyres are continuously raising the stakes on customer service and exceeding Cardholder expectations. Having been in business almost 75 years, Alan and Ian are immensely proud of their trusted local reputation and strive to pass it on to their staff, "we've got



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Kim Hamill, owner and manager of Your Office Administrator has been assisting her clients for over 10 years with their day to day financial and administrative needs.

WORDS BY NIAMH MCCARTHY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY YOUR OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Having a background working in accountancy firms, payroll and tax administration, it was always a goal of Kim's to run her own business and use her skills to assist others. Your Office Administrator (YOA) now has a staff of six who are dedicated to taking the stress out of paperwork and bookkeeping for their clients whom are mostly rural based or non-for-profit organisations.

Kim and the team offer a variety of services to clients. Their primary service is assisting with all aspects of administrative and financial requirements of running a business, for example payroll processing, PAYE, GST, bank reconciliations, processing and paying supplier accounts.

As well as the weekly and monthly obligations YOA can also assist with end of year accounts and management reporting, "we like to think that we cover everything our client could possibly need and hasn't maybe the time or skills to deal with, everything from staff timesheets to debt collection can be looked after by our team" Kim explains.

"They have a range of software options to ensure that everything can be done remotely which is of major benefit to their rural customers."

A major advantage to the customer is that YOA is completely online and paperless. They have a range of software options to ensure that everything can be done remotely which is of major benefit to their rural customers, "of course we still have customers who bring in their paperwork to us each month but we also have a variety of apps and programs which allow us to do everything online." The company is a registered trainer and retailer for Xero, accounting software that allows the customer access to real-time financials from any location. "It's easy to log in from anywhere. Clients can give accountants access or we can go over questions on the phone, saving our clients time as we don't need to go on-site to resolve an issue." Three of Kim's staff work on farms so she believes it is a big advantage that her staff are familiar with the industry and have valuable insight when it comes to working through any administrative issues with clients.

The business has just started working with Figured, an online forecasting and budgeting software tool, specifically created for farmers and works as add on with Xero. Processing payroll is also made very easy by use of their preferred online payroll software; iPayroll and FlexiTime. Both offer convenient apps allowing employees to send timesheets through to managers for approval, annual leave also can be approved making the process seamless and much faster than traditional paper timesheets.

"For Kim, it's a huge reward being able to take some of the pressure off her clients and ensure everything behind the scenes runs smoothly."

For clients wanting to manage paperwork more independently YOA also offers software set-up, support and training packages for Xero, FlexiTime, Figured and other financial software packages.

They also have started very popular "lunchbox workshops", offering short lunchtime training sessions for anyone interested in using Xero. They also plan to extend the training for Figured down the track.

Another aspect of YOA's services is rescue work, where YOA will come in and tidy up the transactions in a business's accounting software.

YOA provide a detailed report of what went wrong and give clients the information and training they need, so that they can be confident to take the books over again.

These days Kim believes it is crucial for businesses to be complaint in terms of meeting their financial obligations. The recent media coverage of employment issues within the agriculture industry has highlighted this need, "across the board all industries are being scrutinised and it's so important to fulfil your legal responsibilities as an employer. Our team can make that happen and give your business peace

of mind." In addition, non-for-profit organisations are now under tougher restrictions in relation to how they are reporting and tracking revenue streams, an issue that YOA has a lot of experience in.

With so many financial, legal and administrative pressures on businesses today, for Kim it's a huge reward being able to take some of the pressure off her clients and ensure everything behind the scenes runs smoothly. "Anyone running their own business will tell you it's hard work, that's why we enjoy being able to let our clients focus on running their farms or companies while we look after everything else.

With such great technology on offer, being stressed about paperwork is a thing of the past for our clients." YOA offers a 5% discount to cardholders on Xero Standard and Premium software subscriptions and 10% on one-on-one, group training and software setup and conversion. Anyone interested can contact Kim on 03 307 8448.



ABOVE: Kim Hamill, owner and manager of Your Office Administrator has been assisting her clients for over 10 years with their day to day financial and administrative needs

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The economics of solar

The numbers around energy efficiency, even for a small country like New Zealand, and ways it could become more energy efficient, can be eye-opening.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



Data from the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (EECA) indicates New Zealand's energy demands are growing at a rate of about 2% a year.

But the savings estimated possible through greater efficiencies gained during that growth are significant. EECA estimates about 20% of that demand or almost \$2.4 billion a year could be saved by using energy more efficiently and utilising more renewable resources.

One of those renewable resources is solar, and it is playing an increasing role in the country's portfolio of "renewables" which comprise about 40% of the country's total energy production at present.

Much of this is hydro for electricity production, but improvements in solar technology and lowered costs are prompting more consumers in higher sunshine hour areas like Canterbury to consider using it in both a business and domestic context.

Utilising solar energy as a renewable option can be as simple as building a home or building with passive solar design incorporated into it, with the ability to capture the sun's warmth during the day and slowly release it when its night.

A well-designed home can 'harvest' 500 watts of heat through each square metre of unshaded north-facing window on a clear winter day – that's the equivalent of having a small standard domestic heater plugged in every metre.

If house designs are kept simple and incorporate almost standard practices like

proper insulation, an insulated concrete floor, double glazed windows and good ventilation, a passive solar focused house should not cost any more than one without those considerations, and it will deliver consistent savings across its lifetime on heating and maintenance costs.

But for many Ruralco Cardholders already living in an established home, interest is strongest around solar electricity systems, often known as PV or photovoltaic systems.

Recent developments in the panel technology and intense competition largely from Chinese producers means prices dropped 34% in 2016 and PV magazine estimates are that they are expected to fall by similar amount this year.

At present PVs are a very small part of New Zealand's sustainable energy supply, comprising only 0.1% of that total.

But as appealing as going "off the grid" may be, the returns after installing the system are tending to fall more from what would otherwise be paid to a conventional electricity supplier.

An earlier income stream from PVs used to be the payment made by energy retailers for buying any surplus electricity back from the customer.

However, this has payment has been significantly reduced and is now typically about 8c/kWh, with a 10kW cap on how much can be sold and with that comes a shift in the economics of such a system.

Typically, a consumer will pay three times as much to buy power from the grid as they will receive for the power sold, so it pays to try and

customise a system as closely as possible to actual power use, as a larger system cannot be expected to pay for itself through exporting 'surplus' back to a company.

