

Real Farmer

FOR EVERYTHING FARMING AND FAMILY

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2016

England to Rakaia
top move for award-
winning wheat growers

Precision delivered for
boosted farm profits

FeedSafeNZ
accreditation
ensures best quality
feed

Superior lucerne for
local & international
consumption

High performance
counts, both on
and off farm



From the Group CEO



Military surveillance technology adapted to assist fertiliser applications on hill country blocks; awarding winning grain growing success in Mid-Canterbury; and rally cars and farm machinery synergies in Balclutha.

We've certainly got a great variety of informative articles in this edition of Real Farmer.

Winter is well and truly behind us, and farmers will have all but finished lambing and calving, making way for spring cultivation and a little further down the track, the drier summer months. Fortunately there appears to be some quiet confidence within the farming sector and we can only hope the outlook remains bright and positive and Mother Nature is kind.

Realising the best outcomes for your farming operation means keeping up with the latest innovations and developments, and that's where we can help. The Ruralco team and its suppliers are carefully selected to ensure you get the best possible service and advice, and the articles we include in our Real Farmer magazine are a great example of that high quality expertise, knowledge and innovation.

In this issue agricultural reporter, Richard Rennie takes a look at New Zealand's digital potential within the agricultural sector and in particular, a military surveillance technology, Hyperspectral Imaging, which has multiple uses across a variety of platforms.

Farming families, Bill and Lynda Davey of Rokeby and Ivan and Jo Watt of Ngapara, open the doors on their farming operations. The Davey's, originally from England, tell us about farming on the other side of the world and their success in the United Wheat Grower's Competition, while the Watt's share how they came to supply high quality Lucerne feed to discerning national and international customers.

In other stories, Balclutha's Paul Goatley talks about rally cars and farm machinery and how the two come together in his workshop, and this year's ATS Longbeach Coastal Challenge is in the spotlight as the popular event celebrates its 10th birthday.

All of these articles are designed to inform and keep you at the forefront of changing technologies and farming practises, and we are sure there'll be something of interest for all readers.

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RealFarmer

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ON THE COVER:
Nick and Bill Davey, award-winning wheat growers from Springdale Farms in Rakaia

England to Rakaia top move for award-winning wheat growers



IMAGE: Winners of the Milling-Gristing Wheat Cup in the United Wheat Growers Competition

A move to New Zealand from England 15 years ago has been a satisfying and winning move for the Davey family.

WORDS BY KATE TAYLOR, IMAGES BY AMY PIPER

In 2001, Bill and Lynda Davey sold the family farm in Lincolnshire and moved their family across the world to the Canterbury Plains. They've been on the same 487 hectare intensive cropping property ever since and together with son Nick have won the Milling-Gristing category in the ATS Seed-sponsored United Wheat Growers Competition for the past two years. When asked if he was planning to enter the competition again next year Bill said "It would be nice to get a hat-trick wouldn't it?"

The farm is on the south bank of the Rakaia River at Rokeby, seven kilometres west of Rakaia.

"We're blessed with some of the best soils in the country. It's classified as Barrhill fine sandy loam, a deep top soil with very little stone content."

Bill has no doubt this quality soil type helps them achieve their top quality crops and probably one of the reasons behind them securing their second win in a row.

The farm has lateral irrigation.

"We're fortunate to have a good supply of ground water here and can grow almost anything."

Bill says they feel humbled to have won the Milling Gristing Wheat Cup given the comparatively high level of entries in this class."

"In this class we chose a preferred variety on the end user's list and that variety for the second consecutive year was Discovery, destined for Champion Flour Mills."

That same variety is in the ground again this year, sown at the recommended seed rate per hectare after which it receives 100 per cent attention to detail in its husbandry, Bill says.



"We farm with the mind-set of the more inputs a crop receives the better the result, although Mother Nature usually has the last say. If we start cutting corners we often pay the price a little further down the track. Quality and yield are paramount with a combination of the two hopefully producing a satisfactory result."

Bill says they entered the competition to challenge themselves and to benchmark against other farms.

"I get satisfaction as I think it's healthy to do this... to challenge one's ability."

This season's wheat was sown in early August and will be nurtured throughout the spring and summer with some specialist advice on inputs.

"We have good agronomy backup, in particular our agronomist. We have the utmost confidence in his advice and his recommendations for inputs

ABOVE: The Daveys believe the more inputs a crop receives, the better the result

BELOW LEFT: The Daveys are happy to support seed companies and trial new seed varieties

BELOW RIGHT: Bill is gradually handing over the day to day running of the business to Nick his son

to grow this crop. We also use the services of Nicole Mesman, our Ballance Nutrient Specialist.

"When growing wheat, and in fact our complete range of arable crops, they're the two people who help us make critical decisions. We look after the soil and in return it delivers some great results.

However, as it is a wind-blown silt we are careful not to overwork it or we risk losing it."

Interest in the annual United Wheat Growers competition continues to go from strength to strength with more than 100 entries received in this year's event and more anticipated for the 2017 competition. Director Brian Leadley is optimistic that growth will continue as growers from further afield show an interest in the national event. He says the competition is taken seriously by the wheat growers who enter, all who bring their own skills and talent to bear across the four main categories of Feed, Biscuit, Milling-Gristing and Premium Milling Wheat, as well as the Protein Trophy, which recognises the ability of a grower to deliver the maximum protein yield per hectare.

The Daveys have historically grown traditional crops such as wheat and barley but also grow white clover seed, brassicas for seed and borage. An area of their farm is also let out on a seasonal basis to grow potatoes and lily bulbs.

"We used to fatten a large number of store lambs during the winter months but as the dairy boom accelerated we turned our attention towards dairy support, along with many others for that matter. The lambs went and the cows came in for their winter holiday."





ABOVE: Bill Davey with his winning Discovery Wheat variety, destined for Champion Flour Mills

They have stable relationships with several established dairy farmers.

“We like them to know we’re here to support them through the thinner years as well as the good years. We’re happy to share some of their gain but are prepared to share some of their pain, looking at the bigger picture with a view to maintain these relationships.”

He says there is no doubt things are tough out there at the moment due to the dramatic reduction in dairy farming fortunes but also as a result of the general world oversupply of commodities, particularly cereals.

“We can usually cope with the odd issue but when several issues compound the negative effect on a business’ bottom line can become somewhat frustrating. We all have to take a long hard look at our farming enterprises when the going gets tough and usually it’s just a matter of continuing to do what you do, just that little bit better.

“There are other things that might look good on the surface but are actually no better than what you’re doing already, so perhaps a case of ‘sticking to your knitting’ until better times return, which they will.”

Ashburton is the main business hub for the Daveys and Bill well remembers being approached to join ATS within their first week in the region.

“We enrolled as a member and have used their services with great enthusiasm ever since. We

were part of a similar buying group in the UK but ATS offers a more comprehensive range. It gives us competitive buying power, which is ever more important in challenging times.”

The move to New Zealand

The Daveys had been cropping farmers in the UK for several generations, says Bill, so it was a big move to change not just country but hemisphere too.

“The main reason behind my decision to move across the world was that I was in my mid 40s and still had enough energy to do something different. It is business as usual here, we’re just on the other side of the world.”

But it was farming under subsidies that started turning Bill’s head and heart away from farming in England.

“I felt uncomfortable farming with subsidies and the need to become reliant on them to make any sort of headway. We operated our business in a constant fear of subsidies being removed and land values declining. We looked at New Zealand in particular, having gone through the process of subsidy removal during the 1980s.

“There was no safety net here but at least New Zealand’s farmers farmed on level playing field and were paid for what they produced, no distortion, as simple as that.”

The family also considered Tasmania, but decided against it.

“In many areas there was a shortage of water for irrigation and where there was irrigation that land was not for sale, particularly in the north-west of the country—deep red soils growing a wide variety of crops including potatoes, onions and peas. It was only when we visited Mid Canterbury we quickly realised the potential of farming here under irrigation.

“Dry land farms in early 2001 here looked terrible. Stunted crops of green feed struggling to grow with minimal soil moisture after what had been an obviously disappointing cereal harvest due to a dry season. I remember commenting to my wife Lynda at the time that if we were to buy land here we would have to irrigate. I had spent the first 25 years of my farming career trying to get water off the land, now I had to reverse that mind set and get water on to the land. The latter being far more of a challenge.”

The family farm in Lincolnshire, on England’s east coast, sold in 2000. That coincided with a favourable exchange rate, which enabled them to purchase a sustainable farming enterprise in Mid Canterbury.

Elder son Paul was 22 when the family moved but opted to stay in England, where he has since married.

“He often visits us but more often when we shout him his airfare,” Bill says, laughing.

Their other son Nick was 21 when they came out.

“He has become my right-hand man and I am gradually handing over the day-to-day running

of the farm to him. I get great satisfaction seeing another generation coming along. My father was very good to me and gave me a helping hand when I was younger and now I'd like to think I'm reciprocating with Nick."

Nick married Julia, who is originally from Christchurch, in 2009 and they have daughter Isobel, 5, and son Harry, 3. As well as working alongside Bill, Nick runs his own business processing and baling grass.

"He has mowers, tedders and rakes, a baler and bale wrappers, tube and individual, and processes our own farm's grass to on sell. He also offers his services to farmers within the area and takes great pride in every aspect of the business."

Bill says it's not time to retire just yet, but it's getting closer. "Not many farmers relish the thought of retirement or even admit they want to. I love what I do and just hope my good health allows me to continue doing that.

"We don't have many staff, just myself and Nick with two young employees, but we put efficiency down to good utilisation of staff and machinery and attention to detail. We run a straight forward operation, we have great water, great soils and opportunities to grow a range of crops. I'd say we're pretty happy with where we're at"

Bill says they're keen hunters and also enjoy a spot of fishing in the Rakaia River when they have the time.

"We still have family living in England and do go back as often as we can. What we didn't



fully appreciate in those early 'heady days' of relocation was that as our parents aged we were not just able to pop back for a long weekend to see how they were. The journey is a formidable one to say the least. It would be fair to say we do miss friends and family along with the traditions we were brought up with, but you can't have everything. New Zealand is an attractive country

in which to live but it is a different culture and we do miss our roots from time to time."

ABOVE: Bill gets great satisfaction seeing another generation coming through and taking over the day to day running of the business

BELOW: They have two employees Tom Health and Will Lake over from the UK to help them for a year



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Spring equine feeds: management and support

Spring is a great time to get out and enjoy your horses, however it can be a time when it is difficult to determine the best feeds and feeding programme for your horse, due to the many challenges that the spring climate and pasture pose. WORDS SUPPLIED BY DUNSTAN HORSEFEEDS



It can therefore be beneficial to take advantage of the knowledge and expertise offered by equine nutrition leaders.

Dunstan Nutrition is a 100 percent New Zealand owned and operated equine feed manufacturer and marketer. We pride ourselves on offering an extensive range of specialised equine feeds of premium quality which are formulated for New Zealand horses performing under New Zealand conditions.

In addition, the knowledgeable Dunstan Equine team ensures that horse owners have support and are able to access information which allows them to utilise the range of Dunstan Horsefeeds

and optimise the health and performance of their horses.

Spring pastures can play havoc with health or behavioural issues of some horses. The increased availability of pasture alone can cause headaches for horse owners with their horses becoming over weight and at risk of laminitis.

Other horses may become more difficult to handle due to the increased energy intake from abundant pasture and generally higher sugar levels in spring grass.

Therefore spring is a time when more stringent management practices may need to be put in place and certainly feeding regimes that may

have been appropriate over winter may need to be revised. With the very cold and wet weather behind us, horses will be doing better and as a result, require less supplementary feed to maintain body condition, with the plentiful spring pasture taking up this shortfall.

There are some great Dunstan products that are very beneficial for use in spring. Dunstan Multi-Ultra is a concentrated vitamin and mineral pellet—similar to a multi-vitamin. This product is a low- intake concentrate and therefore provides horses with key nutrients in a low intake of feed. This is ideal for good doers where 'feed' is not required to maintain body condition but owners wish to ensure they are providing the required nutrients for optimum health without the calories of a full feed.

Alternatively if your horse requires some additional body condition or is in work, a full feed will be more appropriate and Dunstan Coolfeed is ideal during spring. Dunstan Coolfeed is a "coolfeed"—it provides 'cool' calories, not further exacerbating the issues of the rich spring pasture. It is a high- fibre product and therefore provides a greater amount of fibre via the supplementary feed than many other complete feeds. This makes up the fibre shortfall that may exist in spring pasture.

Owners may even decide to remove horses from pasture for a time, providing only good quality hay and Dunstan Coolfeed while they address any issues. Horses or ponies taken off pasture due to laminitis will need extra care and consideration taken in regard to supplementary feed. Dunstan's specialty product Dunstan All-4-Feet has been formulated specifically for horses prone to laminitis or any situation where a low starch, low-energy high-fibre diet is required. Dunstan All-4-Feet takes into consideration that these horses will have limited pasture intake and therefore it includes elevated levels of Vitamin E, C and K.

If you are taking horses off pasture for any reason, it is very important to remember the key rule of thumb for feeding fibre. Horses require a minimum of 1% of their body weight in hay/chaff or pasture daily (ideally 1.5%) on a dry matter basis. A great way to top-up fibre contribution to the ration is to add Dunstan Betabeet Flakes. Dunstan Betabeet Flakes is a super fibre and is highly digestible and a great 'cool' energy source, providing calories for performance and body condition in a form that optimises digestive equine health.

If you have any queries about the Dunstan Horsefeeds range, or if you need assistance with management practices for your horse through spring, contact ATS today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) or contact one of the team at Dunstan on 0800 438 678.

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BRANCHES THROUGHOUT THE SOUTH ISLAND

Healthy hooves, happy cow

Standing on your feet for long periods of time can be uncomfortable, whether you have four legs or two. WORDS BY LINDA CLARKE, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY VEEHOF



Hoof trimming expert Fred Hoekstra says lame dairy cows make a big dent in the milk cheque so reducing hoof problems when times are tough makes financial sense. He says that involves looking at the whole farm management—from herd sizes to diet and resting times, rather than the state of your track to the milk shed.

Fred and his wife Sandy own and operate Veehof Dairy Services, a business they set up 20 years ago whose primary purpose is to support farmers become the best they can be, by raising the standards of hoof care. It has grown into more than a business: Fred's holistic approach to hoof care has been taken on by the dairy industry and he provides trimming services, supplies hoof care equipment and also trains others, including teaching hoof care at Massey University to final year veterinary students.

He says it is not rocket science that a cow with foot problems will produce less milk and it is not uncommon for up to a third of cows in large herds to be lame to some degree. Dairy New Zealand says 27 per cent are lame but farmers and dairy workers will only spot one in four cows with problems.

