

# RURAL GUARDIAN

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OCTOBER 2022 EDITION

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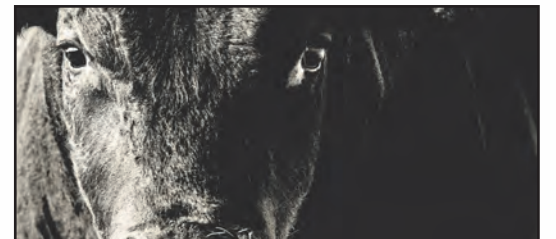
SOLAR PUMPS

P9-12



MAORI DAIRY LEADER

P22-25



TE MANIA STUD

P33-34



## WHERE, OH WHERE, HAVE ALL OUR SHEARERS GONE?

Pages 3-6

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# Smart farming proceeding at a staggering rate!



**Pat  
Deavoll** **RURAL  
REPORTER**

One of the biggest trends  
over the past decade has  
been the growth of the smart  
factory.

This is the name given  
to developments that have  
seen increasing connectivity  
between computers and  
machinery within the  
manufacturing sector.

There is a parallel trend  
within the agricultural  
industry known as smart  
farming- this embraces the  
latest sensor, computing, and  
connectivity technologies, and  
uses data to enable farmers to  
maximize their yield.

This data is collected from  
a wide variety of sources and  
is used to help make decisions,  
from identifying optimum  
soil conditions to monitoring  
the health of livestock and  
adjusting their nutrition.



**Low latency vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication allows the  
use of driverless vehicles.**  
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Devices might be deployed  
within a paddock or on a  
dynamic platform such as a  
tractor or combined harvester,  
or even fed to livestock to  
allow individual animals to be  
tracked across a large area.

The introduction of  
5G communications has  
provided a new and powerful  
tool for farmers. Not only  
does 5G provide wireless  
communications that are on  
par with the speed of wired  
alternatives, but it also has  
the potential to connect rural  
areas that have traditionally

lacked access to the latest  
high-speed networks.

This new connectivity is  
perfect for the smart farm. For  
the first time, 5G technology  
allows the farmer to integrate  
all aspects of technology into a  
unified network. Static sensors  
and remote monitoring devices  
can all provide real-time data  
to the farmer. When these are  
combined with other advanced  
technology such as GPS  
navigation, farmers are able to  
use their resources precisely  
where they are needed most.

Even traditional farm

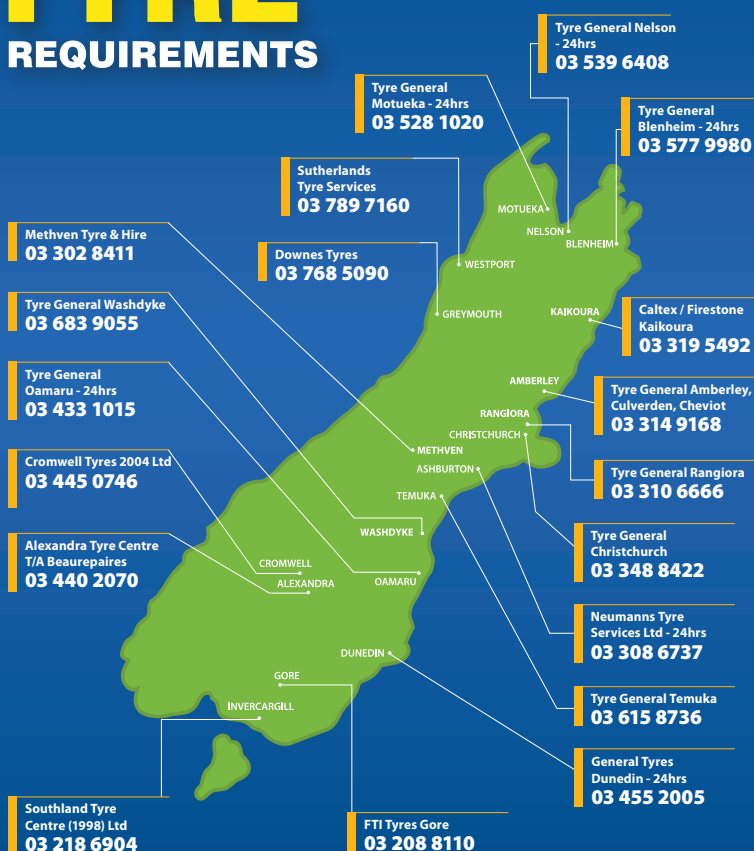
machinery benefits from the  
latest technology. The ability  
to communicate rapidly using  
wireless technology is being  
incorporated in the latest  
generation of tractors. Low  
latency vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V)  
communication is allowing  
the use of driverless vehicles.  
Guided by GPS and using data  
from the smart farm network,  
tractors and other farm vehicles  
are able to operate safely  
without supervision.

Radio frequency (RF)  
communication is at the heart of  
many of these innovations.  
It is easy to forget in the current  
age of digital technology that  
wireless systems still depend  
on high-frequency radio  
transmitters and receivers in  
order to communicate.

With the latest equipment  
sending data at staggering rates,  
designers depend on high-  
performance RF connectors.  
However, there are challenges  
that go along with integrating  
the latest technologies into the  
agricultural industry that need  
to be addressed.

*Read more about this on pages  
17 and 18.*

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The wool cascades to the floor.



The shearer's tattooed arms glisten with sweat, even though it is still early morning and chilly.

# Shearing is iconic to New Zealand: What's happening to the industry?



**Pat Deavoll** **RURAL REPORTER**

It's 7.30 am in a Marlborough shearing shed and the day is already in full swing. The walls vibrate with the hum and rattle

of the shearing machines; the air is pungent with the sweet-salty smell of sheep and sweat, and the radio blares. The Rock FM.

Four men take sweeping blows with their handpieces across the sheep they grip between their knees. Their nationalities are Kiwi (2), Irish, and Aussie. The wool cascades to the floor. The shearers' tattooed arms glisten with

sweat, even though it is still early morning and chilly.

Circling the men are the wool handlers (3), the presser, and the classer (the leader of the gang), all intent on their supportive roles. They work fast, intently. There is no easy chitter-chatter between the crew, they are too busy. But in the back of their minds is smoko, coming up at 9am.

The shearers are the

kingpins. The pace, intensity, the sheer hard yakka, the physicality of the work they do shines. As does the skill which has taken them thousands of sheep to hone. These men are gold, indispensable.

Sadly, their art is a diminishing one, and shearer numbers are decreasing in New Zealand. There aren't enough of them. Covid hasn't

helped- this trapped a number of Kiwi shearers overseas during 2020 and 2021. Those that remained in New Zealand had to pick up the pieces as "essential workers."

South Canterbury shearing gang owner Chris McCarthy used to drive from Ashburton to Blenheim and see nothing but corriedale sheep. Now it's cows and grapes he says.

*Continued on P4*

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From P3

Dairy and the failing wool industry have taken a toll on sheep numbers. It has pushed what sheep remain back into the hills. Fifty years ago there were 70 million sheep in New Zealand; now there is 26 million.

"It doesn't take much math to work out that with a third the number of sheep there will be a third the number of shearers," McCarthy says.

After 35 years in the contract business, McCarthy sees fewer shearers not only because sheep numbers have plummeted but because farming practices have changed.

"We shear all year round now because the North Island is doing their main shear right up until March and this overlaps with the South Island. Shearers are spread thin."

He struggles to find "good people" in the busy season, especially for shearing merinos up-country where real expertise is required.

"Contractors are all after the same people. It's hard to keep shearers and shed hands when there are options like dairying for young people to get into."

"If I get good people and that includes shed hands and pressers, I don't let them go. This includes the girls that do the merino wool. They work very fast. They have to go at the shearers' speed, and it takes



Circling the men are the wool handlers, the presser, and the classer.

real skill.

Before Covid a lot of Kiwi shearers headed for Australia, he says. "They ended up staying where they could make better money. Shearers from the South Island gravitated towards

Hamilton, Victoria. North Island shearers went to Wagin, Western Australia. Some got stranded in Australia during the pandemic.

"But shearers are in demand over there. It's seen as a craft,"

he says.

Mark Barrowcliff is president of the New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association. He owns a King country-based shearing contracting business and has

been shearing since 1986.

On a phone call from me at 6am one morning, he talks about the shortage of shearers.

"Sheep numbers have reduced, so the shearer numbers have reduced – this has to be right.

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Sheep are composites, twice the size they used to be and hard to hang on to for a learner.

"We've been heading towards a big crash for quite some time and that crash is already happening.

"The only thing that saves the industry from this shortage is the decline in sheep numbers. If there were 70 million sheep like there used to be there would be no way we would be able to service them."

A few things are going on here, he says. The shearers training is minimal. There is a small pilot scheme for wannabe shearers otherwise they have to pay for their tuition.

There is little exposure through schools to the wool industry as a career pathway.

"And I'm not just talking about shearers, I mean

everybody in the wool industry. Wool handlers and pressers as well," Barrowcliff says.

Kiwi farmers are missing out on the best shed staff he says. For a long time New Zealand has been known as the best training ground for shearers, wool handlers and pressers and then you go overseas to make good money.

"But Australia was waving dollars around and New Zealand coins. But the good thing is that these days New Zealand has pretty much caught up with Australia in pay."

But there's a perception that it's better pay and better continuity of work over in Australia. It's still seasonal but there are better working conditions. You can work

five days a week and have the weekends off because of the (good) weather, he says. No hold ups.

"We don't want to stop Kiwi shearers from going over there, but we want to entice them back to give our workers a hand during the busy season."

The work is undeniably physical, and this also puts most people off, Barrowcliff says. But some people like it.

"Yes, it's a hard job and you sweat a lot but look at an office job. You sit all day and then feel compelled to go to the gym. We get paid to stay fit, and when we knock off, we can blob."

Shearing Contractors Association board member and Winton-based shearing



There is a small pilot scheme for wannabe shearers otherwise they have to pay for their tuition.

contractor Jamie McConachie agrees that the shortage of shearers is a growing problem.

"It's hard for contractors to keep to a schedule and the delays compound throughout the season. This means for some farmers waits of up to two weeks getting their sheep shorn," he says.

"Overseas workers have filled some of the gaps but not fixed the problem. Then there was Covid.