The more cost-effective alternative then is to use as much of the solar energy as it is generated yourself, and working to shift power use from the usual morning and evening peaks to during that day.

Timer systems can help here, including putting appliances like dishwashers and washing machines on mid or later in the day.

Ideally though PV electricity is best suited in homes where there is a large day time power use. Having something like a pool that runs all day can help iron out a household's demand spikes and make a PV system more financially appealing.

It can also be possible to add batteries to PV systems, but these will in turn significantly increase the cost of the install, and with that the payback time on it. Ultimately most experts recommend that it is financially far better to be using the power as it is generated, rather than either selling it back or installing batteries.

Typically, installations will allow for 5kW generation capacity in the panels, with each panel usually generating 270-300kW, and providing 20 years of generation life.

In Canterbury the installation costs for a domestic house can range from \$9,000 for a 3.2kW system to about \$14,000 for a 5kW system including an inverter, so it becomes critical to carefully source multiple quotes ensuring full installation, equipment and wiring is all allowed for.

It is also important to have peace of mind the company supplying the equipment will stick around, given the long-term investment solar power systems are, and it pays to ensure the company is rated "Tier 1" as an indication of its size and financial performance.

A recent study by Consumer Magazine on solar systems installed in Christchurch indicated an 18-year payback on a \$9,000 system in a low daytime use household. The conclusion was if the household had to borrow to fund the system, making solar power less than economic, although there was a modest gain over a very long 25 years.

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PHOTO: ALDOSSO

Where to from here for New Zealand crop protection?



A San Francisco jury recently awarded US\$289 million in damages to a terminally ill man who argued that Roundup had contributed to his developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

WORDS BY ALISON STEWART CEO OF FAR,
IMAGES SUPPLIED BY FAR

Monsanto, recently purchased by Bayer, will appeal the decision, but whatever the outcome, the case has added more fuel to international anti-glyphosate and general anti-agricultural debates.

For more than half a century, growers in New Zealand have been relying on the use of agricultural chemicals to enable them to produce food products to feed our population and grow our export economy. They've provided a reliable backstop for weed, pest and disease control. However, that agricultural chemical backstop could disappear. Fast.

Environmentally and health conscious consumers are actively seeking out food with minimal pesticide use. Tolerance for chemical residues in food produce is now very low and testing regimes are becoming more and more stringent. At the same time, the effectiveness of chemical crop protection programmes is under threat because of

pesticide resistance problems, and the small size of the New Zealand market makes the registration of new chemical actives an uneconomic business proposition for many large multinationals.

“Environmentally and health conscious consumers are actively seeking out food with minimal pesticide use.”

All this suggests that the time has come to broaden our thinking and consider some of the many novel pest management options being developed around the world.

Innovations such as mechanical weeding, precision agriculture, biologically based solutions and softer chemistry could be incorporated into state-of-the-art integrated pest management (IPM) systems. IPM systems could then be used to promote a New Zealand provenance story based on sustainable production.

Biopesticides (sometimes called biorationals or biologics) should be an integral part of that success if we learn how to use them in the most effective way.

Biological products cannot be taken off the shelf at the last minute and sprayed on a crop that is already suffering from severe disease or pest damage. They do not have the quick knockdown effect that we are used to with agrichemicals.

“The days of insurance spraying at regular intervals throughout the growing season will be gone and growers will have to be much more sophisticated in their knowledge of the biology of the pests and diseases that they are trying to control.”

Growers will have to understand how and when to use biologicals in their management programmes and will have to learn how to mix and match different types of management strategies for optimal control.

The days of insurance spraying at regular intervals throughout the growing season will be gone and growers will have to be much more sophisticated in their knowledge of the biology of the pests and diseases that they are trying to control. It will take time to gain that understanding and it will require more inputs, but it will provide us with the opportunity to differentiate ourselves as high calibre growers producing quality food using the highest standards of environmental stewardship. Collectively this should provide New Zealand with the opportunity to gain a quality premium for its export crops.

So how do we start to integrate these new strategies into our current systems? FAR's role will be to identify new technologies and/or products being developed both here and overseas and to test them under New Zealand arable cropping systems in order to work out how they can be used most effectively.

There are more than 300 biopesticides registered in the US and only a handful in New Zealand. This provides a great opportunity for us to cherry pick the best options. We also have to support the development of New Zealand based products since there will be unique pest/crop combinations that will only be relevant to us.

The fruit sector has already embraced the use of biopesticides and is achieving a benefit from marketing its sustainability profile. It will be more challenging to achieve the same outcome for the arable sector because of the broad acre, lower margin, nature of our cropping systems but this is where targeted spraying/application using precision agriculture technology will hopefully make it cost effective.

“It will be more challenging to achieve the same outcome for the arable sector because of the broad acre, lower margin, nature of our cropping systems.”

There will always be a place for agrichemicals in New Zealand's cropping sector, but the way they are used in the future will look quite different; they will rely on early detection technologies to enable more targeted applications of lower rates of effective combinations of biological and chemical products underpinned by robust cultural practices.

NOTE: New Zealand's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commissioned a review of glyphosate in 2016. This review concluded that glyphosate is unlikely to be carcinogenic to humans or genotoxic (damaging to genetic material or DNA) and should not be classified as a mutagen or carcinogen under the HSNO Act. As such, they advise that "based on the information currently available... glyphosate products approved in New Zealand are safe to use when following the instructions on the label".



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Picking premium winter kale for dairy & beef cattle



Next winter may seem a long way away but in reality it's only a matter of weeks until kale crops are sown for dairy and beef cattle to graze during June and July 2019.

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BARENBRUG AGRISEEDS

As anyone who has ever had a poor crop knows, winter feed is a critical investment. Many factors contribute to a good result but there is one which you control, and it can make a surprisingly big difference.

Picking the right kale cultivar is a key step towards getting the best out of your wintering dollar. And that means thinking beyond how much the crop will grow.

Yield is important, but if you want your cows to utilise the crop well and achieve good gains in body condition score (BCS), the metabolisable energy or ME level of the crop also needs to be considered.

Different kale cultivars have significant differences in feed quality. This is because most of their dry matter yield (70-80%) comes from the stem of the plant, and the feed value of kale stems vary considerably between cultivars.

Some older cultivars are high yielding, and thus have been widely grown over the years. But their stems have poor ME, which means lower crop utilisation if you don't graze the stems, or poor cow BCS gains if you push cows to eat them.