Fred gained his hoof trimming qualifications in Holland and came to New Zealand with dreams of becoming a farmer. But he found his hoof trimming skills were in demand. "I realised that there seemed to be little understanding of the process of hoof trimming and saw an opportunity to make a difference."

For more than a decade he was the only qualified hoof trimmer in the country and in 2011 he gained his Hoof Care Instructors Certificate. He is passionate about teaching farmers hoof care skills through the basic and advanced training workshops he runs throughout the country.

Lameness remains a challenge in the dairy industry and many underestimate the scale involved. Diet and resting time are important, as is herd size.

Fred said while low milk prices had forced some farmers to cut numbers, many had noticed a

spin-off with smaller herds. Cows passed more quickly through the dairy shed, meaning they were in the paddock longer to eat and rest, and actually producing more milk.

He said common misconceptions were that stones caught in the hoof caused lameness; but that was the equivalent of a stone caught in the bottom of a gumboot.

"Farmers often say their tracks are good and they don't push the cows on the yard, but they still have lameness. So what is causing it?"

Keeping the live tissue on the hoof healthy was the best way to reduce lameness, especially in stressful times like calving and mating. Resting time was vital and this was helped by ensuring a cow was out of the paddock for as short a time as possible.

His philosophy is that trimming the hoof of a lame cow will treat the problem, but it won't fix it—that's where herd management can make a difference.

Veehof training courses are often attended by dairy farm workers, but Fred and Sandy say farm owners should attend too. Those attending are taught a five-step hoof trimming process.

"It is designed to open their eyes to the skill required and to challenge some of their management ideas."



ABOVE: Veehof distribute the award winning Wopa cattle crushes

MAIN IMAGE: Freds hoof trimming skills are in high demand in New Zealand

A longer five-day advanced course helps cement that knowledge.

Veehof runs courses around the country as well as supplying hoof care products. They also import and distribute the award-winning Wopa cattle crushes that provide a faster, safer and more comfortable environment for trimming hooves.



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Earlier this year a report on New Zealand's "digital potential" painted an exciting picture for the digital sector in terms of the export potential it can offer New Zealand.

WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE

The Digital Nation report highlighted how much the sector is already contributing to New Zealand's exports, totalling a massive \$6 billion last year. This is equivalent to the fruit, wine and lamb exports.

Few New Zealanders may be aware of the scale of the digital sector, or that the agri-sector comprises \$1.2 billion of its \$6 billion value.

But even before we start exporting our best and brightest digital technology offshore, there are still plenty of opportunities for New Zealand farmers to use it to leverage more productivity and profitability off their own farm businesses.

Last year's Mystery Creek Fielddays highlighted how far development had progressed for farmers seeking more precise means of managing their land, livestock and labour to leverage more productivity and ultimately profitability from all three.

"Few New Zealanders may be aware of the scale of the digital sector, or that the agri-sector comprises \$1.2 billion of its \$6 billion value."

Suddenly the phrase "the internet of things" had entered the language of marketing and technical staff on the stands of weigh scale companies, internet service providers, consulting firms and financiers.

New Zealand's agri-sector had been identified by global intelligence company International Data Corporation (IDC) as a sector to become a world leader in the number of interconnected devices within it.

But leaders in the tech sector have also lamented the lack of unified platforms to get the many varied programmes and software systems that abound "talking" that machine to machine communication.

Farmax General Manager Gavin McEwen says for years we have been led to believe advances in IT (Information Technology) would bring significant productivity and profit gains to farming.

"But in most cases the uptake has been snail paced," he says.

One of those barriers has been the lack of a common platform for the many evolving software programmes to be capable of operating upon.

But Gavin says another one of the challenges is the size of the New Zealand market achieving

a "tipping point" to push technology into mainstream.

The tipping point is recognised as about 15–20% uptake of a new technology or product that pushes it over the line into mainstream.

But the NZ farming market is also relatively small at about 25,000 professional farmers, meaning even once achieved, the scale is not significant on a global level.

"So you would have to ask, why when there are excellent examples of innovators getting substantial financial benefit isn't everyone doing it?"

Gavin talks about the "chasm" between the early adopters of technology who are about 15% of the market, just short of what it needs to push through to a commercial scale, and often the chasm software companies fall into after launch.

"This is where many attempts to deliver software solutions to farmers in New Zealand have ended, they cannot get over the "chasm" to achieve a market share that makes their investment worthwhile and sustainable."

But this has not been for lack of trying—in the past 30 years estimates are between \$200 million and \$400 million has been invested in the public and private sectors on agriculture.

Gavin points to no silver bullet solution underlying software and computer systems in farming. Rather its success lies in being incorporated as a tool, in combination with regular data collection, good business principles and motivation of people operating and driving the farm business.

"They are no different from any other farm implement in that they leverage effort, but ag-software systems in particular leverage information that leads to sound, efficient and timely decision making."

And the data is there to show good IT combined with good farming does deliver. A comparison of sheep and beef farms using a decision support tool software, against the industry average showed across all farm classes those using a system can gain a 78% higher gross margin.

"So you would have to ask, why when there are excellent examples of innovators getting substantial financial benefit isn't everyone doing it?"

He has four simple rules for the agricultural software developers to keep in mind, and for farmers to expect when they are test driving the next new program that promises to revolutionise their farming system.

RULE 1: Keep it simple. Hide the complexity and keep it intuitive. A lot of software on the market has so many functions it ends up confusing and discouraging uptake. Agricultural software is no different.

RULE 2: Don't make me enter the data twice.

Time poor farmers hate having to enter endless screens of data onto their computer, and hate it even more if they have to do it twice.

RULE 3: Unless the program or system adds value to my farm business, forget it.

RULE 4: Just tell me only what I need to know, keep the information simple, I'll find the rest if I really need it.

Despite the challenges in making technology profitable and accepted by farmers, researchers are continuing to develop exciting new technologies that can be taken up quickly and are accepted by farmers. One such technology promises to provide farmers with significant amounts of information on their farms in a "single sweep", easily displayed and understood when presented to them.

High tech imaging paints farms green

A technology developed almost 90 years ago and recently used to detect camouflaged tanks is now being put to revolutionary new uses, helping farmers get more out of their farms while minimising their farm's environmental footprint.

The "Pioneering to Precision" Primary Growth Partnership (PGP) programme funded by Ravensdown and the Ministry for Primary Industries is using hyperspectral imaging to improve how fertiliser can be applied to hill country farms.

As a result of the project Massey University felt encouraged enough to purchase a hyperspectral imaging system.

Hyperspectral imaging collects many, many bands of colour that extends beyond the ones visible to the human eye, using ultra fine wavelength detection to cover a wider range of light wavelengths. It is technology originally developed for military surveillance, but has multiple uses in food processing, mineralogy, astronomy and chemical imaging.



ABOVE: Gavin McEwen of Farmax

For Massey Professor of Precision Agriculture Ian Yule the hyperspectral imaging system is opening a treasure trove of data and images of a farm's environment, including providing detailed images highlighting properties of vegetation and soil. It is even proving capable of detecting pasture types within a farm's boundary.

Professor Yule says the concept of hyperspectral imaging is not new, but the application of it for farming systems in New Zealand is.

"We have used sensors in the past but they are fixed in place. We realised what we wanted was images across the property, as opposed to sensors that sensed the variations, but only in one spot."

"Professor Yule describes the technology as a "game changer" for the sheer volume of information it can glean from one fly over."

Hyperspectral imaging is based on the principal that every object that reflects light has its own "signature" in terms of how it reflects that light.

The team at Massey have fitted the \$500,000 hyperspectral imaging system on board an Aerial Surveys plane, and once in the air the plane can hyperspectrally "map" about 1,000 ha an hour.

This same technology that can determine different minerals on the surface of Mars is providing researchers with highly nuanced, detailed images of farms, in a way that can be easily shown to farmers themselves thanks to the high quality images it renders.

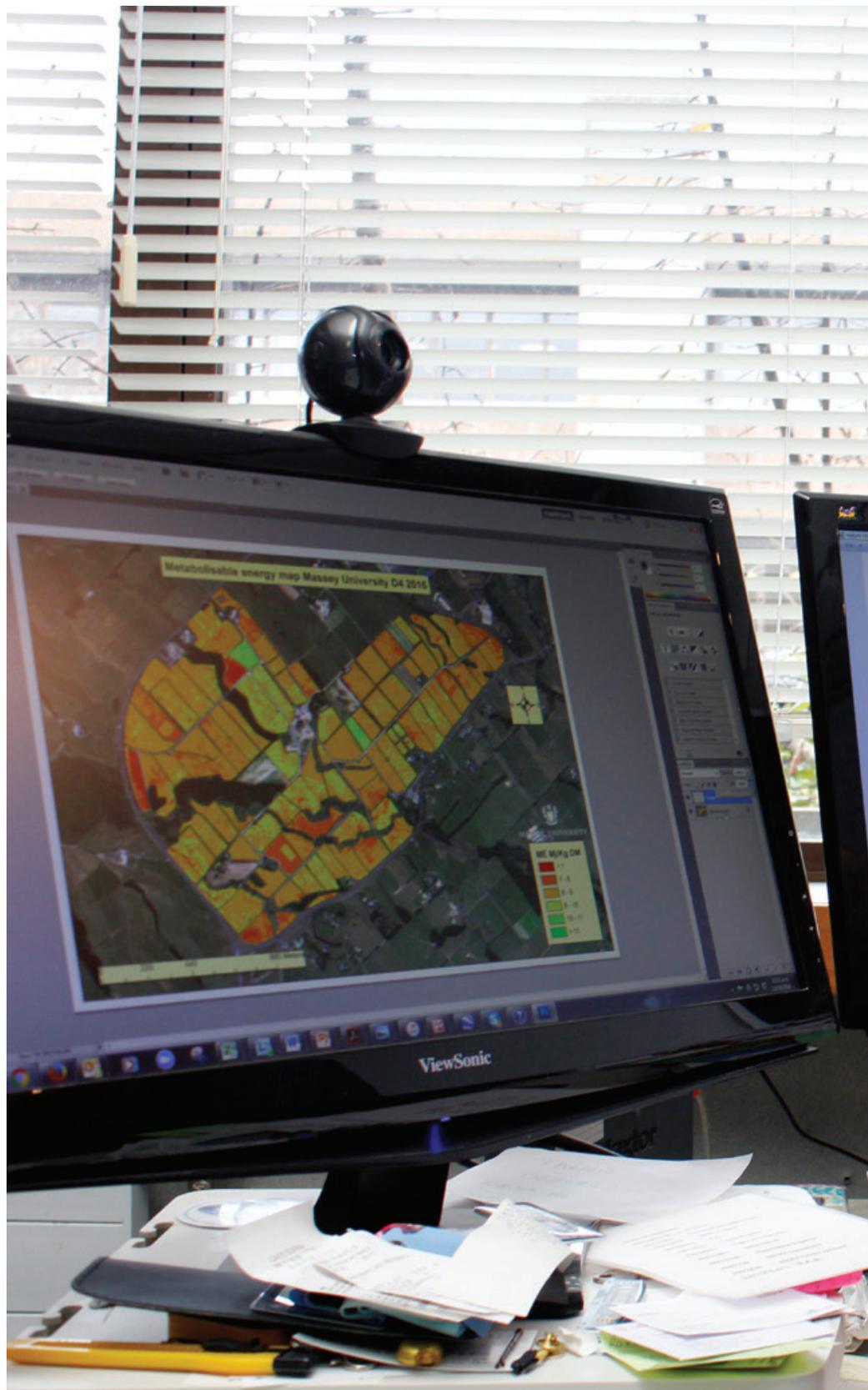
Professor Yule describes the technology as a "game changer" for the sheer volume of information it can glean from one fly over.

"We are finding we are able to tell different species of trees and vegetation, and can learn a lot about the underlying productivity of the land being examined. We have shown the technology is capable of identifying 60 different tree species, and their density."

"On the hill country work we are looking at the levels of nutrients in pasture, and the type of pasture, so we are getting to the point we are able to even determine the quality of the pasture on the property at that time."

In the dairy area, work is also starting to produce images that highlight nitrogen levels in pasture which could identify loss areas on farms and areas vulnerable to leaching issues. This work is assisting other scientists at Lincoln and Agresearch.

Professor Yule is optimistic the technology will do much to make farming achieve two wins at once—to be more environmentally friendly, and to become more profitable and efficient.



The ability to map the whole farm landscape eliminates the need for soil sampling across the farm, providing data on every part of the farm.

"We have shown the technology is capable of identifying 60 different tree species, and their density."

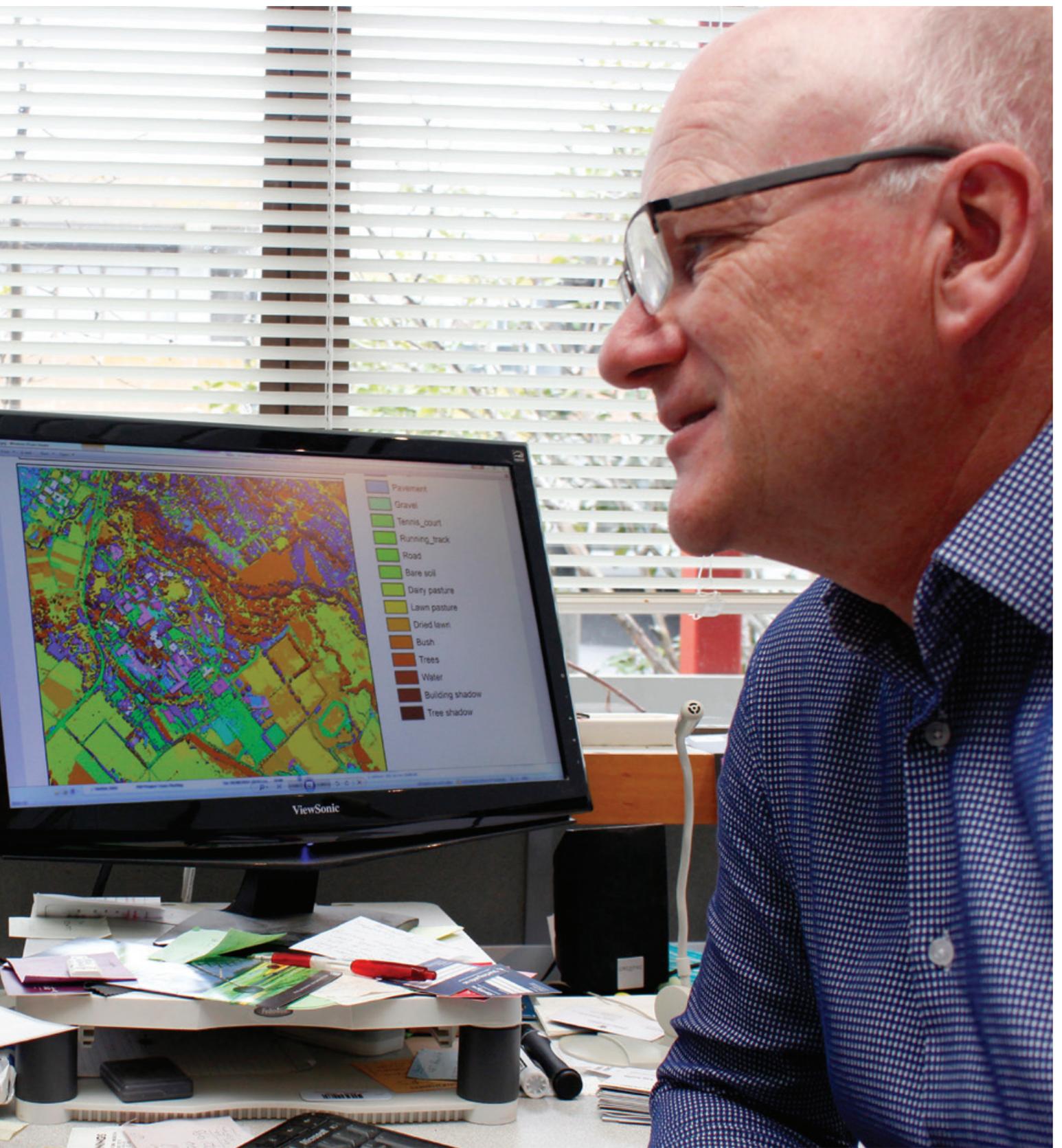
"We make an awful lot of assumptions when we are applying fertiliser, including that the landscape is relatively uniform, which of course it is not. We have programmes

like Overseer trying to estimate nutrient management from a lot of those pre-conceived assumptions."