"For three months of the main shear 27 per cent of my wool handlers and shearers are internationals. Another contractor based in Hawkes Bay had 26 staff from the UK alone working for him, and told me that if it weren't for them, he'd

have to finish up."

But working in New Zealand isn't an annual thing for these overseas shearers, he says. Many come as couples and for most, it's about getting experience to take back home. Before Covid many would do two or three seasons in New Zealand and then settle back home. Overseas staff can't be relied on to shear New Zealand's sheep.

McConachie began shearing 45 years ago when he was 15 and just out of school. Back in the 1970s and 1980s farming was tight, and shearing was one job he could secure. He has since shorn in eight countries around the world.

*Continued on P6*

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From P5

"If you go back 40 years there were a lot of rural-based open teams made up of farmers' sons who could make a living without having to travel more than 15 miles from home. Most sheep farms were on a smaller scale, maybe 1500 to 2000 ewes but these farms have changed into dairy especially anything on flat land."

He agrees with Barrowcliff that people don't want a physically hard job that hasn't changed fundamentally in 120 years. There is more job selection, more choice these days.

"And it's difficult for a young guy starting out in the industry. It can take three or four years to become a good shearer and then there is a \$5000 outlay in cutters, combs, a grinder and handpieces.

"Getting through those first few years is hard for people. They would need to spend \$2000 on a hand piece, \$1000 on cutters, \$1000 on combs and then they would need their own clothing and it wouldn't be hard to spend \$1000 on this."

"On the other hand, they could go into dairy where the farmer provides wet weather gear, a house, power and phone."

Shearing is tough to learn today, he says. Sheep are composites, twice the size they used to be, and hard to hang on to for a learner. They are also very physical due to better feed



**Sheep numbers have reduced by two-thirds so the shearer numbers have reduced by two-thirds— this has to be right.**

and genetics. And they don't "sit" like they use to.

"There is also considerable travel, and in many instances the facilities in the wool sheds are substandard. There are still sheds without hot water or toilets. And the presser may have to use an antiquated machine, and pen up [sheep] in a poorly designed shed."

He says it's not uncommon for shearers to spend four to six months working overseas each year.

"You could leave in early May and go to the UK and finish in August then head to Australia until Christmas.

"But for a young person who wants to learn a skill, who loves hard work and wants to see

the world, shearing is a great option and a great life.

"We can take a kid who doesn't want to do NCEA and within three years, if he can shear a realistic tally (40,000 sheep a year) he can be earning \$90,000 a year. Within 10 years home ownership is an option.

"An experienced shearer can be earning \$150,000 a year."

But the fundamental problem with the industry is that young people don't see it as a viable long-term option, he says.

"If we can't support and mentor or provide education and training they are going to say 'do I want to be in an industry that doesn't even have a training system?'"

Increasingly the answer is no.

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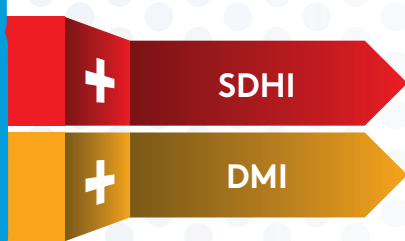


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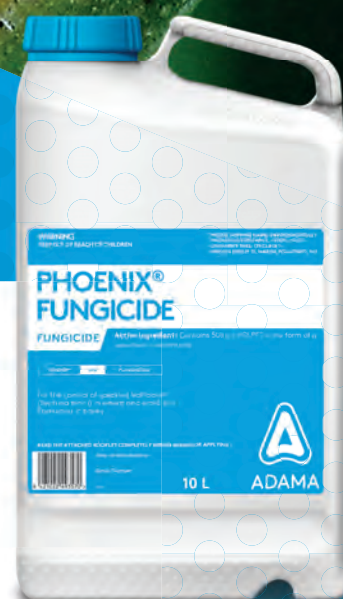
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# Solar water pumps: Things to know and tips for use



**Pat Deavoll**  
RURAL REPORTER

Mechanical pumps have a lot of uses nowadays, whether it be pumping water from wells, aquarium filtering, pond filtering or aeration. When it comes down to it, the main use of this device is the exchange of fluids such as water.

From agriculture to the energy industry, pumps are found in a wide range of applications. A solar water pump system can be commonly seen in residential and commercial situation, as well as for irrigation of agricultural land. Through solar panels, the pump can eliminate the cost of energy and provide a more feasible option that uses energy from the sun (and not fuel-burning mechanisms) for pumping water.



The main disadvantage of deploying a solar-powered irrigation pump for agriculture is its cost (initial investment).

## Introducing solar-powered irrigation for poor and remote areas

In a time when the entire world is switching to solar,

using the sun's energy in water pumping systems can significantly help and accelerate the development of agriculture in African, and many other

poor remote areas. This concept is known as solar-powered irrigation and is used in many regions nowadays.

The truth is, solar energy might

be the easiest way for farmers to produce energy, especially for those living off the electricity grids with poor infrastructure around their homes. Therefore, the use of solar water pumps in agriculture is becoming increasingly popular. The concept of solar irrigation represents a virtuous circle—when the sun shines, it feeds the irrigation system and feeds the crops which are dependant on water in sunny weather. Therefore, a large quantity of energy is being released right at the time when it is needed the most.

Solar irrigation is a concept that works through solar water pumps.

## What is a solar water pump and what are the most popular types?

As discussed, solar pumps present a clean, simple and energy-efficient alternative to traditional electric and fuel-driven pump sets. They are part of an environmentally friendly approach in agriculture and can be used to exploit every region, whether it's developed or poor.

*Continued on P10*

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By LATITUDE



From P9

Due to their immense potential for productive use and agricultural productivity, solar water pumps are now powering more and more agriculture projects. Knowing that 40 per cent of the global population relies on agriculture as its main source of income, access to water remains an ongoing struggle for many people. This is what solar aims to change and introduce a cost-effective future for around 500 million small-scale farmers all around the world.

The main components in a solar pumping system include a photovoltaic (PV) array, an electric motor, and a pump. Solar water pumping systems, on the other hand, are classified as either direct current (DC) or alternating current (AC) systems based on their motor's ability. Recently, the concept of brushless DC (BLDC) motors for solar pumping water applications was presented as well.

#### Classification and types of solar pumps

When it comes to stand-alone solar pumping systems, the main types include rotating and positive displacement pumps. Centrifugal pumps are the common choice for rotation and are designed for fixed-head applications. Their output increases in proportion to their speed of rotation.

Additionally, pumps are also classified as submersible and surface pumps, based on their



Solar pumps present a clean, simple and energy-efficient alternative to traditional electric and fuel-driven pump sets.

placement (underwater and above the waterline).

#### Representation of a submersible and surface pumps.

All in all, the main aspect related to the efficiency of a solar water pump is based on three variables

including pressure, flow and input power to the pump. Wire-to-water efficiency is the commonly used metric that determines the overall efficiency of a solar water pump (as the ratio between the hydraulic energy that comes

out of the pipe and the energy coming over the electrical wires through solar panels).

#### Why solar-powered water pumps are the ideal way to boost agriculture in remote areas

A solar-powered water

pump is a concept that is environmentally-friendly. More importantly, it is a concept that gets rid of any power grids or fossil fuels used to pump water out of the ground. Below are listed the advantages and disadvantages of their use.

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### Advantages of solar water pumps

The first advantage of solar pumps is that they are reliable in regional and remote areas. A perfect example of this is Africa, which is one of the poorest remote regions in the world with an abundance of water—but also the most dominant region when it comes to most days of sun in the year. On the flip side, Africa is thought to possess 9 per cent of the world's freshwater resources which translates to around 4,000 km<sup>3</sup> of water per year. Deploying solar water pumps in Africa is, therefore, the perfect alternative to any other fuel-based sources—and an alternative which can stimulate life in every part of this continent.

Easy to transport and relocate, solar water pumps can be organized as per the needs of the farm and have extremely low operating costs. Both of these are major advantages, paired with their cost-efficiency in the long run, and show that a solar water pumping system is the perfect solution for regions with sunny days and plenty of water on their grounds.

### Major disadvantages

The main disadvantage of deploying a solar-powered irrigation pump for agriculture is its cost (initial investment). Even though it



A solar-powered water pump is a concept that is environmentally-friendly.

depends on the power of the specific pump, one 120 Watt solar pump which promises to produce 2,100 gallons of water per day can be found on online marketplaces from around NZ\$500. An entire system for a solar-powered

irrigation pump based on one pump can also be found for around NZ\$1000. On other sites like eBay, the prices for kits like these are relatively the same.

Obviously, there is a major difference between deploying

a solar water pump for your home and one for an agriculture project. With different types, sizes and needs come different costs. There are cheaper and more expensive models but the average cost of solar water pumps is generally high,

considering the fact that many of them need to be deployed for effective irrigation. But all in all, compared to the cost of fossil fuels and other types of energy, solar is still a winner in the long run.

*Continued on P12*

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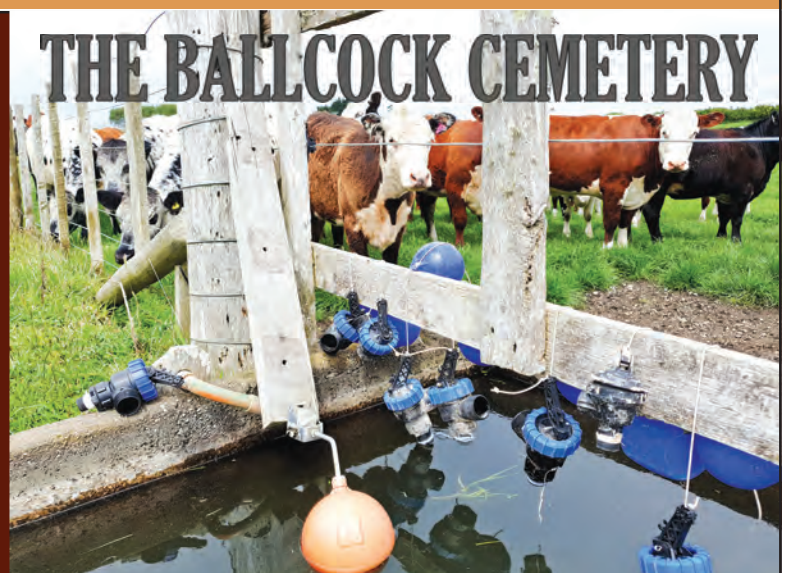
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From P11

In addition to this, solar energy in agriculture is also very weather-dependent. Even though solar energy can still be collected during cloudy and rainy days, the efficiency of a solar system drops. This is why solar irrigation systems are best used in regions with a lot of sunlight.