The most obvious sign of low stem ME can be seen when cattle leave behind the bottom third of the crop, because they find it fibrous and very tough to eat.

Caledonian kale is different. It has a unique combination of high DM yield and stem quality.

As a marrow stemmed kale, it maintains higher ME than older tall varieties, particularly in the lower half of the stem. That means less wastage, better animal nutrition and less trash to deal with when it comes to re-sowing the paddock next spring.

The tell-tale sign is being able to go into the crop when it's mature, and snap a stem of Caledonian cleanly and easily, with no stringy fibres.

At the same time, however, Caledonian is still a tall, high yielding kale variety, averaging 12-16 t DM/ha, and reaching 20t DM/ha in good conditions.

To get the best from your Caledonian crop this season:

1. Spray weeds if necessary, especially thistles.
2. Cultivate to create a good seedbed. The better your preparation, the better your results will be.
3. Sow by early November to lessen the risk of dry weather affecting establishment.
4. Use treated seed, and sow Caledonian at 4-5 kg/ha.
5. Fertilise – apply at sowing as required (typically DAP down the spout or incorporate during sowing). Follow with urea as the crop grows.
6. Monitor and spray for weeds in early establishment, especially fathen, which harbours aphids.
7. Monitor and spray for white butterfly, aphids and other insect pests as necessary.
8. When the time comes, implement a good grazing plan to make sure cows get the full benefit of all your hard work.

For more on winter kale, have a word with your Ruralco Representative today.

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Make the most of good growing conditions to generate conserved feed but watch the impact on your soil's nutrient status. WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS



While grazed pasture is the cheapest form of feed, growing your own conserved feed is the next best thing and a good option to meet a feed gap and/or supplement forage crops later in the season.

"In spring, it's easy for growth to get away on you leaving higher than ideal post-grazing residuals," says Ballance Science Extension Officer Aimee Dawson. "Grazing plants at the three-leaf stage provides stock with nutritious feed and allows pasture to recover quickly. If you let pasture get too long, seed heads and dead matter reduce the quality of the pasture, meaning you don't get the best possible value from it."

Using pasture management tools, such as feed wedges and rotation planners can help you predict and manage pasture surpluses. "In a surplus situation, allocating some paddocks to hay or silage production can help you keep remaining pasture in better shape," says Aimee.

Boosting yield

If you've identified a surplus and have decided to make hay while the sun shines, your focus should be on getting the best possible results from those closed paddocks. If no other nutrient is limiting production and conditions for growth are right, then applying nitrogen before you close the paddocks can increase yield.

"Spring pasture responses will lie somewhere between 10:1 and 20:1. That is every kilo of

applied nitrogen will grow between 10 and 20 kilos of dry matter, within three to four weeks of application," says Aimee.

Sustain is a good option if five to 10 mls of rain or irrigation is unlikely to fall within eight hours of application to reduce nitrogen losses from ammonia volatilisation. Sustain Ammo or PhaSedN Quick Start are alternatives if lack of sulphur is likely to limit the effectiveness of nitrogen application.

A post-harvest application of nitrogen will boost yields from a second cut or reduce the time the paddock is out of rotation. Sustain K is ideal for this as (along with nitrogen as Sustain) it replaces some of the potassium, which hay/silage removes in large amounts, ensuring this doesn't limit the new growth.

Again, the size of the pasture response for this second (and any subsequent) harvest will depend on growth conditions, moisture often being the critical factor during summer.

Keep fertility in good shape

Every tonne of dry matter removes around 5 kg of phosphate, 3 kg of sulphur, 2 kg of magnesium and a massive 15 to 20 kg of potassium for hay and silage respectively.

If hay or silage is fed out on the paddock from which it was cut, some of the nutrient content will be returned to the soil in dung or urine. However, if it is fed out elsewhere on the farm its nutrient value goes with it. Either way, if the nutrients are not replaced, pasture quality will eventually suffer.

K and clover recovery

When you let grass grow for hay or silage production, clovers get shaded out. They will take a while to recover once the silage/hay has been cut. Clovers are poor nutrient scavengers compared to grasses and are easily out-competed if any nutrient is in short supply. In a post-harvest situation, lack of potassium can easily limit clover growth with consequences for your pasture quality and nitrogen needs further down the line.

Replacing potassium after the final harvest addresses this and also avoids luxury consumption issues. Plants like to take up available potassium and keep it in reserve to balance out their 'electrical engines' during growth periods. Luxury consumption reduces the return from your fertiliser investment and can elevate potassium levels in your conserved feed and/or re-growing pasture, which may contribute to metabolic issues in stock if not taken into account.

Post-harvest fertiliser does not replace normal maintenance fertiliser. It is an extra application that takes care of the nutrients removed by the harvest alone. You can either apply replacement fertiliser separately after harvest or combine it with maintenance fertiliser, ensuring a heavier rate goes on your hay and silage paddocks. Split applications if winter leaching is a risk, or if large amounts of K are required to achieve the desired soil test range.

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Improving your in-calf rate



While we're in the thick of calving, it's hard to believe mating season is just around the corner.

WORDS BY SAMANTHA TENNENT OF DAIRYNZ,
IMAGES SUPPLIED BY DAIRYNZ

I know for many of you, improving six week in-calf rates is always high on the agenda, and I can understand why. All the farmers I've talked to with a high six week in-calf rate say it makes their life easier, the job more enjoyable, and not to mention the farm more profitable.

The average six week in-calf rate on Kiwi farms is currently around 65 percent. That's a wee way off the sector target of 78 percent. It's a challenge, but some farmers are already hitting it. So, what are they doing differently?

The journalist in me wanted to find out.

I contacted a former colleague at Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) and asked to talk to a farmer who managed to improve their in-calf rate.

She put me in touch with Hawke's Bay dairy farmer Mike Sales, who dramatically improved the in-calf rate at the previous 650-cow farm he managed with his wife Angela in Rotorua. The pair are now equity managers for a 1200-cow farm in Patoka.

Over the span of four years, Mike, Angela and their team managed to improve the in-calf rate from 52 percent to an impressive 78 percent just by making small changes. What an amazing effort! I asked him how.