By having more precise data on a farm's topography, soil and grasses the next step is to apply that information to more effective fertiliser application.

This data aims to provide better information to farmers on the product type, timing and amount to be applied.

"It will result in a farm fertiliser plan that is far more accurate, reducing application of fertiliser where it is not needed as much, increasing



it where it is and better avoiding areas like waterways and spring areas where you don't want any at all."

Professor Yule says the problem of getting new technology taken up by farmers is proving relatively easy with hyperspectral imaging.

"When you show a farmer a map they get it—what it shows them about the high and low production areas, vegetation, risky environmental areas, fits with what they have intuitively felt about their farm.

"This is the advantage of having very clear maps and graphs specific to their farm. They

don't look at it and think 'that's fine, but that's not how it happens on my farm.'"

"It will result in a farm fertiliser plan that is far more accurate, reducing application of fertiliser where it is not needed as much, increasing it where it is and better avoiding areas like waterways and spring areas where you don't want any at all."

ABOVE: Professor Yule with hyperspectral images mapped on a farm

Opportunities in the primary sector abound for the technology with the technology capable of detecting subtle changes in crops that may indicate an impending disease outbreak, or areas of land vulnerable to nutrient losses into waterways.

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Award-winning year

It's been a busy past year for Dan Bruce, new owner of Hydraulink Mid Canterbury.

WORDS BY LINDA CLARKE, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY HYDRAULINK

He bought the business, married the love of his life Abbey and has recently taken out a top award in the Hydraulink family. He's relishing all his new roles, hitting business goals and managing to squeeze in a regular game of squash at the Hinds Squash Club.

Dan's been so busy the call log on his cellphone doesn't last a day—but he says it's energy well spent to help keep Mid Canterbury farmers and businesses running as smoothly as possible.

Hydraulink has been operating in the district since the 1980s and Dan says its core products, hydraulic hoses and fittings, industrial hoses, and lubrication and fire suppression systems, are top notch.

Dan says while their brands are well known, he has been raising the profile of new products like the Lincoln Quicklub Lubrication System, an automatic lubricating system that saves operators of heavy machinery the daily chore of greasing all the moving parts.

Farmers and others have been seeing the benefits and the increased sales resulted in Dan and Hydraulink Mid Canterbury winning the supreme sales award at the Hydraulink national conference in August. The award is for the top agent over Hydraulink's national network and is based on sales growth of core products—hoses and fittings, oil and lubricants, fire suppression and branding.

Dan was chuffed and pleased for his team. "I knew we were busy and we are 100 per

cent into the product. We believe in keeping machines going as long as you can and getting through these tough times."

Hydraulink has three service trucks that run 24-7, summer and winter. Dan says he and his technicians, Hamish Miller and Craig McDonald, have to think on their feet and work on vehicles of all shapes and sizes, modern to almost ancient. "We make decisions in the field about the best and fastest way to replace hoses. No two days are the same and the plan is always hose off, hose on... though sometimes something bigger is needed."

Delivering top service is a priority, no matter what the callout is for.

With the dry weather continuing, fire suppression systems will be a big deal this summer.

Hydraulink has the Qtec Fire Suppression Systems in its product range, offering a reduction in down time and protection of assets in the event of a fire.

Dan says it's a good investment as well as helping meet new health and safety regulations. The systems involve a network of strategically-placed nozzles in the engine or other hot spots; the nozzles spray



ABOVE: Hydraulink has been operating in the district since the 1980s
 MAIN IMAGE: Top agent award winners for Hydraulink's national network, based on sales growth of core products

water or foam in the event of a fire. The suppression is also designed to cover immediate ground areas and gives the operator time to get to safety.

"It can be expensive to put in on a combine, but when you consider the machine could catch fire during harvest and burn up a paddock... the cost is worth balancing against your losses."

Onboard fire suppression systems can be installed on new or old machines, from combine harvesters to tractors and diggers.

While Hydraulink is best known for hose repairs, they also repair and service rams, motors and pumps and pride themselves in a rapid response to both emergencies and maintenance work.

Dan says he is thankful for the support and loyal custom of friends, family and clients in his first year.



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Lucerne driving on farm performance



There is renewed interest in lucerne as farmers look for forages that deliver high yields and cope with variable climatic conditions. For many farmers lucerne is proving to be a valuable asset on their farms. WORDS SUPPLIED BY SEED FORCE

Seed Force Extension Manager James White says gone are the days when farmers just grew a bit of lucerne on a flat corner of the farm and used it for making supplementary feed.

“These days lucerne is providing the backbone for many high production grazing and cutting systems. The work Lincoln University’s Derrick Moot has done to raise awareness about and push the boundaries about how and where it can be used should really be applauded. Derrick’s efforts have meant a real shift in direction for how lucerne is used in New Zealand,” James says.

Lucerne’s ability to provide quality feed to growing animals at crucial times of the year has helped many farmers change their management practices. They can now supply markets or finish stock in ways that were once thought unachievable.

James says good establishment and management is critical to get the real benefits that lucerne can add to a grazing or cutting system.

“Following the key management steps is crucial if growers are to get the best from their stands. When it is well managed, lucerne is certainly hard to beat. Its water use efficiency and ability to access moisture and nutrients at depth are its big strengths and its ability to support animal production is unsurpassed.

When sowing in spring it is important to give your stand the best chance at establishment. You should:

- Ensure that you have carried out a recent soil test on the paddock or paddocks you have selected to sow. Aim for a pH of at least 6.0 and correct any other nutrient deficiencies

that may limit production well in advance, even the year before.

- Use crop rotation to remove weeds from paddocks prior to sowing lucerne.
- Ensure the area selected is free draining and any weeds have been removed following a robust spraying programme along with any pests.
- Incorporate a pre-emergence herbicide with the last surface working in cultivated situations.
- Create a fine firm seedbed to sow into or if conditions allow you can direct drill. Ensure you do not sow your freshly inoculated seed too deeply (5.0mm–15mm maximum).
- Sow between 8–12kg per hectare of freshly inoculated seed, as lucerne requires specific rhizobia for effective nodulation.

With high producing lucerne crops, nutrient removal needs to be constantly monitored with soil and plant tissue tests to determine requirements. Some nutrients will be replaced in grazing situations but not under pure cutting regimes.

James says Seed Force’s Force 4 lucerne is one of New Zealand’s favourite lucerne’s and it has gone from strength to strength in recent years. “SF Force 4 has a high proportion of quality leaf from multi-stemmed plants and an upright growth habit; this helps with high production under a grazing or cutting regime.”

Different cultivars have different levels of winter activity. They are rated on the international lucerne dormancy scale of 1–10 (1 = highly winter dormant, 10 = highly winter active).

“SF Force 4 offers growers proven agronomic performance and a winter activity rating of four which is well suited to New Zealand’s environment,” James says.

Whatever the dormancy ratings, lucerne should be spelled for a period in autumn to allow the plant to build root reserves. It is recommended that all lucerne stands be shut for six weeks early in the new year so that plants can divert energy into their roots.

“Throughout the country we are hearing success stories about SF Force 4 and its exceptional production and versatility. It performs well in a wide range of environments and under different management regimes, whether grazing, cutting or a combination of both.”

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WORDS SUPPLIED BY FEEDSAFENZ

The FeedSafeNZ quality of production accreditation for New Zealand animal feed manufacturers was introduced by the New Zealand Feed Manufacturers Association (NZFMA) just over 18 months ago and has been embraced by feed manufacturers nationwide. Michael Brooks, NZFMA Executive Director says, "Quality animal feed is key for farmers and the quality endorsement assures farmers that they are buying the best quality feed produced to required standards." Feed suppliers who are FeedSafeNZ endorsed have the accreditation logo displayed prominently on their packaging. FeedSafeNZ is available to (NZFMA) members who meet independently audited standards in relation to the quality of feed production. The FeedSafeNZ accreditation has two main aims: to provide safe feed for animals and thereby to protect the safety of human food.

"High quality feed is vital not only for the health and wellbeing of animals but also for humans, so it's imperative that feed is manufactured to strict guidelines and is packed and stored correctly to ensure its quality is maintained," Michael says.

"New Zealand has an enviable reputation when it comes to locally manufactured feed, and with the FeedSafeNZ accreditation farmers can be even more reassured that the feed they are purchasing is manufactured to the highest possible standard."

"Quality animal feed is key for farmers and the quality endorsement assures farmers that they are buying the best quality feed produced to required standards."

Michael adds that it's timely to emphasise the importance of high quality supplementary stock feed in elevating production. "As dairy farmers work to cut outputs, the option of

cutting supplementary feed is a strategy that needs careful thought."

Michael encourages farmers to seek expert advice in this critical element of their farm business, in much the same way as they would with many other aspects of farm management by implementing a balanced view based on expert analysis of the farm makeup and working toward a balance of natural and supplementary feed protocols to optimise production and long-term farm viability.

"New Zealand has an enviable reputation when it comes to locally manufactured feed, and with the FeedSafeNZ accreditation farmers can be even more reassured that the feed they are purchasing is manufactured to the highest possible standard."

He says that with the growing emphasis and awareness of food safety among consumers, the FeedSafeNZ accreditation is invaluable.

"The FeedSafeNZ accreditation helps maintain the high quality of feed sold to farmers and eliminates product that can lead to poor animal growth and production, as well as reducing cross-contamination of ingredients from storage or processing."

FeedSafeNZ audits are carried out annually by AsureQuality, a company that provides food safety and biosecurity services to the food and primary production sectors worldwide.

Manufacturers undergo a stringent testing regime that involves a thorough on-site audit of their plant and storage facilities and operations. Only FeedSafeNZ-accredited sites are permitted to use the FeedSafeNZ logo on their packaging and other materials.

The NZFMA is encouraging its members to achieve the FeedSafeNZ accreditation and



currently there are 21 sites that carry the FeedSafeNZ endorsement. These stretch from Auckland in the north to Bluff in the south and include bigger companies like Inghams, Tegel, Mainfeeds and SealesWinslow as well as smaller ones such as Sgt Dan in Gore, and Advanced Feeds in Methven.

For further information contact:



Michael Brooks
Executive Director
New Zealand Feed Manufacturers Association
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Sulphur—the cheapest way to grow grass?

Sulphur is one of the cheapest agricultural nutrients, so don't let a deficit limit your grass-growing potential. WORDS SUPPLIED BY BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

“Most farmers are aware of the growth-boosting power of nitrogen fertilisers,” observes Jim Risk, Nutrient Dynamics Specialist at Ballance Agri-Nutrients. “However, the full effect of your nitrogen fertiliser investment may not be realised if another nutrient is lacking.”

Sulphur is definitely one to keep an eye on. “Apart from some central South Island areas, sulphur deficiency has never been a major concern here as our traditional fertiliser choice has been superphosphate. While its main job is obviously to manage phosphate levels, its sulphur content generally ensures an adequate supply of this essential nutrient. Now there are more phosphate fertiliser choices around and not all of them contain sulphur. DAP is a good example. If you're using superphosphate alternatives then you'll need to find a way to add sulphur to your fertiliser programme to avoid a deficiency.”

Adding to the risk of sulphur deficiency is the fact that it's very soluble when in sulphate form as found, for example, in superphosphate and sulphate of ammonia. “This is great for plants, which need the sulphur to be readily available, but it also means that it can leach from your soil, especially during a wet winter,” explains Jim. “If your spring pasture levels didn't meet expectations this year, it could be because low

sulphate levels limited the new season's growth and potentially the response to nitrogen.”

The good news is that sulphur is relatively cheap and there are a number of ways to incorporate it into your fertiliser mix.

“Looking ahead to next season, one approach is to incorporate elemental sulphur into your autumn maintenance fertiliser mix. Elemental sulphur is not readily soluble. It relies on the action of soil micro-organisms, which gradually convert it into plant-available sulphate. These micro-organisms are less active when soil temperature drops below 10°C, so a higher proportion of the applied sulphur remains in the soil. As temperatures rise toward spring, the soil microbes start getting busy again, making sulphate available when your pasture needs it most.”

You do need to take some care when choosing an elemental sulphur product to avoid handling and mixing issues. Sulphurgain Pure is an example of an elemental sulphur product that can be confidently mixed with DAP, MOP or urea and applied in autumn. Alternatively, consider products in the Sulphurgain range to apply maintenance phosphorus and sulphur. If your sulphate soil test levels are still low towards the end of winter, use a sulphate product once winter rains ease off to deliver a

readily available supply of sulphur to growing plants in spring and maximise your nitrogen response. “Superten is a good option if you are applying maintenance fertiliser or there are a number of products which combine sulphur with nitrogen to boost spring growth.”

You can apply Sustain Ammo any time from late winter through to September, once soil temperatures hit 6°C or more. It provides the benefits of Sustain's Agrotain-coated urea with sulphate of ammonia. “With Sustain Ammo, you reduce the loss of nitrogen from volatisation and supply sulphur in a readily-available form, providing ideal support for spring pasture.”