#### Are solar water pumps worth the investment?

One important thing to note when it comes to solar pumps and irrigation systems is the fact that their costs have dropped significantly in the past few years. According to new research from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), there will be a 59 per cent cost reduction for electricity generated by solar PV by 2025 compared to the 2015 prices.

As such, the economic viability of these systems varies for different regions and areas, mostly depending on site conditions, crops and markets. An infographic from The World Bank shows that in 1997, the average price of deploying solar energy per watt was NZ\$110. In 2015, that price was \$0.3 which clearly showcases the drop in prices. Now, a solar panel has an average lifespan of 25 years and compared to diesel pumping, it lacks any fuel and presents less operation and maintenance. The



Using the sun's energy can significantly help and accelerate the development of agriculture in African countries.

only disadvantage is its initial cost which is around two times higher compared to diesel water pumping systems.

Price is also a key differentiator when it comes to returns on investment (ROI). The key aspect that determines the economic viability (the factor associated with the worth

of solar water pumps as an investment) is how the solar-powered systems compared with other forms of energy.

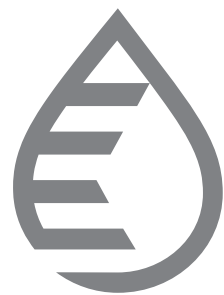
Generally speaking, diesel pumps have low initial investment costs but are also associated with high operation and maintenance costs, not to mention their negative

impact on the environment and ecology. In contrast to this, a solar water pumping system has higher investment costs but lower maintenance and operational costs.

So, the key takeaway of the "is it worth it" question is the following...

If you are based in a region

with plenty of sun and a lot of groundwater, a solar water pumping system is definitely recommended. Despite the initial installation costs, lower maintenance costs and a higher lifespan will give you an up-and-running system set in no time, clean water and many benefits in the long run.



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# Right match crucial in successful equity partnerships

Establishing an equity partnership for farm ownership can be daunting. However, using the most common form of ownership as a model helps understand the process.

An equity partnership is no different from a traditional family farm, where several family members are equity partners. An equity partnership is exactly the same, other than that the partners are not blood relations.

To form an equity partnership you need to bring together a group of people with similar values, sharing the same goals for themselves and for their farm. Sometimes I hear that finding those people is too difficult. My reply to that is: "Show me the perfect family!"

Equity partnerships help retain young, enthusiastic people in farming. They can also offer older farmers an easy, low stress way to exit, without cutting off entirely from their way of life. Alternatively, they can provide urban investors with a real stake in primary production.

Success and satisfaction when



Brent Irving

forming an equity partnership comes from linking up the right people. It is best to have your group together first, and then go shopping.

Making sure your values align is crucial: ensuring you are all on the same page and working for the same goals. Although you can change farms, changing people is much more difficult, so getting that right, with good communication, right at the start, is vital. You need to avoid



Success and satisfaction when forming an equity partnership comes with linking up with the right people.

matching up people who want to go in different directions. For example, an investor highly motivated to make their capital work for them, wanting a four to five per cent return, should never team up with someone who wants to put their whole life into that farm. Clear as anything, that scenario is not going to work, and will almost certainly fly to bits.

My advice is find the right mix of like-minded people, make sure they want the same thing, then go away and put something together: good communication, good governance, being sure you understand each other, and all agree on your objectives.

After that the fun starts and you can go shopping for the farm that will enable you to

achieve those goals.

*Brent Irving moved from rural banking to marketing rural property with PGG Wrightson Real Estate, Otago in 2021. He recently won both PGG Wrightson Rookie of the Year and the REINZ Rural Rising Star of the Year titles. He has helped establish more than 130 equity partnerships for farm ownership*

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AgFest West Coast is an event for everyone and is now going into its sixth successful event.

It will be held at the Greymouth Aerodrome on the 14 and 15 of October 2022.

The event recognises the importance of the agricultural

sector to the West Coast. The purpose is to give people in the rural sector the opportunity to showcase their businesses, to celebrate the agricultural industry and its significance on and around the Coast.

Come along to AgFest West Coast and experience every inch

of farming in New Zealand; from the latest in dairy sheds to the best gumboots to wear in them. You'll see the most up-to-date in farming vehicles and implements, stock care, health and safety, and much more.

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See the latest in precision agriculture.

hold hours of interest for every person in the family regardless of whether they work directly in the rural sector or not

The phenomenal growth of AgFest West Coast in the past eight years proves just how much this event is needed in

this region. Existing exhibitors proudly recommend AgFest West Coast as their preferred event – taking the opportunity to enjoy West Coast's hospitality, while they are on the Coast.

Check out the event at: <https://www.agfest.co.nz/>



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# How to grow in challenging times the focus of TAMA conference



Pat Deavoll  
RURAL REPORTER

The theme of the 2022 Tractor and Machinery Association's annual conference was Growing our World, with a focus on the importance of good relationships and good people as being key for the continued growth across the industry.

TAMA represents New Zealand's tractor and machinery importers, retailers and manufacturers. Its bi-annual conference is a chance for people in the industry to exchange ideas and examine the issues they face.

Despite the headwinds facing the international economy, the conference heard that numbers for Aotearoa's ag machinery sector have remained very strong throughout this past three years.

Agriview/Kynetec analyst Alan Kirsten presented the



Across the globe the use of precision technology in agriculture will continue to be rapidly integrated into equipment over next 8-10 years.  
PHOTO: SUPPLIED

sales figures, which show that 4192 tractors were sold in New Zealand in 2021. That was the second highest annual number in the past decade, and an increase of 24 per cent on 2020.

TAMA president Kyle Baxter said the sales figures are good news and part of a long-term trend. Average annual tractor

sales have risen from 3200 in the years 2008-2012 to 4200 per year in the period 2019-2023.

Whilst this growth presents many opportunities, it also brings challenges for the sector.

"Across the globe the use of precision technology in agriculture will continue to be rapidly integrated into

equipment over next 8-10 years. As the volume of sales and sophistication of technology grows, we will have to ensure the people tasked with selling, servicing, and repairing this equipment are continually trained to ensure they remain experts in this areas."

Baxter said this is happening

at a time when the traditional pool of employees that agricultural machinery companies have relied for sales and support staff on in the past – young people with farming backgrounds who have a passion for agricultural equipment – is declining in numbers.

TAMA general manager Phil Holden said another point that came through presentations and panel discussion at the conference was the need to build good relationships. For machinery dealerships that means good relationships with their brands and their staff, but also with their customers.

"Rural sales and marketing specialist St John Cramer reminded us that the big global brands all produce top quality machinery. The reason a farmer or contractor buys one machine over another often comes down to the relationship they have with their dealer," Holden said.

"This means looking after customers, really listening to them and providing them the backup service and support once the sale has been made."

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# The power of smart agriculture is growing



**Pat Deavoll**  
RURAL REPORTER

The world of agriculture has always been one to adopt new technologies.

From the early adoption of the cotton gin to steam engines, farmers have been among the greatest innovators throughout history.

Advances in the agricultural sector have been overshadowed in recent decades by developments in other areas. While advanced technologies such as microelectronics and the internet make headlines, the pace and appetite for innovation in the agricultural sector has not slowed. The global population is predicted to reach nearly 10 billion by the middle of the 21st century, and farmers have been quick to adopt technology that will increase production and improve their efficiency.

One of the biggest trends in the industrial world over the past decade has been the growth of the smart factory. This is the name given to developments that have seen increasing connectivity between computers and machinery within the manufacturing sector.

There is a parallel trend within the agricultural industry known as smart farming.

Smart farming embraces the latest sensor, computing, and connectivity technologies, and uses data to enable farmers to maximize their yield.

This data is collected from a wide variety of sources and is used to help make decisions, from identifying optimum soil conditions to monitoring the health of livestock and adjusting their nutrition. Although the amount of data collected is vast, the technology of the smart farm means that strategies can be applied to individual paddocks or animals, making the best use of resources and ensuring the greatest productivity.

New technology is therefore vital to the collection, sharing, and processing of this huge amount of information. The development of modern electronics—with reduced size, lower production costs, and efficient power consumption—has made it possible to deploy the large number of sensors required.

These devices might be deployed in a static location within a paddock or on a dynamic platform such as a tractor or combined harvester, or even fed to livestock to allow individual animals to be tracked across a large area.

In each of these applications, the integration of sensors into an information network allows data to be collected, shared, and analysed. Whether done with traditional cables or over a wireless communications network, it is this connectivity that defines the smart farm.

The introduction of 5G communications has provided a new and powerful tool for farmers. Although the consumer market has seen the most



**The introduction of 5G communications has provided a new and powerful tool for farmers.**

visible adoption of this new technology, 5G's capabilities will have a far greater impact in other areas.

Not only does 5G provide wireless communications that are on par with the speed of wired alternatives, but it also has the potential to connect rural areas that have traditionally lacked access to the latest high-speed networks.

This new connectivity is perfect for the smart farm. For the first time, 5G technology will allow the farmer to integrate all aspects of technology into a unified network. Static sensors and remote monitoring devices can all provide real-time data to the farmer. When these are combined with other advanced technology such as GPS navigation, farmers will be able to use their resources precisely where they are needed most.

Even traditional farm machinery will benefit from the latest technology. The ability to communicate rapidly using wireless technology is being incorporated in the latest generation of tractors.

Low latency vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication is allowing the use of autonomous or driverless vehicles. Guided by GPS and using data from the smart farm network, tractors and other farm vehicles will be able to operate safely without supervision. Farmers are even able to take to the skies, with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or drones) being used for both data collection and aerial application of fertilizers.

Radio frequency (RF) communication is at the heart of many of these innovations. It is easy to forget in the current age of digital technology that wireless systems still depend on high-frequency radio transmitters and receivers in order to communicate.