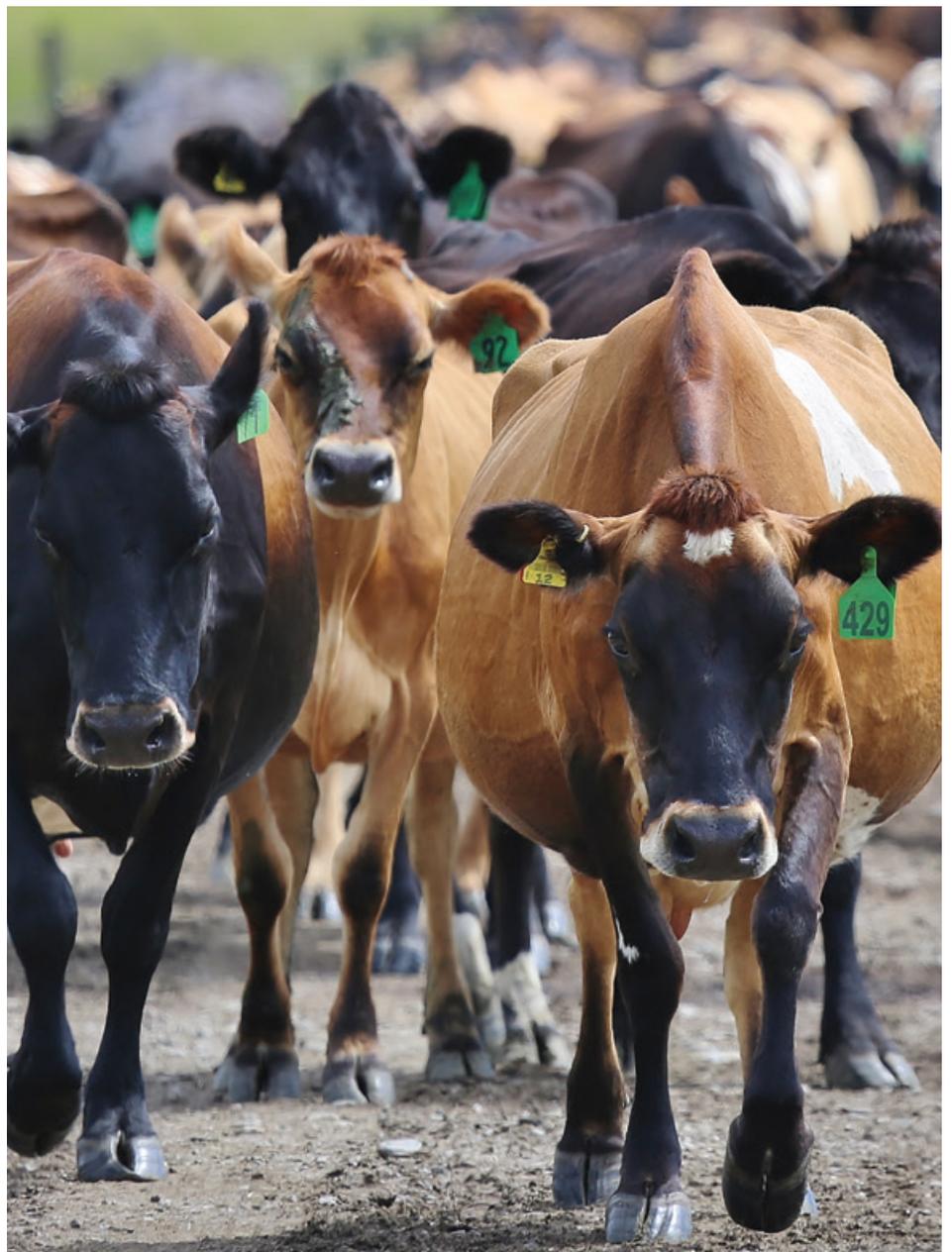
One key area Mike focused on was ensuring cows hit optimum body condition scores

(BCS) pre-calving. He aimed for a BCS of 5 for cows and 5.5 for heifers.

He says BCS targets are extremely important as if cows are too light or too heavy they won't come in heat.

“All the farmers I've talked to with a high six week in-calf rate say it makes their life easier, the job more enjoyable, and not to mention the farm more profitable.”

“Your BCS target is your lifeline. It's psychological for the cow; if she's at the right weight she knows she's ready to be in-calf,” he says.



"After calving we try to hit 4.5 BCS. In the lead up to mating, we'll increase the protein percentage in the feed supplement in the shed to give them more energy and help them reach their BCS target."

Mike also focused on training his staff to ensure they all knew what signs to look for to tell if a cow is on heat. He believes it's important the whole team is trained in this area, not just senior staff, as improving in-calf rates is a team effort.

Mike says record keeping is equally as important.

"After three weeks of recording during pre-mating, we have a list of those that didn't cycle. We can then analyse why and decide what treatment option we will take.

"It always pays to record what's going on on-farm. It's an additional workload but once you do it regularly it becomes a habit and it pays off."

He says communication is also vital so that your team understands what you're trying to achieve.

Finally, Mike encouraged farmers with low in-calf rates to remain optimistic.

"It's a long-term process. Consistency is key," he says.

I know there's no one-size-fits-all approach, but I hope some of Mike's advice helps you this mating season.

For more information about improving your herd's reproductive performance, visit dairynz.co.nz/reproduction



ABOVE: Samantha Tennent is a DairyNZ developer

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A good start to a great future

The foundation of a productive dairy animal starts in the first few months of a calf's life. Good nutrition and management set her up to perform to her potential when she joins the herd for her first lactation. WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY SEALESWINSLOW

Getting colostrum into the calves as early as possible, in good quantities and sufficient quality, followed by plentiful milk feeding is of course essential. This attention to detail needs to continue through the rearing period and beyond.

Early feed intake is the key to maximising rumen development. Starches and sugars in meal help to optimise development of rumen papillae. These are the finger like protrusions that increase surface area for better absorption of nutrients, leading to improved growth rates. Feed that smells good and tastes great helps calves start eating early on in life, as does offering feed to the calves as soon as they are in the pens so they have the time to get used to it. NuStart™ is an additive used exclusively in SealesWinslow premium calf feeds. Given the familiar flavour, the smell and taste helps get calves on to meal early and eases transition between feeds. Not only does it have these great benefits, the prebiotic and essential oil ingredients contribute to improved gut health.

SealesWinslow premium calf feeds use raw materials selected for their beneficial properties. No palm kernel, confectionary or biscuit waste is included in the formulations. These materials help to cheapen the cost per tonne of a recipe but do not necessarily

include the key nutrients calves need. Either that or their variability means the recipe changes between batches, calves notice the taste difference and feed refusals follow.