Another option is PhaSedN Quick Start. This delivers elemental sulphur and sulphate sulphur, along with all the benefits of Sustain. Inclusion of both sulphur forms supports immediate and long-term pasture growth and you can apply the product any time from late winter through to spring.

“If you suspect sulphur is a limiting factor on your farm, your farm advisor or a Ballance Nutrient Specialist and ATS can help you confirm whether or not this is the case and tailor a solution to fit your needs.” So contact ATS today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

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Tuatara Structures build steel structures to stand the test of time—much like their namesake, New Zealand’s native tuatara, which can live for 80 years.

WORDS BY LINDA CLARKE, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY TUATARA STRUCTURES



It’s a great comparison for a company that builds widespan farm sheds, residential, commercial and industrial buildings, storage sheds, grain sheds, covered feed pads and yards, hay barns, shearing sheds, implement sheds, warehouses, packhouses and more.

Tuatara was the first port of call for Greendale trailer importer and distributor Rob Pooler. Rob wanted a building that would house trailers, parts and accessories, but also be able to morph without expensive alterations to accommodate his business ambitions of the future.

“The team at Tuatara not only delivered me a great building . . . they made the whole process hassle free and efficient.”

Tuatara’s wide span and structural buildings are designed and built for Kiwi conditions and constructed with attention to detail. They’re also built quickly, with a guarantee your structure will be usable within 28 days of building consent being issued.

The family-owned business has been in operation since 2013, based from Christchurch, and has a large and experienced team with resources to build even the biggest, most complex projects.

Company owner Jordan Frizzell said the company used solid steel rather than cold rolled columns preferred by other manufacturers. The result was a structure with up to eight times the mass of steel than similar structures.

Farmers looking for a quality building have been heading their way.

Jordan said key to the success of each project was making sure Tuatara consultants knew what the farmer wanted.

“We come and meet the farmer on their turf to get an understanding of their needs and so we can provide the very best solution. Then we bring back a fixed cost investment proposal—we won’t email you out some flimsy one-page quote in eight weeks’ time. In most cases the farmer will have a fixed cost back within ten working days, including plans and renders. All at no cost.”

Tuatara Structures are proud of its family owned and operated culture, and its ability to adapt to changing construction market conditions. Their commitment to traditional business values and sound construction practices means word has already spread in the farming community about their innovation and excellent customer service.

“It has been the word-of-mouth recommendation of satisfied customers that has most contributed to our reputation as a

ABOVE: Tuatara’s clear span structures are steel frame building where no structural support columns sit within the shed’s floor space

solid, reliable and capable builder of structural steel buildings,” Jordan said.

Tuatara’s clear span structures are steel frame buildings where no structural support columns sit within the shed’s floor space, allowing a fully customisable work and storage environment that can be changed over the years to support different purposes. At the site, the first features of the building to be completed are the concrete “feet” that support the steel columns of the walls. Once these feet are completed, the pre-built roof and steel columns are transported to the site, assembled and then lifted into place using cranes. The support columns are then fixed to the feet before the building is finished off with exterior cladding.

Tuatara Structures is making its presence felt throughout the South Island with a range of diverse projects under way in Gore, Queenstown, Rangiora and Mayfield, and has ambitions to be nationwide.



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Keeping tabs on the land

Surveying and civil engineering firm Survus Consultants know farmers and speak their language, from subdivision to centre pivots. WORDS BY LINDA CLARKE, IMAGE SUPPLIED BY SURVUS CONSULTANTS

The family business was started by Ken Frizzell in 1957 as K H Frizzell Reg'd Surveyor. Senior survey technician Malcolm Dartnall, who worked with Ken from the 1980s until his unexpected passing in 1992, said Ken's interest in the land came from an uncle in Palmerston North who was a surveyor. Ken regularly spent his school holidays following him around. After bravely deciding to go out on his own in 1957, he placed a public notice in The Press announcing he was starting his own practice (this was back in the days when advertising for surveyors was not allowed) – his first phone call was from a farmer in Amberley and from that point on Ken was hooked on Canterbury's rural landscape.

Today the business is owned and run by Ken's son Hamish, with Hamish's son and daughter Reuben and Zoe also a big part of the team that thrives in the open air and loves dealing with people.

Hamish said Survus had been focussed on rural work since that first enquiry nearly 60 years ago, and their rural surveyors have decades of experience in the rural field, mapping the land, waterways and more recently many earthquake damaged buildings to determine new and existing boundaries and create new land titles. They also provide a host of advice around property developments from Timaru to Kaikoura.

"A lot of our clients are what we term 'non-developers' and are subdividing the family home,

family farm or have bought a first-off development property. We love seeing people who have never subdivided succeed with their projects, and then come back and have another go."

Survus covers all their needs, from planning and surveying through to civil engineering and project management. They make a complex process very simple and hassle free for these clients.

"Farmers in particular do a lot of adding or subtracting to their farm properties, be it through acquisitions, future planning, retirements and partnership dissolutions, divesting themselves of surplus houses or retaining the farm home for themselves."

Hamish said their unique free-on-site consultations are key to making sure Survus and its clients are on the same page from the outset. "We pride ourselves on being approachable and regularly travel up to an hour or more for these consultations. We work together as a team, know the challenges of a project from the beginning, and can thereby provide accurate costs for any development going forward. As a result we have a good

ABOVE: Survus' rural surveyors all have between 15 and 35 years of field experience each

rapport with clients right from the outset, and consequently we generally form long-lasting friendships with them.

"Obviously the topography of many of the properties brings challenges with both surveying and engineering but our staff use four wheel drive vehicles and the latest survey technology."

Experience in the field is also important and Survus' rural surveyors all have between 15 and 35 years of field experience each. Survey operations manager Craig Hurford has also just been appointed president of the Canterbury branch of the New Zealand Institute of Surveyors for the next two years, which is a definite nod to his expertise and management ability. Survus are very proud of Craig for this appointment.

Hamish said the Canterbury earthquakes had caused huge issues with survey framework accuracy and Survus had been heavily involved in the rebuild of the city and its surrounds.

While rural work is a core focus, the Survus team are also involved in major Christchurch projects as the city re-establishes facilities. Survus is currently providing surveying and engineering services for a new Rolleston township subdivision of over 220 lots just starting to get off the drawing board as well.

Rural or urban, lifestyle or residential, the Survus team loves dealing with people and seeing the job through to completion.

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Superior lucerne for local and international consumption

Bagging potatoes in South Otago started Ivan Watt on the road to bagging lucerne in North Otago. WORDS BY KATE TAYLOR, IMAGES BY STU JACKSON

Wallfield Farm Lucerne Chaff Haylage is made from naturally grown lucerne in the limestone country west of Oamaru where Ivan now farms.

Ivan and Jo Watt grow about 90 hectares of high quality lucerne, which is also known as alfalfa, on Wallfield Farm at Ngapara, about 30 kilometres west of Oamaru.

"We've been growing it here for 16 years and the demand for our product was so great we decided eight years ago to develop the technology and machinery to pack and vacuum seal the crop and market it."

Their lucerne is suitable for a wide range of livestock, horses and calves in particular, and can be used on its own or in conjunction with other feeds.

Ivan and late wife Marlane had moved to Oamaru in 1996 after 28 years of growing potatoes and barley on a family farm at Inch Clutha, which is an island near Balclutha with the Clutha River flowing on either side.

"We were sick of the wet seasons and the floods from being so close to the Clutha," he says.

"We looked at other farms across the lower South Island, from Methven down, including other parts of South Otago. We settled at Ngapara because we found the right place. It is limestone country and known to be good for growing things. Stock do well on it."

The former bull rider and calf roper had retired from rodeo until he got back on a horse to do farm work on steeper sections of the new farm. His horse, Curry, turned out to

be a natural at calf roping so he returned to the rodeos for a while, but it was taking Curry on horse treks that led to him meeting Jo, who he later married. The pair still ride most days to move the cattle around the farm, although 26-year-old Curry is now retired. Ivan and Jo planted the first commercial lucerne crop in 2000.

"Before that we had been running bulls for beef and then started playing around with lucerne because I used to crop when I was down south," says Ivan.

"Then we started thinking about different ways of selling it and we started bagging

ABOVE: Ivan met Jo, who he later married, during horse treks with his horse Curry



ABOVE: WF is a very well received supplement feed, both in New Zealand and internationally

RIGHT: They decided to settle in Ngapara due to the valuable limestone country

BELOW RIGHT: The lucerne business is a year round one for Ivan and Jo

it about eight years ago. It was a different avenue to make better revenue for what you were growing.”

“Supplying it to the dairy industry, if it was a good season they didn’t need it and if it was a dry season they would happily pay for it but I didn’t have it there to sell.”

Now horses are the main market and calves are also added to the list at this time of the year.

“When the dairy market dropped, the number of calves on it went down as well, which is a shame, as they do very well on it.”

After a bit of trial and error, Ivan discovered a way to bag the lucerne that was similar to what he used to do with the potatoes in South Otago. So he built a machine in a hay barn on the farm and all the bagging is done on site.

“When the dairy market dropped, the number of calves on it went down as well, which is a shame, as they do very well on it.”

“It’s a crop you grow and harvest and bag and sell. Then you repeat the process.”

There is 90ha of lucerne on the 144ha farm.

“We run a silage chopper everywhere we can. If we can drive a silage chopper there then we grow lucerne there. We usually run cattle in the gullies. We’re doing calves this year—buying them in at 100kg, putting them on lucerne and selling them later on. So from

November through to April they will graze some of the paddocks.”

He says lucerne had a number of positive points for him over other crops, including not having to replant it every year.

“We replant about every seven years. This year we haven’t done any replanting but usually we would replant something every year. It all depends what the paddocks are like. If it looks like it has run out we will replant no matter how old it is, but some paddocks last up to 10 years. Better paddocks in good seasons perform really well.”

The lucerne business is a year-round one for Ivan and Jo and their full-time worker Blair Armiger, who has been with them for the past two years.

Harvesting generally starts in October and runs through to May each year. Each crop is packed into 22kg plastic bags and vacuum sealed.

Ivan says his lucerne is rich in protein, vitamin

K and many other vitamins and minerals. The farm’s limestone soil has high calcium levels for growing high quality lucerne. The crop is dressed with natural seaweed in the plants’ early growing stage, which acts as a broad spectrum fertiliser rich in beneficial trace minerals and ready-to-use micro-nutrients.

“The seaweed also helps as an organic pest control—all in one natural material,” says Ivan.

In spring, the feed is often used by calf rearers. He says calves should be introduced to it slowly, but it helps their stomach development so they will do well when they move onto grass.

WF as a supplemental feed product has been well received in the New Zealand market place, selling well into both the horse racing and breeding industry throughout the country, New Caledonia (via a company in Hamilton) and Hong Kong.

Ivan secured the export market through





contact with a horse trainer. He says exporting is easier once you're underway. "As soon as we got the first lot off, it was a turning point. I was thrilled to see the back of it to tell the truth. Customs and MPI were very helpful though. They want you to export and get things right. It was just the regulations and red tape and the stress of making sure everything was done properly."

"We supply a lot of stud breeders with feed to prepare their yearlings for the sales... from Invercargill to Warkworth."

Almost all of the WF product is sold in New Zealand although Ivan admits he'd love to increase the amount they export.

"We supply a lot of stud breeders with feed to prepare their yearlings for the sales... from Invercargill to Warkworth. One stud takes feed every week. One of our good customers is the Westbury Stud in Karaka, Auckland, they've been using it for four years now and it has become a major part of its feeding programme. It is consistent feed and the horses do very well on it."

"Geez, what have you been feeding your horses"

It is compatible with grain feeds and supplements. Ivan says adequate fibre intake is vital for a healthy digestive tract in all horses so those at risk of gastric ulcers would benefit from lucerne forage as well (e.g. chaff haylage).

Waimate's Pear Tree Farm has been using Wallfield's product since it was first available.

It specialises in preparing young horses for the South Island Thoroughbred Sales. Up until 2014, this sale has been held in August, which brought obvious challenges to preparation as buyers still want to see horses in summer condition in the middle of winter.

"We find that by using the Wallfield Farm product as a key ingredient of our feeding regime, our horses glow from the inside out." Ivan says Pear Tree Farm told him people were saying "geez, what have you been feeding your horses" when they first started using his lucerne.

"Business is gradually growing. It takes time to get people to change. If they're on a good system you can't blame them, but they soon discover how well ours works in with other feeds. We had one woman who was paying through the teeth for high-priced meals to fatten her horse. She came up to get some

of our feed and in just three weeks had a different horse. So it certainly does work and that's due to the lucerne growing on these limestone country with all the goodies in it."

Ivan says it puts a good shine on any animal's coat.

"Breeders use it before shows to get their animals ready—cattle, sheep, goats, anything. We get a lot of feedback from people using it three to four weeks before a show and it makes their coat really shine. I guess it would be good if it took longer to do that—they would buy more," he says, laughing.

ABOVE: Ivan says the WF product puts a good shine on any animal's coat

ABOVE LEFT: The farm's limestone soil has high calcium levels for growing high quality lucerne

BELOW: Ivan built a machine in a hay barn on the farm and all the bagging is done on site



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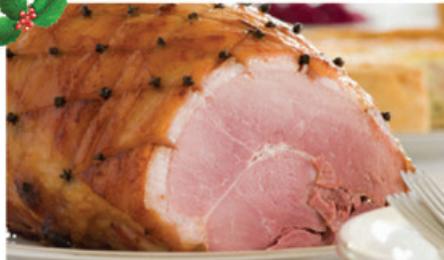
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Planting with purpose

Farmers are tapping into the potential of trees, shrubs and other plants to help manage nutrient run-off and stabilise banks beside waterways.

WORDS BY LINDA CLARKE, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY SOUTHERN WOODS

Southern Woods Plant Nursery Marketing Manager Rico Mannall says rural land-users were thinking about plantings with function as well as beauty when they were building or making environmental improvements.

"Plants play an important role, whether it is to disguise dairy sheds and farm buildings, create a shelter belt or grow under centre pivots."

Rico said dairy sheds often needed plants to soften their impact on landscapes and plants needed to be not only good looking but tolerant to extremes of temperature and moisture. Those same plants were also helpful in filtering nutrients to prevent them being washed through the soil profile and contaminating water sources.

He said most farmers knew mass plantings could help their farms meet new environmental best-practices, but needed advice on what to plant, where and when.

The experienced staff at Southern Woods can work from photographs and plans so could give advice to farmers all around the country. They could also recommend the right plants for New Zealand's different climate zones.

Rico said sometimes a site visit was the best way to determine what was needed.

The most popular plants for farm planting included tussock, toe toe varieties, flaxes, and larger native trees like pittosporum and ribbonwood.

Southern Woods grows over a million plants annually at its retail and nursery centre on State Highway 1 at Templeton, just south of

Christchurch. They are delivered to customers all around the country.