**Low latency vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) communication is allowing the use of autonomous or driverless vehicles.**

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# New markets for venison and more productive deer farms

The deer farming industry is celebrating the success of a strategy that has resulted in successful venison market development in China and a retail breakthrough in the United States. It has also resulted in increased productivity on deer farms.

Known as Passion2Profit (P2P), it aimed to convert the passion that farmers have for their deer

into greater farm profitability.

P2P was part of the government's Primary Growth Partnership programme and was funded 50/50 by the Ministry for Primary Industries and Deer Industry NZ.

China was now the industry's fourth biggest venison market, up from near zero exports at the start of the P2P programme.

On farm, productivity improvement has been reflected in a 4 per cent increase in national fawn survival rates, and a 4 kg lift in average carcass weights from 55 kg to 59 kg.

Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ) chief executive Innes Moffat said a raft of resources were developed for deer farmers under P2P as well as methods to ensure

the adoption of new management techniques and technology.

"Resources include the Deer Hub online, the Deer Fact sheet series, tools to monitor growth and reproduction and the setting of key performance indicators. Farmers engaged with productivity improvement initiatives in the early part of the programme then, as the

programme's focus shifted, into improving environmental management," he said.

"For me, the enthusiastic engagement from our deer farmers in P2P programmes has been the highlight. We are taking the enthusiasm that has been with us since day one of the programme, through into our future work."



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The size of the belgian blues comes from the breed's double muscle gene, which is completely natural and the result of a focus on producing meat.

PHOTOS: ISTOCK

# Farmer demand for CRV dairy beef genetics grows



Pat Deavoll  
RURAL REPORTER

CRV's dairy beef sales have grown by 15 per cent since last year as farmers take a more strategic approach to breeding and look to diversify their income streams.

"In the past, farmers used dairy beef predominantly towards the end of the mating season," says genetics product manager (NZ Market) Mitchell Koot.

"Now we are seeing more of them using it as part of a more strategic precision breeding approach to increase their herds' genetic gain.

"That involves using dairy beef strategically over their lowest genetic merit animals, together with sexed and conventional dairy semen over their best performers. This approach helps drive genetic gains even faster and create a healthier, more efficient herd."

Koot says as an increasing number of dairy farmers are

recognising the added value of dairy beef calves, they are considering a range of breeds to appeal to the beef market.

"Our dairy beef fertabull (hereford, angus and belgian blue) remain the most popular options within the respective breeds to give dairy farmers the best chance of getting cows in calf. Data from CRV recorded herds indicates that farmers are getting up to four per cent higher non-return rates using fertabull."

CRV currently has 20 breeds of dairy beef for farmers to choose from. These range from breeds with easy-to-identify coat markings, such as hereford and belgian blue, to breeds with high growth rates that appeal to beef finishers, such as charolais, angus, and stabilizer.

Dairy beef sires breeding values are screened carefully for short gestation, growth rates, and calving ease along with other key traits. Short gestation is important as it allows the calving pattern to be in line with earlier mated animals in the dairy herd.

CRV works with key dairy beef partners to ensure they offer customers top-quality sires whose progeny have traits tailored to both dairy and beef



The Stabilizer is relatively new in New Zealand but is actually the result of 30 years R and D by leading North American genetics companies.

farmer needs.

## Belgian Blue

CRV offers sires from the Belgian Blue Group (BBG) in Belgium. The size of the belgian blues comes from the breed's double muscle gene, which is completely natural and the result of a focus on producing meat.

BBG breeds dairy beef semen first and foremost for calving ease. Gestation length is also a key trait as are fertility, growth, and meat quality. With plenty of calves on the ground, CRV

sire Elk 41 is proving popular with farmers, with his strong growth rates, short gestation, and good coat colour markings.

An Irish study has shown that a belgian blue cross animal produces more meat from the same duration of feeding. BBG also offers polled blues too, which are popular with farmers wanting to avoid the time and cost of disbudding calves.

BBG has a strict breeding programme to ensure the best beef bulls are selected for dairy

and have been thoroughly tested to avoid any calving issues.

## Hereford

CRV also partners with Bluestone Herefords in South Canterbury, which has been supplying hereford genetics to CRV since 2014.

Bluestone focuses on producing a balanced hereford bull with four main traits; low birth weight, short gestation, ease of calving, and homozygous polled (hornless).

Lower birth weight is important because we know that lighter progeny means less risk of a difficult calving.

Short gestation is highly heritable trait that has many financial and management benefits. It means more days in milk, while the increase in re-breeding time gives cows more time to gain condition and increases the likelihood of them getting in calf. This also has flow on benefits for the following season with a tighter calving pattern.

Bluestone Hereford bulls are homozygous polled, so no de-horning of the progeny is required, saving time and money, while improving animal welfare and human safety.

*Continued on P20*



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CRV genetics product manager (NZ Market) Mitchell Koot.

PHOTOS: ISTOCK



Angus remain one of the most popular options to give dairy farmers the best chance of getting cows in calf.

*From P19*

Hereford cross-bred animals are very popular, due to their easily identifiable coat colour markings, with great saleability and high-value off-spring.

**Stabilizer®**

Stabilizer® is relatively new in New Zealand but is actually the result of 30 years R&D by leading North American genetics companies. They have captured the best

attributes of four breeds and combined them in a composite breed. Stabilizer is also a polled breed.

CRV sources its Stabilizer® genetics from Focus Genetics - NZ's largest independent red meat genetics company.

These dairy beef sires have been selected to maximise the value of shorter gestation, calving ease, and increased growth and yield in the

finished product.

Stabilizer® cross calves wean on average four days earlier and heavier with 19 per cent more scanned eye muscle (Massey University New Generation Beef trial - Stabilizer® cross vs traditional cross breeds at 11 months).

Stabilizer® combines the moderate size, ability to maintain body condition, and meat marbling of the British

breeds, with the muscle, milk production, and growth traits of the European breeds.

Colour marking is also a key consideration for many farmers. The Dairy-Stabilizer® cross progeny feature blocks of red or black colouring.

"When choosing a beef breed to use, farmers should consider the risks of each breed carefully, but not be afraid to consider new options

and make sure your decision is backed up by good science," says Mitchell.

"Dairy farmers can create real value from dairy beef cross progeny and in turn pass that value on down the supply chain. Using the right genetics, they can rear animals that will wean quickly, finish sooner, yield more, and maximise dollars paid per kilogram of carcass."

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# Dairy Focus

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2022



## THE ART OF DAIRY MATING

**Pages 30-31**



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# Maori leader: Putting the mana back into farming



Pat Deavoll  
RURAL REPORTER

There is no doubt that Maori Southland dairy farmer

Tangaroa Walker is a hard case. He lives life at a million miles an hour running his farm with six staff, on which he is a contract milker, and managing Farm 4 Life, an online education platform which he imagined himself and that delivers education to wanna be dairy farmers 24 hours a day. He is also a husband and father.

However Tangaroa's life didn't start out easy. His early years in Whakamarama in the North Island were pretty rough. Adopted twice before the age of five, he went to five different schools before age six and had never read a book. He moved home 17 times. At one point he lived in a tent for 18 months.

"I was brought up amongst drugs and alcohol and gangs, on the wrong side of the tracks," Tangaroa says.

"This was the path I was going down- breaking into stuff and stealing cars.

"All my cousins had gang patches and grew grass – these days I grow a different type of grass."

But the 2012 Inaugural Young Maori Dairy Farmer of the Year winner rose above his upbringing and has a tale to tell.

"Well, when I started off farming I used to get five bucks a week from my uncle. I would milk some of his cows, feed the pigs and the dogs and that is what I did every day from seven to 12 years old. For five bucks a week, man, I put that money towards a school lunch from the tuck shop."

By 14, he was looking after a dairy farm for weekends while his boss went away. At 18, he "left the nest" for Southland – somewhere he knew nobody and where "it could all have turn to custard," he says.

"I was standing in a cow shed



Tangaroa Walker: Farmer, father and social media guru.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

with my boss when I was about 18. He was a damn good farmer and a successful man, so I said 'What do I need to do to be like you?' and he said 'You have to

go where the grass grows the cheapest'. Needless to say, I ended up in Southland and the rest is history. I absolutely love it down here, the diving, my

new family, the rugby, the pig hunting, and all the farming opportunities. After being down here for ten years now I wouldn't go back."

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In Southland he became a farm manager for Graham and Glenda Haines.

"Graham and Glenda knew how to get me fully engaged with what I was doing and made me want to do what they needed for their business. That's something every business tries to do, and whether or not they're successful at that is the difference between them achieving their goals and not achieving their goals."

When the Haines' asked Tangaroa what he wanted to do with his life, he told them "learn everything and be contract milking within a year." It was a goal he achieved.

"I struggle to teach people through Farm 4 Life what Graham taught me in one year," Tangaroa says. "If I could create a 'Graham in my pocket' for everybody in the world, they could have the same experience that I've had in the industry."

Today, Walker is a true community and industry leader running a successful 920-cow dairy farm and reaching millions as the congenial face of Farm 4 Life with his practical, inspiring, funny videos on everything from farming to fishing to mental health management.

"I want to help people to understand where our food comes from. It's not from a packet, it's from the farm and what actually happens on the farm. It's quite enjoyable doing it through social media. By posting something

once I can reach a million people. And I love getting asked questions, having a laugh, and helping people learn.

"The thing for me, Farm 4 Life is the engagement with people—they say 'I loved that video,' or 'how do I go farming,' or 'how do I find a job?'"

As an aside, Tangaroa also published a book, with the help of a ghost writer, called Farm For Life: Mahi, mana and life on the land.

He had never written a book before and didn't know the process but he likes doing things he hasn't done before.

Being a busy man made it hard for him to have any downtime but he managed in the end, and even went on a 33-stop book tour around the country.

Farm 4 Life is a training resource for those new to the dairy industry, teaching them everything from how to operate and maintain farm vehicles to how to set up a fence.

"Farm 4 Life works a bit like YouTube, giving farmworkers a 'more meaningful' understanding of the work," Tangaroa says.

"Why does a farm owner have to teach his staff every year how to do something when they can get the professional... to occupy that video space and teach millions?"

"You can just jump into Farm 4 Life, type in for example 'fencing' and it will come up with nine educational videos about how to build and maintain a fence."