Pelleted feeds, or textured feeds including pellets, are the safest and most consistent for calves. Manufacturing with a pellet press means good mixing of materials and each mouthful of feed the calf takes is the same as the next. Some of the components of calf feed must be offered in specific quantities, such as Bovatec® and trace minerals, to ensure no cases of deficiency or toxicity occur. Feeds with ingredients that are just blended together are fraught with risk; de-mixing on their way to the farm, or during storage and feed out, can cause the product to be very variable in terms of what each calf consumes.

Regular testing, on a weekly basis, is essential to ensure specifications that are set at the beginning of the season continue to be met all year round. On site sampling, retention of samples and testing is important, as are the results from external company testing, such as with Hill Laboratories.

FeedSafe NZ is an accreditation to ensure good manufacturing practice at each site. AssureQuality independently audits sites on multiple criteria which gives surety of

adherence to quality procedures. Lifting the overall standards in the feed manufacturing industry is essential given the output of the chain is human food production.

Young stock rearing does not stop when the animals reach their target weights for weaning. There are many critical live weight targets to reach until they are productive animals; research in New Zealand shows we have some room for improvement. It is worth remembering that live weight and not age is the indicator for animals reaching puberty and therefore links into their future milk solids production level. Where animals are moved off farm to continue their growth and development, it is worth offering additional feed for their first week on the new property to help them recover from the stress of transportation. If a tail end group starts to become evident in the mob, preferential feeding of a good quality pellet helps lift them back to targets and keep them on track.

With close attention to management and meeting targets, heifers will be off to a great start to their future productive milking life.

For further information, talk to your Ruralco representative.

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Environmental help available for deer farmers



Help is now available for deer farmers looking for tips on how to write their Farm Environmental Plans (FEPs) and to put them into practice.

WORDS AND IMAGES SUPPLIED BY DEER INDUSTRY NZ

Deer Industry Environmental Groups (DEGs) are being set up by Deer Industry NZ (DINZ) with funding from Passion2Profit (P2P) the deer industry's Primary Growth Partnership programme.

DINZ P2P manager Innes Moffat says the focus of each group will be on helping farmers improve the environmental impact of their deer farm operations.

"They will be facilitated by environmental consultants familiar with regional council plan requirements. Their main resource will be the Deer Industry Environmental Management Code of Practice published earlier this year. The code is largely based on farmer case studies ... environmental practices that have been shown to work."

Moffat says there will be from six to eight farms in each group. "Most farmers are comfortable in

a group that size, sharing their experience and ideas with each other. It also means members can visit all farms in their group each year."

He says the Environmental Groups will in this respect be modelled on the industry's existing Advance Parties (APs). About 15 percent of the country's deer farms, responsible for about 25 percent of the country's deer, are directly involved in APs. These farmer-led groups were launched four years ago to rebuild deer farmer confidence and to boost the productivity and profitability of deer farms.

However, unlike APs, the DEGs will have a fixed focus—on environmental performance—and they won't be limited to deer farms. "If you have a bunch of neighbours—say, half a dozen farmers in a catchment, some with deer and some without—and you want to get on with some environmental work, then give DINZ a call," Moffat says.

There are now 26 APs—from north of Auckland to Southland, with another three on the drawing board. They are farmer-led and operate on the principle that farmers learn best from other farmers in a supported environment.

He expects they will be joined by around 10 DEGs within the next 12 months, some of which are likely to be formed in Canterbury.

"We expect the DEGs will have a shorter life than the APs, but who knows? Once the members have written a plan and applied it to the environmental issues on their farms, they may want to call it a day. Or they may want the group to morph into a standard AP ... it will be up to them," Moffat says. He says the longer established APs are evolving with time. After three or four years, the majority of AP members have—as intended—made management changes to improve the profitability of their deer operations.

"In most APs there's now a greater focus on environmental sustainability and two of them are specifically focussed on the environment. Some continue to be based around farm meetings and the stimulation that comes from sharing experiences with other farmers. In others the members are more interested in bigger and more complex issues, like overall farm management systems and farm business planning," Moffat says.

"There has also been a renewed enthusiasm for deer, with many AP members expanding the deer-fenced areas of their farms. In part this has been because of consistently profitable venison and velvet prices and in part it is because APs give farmers the confidence to refine their farm management practices and to invest in their deer. "In a small industry—where individual deer farms may be geographically isolated from each other—it is critical to encourage networking, camaraderie and a sense of common purpose." Lessons learned in AP projects are communicated to the wider deer farming community through annual workshops convened by local Advance Parties. Similar workshops are likely to be convened for the DEGs.

Moffat says as well as encouraging farmers to set up environmental groups and more APs, DINZ will be looking at developing more innovative activities where farmers can learn from other farmers in how to deal with various challenges that come with farming deer and how farms can be best suited to fit these animals.

"In the last couple of years we have convened Regional Workshops at which small groups of farmers take part in facilitated discussions on topics that interest them. We're going to try and replicate that across the industry on other important topics, including environmental management challenges."

Deer farmers interested in being part of an Environmental Group should contact DINZ environmental manager Lindsay Fung, tel 04 471 6115 or lindsay.fung@deernz.org

Deer farmers interested in setting up an Advance Party should contact Innes Moffat, Tel 021 465 121 or innes.moffat@deernz.org

ABOVE: The wallow before
LEFT: The wallow after



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Business Compliance Issues



When Human Resource policies for small businesses go wrong.

WORDS BY DAVE HOULIHAN,
DIRECTOR OF EMC LIMITED

Robust workplace policies and procedures underpin every well-run business. Therefore, it is essential that all your policies and procedures are up-to-date and align with local and national employment laws. Of course, this is easier said than done. Employment rules and regulations, in addition to work, health and safety laws, are complex and always evolving. Nevertheless, it is your responsibility as an employer to stay on top of any changes.

Following the allegations of sexual harassment, drunken behaviour, bullying and more against the renowned law firm, Russell McVeagh, an Investigative report into the firm was recently conducted by Dame Margaret Bazley. In her findings, Bazley attributes inadequate policies, standards and governance structures as factors that contributed significantly to the poor management of workplace incidents. Bazley looks in-depth at the gaps in and changes required to improve the firms' Harassment, Alcohol, Poor Performance and Exit Interview policies. The fact that the firm had no Code of Conduct and no identifiable standards for behaviour at social events or for relationships at work is clearly outlined as gaps that need to be filled.