Rico said riparian planting was also an important issue for farmers and the right plants could stabilise banks and create natural corridors. "It also has the effect of reducing weed in the river as well."

Farmers who have ripped out trees to make way for centre pivots and lateral irrigators were also replacing them with low-growing plants that still offered shelter but allowed the irrigator to pass without obstruction.

There will be big changes at Southern Woods as the nursery gives up land for the new southern motorway, but it will be business as usual for customers. The access point will move from the highway to Robinsons Road.

Rico said there are longer-term plans to create a destination for customers looking for top quality plants and advice. "We're planning extensive display gardens, with a great customer experience at the forefront of our rebuild plans."

"We've got a lot of talented people here that makes us different to the chain stores. Our people are passionate about plants."

He said while farmers often needed mass plantings that could involve up to 100,000



ABOVE: Retail manager, Chris Smith
MAIN IMAGE: The large number of knowledgeable staff members give Southern Woods a competitive advantage

plants, Southern Woods also catered for smaller residential customers, who wanted to beautify their sections with hedges, topiaries, fruit trees and more. They are also involved in many commercial projects, especially in Christchurch where a new green city is emerging post-quakes.

"We can take on projects of any size," says Rico. The garden centre at Southern Woods is open seven days a week and customers can also buy online, or by email and phone. Plants can be delivered nationwide or prepared for collection if pre-ordered. Their 105-page catalogue is a great resource for planning a planting project, available free of charge to all prospective customers.

The nursery's mantra is about planting for the long-term benefit of future generations and the environment. They work hard to reduce waste and use resources efficiently and there is a high priority on producing hardy plants that have the best chance possible of survival.



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the actives are still effective on their own **before** worms have developed significant resistance. *'Saving' the combination drenches until you need them is not the correct approach.*

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For more information on Coopers® Animal Health products go to www.coopersonline.co.nz or phone 0800 800 543 or contact ATS on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

ACVM No: A10249*Registered trademark. Schering-Plough Animal Health Limited. Phone 0800 800 543. www.coopersonline.co.nz/NZ/ALCE/0516/0006

Spring Drenching – Rules of Thumb

Roundworms are probably the most important production-limiting factor on New Zealand farms.

Lambs and calves are most at risk, as older animals develop a degree of resistance to worms. Therefore, it is important to have your drenching programme planned before periods of high worm challenge.

Worms develop best on pasture in warm, moist conditions. In general, pasture burdens start to rise in Spring and peak in Autumn. In Spring, a lot of the worms on pasture come from ewes around lambing, when the ewes' immunity to worms temporarily decreases. This often coincides with increasing temperatures, providing favourable conditions for worms to develop on pasture. The risk here is that as lambs and calves start to graze, they can face a high level of worm larvae on pasture and develop large worm burdens with a lot of worm eggs being deposited onto pasture as a result. Without management,

this can lead to very 'wormy', lower weight lambs and calves, and high levels of pasture contamination later in the season.

To minimise these effects, a drenching programme and good management practices tailored to your individual farming situation are recommended. The following can be used as general 'rules of thumb':

- The roundworm lifecycle is approximately 21 days, therefore a 28 day drenching routine is often recommended. This allows susceptible worms to develop between drenches (helps minimise the risk of drench resistance developing), but ensures developing worms won't cause significant production losses.
- It is extremely important that an effective combination drench is used such as Coopers® Scanda® for lambs and calves and Alliance® for sheep and cattle
- Ensure your drench gun is accurate and your drenching technique is correct, to avoid under or over-dosing.

- Feeding animals enough will enhance their ability to cope with worms.
- Management practices can greatly reduce the speed at which drench resistance develops. Consider tools such as maintaining a refugia population, alternative grazing by different stock, and feeding crops.
- Ensure you have sound 'quarantine' drench practices, and 'exit' drench practices where needed to avoid introducing or speeding the development of resistant worms on to your farm.

If you would like to discuss any of these points further, contact your local COOPERS Territory Manager on 0800 800 543 or contact ATS today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

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Calf Drenching: Get it right this season

ARTICLE SUPPLIED BY:



The first year of a calf's life is crucial to its future productivity. Internal parasites such as gastrointestinal worms can have a major impact on the health of calves, as they have not yet developed age-related immunity.

Worm burdens on pasture can be high, especially in the case of dairy run-off blocks or where the same calf paddocks are used year after year.

There are many reasons why worm control is so important in calves:

- Worm burdens can reduce growth rates, even before clinical signs of infection (e.g. diarrhoea) become apparent.
- Although most calves eventually acquire age-related immunity to worms, this may take many months to develop.
- Young affected animals may not reach their full milking potential as cows.
- Worms are able to breed easily in young animals with poor immunity. This causes large numbers of eggs to be spread on pasture, contaminating it not only for them, but for older stock too.
- Calves may not grow optimally despite drenching because:
 - the drench being used is ineffective against some or all species;
 - the time interval between drenching is too long for the product used (this depends whether a long-acting or short-acting product is used);
 - there is an extremely heavy challenge and/or inadequate nutrition.

Effective worm control products improve production not only through improved appetite, but also because protein and energy are not wasted fighting off a parasite challenge. Minimising losses due to parasites is achievable with a well designed parasite management programme. A good plan should not be limited to pharmaceutical control, but should also encompass good pasture management, crop rotation, and alternating pasture use with older or different species of animals.

There are many drenches available in New Zealand and, depending on their formulation, method of application and active ingredient, they may have different parasite control and persistent activity claims. Persistent activity relates to how long the product is effective within the animal's body to kill incoming parasite larvae. It is the incoming larvae that do much of the damage, as they burrow into



the gut lining. Many pour-on products offer persistent activity against a broad spectrum of worms. However, some of the cheaper options don't so, while they may be cheaper, they aren't necessarily providing you with protection you might expect.

Generally, drenching should start from weaning after calves have been eating grass for at least a month. If they're unlikely to be carrying parasites because they've been housed inside, there's little point in drenching them. If short-acting drenches are used (e.g. oral products and some injectables and pour-ons), they should be given monthly. If longer acting products are used, for example Cydectin® Pour-On, then drench intervals can be widened, e.g. 6-8 weeks apart.

Combination white plus clear drenches or 'triples' are a good option to minimise drench resistance as they are likely to kill most worms. However, pre-formulated combinations aren't your only option especially if you are trying to achieve longer drench intervals for animal management or better control against *Ostertagia*, *Trichostrongylus* and lungworm. An oral white plus clear drench, including levamisole, when given at the same time as Cydectin Pour-On can be used to achieve two different goals at the same time: to reduce drench resistance and to protect stock for longer. Recently published trial work by Dr Dave Leathwick¹ highlighted that Cydectin Pour-On was highly effective

(>99%) at killing *Ostertagia*; one of the most significant production limiting parasites in young animals.

Use of a single active ingredient in isolation or continuously throughout the year in a calf drench programme is not recommended. Ensure you read the product labels to ensure the most appropriate and effective drench families are being used to meet your specific requirements.

For more details on an effective parasite management plan for calves, speak to your animal health advisor or veterinarian.

For more information or to order your calf drench requirements contact ATS today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

¹ Leathwick, D.M., Miller, C.M., Efficacy of oral, injectable and Pour-On formulations of moxidectin against gastrointestinal nematodes in cattle in New Zealand, Vet Parasitology (2012).

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Nobody likes lameness yet every farmer is dealing with it

Lameness is one of those challenges that no matter how good you are, if you have cows you will have lame cows. WORDS SUPPLIED BY FRED HOEKSTRA, VEEHOF

Lameness, alongside mastitis and infertility, is in the top three animal health issues we are dealing with on our farms. It is a very painful condition and that is why milk production and body condition are negatively affected by lameness. Apart from the animal welfare issue, the financial cost is significant as well. Each lame cow has the same financial cost attached to her so it is very difficult to put an average cost to lameness. However, if a cow fails to get pregnant due to lameness, you will have to replace this cow with an in-calf cow. Depending on the season you

are talking \$1,000 cost for that cow already. I believe that \$500/lame cow is realistic, times the number of lame cows that you are dealing with during a year, that will add up pretty quickly for most farmers.

Why do we have so many lame cows? Have you ever thought about what it would be like if a herd of cows in the wild were dealing with that much lameness? It wouldn't be sustainable. Cows would have become extinct a long time ago. Lameness is very much a domestic farming problem.

What is the greatest contributor to lameness then?

The difference between our domestic cows and their wild counterparts is management. We expect more from our cows—more milk, to get in calf every year, walk further, more cows in a mob and so on, and at the same time we take away shelter, food (controlled starvation), water and rest. Somehow it seems that we are forgetting the basic needs that a cow has. Do you think that the farming practices described above would have an impact on how well a cow



functions? Of course it does. Imagine what it would be like if you had no roof on your house, didn't get enough to eat and to drink and you went to bed an hour too late every night. Would you employ somebody who lives like that? People don't function well when they live like that so why do we expect it from our cows?

Prevention is always better than cure. What are some preventative measures farmers can take to minimise lameness?

In order to prevent lameness, we need to address the contributing factors mentioned in the previous answer. Big gains can be made with an improved management policy. The objective is to provide for the cow's basic needs. For a lot of farmers this will mean milking less cows or buying more feed. The aim is to stop under feeding. Controlled starvation is a last resort to manage an unexpected feed shortage, not something to be planned as part of normal farming practise.

Make plenty of clean water available at all times. This may mean that more water troughs need to be installed in the paddock, along the tracks and by the cow shed. If you are feeding supplements, add your minerals to the supplements and not to the water. This will stimulate cows to drink more water because it doesn't taste horrible and the minerals are taken up in the body better in a solid form.

Have the cows in the far away paddock at night and close by during the day. The reason for this is that cows walk slower in the heat of the day. If they have to do the long walk in the heat they end up spending more time out of the paddock over a 24-hour period.

Make sure cows are handled patiently at all time. The aim here is not so much to minimise forces on the hoof but to minimise stress on the animal. Healthy hooves are strong enough to handle rough terrain. Cows being flight animals struggle a lot more with the stress that impatient animal handling puts on them and when stress hormones rage through the body for prolonged periods of time they cause lameness thus it

needs to be managed. Make the whole milking procedure enjoyable for everyone involved, especially the cow.

These are just some suggestions and by no means all the things you can do. I just want to encourage you to think of ideas yourself that will help you in your particular situation.

Do seasonal changes influence the incidences of Lameness?

Yes, they do. There are certain times of the year when cows are at higher risk of lameness. Calving for instance is one of those times. There are big hormonal changes going on in the body at that time. Often there is a change of diet on top of that as cows are coming home from the winter crops.

Towards the end of the milking season we see an increase in lameness. This has a lot to do with the chronic lack of resting time during the entire season catching up on them. That is why 16 hours between milking has such a positive effect on cows as they get a chance to catch up on some rest.

Other seasonal factors are the wet times when cows spend a lot of time just standing in the corner of the paddock with their bum into the rain.

How effective is hoof trimming for the recovery of a lame cow?

When cows are lame due to a lesion in the hoof, the only way to help the cow is through proper hoof trimming. However, improper hoof trimming will make things worse, not better. Unfortunately, this is very often the case. With hoof trimming we don't try to fix the lameness. We can't, we try to help the cow to fix the lameness herself. This means that we need to know how to manipulate the claw in such a way that the lesion is relieved from pressure. This needs a holistic approach and not just opening up a lesion.

Are antibiotics helpful for supporting lameness recovery?

Not very often. Antibiotics are a fantastic invention to assist with infections. The problem is that many people see antibiotics as a magic potion in a bottle. Antibiotics should only be used when there is a clear sign of infection. An open wound is often not infected and therefore doesn't need antibiotics. If there is no swelling you should not use antibiotics—they are expensive and you are not achieving any benefits. I would even go so far as saying in the case of foot rot not to worry about penicillin if a stone is found in the interdigital space. Often getting the stone out is enough for the immune system of the cow to overcome the infection however it is important to keep an eye on this cow's leg should an infection develop.

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WORDS BY ANITA BODY, IMAGES SUPPLIED BY AG & AUTO DIRECT

Motorsport enthusiast, Paul Goatley, applies the same formula when it comes to running his Balclutha farm and automotive business, AG & Auto Direct, and with 25 years of servicing experience within the rally car industry he's well placed to know what works and what doesn't. Paul trained as a diesel mechanic and has always had a strong interest in motorsports. "There have always been a number of good rally car drivers around Balclutha over the years and I became involved with a few of them in the early days," he says.

He started out racing motor-cross bikes and later progressed to rally cars. It was this involvement

which saw him progress into the areas of servicing, preparation and building of rally cars. "It became too expensive for me to keep racing in motor-cross, and later in rally cars, so I got more into the service side of things."

As with any motorsport, the aim is to go faster while maintaining control and reliability. Many within the industry are innovative in their thinking and have the practical skills and know-how to make improvements. Paul certainly fits this mould and went on to prove his expertise and ingenuity by succeeding where others, both nationally and internationally, had failed—in the area of transmission systems.

The Goatley Transmission came about in the late 1990s when Paul wanted to improve the efficiency of his car's gearbox, but on a budget. So he set about creating a quick shifting, clutchless, sequential gearbox for his amateur rally car. By utilising simple engineering principals and working through tooling and materials problems, he created a gearbox which used multiple wet clutch technology to select each ratio. His automatic manual transmission development was recognised throughout the automotive industry and he went on to patent his development. His expertise in transmissions and rally cars is still widely regarded, and while he continues to



BELOW LEFT: Paul Goatley runs AG & Auto Direct in Balclutha & wife Sharon takes control of the administration

BELOW RIGHT: Paul's team work on rally cars in their Gormack Street workshop

occasionally race, it's his servicing skills which see him still involved in the rallying circuit.

Most recently he has been part of the service team for Auckland based rally car driver, Andrew Hawkeswood, who recently came third in the New Zealand Rally Championships. Paul was part of the service team working on the newly developed AP4+ cars being raced by Andrew during this year's Championships. "I've known Andrew for many years and it's through that friendship that I ended up being part of his team – a team I am very proud to have been involved in. It's been a big project to design these new cars."

Back at home in Balclutha, Paul's team at AG & Auto Direct also work on rally cars in their Gormack Street workshop. "We have an Australian owned car here which we have serviced, rebuilt and worked on for the last 10 years, and the owner comes over here to drive it before returning home again."



"One of my team is pretty much full time on rally car work while my time has been cut back to only around a couple of days a month." Paul finds running the business keeps him "stuck behind the desk" much more of the time than in the past but is a necessary part of his job.

At first glance, rally cars and farm vehicles might not look like much of a natural fit, but Paul says working on rally cars has taught them the importance of doing "it right" as there can be no mistakes when dealing with high performance vehicles. "It helps keep us sharp and the rally car work does roll over into our day to day stuff." Farmers appreciate their vehicles also fall into a high performance category, as they need to be working at optimal levels at the right time to ensure farm work is carried out in a timely and efficient manner, so the best possible outcomes can be achieved.