*Continued on P24*



The 2012 Inaugural Young Mori Dairy Farmer of the Year winner (centre).



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From P23

Tangaroa came up with the idea four years ago - but had wanted to try and educate people for a long time.

"At 22 years I was a bit bored so wanted to come up with a challenging technological concept," he says.

He has a large social media following for his Farm 4 Life videos. His three essentials for farming content are: make it entertaining; work with a live audience (farm animals) and hit them with really good knowledge.

"I enjoy helping young people so none of it is work for me. It's like my hobby. I am also now on the board of the South Island Dairy Event so they can ask me questions about how to attract young Kiwis to the industry," he says.

As the inaugural 2012 Young Maori Dairy Farmer of the Year winner, the outcome has been significant.

"I wanted to be the most successful Maori in the world and I wanted to motivate young Maori by directing them down the path I had followed to show them that the opportunities are out there if you are willing to sacrifice and put in the hard yards.

"I have always been passionate about dairy farming but since winning the Ahuwhenua (Young Maori) award I've been shown a lot of other areas that



The Southland coast, where Tangaroa is in his happy place free diving.

I am interested in as well. I've learned a lot about business. All of a sudden I wasn't just talking to farmers but to bank managers and CEO's. When I attended the FoMA conference people were coming up and talking to me about how they could help me get ahead," Tangaroa says.

Tangaroa is easy-going when it comes to his success. But he's fuelled by a desire to highlight the dairy industry, even in the challenging environmental conditions Southland offers.

"It could have happened anywhere in Aotearoa but to do it in Southland has probably

been the biggest leverage that I could have achieved: there's nothing better than showcasing how to do things in the most challenging part of the world," he says.

And the work hasn't stopped yet, Tangaroa is currently in the process of acquiring NZQA qualifications for all video content on the platform, and plans to roll out subtitles on videos in a variety of different languages, with Maori being the first. Eventually, he hopes the Farm 4 Life architecture can be used across the whole agriculture sector.

Tangaroa takes most of his



I wanted to be the most successful Maori in the world and I wanted to motivate young Maori by directing them down the path I followed.

videos himself and they have been watched "millions" of times."

He says his relationship with Farm 4 Life has made it hard for him to see it as work anymore.

"I'm always filming and so it becomes normal. It's just like cooking and eating a meal. I enjoy it".

But his work in promoting the dairy industry is more than just through educational material. He connects with both farmers and prospective entrants alike by providing real conversation through regular Facebook live videos.

When he has more downtime he likes to go free-diving and work out at his fitness gym in Southland. He also enjoys spending time with his wife and son.

Future goals? Tangaroa strives to "make a difference to people's lives."

To do so, he wants to continue educating others on how to improve their farming and try to give children a vision of the rural community.

His last word? "Although checkered shirts and Canterbury shorts are good-looking... farming just needs a sexy-up, mate," he says.

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New Zealand farms just under 5 million dairy cows in over 11,000 dairy herds. These bring in about \$19 billion a year to the national economy.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

# Don't know much about dairy? Take a read



Pat Deavoll  
RURAL REPORTER

New Zealand may be small in size, but our dairy industry is big in the world of dairy exports, being the eighth largest dairy producer globally.

With only five million people and around the same number of dairy cows that leaves a lot of dairy to export, and we send it to many places. Our high-quality dairy produce is New Zealand's biggest export earner.

New Zealand's temperate climate is well suited to a low-cost, high-quality grazed-pasture dairy system. The seasonal calving system that's been a feature of the industry for more than 100

years, matches home-grown feed supply with the herd's nutritional needs.

This seasonal calving system works with nature rather than against it, allowing the cows to access grazed pasture as their main feed source all year round.

Many of our international dairy farming customers have adopted this seasonal calving system with farmers seeing positive results, focusing milking cows to the pasture growth curve and keeping costs low.

New Zealand farms just under 5 million dairy cows in over 11,000 dairy herds. These bring in about \$19 billion a year to the national economy.

Dairying is spread across 1.74 million hectares of land and plays an important role in every regional economy.

Our dairy sector is highly integrated, modern, science-based and innovative, and is a global leader in pastoral dairy farming.

The industry commitment to ongoing improvements is strong, covering areas from people to pasture and from animals to environmental sustainability. Scientific research, later adopted as on-farm practices, and farmer collaboration characterise the industry.

Under our seasonal pasture-based farm system, highly fertile, easy care, productive and profitable cows are essential. Cows are calved to match feed demand with the rapid spring pasture growth.

Most cows calve within a 12 week spring calving window, with 83 per cent of the herd, on average, calved by week six of calving. That's more than 4 million cows calved in just 6 weeks. The national herd calving interval of 368-370 days is the shortest in the world, and it's been at this level for many years.

Genetic fertility trends are

positive, as are phenotypic trends. In 2021, the NZ national 6 week in-calf rate reached yet another high point after 4 years of consecutive gains. Final in-calf rate is also improving despite the average herd's total mating length being shortened (2021 saw the shortest recorded to date at just 10.7 weeks).

Herd life of cows in New Zealand is one of the longest in the world, averaging over 4.5 lactations per cow and unlike most countries, the phenotypic trend is for increased herd life.

Production per kg/liveweight continues to climb; modern New Zealand cows produce 50 kg milk solids more per year than the cows of a decade ago, despite being about the same size. High genetic merit cows are more profitable for farmers.

High genetic merit animals partition more of the feed eaten into milk solids, and less into waste. This means more

nitrogen is being converted into protein in cow's milk rather than being excreted as urine or faeces.

Genetic improvement is a concept well understood not just by NZ dairy farmers, but by farmers all over the world.

Every year, to identify and breed the best cows to elites sires, New Zealand dairy farmers milk a record of 3.67 million cows and mate 3.59 million to elite AI genetics.

This results in a superior line of replacement calves who will enter the milking herd at 2 years of age.

Historic genetic trends show NZ farm and cow performance improving and set to continue. It's fair to say that both the NZ and other industries understand the importance of responding to a changing world, seeking new and innovative ways to create competitive resilient systems that are better now and keep improving.



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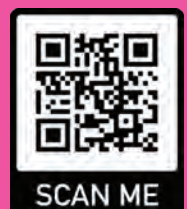
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# Du-Wett Super Spreader no longer just an 'extra'

Until relatively recently, the volume of water in spray programmes had largely flown under the radars of dairy farmers looking to achieve management efficiencies. However, rising fuel, labour, and spray costs, and shifts in attitudes towards the use of water itself, may be changing that.

UPL NZ Ltd.'s Adjuvant Product Manager David Lingan says increasingly farmers are looking to make savings, without compromising spray efficacy, using adjuvants such as Du-Wett Super Spreader.

"Budgets and the continuous drive to improve farming systems mean the products are being viewed in a new light," Lingan explains.

"Previously adjuvants tended to have been considered a bit of an 'extra'. Perhaps that was due to a lack of category confidence or a limited understanding of the benefits of adjuvants. In fact, correct use of an adjuvant such as Du-Wett Super Spreader improves spread and retention of crop protection products

and at a much lower water application volume per hectare."

A passionate champion of Du-Wett's power to extract every last cent of value from sprays, Lingan says the product is now getting the attention it deserves.

He says it's ironic that water use in spray programmes has avoided close scrutiny for so long.

"When we went out to spray our crops and paddocks, we often overlooked that one very important component in the tank: the water. It was used to dilute the chemistry and (we hoped) provide adequate coverage to our crops. It was almost an afterthought. Yet, by volume, it has almost always been the most common ingredient in the spray tank"

Lingan says scientific recognition of the "huge" potential benefits of reducing water volumes goes back quite a way.

Elliott Chemicals Limited (now UPL NZ Ltd) had begun work on adjuvants in this country more than two decades



UPL NZ Ltd.'s Adjuvant Product Manager David Lingan.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

ago. Du-Wett is one of their successful discoveries. An organosilicone surfactant blend super-spreader with improved deposition, it is backed by years

of dedicated research and development.

Lingan says one spray droplet containing Du-Wett can provide up to 25 times

the spread of active compared to spray applied without an adjuvant and at least 5-10 times compared to a conventional, non-ionic adjuvant.

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“Using much lower water rates makes spraying faster, meaning less time in the paddock, and reduced re-filling and travelling. That cuts diesel use, downtime, and total hours on the job.”

Lingan says the balance sheet benefits are measurable and significant. “Previously, for many growing high value crops, costs were simply considered part of doing business. But actually, even water isn’t free.

“The savings can be calculated, and Du-Wett will pay for itself.”

Du-Wett can be used across a wide range of crops and pastures and works in three key ways.

By decreasing spray drift by up to 25 per cent, Du-Wett reduces waste, increases efficiency, and lessens the risk of unintended environmental consequences.

It also improves coverage through more even spray droplet spread, distribution, and adhesion. That enhanced coverage is achieved through the lowering of the surface tension of the spray solution containing Du-Wett, thereby spreading the spray droplet. High water volumes alone just can’t do that.

Lastly, Lingan says, Du-Wett optimises the activity of chemistry.

“With the cost of sprays



Du-Wett can be used across a wide range of crops and pastures.

increasing at a rate we haven’t experienced in many years, it’s fiscally prudent to adopt and integrate Du-Wett (and other adjuvants) in most crop protection inputs.”

Lingan says where Du-Wett particularly comes into its own for dairy, is in high value, notoriously hard-to-wet maize and brassica crops.

Du-Wett is used with insecticides to target brassica

damaging pests including aphids, white butterfly and diamondback moths. Critically, Du-Wett enables the insecticide’s active to reach all parts of the leaf where aphid and caterpillars are often sheltered.

Using Du-Wett in the tank, aerial applications of insecticide to control maize pests including corn earworm and armyworm can be made considerably more

cost effective and achieve better coverage.

“If the crop protectant product doesn’t actually get to the plant – there’s not going to be any protective action. Adding more water will only make it worse. This is definitely a case where ‘less is more,’” Lingan says.

The newly Du-Wett Organic, a BioGro-certified super spreader, means organic

growers can now also benefit from all the features and benefits of Du-Wett.