On the other end of the HR compliance scale, many NZ businesses are beginning to recognise that policy can be a proactive way to not only safeguard against inappropriate behaviour but also to improve employee

experience and generate company loyalty. Take Google, for example, who recently introduced a new HR policy to improve employee communication and end toxic culture. Vodafone NZ who voluntarily topped up the government's parental leave contribution with a 22-week parental leave policy.

Now businesses are taking the lead and expanding on the minimum legislative requirements of company policy; it is a risky move not to ensure your own policy library is robust and up-to-date with national minimum employment standards. Sure, it's an ongoing challenge, but as Russell McVeagh found, getting it wrong is far costlier than investing to get it right.

Remember, even when you're using compliant policies, it's also important that you enforce your business policies consistently throughout your organisation and retain records that your employees have read and acknowledged them. Always deal with any staff breaches of policy promptly and according to the procedures set out in the policy. As the Case of Russell McVeagh highlights, inconsistencies in the application of a policy or not keeping a policy up-to-date can land you in all sorts of trouble

Building Evacuation Schemes

On 1 July 2018 the Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) - Fire Safety, Evacuation Procedures, and Evacuation Schemes Regulations 2018 replaced the existing Fire Safety and Evacuation of Buildings Regulations 2006.

The new regulations will impact both owners and tenants of buildings; there are also some prescribed changes that specify certain matters such as the content and colour of Fire Action Notices.

Some of the key changes are as follows:

- Building owners AND tenants are now required to ensure means of escape are kept free from obstacles;
- All commercial buildings (which include all agriculture buildings) must have an evacuation procedure must make provision for any persons requiring particular assistance;
- All Fire Action Notices must be of a certain colour, format and the text to be a certain size;
- Fines have increased from \$200 to \$10,000 for an individual and \$20,000 in other cases;
- FENZ may now revoke or require a variation to approved schemes;
- In certain cases, unscheduled alarms may be treated as a trial evacuation;
- Unscheduled evacuations must be reported to FENZ;
- Reporting of trial evacuations is now more comprehensive, including the details of training sessions and the functionality of the fire alarm system;
- Where persons nominated as a contact for a building is absent from NZ for more than 21 days, they must notify FENZ;
- There are also amended requirements to report on the operation of fire alarms and works to buildings;
- Schemes will also note if there are obligations around response plans under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015.

For More advice on Business, compliance issues contact Dave Houlihan From Emergency Management Consultancy Ltd.

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Ruralco invests in community

Being a major part of the rural services landscape is not the only role for Ruralco as part of the diverse rural community. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



The farmer co-operative is also a familiar and welcome site as a major sponsor in a number of major events throughout the Canterbury region, and that support is growing throughout the rest of the country.

Possibly the most high-profile event that is very familiar to people in the Mid Canterbury district is the Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge.

The challenge has been running for nearly 12 years now and represents a fantastic fund-raising exercise for local rural primary schools, run by the Longbeach School with the support of the Hinds and Districts Lions Club.

Starting as a mountain bike event in 2007, the Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge now includes a run and a walk alongside the cyclists, traversing an outstanding piece of the Canterbury coastline.

Every year the event attracts hundreds of people from around the Canterbury region and beyond. All the funds it raises are evenly divided between Longbeach School and the Hinds and Districts Lions Charitable trust.

A proportion of the funds also go to the Maia Health Foundation, a trust raising funds for significant projects within Canterbury's health system.

Having taken part in the Longbeach challenge half marathon, with its many dips and twists along the coast, Ruralco Director Mark Saunders can personally attribute to the huge level of community participation and satisfaction such an event brings with it.

More recently his three sons have also become avid participants and are again looking to give their Dad reason to up his training regime before the big event in November.

"And it's great to see so many Ruralco staff members get together for the event. With most of them living and working in the Mid Canterbury district community they appreciate the value of this event."

The addition in recent years of a walking section, either 12km or 5km has also opened up the opportunity to participate to an even wider sector of the community—that includes the 5km event being suitable for families with baby buggies.

Ruralco also plays a big part in sponsoring the Women's Social Grade for Mid Canterbury Netball in Ashburton, held over the winter months for the past couple of years in the Ashburton EA Networks Event Centre.

"Supporting an evening event has meant there is the opportunity there for busy farming Mums to participate in something for themselves. They are a driving force in many farming partnerships

and deserve this support, enabling them to have time to enjoy something for themselves in a social environment."

Ruralco's links with the centre extend back to its foundation, with ATS being a substantial sponsor of the EA Networks Centre when it was first established. Today, it offers residents within and beyond Ashburton a full sports and fitness facility, more often found in significantly larger cities.

Ruralco is also a major sponsor of Arable Y's, a FAR initiative aimed at building confidence in, and creating opportunities for, the next generation of arable farmers. With the objective to ensure arable farming remains a critical part of the New Zealand farming scene, FAR organise and hold monthly catch-ups with industry presentations or on-farm visits for young arable farmers so they are able to up-skill and gain knowledge from industry experts, researchers, agronomists and fellow Arable farmers.

Rural schools also get a helping hand from Ruralco, from providing baling twine for those that sell pea straw for fundraising at harvest time, to providing product for school agriculture blocks.

Ruralco has also established a network of sponsorship relationships in a number of other valued, voluntary groups in rural communities. That includes Young Farmers, supporting the recent "Bark up" and "Speed Shear" competitions. Rural firefighters and search & rescue groups are also recognised with sponsorship support from the co-operative.

Out on the farm, Ruralco staff can also frequently be found manning the barbeque at farm discussion days, providing a valuable point of contact between the co-operative and its valued farmer shareholders.

Mark maintains Ruralco and its staff have set a high standard for supporting and sponsoring their rural community.

In return the farming community has shown its appreciation by becoming loyal shareholders within the co-operative. That is in what is a fiercely competitive rural services sector that puts the co-operative up against some significantly larger, well-funded competition.

"Our sponsorship commitments say much about the sense of pride we have in our rural communities, and both customers and staff are very much part of that too – we punch well above our weight in this respect."

"As a co-operative we are passionate about supporting our cardholders, their families and farming communities. It is about driving towards a sustainable and stronger future for farming wherever Ruralco stores and services are used and giving back to the community that supports us."

IMAGE: Ruralco Director, Mark Saunders

Our rural community

Ruralco is proud to support and be part of a strong rural community. Below we learn more about three generous groups, giving back to their rural communities.