AG & Auto Direct, which formerly traded as Paul Goatley Ltd until two years ago, has four workshop staff, and another two employees dedicated to parts and retail at the business's Clyde Street premises. Paul's wife, Sharon, works in the business with him and a part-timer takes control of the administration.

The business holds the Landini, McCormick and Mahindra tractor agencies, and also supplies Fleming hay and silage equipment, and Samasz mowers and rakes. They are the only Landini and McCormick agents in the area. "We pride ourselves on being suppliers of quality brands and machinery. This extends to our range of

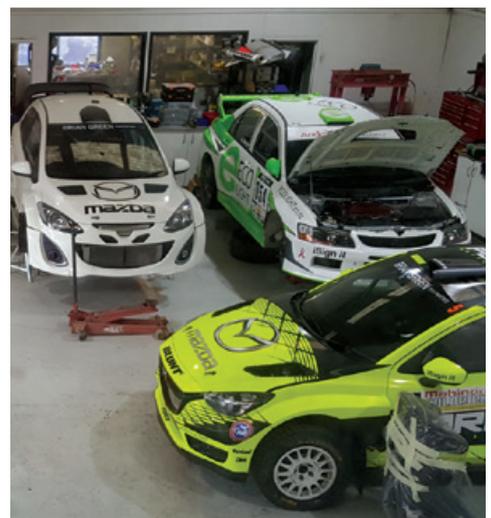
motorcycles, ATVs and UTVs which includes the increasingly popular CFMOTO brand, Jialing two wheel or ag farm bikes and Sherco trial and endurance bikes. We have got the on-farm and hobby motorcyclists covered." Paul says the CFMOTO UTV's have been particularly popular and impressive – "they certainly know what they are doing. They are the best UTV on the market and very, very reliable."

The workshop team can service all farm machinery and equipment, both on-farm or in the workshop. Dealing with such a wide variety of machinery means staff are kept busy all year around. After hours call-outs are another service offered. In addition to servicing and repair work, general engineering is also carried out with the making of bale buggies and feeders. "There's no task that we won't try and tackle," says Paul. "We service all vehicles and even do classic cars like old Escorts and Datsuns."

A wide range of tools and parts, such as batteries, belts, o rings, seals, bearings, nuts, bolts, tynes, belts, filters, grease and oil are in stock, and if they don't have something they will source it for customers.

When looking back over all of his achievements and experiences, Paul says growing the business would have to be one of the high points of his career so far. "Seeing the business grow and being able to employ local staff from around our town has been really great. We rely on the local community to support us as we are employing people from the community. They do that and in turn we support the town by sponsoring local events. It means we can give back. It has been great to see the business grow and to be supporting the locals."

This supportive approach and attitude is part of the reason AG & Auto Direct has recently become a Ruralco Supplier. "It allows us to reach new customers and gives us a bit more exposure, and it is also a way of supporting Ruralco as it establishes itself here as well."



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ATS Energy urges caution over price review

Canterbury farmers relying upon irrigation are being cautioned about what the true cost may be to upgrade any electric pumping capacity in coming years, as transmission costs threaten to surge. WORDS BY RICHARD RENNIE



The increase in the transmission component of farm electricity bills is likely to be the result of the Transmission Pricing Review, currently underway with the Electricity Authority (EA).

While the final outcome of the review remains uncertain, it has energy users and lines companies in Canterbury concerned over the likely cost implications it may bring to them.

Essentially the EA's review intends to try and get the cost of electricity infrastructure upgrades to fall within the region they are incurred. Until now the cost of local electricity upgrades to receive power from Transpower have been averaged across all network lines companies.

The review proposal aims to get the charges lines companies, the customers of grid operator Transpower, altered to be more closely linked to the transmission service delivered to that particular line company's region.

This 'user pays' system also intends to reflect the costs involved in delivering electricity to that particular transmission customer at different times throughout the year.

This is the authority's third run at transmission pricing, a contentious issue that has been an

ongoing issue within the industry for the past 15 years.

The broad impact of the proposal is that the regions that have experienced significant increases in electricity infrastructure investment, like substations, will be the ones that are hit with an increase with the lines companies in those areas required to pay to Transpower.

Unfortunately Canterbury electricity users stand to be some of the biggest losers if the proposal goes ahead.

Estimates released by the EA are Electricity Ashburton Networks customers will be paying between \$104 – \$117 a household a year, by far the most significant increase of any in the country.

But ATS Energy Account Manager Tracey Gordon says these figures can also give a sense of complacency.

"They are based on a domestic household's consumption, and not that of a large commercial farming operation. We do not know at this stage how much more than this farmers will be required to pay, but it certainly will not be less."

EA Networks estimates are that large irrigated farming operators could face an increase of 230%

in their transmission charges which often form between 10-30% of an operator's power bill.

The particularly big increase in Canterbury is based on the region having had strong population growth through the Selwyn district, and the surge in irrigation infrastructure over past years. Both had required investment in new electricity distribution equipment, such as substations to handle the growth.

Tracey says farmers with an array of large irrigation pumps have to be alert to the impending changes after the review is complete, and also keep it in mind if they are considering any upgrades or expansions over the next couple of years.

Lines companies affected by the proposal are at pains to point out they do not benefit from the increase, it is simply an additional cost foisted upon them they have to pass on to their customers.

EA Networks Chief Executive Gordon Guthrie says his network submitted on the changes, along with most other major lines companies in NZ.

He says the present system of allocating network costs is not perfect, but it did not require a major change.

He is also at pains to point out the cost is not driven by lines companies simply wanting to drive more money from their customers.

"It is very much a cost we have to pay, and are forced to on charge."

Canterbury is particularly disadvantaged by the proposals because the changes are based on a peak winter load estimate, when Canterbury's peak load falls in summer with the irrigation season.

Tracey is urging farmers in Canterbury to take an interest in the authority's review, given they are likely to be at the sharp end of any increases it delivers.

While submissions have been received from the likes of Federated Farmers, the review process is a lengthy one, likely to stretch well into next year.

"Farmers who are going to be affected need to be demanding more attention to this from their assorted groups, including the Feds, DairyNZ, Horticulture NZ and even their local councillors if they don't want to bear the full brunt of what it could mean to their business costs."

To discuss this further or for more information on this, please contact Tracey Gordon on 0800 289 287.

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Silo risk assessment a necessity

Many farms have them—the silo. A Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU), as part of the duty of care to workers, need to ensure that all risks associated are identified and controlled. In this edition, we review a risk assessment for a silo. WORDS SUPPLIED BY JANE FOWLES, COMPLIANCE PARTNERS



PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THIS IS FOR GENERAL PURPOSES ONLY. ANY RISK ASSESSMENT NEEDS TO BE DONE BY YOU, ON YOUR FARM, WITH YOUR PARTICULAR EQUIPMENT.

Step One: Identify the Risk

Experience tells us that there are a number of risks that you could incur when exposed to a silo. The first step is to identify those risks for your farm. Some to consider: falls from heights (including into the silo), accessing the top hatch for delivery/inspection/sampling/securing, engulfment or entrapment, entry, maintaining the roof, fires and explosions, structural collapse, electrical shocks from faulty equipment or proximity to overhead power lines, plant and equipment such as augers or conveyors, associated delivery trucks or loaders and confined space risks.

Step Two: Assess the Risks

Once we have identified the risks associated with the silo, we need to consider the consequences of being exposed to those hazards and how likely it is to occur on farm.

Step Three: Control the Risks

Once the silo risks have been assessed, we need to apply all reasonably practicable steps. Some steps to consider include:

1. Can we Eliminate the risk? Do we have to enter the silo or climb to the top of it?

2. Minimise the risk:

- (a) Substitute part of the system of work or plant for something less hazardous—Is there a remote system to assess grain levels, like a mechanical fill indicator that can be seen from the ground, a hand-held sensor or a weight indicator? Can we use a vacuum instead of an auger? Can we clean the silo from lower levels rather than the top?
- (b) Isolate the hazard—Can we restrict access to an area by the use of barriers?
- (c) Engineering controls—How can we guard the augers? Can we use remote control levers? Can we fit hand rails to the roof? Can we have a mechanical open/shut system operated from the ground? Is there a second exit – with a ladder installed internally? Can we fit a ground-level access hatch for cleaning? Can we install fixed stairs, ramps or work platforms? Can we use an elevated work platform to access?
- (d) Administrative controls—Have we documented a safe system of work? Do we need warning signs? Do we have specific training and work instructions? What is our emergency procedure? Have we ensured all our staff have received appropriate external training? Have we consulted the manual that describes the safety measures to take? Have we kept inspection, maintenance, cleaning and repair records? Do we need a process for testing atmospheric/environmental conditions?
- (e) Personal protective equipment (PPE)—Can we issue fall arrest harnesses, eye, respiratory or hearing protection? Do we need to allow for breathing equipment?

Step Four: Monitor and Review

Once we have identified our control measures these will need to be checked regularly to ensure they are being used and remain effective. Monitoring mechanisms could include inspections, observations and walk-throughs, worker feedback, checklists and independent reviews.

Remember, we need to not just spot the hazard but to think about the cause of an event, the likelihood it will occur and the consequences if it does. To be reasonably practicable, a step must protect people from harm and take into consideration how likely the risk is to happen, what degree of harm it may cause, how much is known about it and what ways are available and suitable to eliminate or minimise.

Every farm will be different, so it's important to take the time to think about your individual situation. Compliance Partners are happy to assist you with any review.



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Run it, bike it or walk it

Welcome to the east coast of the South Island New Zealand, it's rugged, picturesque and ideal for our cross country multi-sport event, the ATS Longbeach Coastal Challenge.

WORDS BY JOANNE TAYLOR IMAGES BY AMY PIPER

ATS have been proud supporters and the naming sponsor of the Longbeach Coastal Challenge since its fruition back in 2007. Over the past nine years the event has gone from strength to strength and last year saw 1,214 competitors take advantage of the one day of the year this beautiful slice of Canterbury coastline is open to the public. Land owners give generously to this community fundraiser by throwing open the gates and allowing access to their paddocks, laneways and coastal boundaries that overlook the vast Pacific Ocean.

The ATS Longbeach Coastal Challenge is a unique community event run entirely by passionate volunteers from the Hinds & Districts Lions Club and parents from Longbeach School, who enjoy working together to run a sporting event that caters to everyone from elite sports people through to young children, who can participate, challenge themselves and have fun all whilst contributing back to the youth in the local community. "The support of our community, our key sponsor ATS plus our wider sponsor family has enabled this event to grow and become one of the most popular for young and old," says Angela Cushnie, who has been a part of the organising committee for many years.

This unique event has raised over \$165,000 over the past nine years. The funds have been used to build the fabulous new playground in Hinds, support the youth centre in Ashburton, provide extra teaching resources and resurface the tennis courts at Longbeach School to name just a few of the projects over the years.

"It has been exciting to see competitors such as Anton Cooper who has competed in the Challenge nearly every year since he was a young teenager and has gone on to become one of the best mountain bikers in the world," says Angela. "Anton loves this event because it is one of the

few in the world which combines young kids racing alongside elite competitors—there is no better way to get kids involved in the sport of mountain biking' he said at the 2015 event".

The event draws competitors from far and wide and offers an option for every age and ability to compete.

Bike it:

- 35km Heartland Ricoh Classic Challenge
- 35km Aon Classic Team Challenge
- 23km Longbeach Estate Recreational Ride
- 23km Electraserve Team Challenge
- 12km BNZ Family Ride
- New in 2016— 5km kids ride for under 10 year old's accompanied by an adult participating in the 5km walk or run.

Run it:

- 21km Physiosteps Off-Road Half Marathon
- 12km ACL Recreation Run
- 5km EA Network Run

Walk it:

- 12km Latitude Scenic Walk
- 5km Tavendale and Partners Scenic Walk

So why not make a date and join us for the very special tenth anniversary ATS Longbeach Coastal Challenge on November 27. This year everyone who finishes the event will receive a specially commissioned medal to commemorate reaching the 10th anniversary milestone and as our way of saying thank you to the many competitors who continue to support the ATS Longbeach Coastal Challenge.

Visit www.longbeachcoastalchallenge.com to get your entry in or search for us on Facebook at Longbeach Coastal Challenge and check out video footage and more photos of the day.





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Best practice management for brassicas

Summer and winter forage brassica crops are grown widely in New Zealand to supplement pastures. WORDS SUPPLIED BY PGG WRIGHTSON SEEDS

About 300,000 hectare (ha) are grown each year making forage brassicas the largest annual crop in New Zealand. Brassicas produce high quality feed to graze in periods of feed deficit or when pasture is poor. Brassica break crops provide several advantages. Including reduced weeds and pests, increased soil fertility an opportunity for drainage and the introduction of grasses with novel endophytes.

Summer/Autumn Brassica Options

Summer and autumn feed options include leafy turnip, bulb turnips or forage rape. Leafy turnip is a multi-graze Asian vegetable cross bulb turnip, ideal for vigorous growth of high quality leaf and very little stem or bulb. Bulb turnips are single graze only but have good potential yields and quality. Forage rape is suitable for multiple grazing in all livestock systems and is a high quality feed with good acceptance by stock but needs to be 'matured' before being fed to livestock.

Winter Brassica Options

Kale and swedes make for good winter options. Kale is a traditional winter feed crop although now used also as a summer feed and able to regrow after a light February/March grazing. Kale has a deep root system and has tolerance

to dry conditions, clubroot and dry rot. Swedes perform best in cool moist environments, they are a good first year brassica option with good animal performance.

Crop Establishment

Crop establishment, soil preparation and sowing are important to ensure a high yielding brassica crop. Often the "worst" paddocks are sown into brassica as part of a regrassing programme. Therefore work needs to be done to remedy the poor conditions to increase fertility, drainage, and compaction so allow yourself enough time for establishment.

For sowing, it is important to place the seeds at the right depth in a fine, firm and moist seed bed. Make sure to get good seed-soil contact, with the right spacing between seeds to achieve the desired uniform plant population, achieved either by conventional cultivation or by direct drilling. If using conventional cultivation a glyphosate spray will help with the breakdown of turf and make it easier to get a good seed bed. Direct drilled paddocks require total destruction of existing vegetation and ideally a two spray program should be used, this will also help conserve moisture. Pests including slugs and springtails are more likely to be present with direct drilling and may require control.