The simple use rate on the Du-Wett label was developed specifically to optimise the benefit of Du-Wett and the tank mix partner(s). Following the label directions will ensure maximum efficacy, and enable users to get the best out of Du-Wett

Du-Wett is compatible with most commonly used fungicides and insecticides.

If wet weather protection is needed, using Du-Wett WeatherMAX, a Super Spreader containing synthetic latex for enhanced rainfastness is recommended.

Lingan does sound one note of caution. Not all organosilicones are created equal. “Organosilicones are often used with herbicides for superior penetration via stomatal infiltration. Du-Wett is a very different type of organosilicone in that it will not increase penetration when used at recommended label rates. Too much penetration can often have unwanted effects. In short, you can’t just use any organosilicone to lower your water volumes in place of Du-Wett.”

For more advice, ask your technical representative or for information on saving costs with Du-Wett, contact David Lingan at UPL.



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# Elbow Deep



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with **Craig Hickman**

## Independent dairy processors – objecting to anything Fonterra does

Nobody was surprised when Fonterra's competitors objected to the co-operative's plans to change its capital structure. Vigorous objection to anything Fonterra does is just what independent dairy processors do on days that end with a Y. It has almost become a sport to see who can make the loudest, most farcical threat about what change will bring.

Recently Open Country Dairies hired a firm to compile a report full of dire warnings about what Fonterra's capital structure changes would do, including an increase in the domestic price of dairy products. Open Country Dairy export all their products, so their sudden concern for the New Zealand consumers is hardly genuine.

While at times competitor's arguments are short-sighted, the reason every processor has an opinion about Fonterra's capital structure is simple, they are all fighting for a share of the declining milk pool.

Once again Fonterra find themselves begging the Government to change the law so they can fight off the advances from these competitors. And once again, Fonterra have nobody but themselves to blame.

Fonterra's current capital structure came into effect ten years ago and was designed solely to protect the co-operative's balance sheet against farmers exiting the company

and cashing in their shares. This was fine when milk growth was exponential, but the ink was barely dry when production began to slow, and Fonterra's share of the pool declined. This new structure attempts to give farmer shareholders a reason to keep supplying the co-operative instead of cashing in their shares and supplying an independent processor. Independents do not require farmers to buy shares in their company.

The Minister for Agriculture Damien O'Connor's dislikes Fonterra's current shareholding arrangements so intensely that he is pushing for the changes to progress. However, O'Connor can smell the desperation on Fonterra's breath and has wrung several concessions out of them in the process, not to mention dropping a review of milk quota allocations in their lap.

For their part, Fonterra has acquiesced to nearly every demand the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) asked of them, so desperate were they to see the changes go through. Changes, it must be said, that have the support of an overwhelming majority of farmer shareholders, myself included.

Last week the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment (PCE), Simon Upton, called for a pause in proceedings stating that he was "concerned these changes



hold the potential for negative environmental consequences".

I find Upton's concerns quite bizarre as everyone agrees that the milk pool is shrinking, which should result in the opposite of increased environmental impacts.

Government regulations around freshwater and land use change have all but stopped dairy conversions dead in their tracks, and more land is moving away from dairy than is converting to it.

Upton's argument is that the changes Fonterra want to make could make farmers more profitable and incentivize

them to milk even more cows. However, producing milk has got increasingly expensive over the past two seasons with increased interest rates and input costs easily outstripping the gains made in the Farmgate Milk Price.

If anything, freeing up farmer's capital will allow them to more easily comply with increasing environmental regulations, thus doing exactly the opposite of what Simon Upton suggests.

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**Craig Hickman: Changes that have the support of an overwhelming majority of farmer shareholders, myself included.** PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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# Genetics and reproductive performance in cows goes ahead



**Pat Deavoll** **RURAL REPORTER**

Genetics plays a role in an animal's reproductive performance, for the animal itself and the sire she's mated to.

New Zealand's seasonal dairy farming system entails a condensed calving pattern with cows required to conceive within approximately 12 weeks of the planned start of calving.

This has resulted in strong selection for fertility through the culling of non-pregnant cows and a relatively strong emphasis on fertility in Breeding Worth (BW), the national breeding objective that drives sire selection.

## Fertility breeding values

Fertility breeding values (BVs) are comparative measures expressed as a percentage of daughters that re-calve within the first six weeks of calving. The fertility BVs can be used to compare sires of all ages, breeds and crosses in New Zealand.

Fertility BVs for bulls and cows are relative to a genetic base, being the average of cows born in the base year. So cows with fertility BVs of 0 per cent have the same genetic merit for fertility as the base cows born in 2005.

In comparing cows with fertility BVs of +5% (high genetic merit for fertility) with cows with fertility BVs of -5% (low genetic merit for fertility), you can expect 10 more high-merit cows per hundred to re-calve in the first six weeks of the herd's calving period.

Bulls transmit half their fertility BV to their daughters. The other half comes from the dam.

## Sire selection and fertility genetics

Some artificial breeding (AB) sires produce daughters that are genetically more fertile than others. This means that the genetic make-up of the herd for fertility may be a little better or worse than the average herd.

Farmers can check their herd's fertility genetics by requesting the herd's average fertility breeding value (BV) from the herd improvement organisation.

Breeding Worth (BW) takes reproductive performance into account, ensuring there will be ongoing genetic progress long term in cow fertility.

Farmers who are struggling with reproductive performance could find it valuable to specifically target bulls that rank well for fertility. This will effectively increase the rate of gain in fertility genetics within the herd, and this should have a large impact on the herd's overall reproductive performance.

## Genetic fertility research

An 'animal model' research herd with extreme diversity in genetic fertility has been established by Dairy NZ and these heifers calved in 2017. Their progress has been monitored and the research team are looking for answers to the following fertility questions:

- How accurate is the current fertility breeding value?
- What new traits can we measure to help us better predict fertility?
- What underlying physiology is driving differences in fertility?

## Crossbreeding adds hybrid vigour

If you are breeding crossbred cows they will have additional hybrid vigour for fertility. New Zealand Animal Evaluation data measures the hybrid enhancement of fertility beyond the effects of breeding values.

The hybrid vigour advantage for a first cross animal is that the six-week in-calf rate is around 3.4 per cent higher than you would expect from mating parents of the same single breed.

The hybrid vigour advantage for subsequent crosses is that the 6-week in-calf rate is around 2 per cent higher than you would expect from mating parents of the same single breed.

Crossbred AB sires will retain a 1.7 per cent hybrid vigour advantage.

## Gestation length

In New Zealand, the average gestation length of dairy cattle is 282 days, but there is genetic variation around this.

Interest in short gestation breeding options has increased and some farmers include short gestation length sires in their mating programme, at the tail end of AB or as an AB restart near the end of mating.

## Selecting bulls to minimise calving difficulty

Subsequent reproductive performance is worse after an assisted calving.

Some sires, especially holstein-friesian, cause higher rates of assisted calving when mated to yearling heifers. This is a direct genetic effect of the bull.

This sire effect is reflected in a sire's calving difficulty BV.

A sire's calving difficulty BV predicts the percentage of assisted calving's expected when he is mated to yearling heifers. It can also be used to identify bulls that are expected to increase the rate of calving assistance for cows carrying the bull's calves.

When artificially inseminating yearling heifers, use sires proven under New Zealand conditions with a low calving difficulty BV.

## Avoid inbreeding

Inbreeding tends to have a negative effect on a cow's profitability through lower fertility, lower production and a higher incidence of genetic disease. Avoid inbreeding by not mating sires with closely related cows.

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Fertility breeding values (BVs) are comparative measures expressed as a percentage of daughters that re-calve within the first six weeks of calving.



# Farmers focused on wintering well



Pat Deavoll  
RURAL REPORTER

Farmers Ewen Mathieson and Ben Tosswill are working hard to protect their stock and the environment, by wintering well during the coldest months of the year.

Traditionally, July brings chilly temperatures, wet weather, and an increased risk of snow. To help farmers stay on top of these challenging conditions, Southland dairy farmer Mathieson and Hawke's Bay sheep farmer Tosswill are sharing their experiences of managing winter grazing.

Speaking on a DairyNZ podcast, both Mathieson and Tosswill agree that planning ahead, developing contingency plans, and carrying out daily checks are key to providing good animal care, protecting the environment, and minimising stress for people and animals over winter.

"Having a wintering plan helps identify risks like slopes,

water sources, and different soil types which helps us to plan our winter grazing to reduce the risk of contaminant and sediment runoff," said Mathieson.

"Planning allows us to think through the different scenarios that could occur over winter and prepare for them. It helps reduce stress and allows you to get a better night's sleep," said Tosswill.

Mathieson has developed small sawdust pads on his farm to provide cows with a comfortable space to move to and lie on in bad weather.

"Cows need to be able to lie down while they are digesting feed," Mathieson explains.

"They need to express their natural behaviours and lying is an important part of this."

"With the new regulations coming in next winter, North Island farmers also need to have a wintering plan and understand how practices affect the environment. We developed our plan for this year and are still learning about our impact," said Tosswill.

Mathieson said a particular focus on his farm was checking animals regularly – once or even twice daily.

"This helps us catch issues



Ben Tosswill: With the new regulations coming in next winter, farmers need to have a wintering plan and understand how practices affect the environment. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

early so that small issues don't escalate into bigger problems."

DairyNZ's head of the South Island, Tony Finch, said during July and August the weather could be very cold and unpredictable, and farmers needed to keep up their focus on caring for stock right to the end of winter.

"Daily checks on the weather forecast, paddock conditions, and cows are all vital to protect your herd. You can use the gumboot test to check that the ground is suitable for cows to

lie on. Planning ahead is also key to ensure that cows don't calve on mud."

Last winter, 89 percent of farmers developed a contingency plan to protect their animals and the environment in bad weather.

Finch said it's not too late for farmers to develop a Plan B if adverse weather strikes, using DairyNZ's template. "If you do have a Plan B, check your team understand when to action it."

Beef + Lamb New Zealand's environmental policy manager

Heather McKay said the wintering grazing module in Beef + Lamb NZ's farm plan would help farmers identify risks and take action to mitigate them.

"Both Ben and Ewen stress the importance of having a plan in place to protect their livestock and soil and water resources. We encourage all farmers who are intensively grazing to follow their lead and use the resources available to develop a plan and take the stress out of winter grazing."