Gearing up for this year's Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY THE RURALCO LONGBEACH COASTAL CHALLENGE COMMITTEE

The Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge attracts a wide range of participants—from Sunday strollers and enthusiastic kids to fast pace competitive mountain bikers who race it out for the top spot.

The event is gearing up for its twelfth successive year on Sunday 25 November 2018. Plans for this year's event are already well underway, with early bird entries starting to roll in. Those that get their entry in by 30 September may even be lucky enough to win a bike, thanks to Paul Wylie Cyclorama.

The Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge has progressed from strength to strength, from its humble beginnings in 2007 with just 259 competitors, to over 1,200 last year raising

\$45,000 which was split between the Hinds and Districts Lions and Longbeach School. The stunning scenery, good ol'country hospitality and challenging but fun course are just some of the reasons why so many people come back year after year.

The funds raised from this fantastic event give each of these organisations a huge boost. The Hinds and Districts Lions invest that money back into the local community as well as other worthwhile causes. This year the Lions donated \$5,000 of the money raised from the 2017 event to the Maia Health Foundation, raising funds for a roof-top helipad at Christchurch Hospital.

"The roof-top helipad will be of huge benefit to the people of Mid Canterbury and it could even mean the difference between life and death for any one of us." Says Garry Brown, Chair of the Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge and member of the Hinds and District Lions. "The Lions have indicated a commitment to continue their support of the Maia Health Foundation with funding in years to come. Maia's next project involves enhancing the children's facilities for the hospital so yet another very worthwhile cause."

Neil Simons, Principal of Longbeach School, believes the Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge is not only a great fundraiser but a

fantastic way to build the community spirit. "It is huge for us as it brings the community together as volunteers work towards a common goal. This is not only great for us but also because it strengthens the rural connections and creates that feel good factor. As the saying goes; do good, to feel good."

Neil also reflects on what has been made possible for the school over the years thanks to the funds that have been raised. "The proceeds from this fantastic event benefit the wider community, through the Hinds and Districts Lions, and the children at Longbeach School. With this partnership, we are able to provide extra support for students by employing teacher aides. Our teacher aides not only help those students who find learning a challenge but also those students who need further extension. Other areas that have benefited from the Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge proceeds include important learning resources, a volley wall, mathematics equipment, leadership courses, and a sound system for our hall. Furthermore, we are working towards constructing a new senior playground for our older students."

If you would like to find out more about this fantastic event visit www.longbeachcoastalchallenge.com

Bequest to Hospice Mid Canterbury

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY HOSPICE MID CANTERBURY



Hospice Mid Canterbury recently received a generous bequest from the estate of Hugh Haslett.

Hugh was a fiercely independent man who lived life his own way—holidays and luxuries weren't for him, but he gained immense satisfaction from getting the best from his land, caring for his stock and quietly helping others.

As age and health problems limited his strength and mobility, Hugh's solution was to work longer hours and park his trusty 4-wheel motorbike nearer the door. Life became even more difficult following a terminal diagnosis. However, dedicated care from district nurses and support from extended family and the Hinds community allowed him to stay in

his own home and continue farming until his death; something that was immensely important to him.

Hugh knew he was fortunate to be able to stay in his own home until his death and he wanted that option to be available to other rural folk. The philosophy of hospice, for people to live every moment in whatever way is important to them, and to be cared for in any place they call home, matched his beliefs. Hugh's bequest to Hospice Mid Canterbury is enabling us to provide support to people throughout the Ashburton district, between the Rakaia and Rangitata Rivers, from the mountains to the sea.

Hospice Mid Canterbury provide a range of services to people in Mid Canterbury dealing with a life-limiting illness.

The aim of hospice is to help people make the most of their lives; to live every moment in whatever way is important to them.

All services are:

- free;
- available throughout the Mid Canterbury region;
- available to people of all ages with any life-limiting condition, and their families and carers.

People do not have to be referred by a doctor or specialist; anyone can contact Hospice Mid Canterbury.

Hospice Mid Canterbury is a registered charity, and an Associate member of Hospice New Zealand.

Hospice Mid Canterbury began offering non-clinical support to clients at the start of 2015. We work in collaboration with other providers, with the aim of providing additional supports to enhance the journey of individuals and families dealing with a life-limiting illness.

From April to July this year we have provided the following support to Mid Canterbury residents:

- Sitting and companionship: 122 hours;
- Transport: 47 hours;
- Biography: 114 hours;
- Counselling: 26 hours;
- Massage, including lymphedema massage: 52 hours;
- Reiki and reflexology: 42 hours.

We receive no government funding. We are therefore reliant on the generosity of others to be able to continue to provide these supports for families. The hours above show that there is a real need in our community for individuals and families faced with the challenge of a life-limiting illness to be supported through their journey.

See our website www.hospicemc.nz for further information or contact Christine Wilson, the manager manager@hospicemc.nz. If you can offer support to Hospice Mid Canterbury financially, please contact Tony Todd tonytodd47@gmail.com or Marg Lilley marg.lilley99@gmail.com.

A growing awareness about dementia

WORDS AND IMAGE SUPPLIED BY LIONS CLUB OF ASHBURTON PAKEKE



Greg Kelly is an Australian who was diagnosed with Youth Onset Dementia at age 59 years. Now aged 61 years he, accompanied by his wife Janet, and two others are riding a

motorcycle throughout Australia, with the aim of publicising issues around the diagnosis of dementia, particularly in younger people, and its management once diagnosed.

From there they will tour through New Zealand, the United States of America, and the United Kingdom.

The basis for this effort on his part is that dementia is the:

- 3rd highest killer in New Zealand;
- 2nd highest killer in Australia;
- 6th highest killer in the United States of America;
- and No. 1 killer in the United Kingdom.

Dementia affects everyone in our society whether it be within immediate or wider family or close friends. Because Dementia in all its

forms has become a rapidly growing problem, there is significant and growing interest in this function and its speakers.

In addition to his wife Janet, a support person/driver, and a film maker are also accompanying Greg.

Their efforts are substantially supported by Ford New Zealand (who is providing a vehicle), Subaru, Harley Davidson motorcycles—Greg rides a Harley—and many public and anonymous sponsors.

Dementia New Zealand and its provincial branches, Medical Research bodies, and Lions Clubs strongly support and promote their efforts. These are in addition to sponsorships and support that have been and will be provided in other countries.

The Lions Club of Ashburton Pakeke is holding a breakfast function at Hotel Ashburton on the morning of 19th October at which the feature speaker will be Greg Kelly.