Fertiliser Management

Make sure to plan ahead, get a soil test done well before sowing as part of paddock preparation. Brassica crops have large mineral nutrient requirements. Your pH should be between 5.8 and 6.2 for all brassicas. The need for nitrogen (N) is high in most brassica crops and they respond strongly to nitrogen application. Phosphate (P) is vital for brassica establishment and requirements are usually around 40–60 units. In areas of low phosphate having it applied down the spout will give the greatest response. Micro nutrients for brassicas particularly boron are important for plant health, especially those with a bulb. When selecting seed use treated (Superstrike, Ultrastrike or Gaucho) certified brassica seed, to give the best possible establishment.

Weed Control

Brassica seedlings need the best start possible so this requires a weed free seed bed. Doing a good spray out before cultivation and using pre-emergent chemicals with some residual will help achieve this. The Cleancrop™ Brassica System is an ideal fit if weed burdens are an issue on your farm.

For more information on brassica management or brassica varieties available contact ATS Seed today on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

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On farm crop recording tool, right at your figure tips

More and more arable farmers are signing up for ProductionWise® as they recognise the significant extra benefits provided by their industry's farm recording tool.

WORDS & IMAGES SUPPLIED BY MELANIE BATES, FAR

FAR's ProductionWise® Manager, Melanie Bates, says growers now see the benefits of using a system capable of recording all the farm's operations and inputs.

"With increased pressure for compliance and end-user traceability reporting, farmers need accurate up-to-date records with proof of on-farm operations and inputs from ProductionWise® at the touch of a button. Many growers are also finding the mapping feature to be very useful in meeting the requirements of Farm Environment Plans."

See the image below for an outline of some of the very practical features of ProductionWise®.

Farm Setup and Mapping

Farm setup and mapping enables you to easily configure your farm, map your paddocks and identify on-farm grain storage facilities and other farm infrastructure.

Map all the features of your farm to assist with Farm Environment Plans, etc

ProductionWise® is constantly being upgraded to meet grower and industry requirements, and has the ability to create polygons, lines, circles, rectangles and markers. In addition to your existing paddocks and grain/seed storage. These shapes can help to map any physical, infrastructure and paddock features of a farm, which is particularly helpful for Farm Environment Plans.

Map Features can be added as another layer to the Map, all with a printable option.

Paddocks

This page allows users to enter their paddock management practices for the current growing window, future growing windows and historically. Templates or favourites for activities can be set up to reduce data entry.

Paddocks acts as a paddock diary, where you input the information that would normally



ABOVE: The mobile app is designed to be visually appealing and easy to use

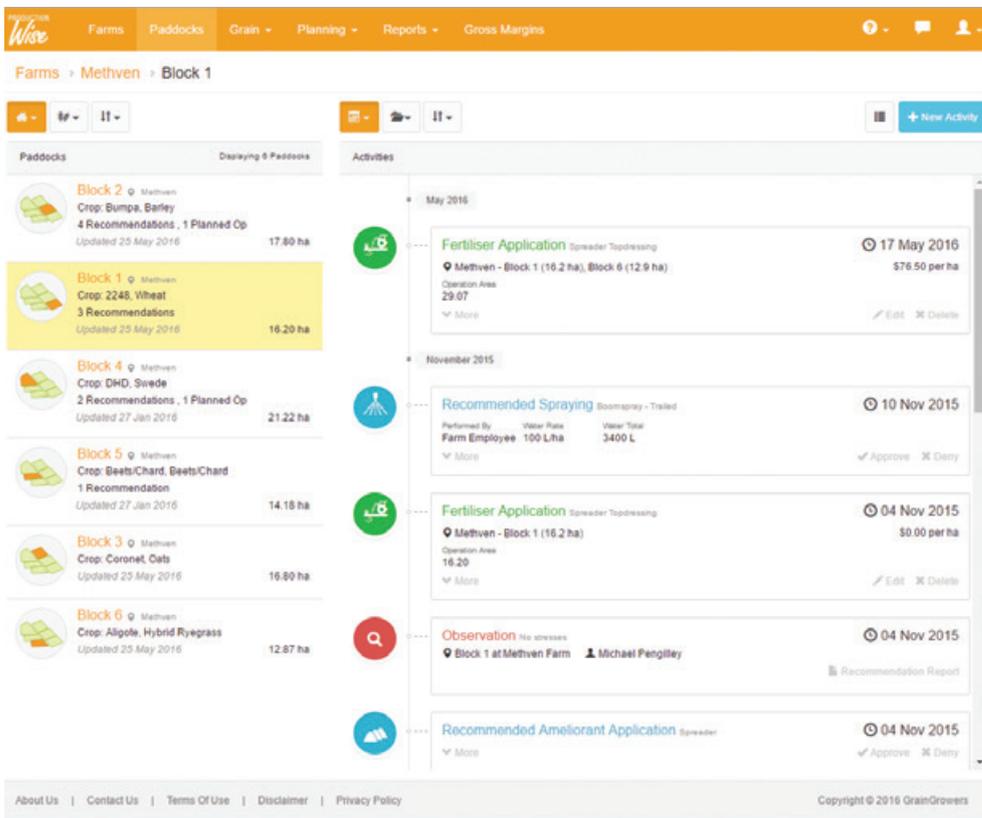
BELOW: Farm Overview and Summary

Paddock Name	Date	Operation	Implement
Block 2	18/05/2016	Fertiliser Application	Spreader Topdressing
Block 3	18/05/2016	Fertiliser Application	Spreader Topdressing
Block 1	17/05/2016	Fertiliser Application	Spreader Topdressing
Block 6	17/05/2016	Fertiliser Application	Spreader Topdressing
Block 2	9/11/2015	Ameliorant Application	Spreader

be written by hand in a diary, but is easier to access and search at any time.

Mobile App

The mobile app syncs ProductionWise® to the farm computer, allowing users to view, input and edit paddock information in real time. This allows for the day-to-day paddock diary (operations and inputs) to be recorded on the go. Importantly, the app can be used offline, which means that if you have no mobile coverage in the paddock, you can still enter the data and it will sync to the cloud when the app is switched back to online mode. This offline information can be stored for up to two weeks.



LEFT: Paddocks acts as a paddock diary, where you input the information that would normally be written by hand in a diary, but is easier to access and search at any time

BELOW: The mobile app is designed to be visually appealing and easy to use

BOTTOM: Vendor Declaration, ready to be signed and sent away with any sold crop

Advisor functionality

With a grower's permission, farm advisors can register and connect to their clients ProductionWise® account to record recommendations and observations. They too can do this via the mobile app.

FAR has worked with farmers to further develop the ProductionWise® site to suit the New Zealand environment. As well as being an on farm crop recording tool, ProductionWise® also gives FAR access to regional cropping information for benchmarking assessments and to provide general reports back to growers at the end of the season.

ProductionWise® is freely available to FAR levy payers at www.productionwise.co.nz

Quality assurance vendor declarations

ProductionWise® now enables vendor declarations to be generated through the Reports and Paddocks page. Using a template adopted from Malteurop and United Wheat Growers, the information added when recording paddock operations and grain storage operations can be transferred automatically to the vendor declaration form to show specific inputs used on a parcel of grain/seed/crop. This vendor declaration provides detailed evidence of paddock, crop and storage inputs and management practices.

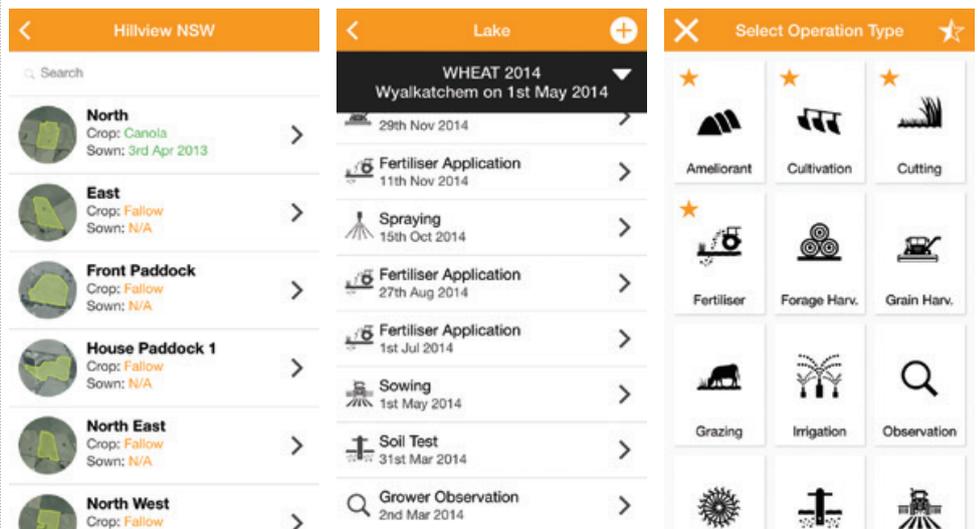
Vendor Declaration, ready to be signed and sent away with any sold crop.

Gross margins

The gross margin section automatically generates reports from the information provided in the paddock diary. This information includes any operations and inputs; for example cultivation, sowing, spraying, fertiliser application and grain harvest. Many operations and inputs even have generic default unit prices set to them. Growers can use these default unit prices, or choose to enter their own, which will be saved in the system for future use. A gross margin report can then be generated.

Grain

The grain inventory section allows for traceability from paddock to plate; it keeps track of crop harvests to the store, crop storage movements and storage capacities.



PRODUCTIONWise

BUYER: _____ **PRODUCTIONWISE CROP DIARY**

CROP TYPE: _____

GROWER NAME: Mr Farmer ADDRESS: Home Farm, Methven QA REF No: 12345 CONTRACT No: _____ HARVEST YEAR: 2016

A - Paddock and Seed Details: Must be completed for EACH Paddock and submitted prior to grain receipt.

Paddock Name	Date Purchased	Variety	Seed Source	Sown	Generation	Seed Treatment	Seed Ref No.	Paddock Lat/Long

B - Chemical & Fertiliser Applications: All chemicals should be applied in accordance with the manufacturer. Record ALL applications, including ALL presown applications.

Product Applied	Date Applied	Rate	Method	Applicator	Chemical Groups	WHP (days)	Active Ingredients/Comments
FERTILISERS							
HERBICIDES							
GROWTH REGULATORS							
FUNGICIDES							
INSECTICIDES							
CLEANING HARVEST EQUIPMENT							
GRAIN STORAGE INSECTICIDE							

C - Harvest Sample: Must be completed for EACH LINE of on farm stored grain submitted

Harvest Date(s):	Paddock No(s):	Ha.	SILO No(s):	TONNES:
CARRIER:	DATE HARVEST SAMPLE SENT:	HAS GRAIN BEEN ARTIFICIALLY DRIED?		
IF YES, DATE DRIED:	WHERE DRIED:	MOISTURE CONTENT PRIOR TO DRYING:		



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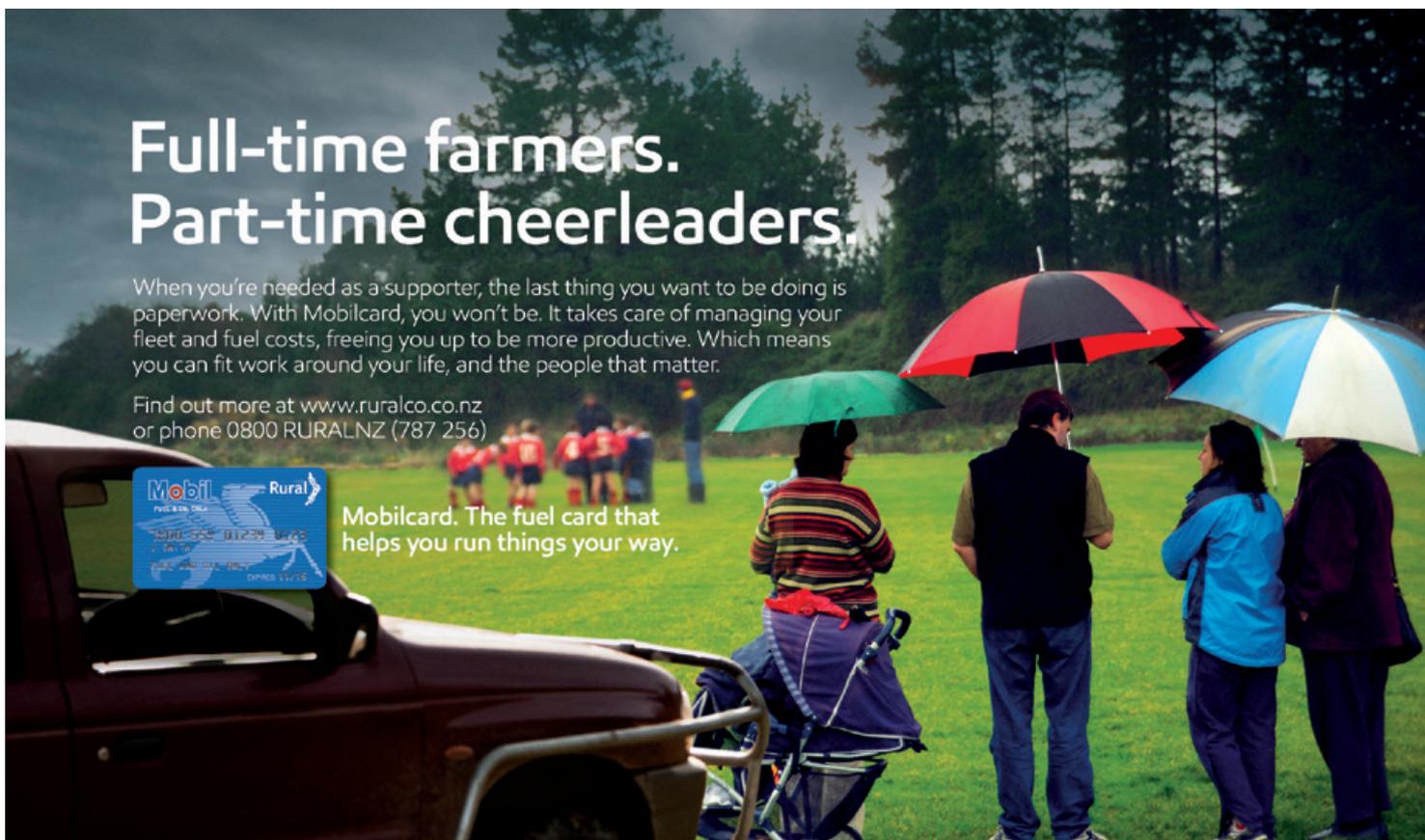
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Setting your cows up for a good mating

The New Zealand pasture based dairy system is characterised by a seasonal calving pattern that matches pasture growth in the spring and of course finishes in the autumn.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY BERNARDITA SALDIAS, CENTRE FOR DAIRY EXCELLENCE

The aim of this type of system is to have a calving interval no longer than 365 days. To be able to achieve this target, it is necessary to begin mating all cows between 80 to 85 days after calving as dairy cow's pregnancy is 282 days thus most producers begin mating around 23 October in preparation for calving on 1st August. Furthermore, a tighter calving rather than a spread out calving pattern is preferable for production and reproduction performance of the herd; through increasing the interval from calving to mating, there is more opportunity for more cycles as well of course more days in milk. From a reproductive point of view, a tighter calving pattern provides the opportunity to cycle all cows—or the majority

of them—before the start of mating and therefore helps to reduce costs of treatments of the non-cycling cows. This is also important, of course, as typical conception rates for the first cycle are only around 30–40%, natural conception rate improves with each cycle and is optimal at the 3rd cycle at 55–65%.