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# The future looks bright for Te Mania

When Thomas Grothe heard that Te Mania was looking for an investor last year, he didn't sit on his hands. Grothe, whose of German descent, was keen to be part of New Zealand's farming industry and he needed the right engine.

Te Mania had been through its share of financial difficulties but what Grothe saw was a thriving angus stud business with strong foundations, a keen eye for progression in new technologies, and Will Wilding – the young man with an innovative mind, vast knowledge, and a desperate desire to make it all work.

"I had heard about the reputation of Te Mania's cattle and I wanted to be part of it. I wanted to enable them to take further steps with my financial backing," says Grothe.

Wilding says when Grothe first began discussions with the Wilding family, he was particularly interested in the talk about improving feed efficiency.

"Methane is going to be the next big issue for farmers and we know that net feed intake and methane emissions are closely correlated," says Wilding.



**Will Wilding: the young man with an innovative mind, vast knowledge, and a desire to make it all work.** PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

One of the first partnerships that was forged when Grothe came on board was with Vytelle, a global precision livestock company focused on reshaping the industry and fast-forwarding genetic progress. Vytelle Sense is a research feed-pad technology that identifies the most efficient/elite performing animals with an individual animal feed intake and weight-gain data capture system. Animals are run through a feed pad in groups of 35 bulls or 40 heifers for 66 days and the Vytelle technology

collects individual weight, feed intake and behaviour data on cattle in the pens as they eat and drink.

The first 106 Te Mania bulls went into the new Vytelle GrowSafe feed unit on Monday 12 September. They have eleven days of pre-trial to learn to use the feed bins, before 49 days of recorded feeding and weighing. The bull's EID tag is scanned as it feeds from the bins and the feed is continuously weighed. Then the animal is weighed as he drinks from the trough.



**The first 106 Te Mania bulls went into the new Vytelle GrowSafe feed unit on Monday 12 September.**

Vytelle makes the claim that genetic selection for feed efficiency will reduce feed intake by up to 12 per cent, reduce methane production by 30 per cent and improve profitability.

Grothe says, "If we can increase feed efficiency, and consequently decrease methane emissions, then I think we are taking farming in the right direction. These claims need to be proven and I'm willing to invest in trials to prove they are accurate."

Since shifting to AngusPRO,

Te Mania has access to the Net Feed Efficiency EBV. However, this is calculated with genomics alone and has a moderate accuracy of about 40 per cent. The addition of phenotypic data from the feed pad will improve this accuracy.

In the past, Te Mania has made its mark on the environmental grandstand with its fertiliser programs, however, paving the way with this new feed-efficiency project will make a much larger impact," Wilding says.

*Continued on P34*



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From P33

"If we can identify and breed from genetic profiles that are better for the environment, we can reduce our environmental footprint in a much greater way."

The facility itself was already there in bones. A feed pad was built in the 1990s as a quarantine facility for export cattle. It's been used during calf weaning for the past five years but is now being repurposed. The maximum capacity of the four feed pads is 16 groups of either 35 bulls or 40 heifers a year.

Three of the feed pads will be used by Te Mania full time and one will be available for use by other AngusPRO members, or may be of interest in beef trials. Quantity of feed will be the only handbrake for the first year, as Wilding needs to grow a much higher tonnage of lucerne silage, and possibly maize silage, to feed in the bins.

As general manager and stud master, Wilding is not just focused on feed efficiency, but also on the unchanged core values of the stud. Maternal qualities are first and foremost – a cow that gets in calf every year, calves easily, then repeats this every year thereafter. Growth comes in next and although the 'balance' term has been bandied around a lot recently and sounds cliché, the

Te Mania herd are genuine hill country cows that live in the hills for more time than they do on the flats.

"Our core philosophy hasn't changed, but new technologies are allowing us to select and make breeding decisions on a whole new playing field," Wilding says.

Embryo transplant (ET) will allow Te Mania to flush the most feed-efficient females in the herd, and after sourcing semen from the most feed efficient sires they'll be able to generate a refined bloodline that has reduced methane emissions and this will undoubtedly have appeal to the end consumer. The commercial farmer will be interested too of course, as the positive effect on profitability is a certainty.

Te Mania has always been at the front of the innovation game in New Zealand – the first to weigh calves, have scales on farm, and the first to join BreedPlan. The history of innovation is there. Technology is now the future of cattle breeding, although it comes at great expense. Having Grothe come on board has provided much needed financial stability, eased the burden of farm succession and allowed Te Mania to invest in technology that will catapult the stud back to the forefront of the stud-breeding game.

Grothe is keen to increase Te

Mania's production by 10 per cent year on year. The two-year-old auction's bull numbers aren't expected to change but he and Wilding are looking at ways to increase bull numbers through other avenues. The number of yearlings sold at the October bull sale is expected to rise, possibly decreasing the number that would be available for private sale.

"Every year the cohort of bulls is becoming more condensed, especially with the ET. This is reducing wastage and ultimately lifting the quality of what we sell at auction," Wilding says.

Wilding has his feet firmly planted at Te Mania and is there for the long haul. Without sounding too hushed on the matter, there are projects in the pipeline that excite him and he sees the reduction in waste bulls as being a big bonus.

Grothe spends 50 per cent of his time on farm at Conway Flat and isn't afraid to get his hands dirty, whether it's pouring concrete or surveying a new road through the blackberry.

"I found a partner who needed some investment. I had the money and Will has the knowledge, so I see it as a win-win," says Grothe.

Whatever way you look at it, the future is bright for Te Mania.

By – Sarah Horrocks



Maternal qualities are first and foremost – a cow that gets in calf every year, calves easily, then repeats this every year thereafter.



Genetic selection for feed efficiency will reduce feed intake by up to 12 per cent, reduce methane production by 30 per cent and improve profitability.

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# 10,000 farmers will require resource consent for winter feeding



**Chris Murdoch** **PROPERTY BROKERS**

**"The Queen is dead and long live the King".**

What a difference a few days can make to people's lives. One day the Queen lives, the next moment she has gone. I guess it just shows us we need to make the most of each day we are given.

Recently I read an article written on the consent log jam that's heading our way. Well, not all of our way but certainly if you are farming rolling or sloped terrain then definitely your way.

This is in connection with getting a consent to drill winter feed crops on sloping ground and to meet the requirements set down by the Government for freshwater farm plans. It suggested an estimated 10,000 farmers may require resource consents to intensively winter stock on winter feed crops this next coming season. There is no way these consents can be granted in time to allow farmers time to apply, get a result and then drill their winter feed.

This is just another example of Government officials with bright ideas but no real knowledge of how a farm works practically. These rules are going to have serious



**10,000 farmers will require resource consent for winter feeding.**

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

consequences, especially in the South Canterbury area where a large area of farms are on sloping country.

It amazes me how a group of non-farmers can come up with ideas that have huge effects on others without serious

consultation with the people who are affected.

In real estate, the market still seems to be ticking over with a good number of quality properties coming to the market in the new season. The dairy pay-out seems on the lift after a long

spell on dropping GDP sales.

Lamb and beef prices are holding and arable continues to be getting record prices for their grain this year. A lot sits in the balance and everyone seems to be concerned about the cost explosion that at

the moment is offset by the commodity values.

Watch this space concerning consent and cost structures.

*The views expressed in this column are Chris' and do not reflect the opinion of his employer or Property Brokers.*

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# Ashburton A and P Show – something for everyone



In the summer months, large show jumping events are held regularly.



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The Ashburton Agricultural & Pastoral Association Show is held on the weekend following Labour Weekend of every year and is the largest two-day annual agricultural event held in the Mid Canterbury district.

Hosted at the Ashburton Showgrounds on 17.4 hectares

of land since its founding in 1877, the show's mission statement is to "promote excellence in agriculture and goodwill between town and country."

The show attracts exhibitors from all over the South Island.

Each year the president

chooses a 'show theme' and many exhibits/competitions are based around this.

The show offers strong two-day competitions for horses, dog trials and one-day competitions for sheep/wool/pet lambs, cattle (dairy, beef and calves), poultry, alpacas, shearing, goats, donkeys, and grain and

seeds. Highland dancing is a highlight, plus tiny tots and home industries for adults and students.

All events are well supported offering a good standard of competition to competitors. Over 190 entrants complement the livestock competitors

together with food, music, displays, entertainment and competitions.

The Ashburton A & P Association was formed on 1 October 1877 when a meeting of farmers was held at the Somerset Hotel. Its first show was held on November 15, 1878 at Tinwald.

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The show's mission statement is to "promote excellence in agriculture and goodwill between town and country."

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

The first president was John Grigg of Longbeach who held the position for two years. Photos of all the past presidents can be viewed in the A & P lounge at the grounds and the minute books are in safe keeping at the Ashburton Museum.

In the 1920's the show was a two-day event held during the week. Later it became a one-day show. Then in the 1960's it became a day-and-a-half event, due to the number of horse entries- then later a full two-day show again.

In 1957 the A&P purchased

and took over the old Ashburton Sale Yards and extended the grounds towards the main road. This gave the Association valuable space which was well utilised at show time.

In the list of past presidents, a large number of family names keep cropping up - there are several grandfathers, fathers and their sons who have held office.

Up till sometime in the 1930s a winter show was held in the arcade in Ashburton. Over the years there have been organised a lot of related

agricultural events such as ploughing matches, prime stock sales at the Tinwald sale yards and until recently, the annual ram fairs.

Between 1942-1944 there were no shows held due to WW2 and the grounds were used as an army camp.

The annual show takes place at the end of October, the week following Labour Weekend at the association's showgrounds at Brucefield Avenue where there are excellent facilities for the public to enjoy.

The show is run by a small hardworking committee helped

by a large team of volunteers who work together in the week prior to the show.

As far as show attractions there is an excellent ring for horse events and enough space for exhibitors including a large home industries pavilion which replaced one that was burnt down in 1989.

A standard has been set and the committees over the years have worked tirelessly to provide what is now known as one of the best two-day shows in the South Island attracting entries from a wide area.

The Ashburton A & P

Show is fortunate to own its own grounds and these are hired out regularly to various groups during the year. It has been the home base since 1956 to the Mid Canterbury Rugby Union. In the summer month, large show jumping events are held regularly in November and January along with other smaller horse events.