The breakfast will also feature the following additional speakers Hamish Riach CEO of the Ashburton District Council and immediate past CEO of the Crusaders Rugby Group; and Darral Campbell CEO of Dementia Canterbury.

Hamish will speak briefly on the importance of injury management and particularly head-knock injuries in contact sport and the relevance of that as a precursor to dementia.

Darral represents developing understandings about the diagnosis of dementia, its management, and helping dementia patients live well during their illness. She will also explain the effects of past societal attitudes to dementia and how those are changing rapidly.

The net proceeds of the function, including an auction will be transferred to Dementia Canterbury for the specific purpose of using the proceeds in the Mid Canterbury District.

The cost of the function is \$35 per person of which \$25 is the cost of the breakfast with the remainder going towards the net proceeds. For tickets contact Robert Spencer on 03 308 1777, 022 360 8807 or email susanspencer@xtra.co.nz.



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	Mitre 10 Mega -	X-952802	\$236.70	\$25.67	\$211.03	\$7,467.77
	Hinds Saddlery & Feed	00108603	\$66.68	\$7.55	\$59.13	\$7,526.90
	Wheons Tyre Services Ltd	644227	\$25.31	\$1.27	\$24.04	\$7,550.94
	Wheons Tyre Services Ltd	2254817	\$1,348.60	\$67.43	\$1,281.17	\$8,832.11
	Wheons Tyre Services Ltd	72150	\$528.91	\$52.89	\$476.02	\$9,308.13
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Tracey Gordon

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available to suit your individual needs.

Contact Ruralco Energy Account Manager, Tracey Gordon today to get an energy price comparison on your accounts.

Gift giving made easy

Have you got a wedding coming up this spring or summer? Check out Ruralco's Online Wedding Registry and find out how we can make gift giving easy. The registry automatically updates as purchases are made making shopping especially easy for out of town guests. To book a time to set up your registry or to find out more, email us at theregistry@ruralco.co.nz or telephone us on 0800 (787 256) or 03 307 5100 or pop in to one of our stores to find out more.

Get prepared for the season ahead with bulk fuel deliveries and fuel storage tanks

Did you know bulk fuel deliveries to your farm or business can save you up to 31¢ per litre compared to the national pump price? That's the saving being made by those already utilising this service. Plus, we can sort your fuel storage too ensuring you have adequate supply over the season ahead with lease and purchase options for tanks.

 <p>Don Joseph FUEL SALES MANAGER 027 839 7351</p>	 <p>Sarah Wells FUEL ACCOUNT MANAGER 027 360 9535</p>
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Put your Spark Account through Ruralco

Did you know that you can charge your Spark account through your Ruralco card?

Simply give Ruralco a call on 0800 787 256 and ask for Lisa.

They will be happy to organise your Spark bill to be added to your Ruralco Account.

Please be sure to have your Spark account number handy and the phone number that the account is for.

You can now use your Ruralco Card at Mitre 10 in the North Island!

Ruralco are excited to announce that you are now able to use your Ruralco Card at Mitre 10 stores around The North Island.



New Ruralco Card Suppliers

Dates for your diary

13 October

Ellesmere A&P Show in Leeston
Keep an eye out for great fuel deals in this area

17–18 October

2018 NZGSTA Annual Conference
Christchurch

19 October

Dementia Awareness Breakfast
Held by The Lions Club of Ashburton Pakeke at Hotel Ashburton, 7.30am.
Contact Bob Crean for tickets on robert.crean@xtra.co.nz or 027 450 0231

22 October

Labour Day
Ruralco Farm Supplies stores will be closed from Saturday 20 October–Monday 22 October. If cardholders have any emergency requirements the duty manager can be reached on 03 307 5100 or 027 487 6865

26–27 October

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

16 November

Canterbury Anniversary (Show Weekend)
Ruralco Farm Supplies stores will be closed Friday 16 to Sunday 18 November. If you have any emergency requirements, the duty manager can be reached on 03 307 5100 or 027 487 6865.

20 November

ATS Annual General Meeting
7pm, The Bradford Room, The Ashburton Trust Event Centre

24 November

Courtenay A&P Show in Kirwee
Keep an eye out for great fuel deals in this area

25 November

Ruralco Longbeach Coastal Challenge
Entries are now open, check out www.longbeachcoastalchallenge.com for more

6 December

Ruralco Christmas Event in Ashburton 9am–8pm
Join Ruralco and selected suppliers in Ashburton for all your Christmas shopping

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Alexandra Foursquare
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Your Office Administrator
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ASURE Ascot Oamaru
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Allied Fuelstop Opunake
12¢ per litre discount

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Rangiora

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5% discount

Rolleston

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5% discount

Taupo

ASURE Prince Motor Lodge
Best deal of the day

New Pasture Packs to lift pasture performance

Ruralco Seed are pleased to introduce three new pasture packs this spring. The new packs have been specifically designed to help lift production on dryland farming systems.

Contact the Ruralco Seed team today for details on each pack and to discuss the options that are best suited to your farming system.

Pack Name	Key Benefit	Seed Mix Components	Price (25KG/1HA PACK)
Supercharga Italian Pack	PERSISTANT PERFORMER	ASSET WE ITALIAN RYEGRASS RELISH RED CLOVER TRIBUTE WHITE CLOVER	\$219.90 INC GST
The Ecotain Pack	INNOVATIVE PERFORMANCE	ECOTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL PLANTAIN RELISH RED CLOVER TRIBUTE WHITE CLOVER	\$209.90 INC GST
Endura Dryland Pack	ULTIMATE DRYLAND PERFORMER	PROSPECT PERENNIAL RYEGRASS AR1 SAVVY COCKSFOOT RELISH RED CLOVER NOMAD WHITE CLOVER	\$299.90 INC GST

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• 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**
- 1800 x 1225mm
- 2100 x 1225mm
- 2440 x 1225mm

EXTRAS

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

TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



STANDARD FEATURES

• RHS fame 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**
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- 2440 x 1500mm ID
- 3070 x 1530mm ID

EXTRAS

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

TANDEM AXLE TRAILER



STANDARD FEATURES

• RHS fame 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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STANDARD FEATURES

• RHS fame and bolt on channel drawbar • New Trailcom 1500kg hubs and stubs
• New 22/11 x 8 wheels and tyres • 15mm plywood floor
• 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)

CRATE

- Lift out crate
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