“The aim of this type of system is to have a calving interval no longer than 365 days.”

To make the calving pattern tighter for a herd, it is necessary to get cows in-calf as soon as possible hence it is important to focus on

heat detection, especially in the first three weeks of the planned start of mating (PSM). Nevertheless, pre-mating heat detection is also an important tool which helps firstly to identify cows that are not-cycling—so decisions can be made for potential intervention—and secondly to record cows that are cycling in the herd and thus provide an indication on the success of mating in the first cycle post PSM.

There are several reasons that influence the percentage of non-cycling cows (extended anoestrus period) within any given herd but from the animal nutrition point of view the most common cause is a low body condition score (BCS) at calving (mature cows BCS < 5.0) and extended negative energy balance



(NEB) after calving which impacts on the BCS of the herd due to the excessive mobilisation of energy reserves in response to milk production. Loss of some BCS (Less than 0.5 BCS units) post calving is a normal function of the modern NZ dairy cow, we tend to run into problems where cows lose BCS over one BCS unit between calving and mating.

Cows which calve at BCS below the recommended target are at a higher risk to delay their cycling. For example, it has been reported a 6% of decrease in pre-mating heat detection when cows calved at BCS 4.0 instead of BCS 5.0.

“It is common to find that thinner cows delay their reproductive cycle as a physiological response to the shortage or poor quality of feed before mating.”

On the other hand, a feed shortage supply after calving, which prolongs the NEB of the cows, will also impact the BCS due to the mobilisation of excessive fat reserves of

the cow. It is common to find that thinner cows delay their reproductive cycle as a physiological response to the shortage or poor quality of feed before mating.

Consequently, using the pre-mating heat detection records in conjunction to scoring the herd 3–4 weeks before PSM will bring the opportunity to plan ahead with the aim to put some strategies in place—if it is required—that may help to improve the nutritional level of thinner and younger cows.

At PSM at least 85% of cows should have BCS 4.0 or above. Anything below this target may well have a significant impact on the reproductive performance through a lower submission rate, and/or a reduced conception rate as described previously, and therefore poor 6-weeks in calf rate (4–5% reduction of 6-weeks in calf rate when cows are mated at BCS 3.0 instead BCS 4.0).

“One common approach to minimise loss of BCS of thinner/younger cows is to split the herd into two mobs...”

An opportunity to explore whether your cows are in a state of NEB can be to look through your Fonterra fat to protein ratios, typically it should be in the normal range of 0.73–0.77 and optimally 0.75. Figures less than this indicate higher fat mobilisation which indicates that cows are not being fed sufficiently. This can be seen explicitly when spring storms blow through, cows even offered sufficient feed stand in the corner with the backs to the wind; subsequently we often see a spike in milk fat % which shows short term mobilisation of fat stores. This can sometimes be seen as well when cows go hungry overnight etc. Vets also do a good job of testing for BHOB's in cows 7–14 days post calving which indicate potential excessive fat mobilisation.

One common approach to minimise loss of BCS of thinner/younger cows is to split the herd into two mobs, this is usually done when the majority of calving has been completed and can allow 4–6 weeks pre mating.

The light and/or young cows are given an opportunity to improve their energy balance to a positive state and actually put on BCS/ milk better pre-mating which improves the mating success.

The light mob can have feeding preferences such as use of supplementation or grazing in front of the cows (getting the first part of every paddock) with the aim to get the best of the pasture allowance without putting pressure on them.

In the meantime, the main herd follow the light mob and graze to the desire post grazing residuals targets. In this way pasture quality is not compromised.

Another strategy commonly used is the once a day milking (OAD) after calving; which help to reduce the nutritional demand for milk production and therefore reduce the length of the NEB period; this approach therefore will help to minimise loss of the BCS of thinner and younger cows.

Work from DairyNZ shows that cows put on OAD from calving to mating do have a higher submission and conception rate than cows milked twice a day over this duration. However, this is at a considerable cost in lost milk production both during the OAD and for the rest of the season.

It is interesting to note, however, putting non-cycling cows on OAD for seven days before the planned start of mating and for the first three weeks of mating did not decrease the time to conception compared to untreated controls. Thus it is the length of duration that cows are OAD which plays a significant role on the usefulness of this tactic in improving mating success but comes at a cost in terms of lost milk solid production.

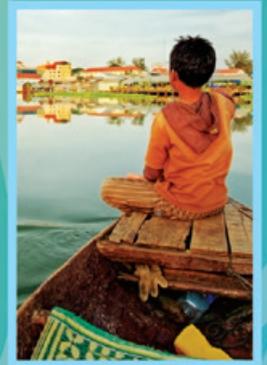
In a New Zealand study, separating non-cyclers 7 days before the planned start of mating and grazing them separately for 28 days at the same grazing rate as the control cows failed to increase submission rate or conception rate. In fact, only 19% of the cows were pregnant by 4 weeks of mating compared to 42% pregnant for cows treated with controlled internal drug release (CIDRs). However, longer periods of separate grazing at a luxury pasture allowance can lead to improvements in BCS and hence submission rate. This can be useful if cows at a BCS of four or less are identified early for separate grazing (6–8 weeks after they have calved when loss of BCS should have plateaued out).

“Another strategy commonly used is the once a day milking (OAD) after calving; which help to reduce the nutritional demand for milk production and therefore reduce the length of the NEB period...”

There are feeding options which can improve the result of mating, all the science and evidence we have to date shows that reaching optimal BCS pre-calf and minimising loss of BCS between calving and mating play the biggest roles in achieving good success rates.

There are, of course, hormonal intervention policies which also can play roles on farms where pre-mating heat detection indicate an issues in the herd. Through discussing these options with trusted advisors sufficiently early, decisions can be made to ensure success or at least minimise disasters on farm this mating.

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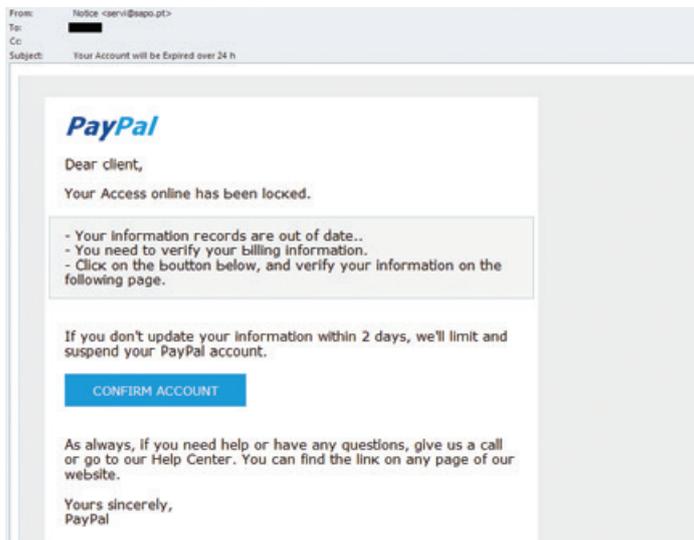
Tech Tips

BECOME TECH-SAVVY WITH RURALCO'S TOP TECHNOLOGY TIPS

Phishing in a nutshell

Phishing is a method used by scammers to get personal information from someone. They can be in the form of an email, a text message, a call, adverts and websites. They are designed to steal money.

How to identify a phishing email:



1. Did you expect an email from them?

The first question you should ask yourself is "Are you affiliated with that company? Would you expect an email from Paypal for example?". If not, report the email and delete.

2. Who is it from (email address used)?

Does the email address correspond to the name? In the image above, the email claims to be from Paypal, but the email address is servi@sapo.pt. This is a clear sign of phishing, report the email and delete.

3. Do you have to click something?

Watch out for clickbait. Unless you are sure of the sender, do not click on anything. To check where this link goes to, hover over the button or link for the website address will show. If the website address is unfamiliar or unrelated to the forseen email (example paypal), report the email and delete.

4. Does the email require you to download a file?

If the button doesn't redirect you to a website but downloads a file instead. Do not open it. Delete this email immediately.

5. Do you have to give out information?

Are you given a form to fill out your personal details? Most companies do not ask for information within an email, they will ask you to go through the official website or contact them directly. If in doubt, call them. If you can't call them, check out their website. If you can't verify that the email is legitimate, then delete it and do not provide your personal information.

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Avoid overloading sockets and risk of fire

- Check the current rating of the extension lead, most are rated at 13 A, but some are rated at only 10 A or less. The rating should be clearly marked on the back or underside of the extension lead. If not, refer to the manufacturer's instructions. Never overload an extension lead by plugging in appliances that together will exceed the maximum current rating stated for the extension lead. This could cause the plug in the wall socket to overheat and possibly cause a fire.
- Only use one socket extension lead per socket and never plug an extension lead into another extension lead.
- Use a multi-way bar extension lead rather than a block adaptor, as this will put less strain on the wall socket. Some block adaptors do not have a fuse, which increases the risk of overloading and fire.



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The importance of identifying non-cycling cows

At a recent breakfast meeting for our vet team we ran a “repro quiz” to serve as a refresher for the vets as we head towards another mating season.

WORDS SUPPLIED BY IAN HODGE, VETERINARIAN, GM TECH SERVICES, VETERINARY ENTERPRISES GROUP

This was really well received and a lot of fun. Before the meeting the vets were handed 10 questions on the various hormones, drugs and programs used in dairy cattle reproduction, and they were given a few days to come up with their answers. At the breakfast meeting the discussion was very productive and useful in terms of getting the vets thinking along the lines of making the best decisions regarding dairy herd reproduction this season.

Part of the process was to enable vets to have useful discussions with their clients about the best approach to reproduction management in their herds. This is so important this year because of significant pressure to reduce “costs” but at the same time continue to invest in those things which result in income generation. It is important for vets to justify the investment they advise, establish the annual return on that investment and the net effect on farm profitability. Contrary to what some may think, a farm animal veterinarians’ primary interest is not in commercial sales but in animal wellness and farm productivity.

Veterinarians around the world have certainly done a great job of elucidating the bovine reproductive cycle and how it can be totally controlled and manipulated to ensure a seasonal pattern of breeding coinciding

with good pasture growth. The oestrous cycle control is achieved by the strategically timed use of synthesised versions of naturally occurring reproductive hormones. It is now possible to cause ovulation of dominant follicles by re-creating the signals coming from the brain to the ovary, to cause the growth of progesterone producing tissue (Corpus luteum), and to allow follicular waves to continue under a high concentration of progesterone (CIDR), to cause maturation of follicles, and ovulation, by using hormones that work on the ovaries and the brain in a controlled way that allows timed ovulation and insemination, and ultimately an improved first service conception rate.

What I am referring to here, off course, is the commonly used CIDR (Controlled Internal Drug Release) program for non cycling cows. This program has now been developed to the point that first service conception rates should approach 50% and the cumulative pregnancy rate in CIDR treated cows should be similar to cycling cows.

Identifying non-cycling (anoestrus) cows is very important and that is why it is so important to tail paint at least 35 days prior to the planned start of mating. Cows with no colour paint change 10 days prior to the planned start of

mating can then be examined, and determined to either require treatment for anovulatory anoestrus, or not. True non cycling cows are unable to produce enough progesterone to initiate overt cycling activity hence why we use CIDR’s (which contain progesterone), and other reproductive hormones in these cows.

Some cows that have been treated for anoestrus with the CIDR program may return to anoestrus (after they have cycled and been mated) and they may also not be pregnant. These cows that do not return to oestrus and that are not pregnant are called phantom cows (because we think they are pregnant). If not detected and treated they contribute significantly to the herds final empty percentage, especially if the number of cows treated with CIDR’s is high. Phantom cows can be detected by ultrasound scanning when they are at least 35 days since their mating date, and they can be treated using a full CIDR program.

Treating non cycling cows results in a significantly increased cumulative pregnancy percentage in that group of cows, and these pregnancies are all initiated within the first 6 weeks of the start of mating. The cumulative days in milk from these pregnancies more than offsets the cost of the CIDR programs in the subsequent season.

Is it time to renew your Approved Handler Certificate

Your Approved Handler Certificate may have expired or be about to expire. Make sure these are up to date before its time to purchase or apply chemicals. Please contact Peter Jacob on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287) and he will be able to assist you with the renewal process.

Want help with your on-farm safety requirements?

ATS is now working with Ashburton based consultancy business and Ruralco Supplier, Compliance Partners, to provide you with up-to-date solutions for meeting all of your on-farm health and safety requirements.

Jane Fowles, from Compliance Partners, provides useful and ongoing support to help you reach your farm outcomes using your best asset—your people. She also offers a free on-farm health and safety check which can be arranged following your attendance of an ATS Farm Safety training day.

If you have been putting off updating your systems or you are having trouble getting to grips with the latest legislation requirements, now's the time to sign up for training at ATS. The day will provide you with access to a farm safety manual, and participants can also apply for a discount on their ACC levies on completion of the course.

The next training days will be held on 18 October and 22 November at a cost of \$550 (GST and cardholder discount inclusive). Seating is limited so get in fast. For more information or to reserve your spot please contact Peter Jacob on 03 307 5124 or 0800 289 287, email book@ats.co.nz or reserve your spot online at www.ats.co.nz/farmsafety.

A fresh new look for your Newsbrief and statement

You will notice a fresh new look to this month's Newsbrief and statement. Your Newsbrief better showcases up to date information from all parts of the business and your statement is even easier to read with a clearly defined rebate for each transaction.

Please note any supplier transactions listed without a rebate, means the rebate is either taken at point of sale or the supplier is a convenience-only supplier.

If you have any questions regarding your statement, please contact the Finance team.

When was your last electricity reading?

As we are in the busy irrigation season, please check your electricity accounts to see when you had the last actual reading on your connection. This is important to ensure you are getting accurate accounts. Also remember, if you have turned off your mains during the winter, check they are back on so your smart meter reading can be obtained. For any queries, please contact ATS Energy Account Manager Tracey Gordon on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).



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ATS AGM, Hotel Ashburton
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Plus to help you celebrate your big day, ATS will gift you a voucher to the value of 10% of your registry spend! Simply contact us to arrange your appointment with one of the ATS Gift & Homeware team on 0800 BUY ATS (289 287).

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