As the Ashburton A&P has had to change with the times it has needed to keep looking forward into the future to ensure the continuation of the Association.

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# IronmaxPro NZ's first BioGro Certified slug bait

**I**ronmax Pro from UPL NZ Ltd, is the new, better, and greener way to protect high value forage crops and dairy pastures from the twin menaces of slugs and snails.

Mike Goodwin, UPL NZ Central South Island regional manager, says the unique product builds on the success of the sustainable agricultural solutions provider's Metarex® Micro (applied at drilling with seed) and Metarex Inov slug baits. The Metarex products, themselves breakthroughs when they were launched, are very well known and have been used in New Zealand for many years.

Goodwin says the BioGro NZ organic certification takes Ironmax Pro up an extra notch. "It's huge. It's great news for farmers, contractors and the dairy industry all of whom have been crying out for environmentally 'softer' options that still get the job done."

With demand for high quality feed continuing to increase steadily the approval has come at a good time. Goodwin says around 500,000 hectares of

brassicas alone are estimated to have been planted this season.

Slugs continue to be a major pest in brassicas, maize, and pasture and Goodwin says they have the potential to cost the economy millions of dollars. "There is a lot on the line. No-one can afford to have a spring or autumn sowing fail. Slugs are right up there in their ability to cause really serious crop damage - just slightly behind grass grub."

Grey field slugs (*Deroceras reticulatum*) thrive in this country's temperate climate. Particularly damaging to seedlings, they are active year-round with population pressure and damage typically peaking in autumn and spring. Goodwin says the pests have the capability to wipe out an entire crop if they are present in sufficient numbers.

Goodwin says popular low and no tillage systems can also provide slugs with more "trash"; an environment in which they flourish.

Goodwin says the product's spreading properties are excellent. "The pellets'

uniformity is a key feature determining ballistic profile and effective spreading distance.

The unique Ironmax Pro manufacturing process and pellet size mean the bait can be spread consistently at widths of up to 24 m. That saves a lot of passes, time, and fuel."

The product's breakthrough Colzactive® technology is responsible for the exceptional palatability that further separates Ironmax Pro from other slug baits. Created by the De Sangosse research and development team, Colzactive is made up of specially selected oil seed rape extracts. Goodwin says the De Sangosse R&D team evaluated 20 different plant species and identified 50 potential molecules for their attractiveness to slugs.

"They ultimately selected two molecules from oil seed rape for their extraordinarily attractive and palatable characteristics to slugs. These are the basis of the Colzactive technology which enhances the Ironmax Pro bait attractiveness, its taste and, importantly, the speed at which



**Michael Goodwin: UPL NZ Central South Island regional manager.**

the baits work compared to other slug baits."

Research shows slugs actively prefer feeding on Ironmax Pro to feeding on seedlings. That enjoyment, however, is very short-lived.

Ironmax Pro contains the optimized active ingredient 24.2 g/kg ferric phosphate anhydrous, referred to as IPMax. Iron phosphate is a natural component of soil. It works as a stomach poison on slugs and snails and is fatal

once ingested. A vital organ (the digestive gland) becomes overloaded with iron which impairs the digestion process and ultimately the ability to process food. Feeding stops almost immediately.

Goodwin says as slugs retreat underground to die, positive signs of crop protection rather than dead slugs should be looked for to indicate that Ironmax Pro is doing its job.

Monitoring the crop is a key component of slug control. De Sangosse slug mats are very handy for detecting slug activity. Slug mats should be left out overnight and checked for slugs the next morning. Goodwin says just three to four slugs per mat indicates a population large enough to cause damage.

Ironmax Pro is IPM friendly and does not impact beneficials including earthworms and the slug predator carabid beetle, which can contribute to the natural suppression of slugs. This makes Ironmax Pro an exceptionally low hazard environmental solution.

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# Headwaters leads the way with premium lamb



Pat Deavoll  
RURAL REPORTER

It is not often a gathering of farmers down in the South Island get to hear directly from the world's top chefs. But at the Headwaters muster held in Wanaka last month, the 120 farmers who supply Headwaters with Lumina lamb heard how and why their lambs are so important to the premium restaurant sector.

It is all about the fat, farmers were told via video from kitchens at restaurants in Las Vegas, Palm Springs, and Taipei. A fine intramuscular micro-marbling rich with Omega-3 that has become game-changing for chefs and diners alike.

The ewes which were developed with a unique constitution to survive New Zealand's high country 15 years ago, have become the matriarchs of a precious source of premium protein perfect for discerning foodies.

"It is the smooth delicate flavour", "have never tasted lamb like this before", "it is because it is beautiful animal protein sourced ethically" are some of what the farmers heard from the chefs across the globe about the lamb they rear in New Zealand.

Consumer demand for Lumina lamb has driven significant growth at Headwaters which has seen the volume of Lumina lamb go from 50,000 lambs to 104,000 in 12 months - in a market where supply is diminishing.

Headwaters has aspirations to grow further - by 100,000 lambs year on year. The company has hired a new general manager, doubled its staff, and wants to see the Headwaters family of farmers expand and flourish.

For Headwaters, the focus is not only on sourcing and supplying a unique product, it wants to grow a community of progressive farmers that are connected to what happens to their lambs beyond the farm gate, and care. This enables them to farm proactively, and accurately respond to consumer trends and this is possible at Headwaters because of the joint ownership of the Lumina brand with the Alliance Group via High Health Alliance.

Tim Saunders, who joined Headwaters as GM mid-last year from Maori food and beverage company, Kono, explains how it works.

"Headwaters is unusual, and can be a tricky concept to get one's head around because it links farmers with the science and genetics which go into sustainable breeding of a sort-product, with the desires of the end consumer market - and touches on everything in between.

"Our farmers are not one part of the value chain, they deserve to be part of all of it. We see them as integral all the way through, with skin in the game, and a decent profit share.

"We insist the Headwaters' lambs come from sustainable and high-performing farms, we use data to define and determine this and to drive further good change on-farm, we encourage this by demonstrating the significance of provenance and premium product to our farmers by

connecting them directly with the chefs that pride themselves in preparing Lumina lambs for the consumers who savour them," says Saunders.

Dan Harper, who manages Quartz Hill Station with his wife Georgie in Canterbury, farms Lumina lamb.

"Headwaters is like a big family, we are proud that we are doing something different and that as part of that, we are also making a difference. We are a farming family. It is in our blood, I want my children to feel the same pride about what they do.

"At Headwaters we are all like-minded, we want to produce the world's best lamb and do it in the right way," says Harper. "Hearing from those chefs what they love about Lumina gives me goose bumps, and seeing Lumina lamb on a menu, knowing it comes from this small group of farms here in New Zealand means a lot. We are not just putting our lambs on a truck at the farm gate - with Headwaters we remain connected to the end product and are inspired to make it the best."

Headwaters has plans to double the number of farms that supply Lumina lamb to satisfy growing demand for the unique food product from the premium global restaurant trade.

"But this is not about volume, it is scaling with purpose and about contributing to a thriving sheep and beef sector in New Zealand, helping farmers grow businesses worth handing over to the next generation, and ensuring that sustainably produced New Zealand lamb - stays on the menu globally. All thanks to New Zealand sheep farmers," says Saunders.



The Harper family of Quartz Hill Station: Headwaters is like a big family.



The Headwaters muster held in Wanaka this month, the 120 farmers who supply Headwaters with Lumina lamb heard how and why their lambs are so important to the premium restaurant sector.

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# Spring is here at Free Range Farm



**Sheryl Stevens** **ECO EFFICIENCY**

Spring was never more welcome at Free Range Farm than this September.

Father's Day was celebrated with a yummy brunch feast out in the sunshine once the mobile hen and pullets houses and fences were shifted and reassembled in the back food forest where the hens can roam on fresh ground and lay lots of tasty eggs as well as keep the orchard tidy.

We were delighted to welcome our first kereru [wood pigeon] who stared wistfully at the empty creek that now supports no life since the council shut off the fresh water. He or his ancestors may have been here before when the kowhai and tree lucerne are flowering but this was the first time we had spotted him close to the house. It's sad to see the 130 year gravity fed creek bed barren and dry.

We are grateful for the late lambing this year as the weather improves and the grass begins to

grow. The blossom on the heritage peach and nectarine trees we have grown from seed is stunning. Another surprise is seeing the peach and nectarine stones sprouting in the worm castings we have put in the garden as well as in the trays of the worm farm.

We've been teaching people to grow their own heritage stone fruit trees for years to avoid leaf curl and rot and have never seen such an abundance of sprouting seeds appearing through the garden mulch. It's shaping up to be a great spring.

Now the hens have been shifted we are busy in the vegetable garden. The hens or 'chicken tractor' have been clearing and naturally fertilizing this area all winter and now it's time to plant our own seed potatoes in the cleared ground and clear out the raised beds to fill with pony poo and worm castings from our five worm farms. We harvested the spring onions and kale to make space for the celery, pak choi, moon bok, cauliflower, and red cabbage seedlings. It's great planting weather after a very wet winter.

The kale leaves cut up finely with onion and garlic and carrots and topped with lamb neck chops or chicken thighs and a tasty Mexican tomato sauce with or without a grated cheese topping makes a yummy slow-cooked dinner.



Harvesting kale in preparation for spring planting of seedlings.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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# Break new ground with dietary diversity for ewes



**Pat Deavoll** **RURAL REPORTER**

Constantly feeding pregnant ewes the same type of food can cause stress and compromise animal production, health, and welfare. But a diverse diet is a boon during the lambing process, leading to reduced oxidative stress and healthier, “happier” lambs.

That’s according to new research from Lincoln University’s Pastoral Livestock Production Lab, which explored whether offering dietary diversity to ewes in the final trimester of pregnancy would reduce oxidative stress for both the mother and offspring.

A reduction in stress was indicated and ewes eating functionally diverse diets also birthed heavier lambs that had lower cortisol levels. The project is the first to detect maternal and foetal stress by examining the cortisol concentration and antioxidant levels

of lamb’s wool in utero.

These findings suggest moving away from a typical monotonous ryegrass menu for lambing ewes and instead peppering their diet with foods like chicory, plantain, red clover and lucerne, as well as other plants.

According to livestock production Professor Pablo Gregorini, whose former PhD student Konagh Garrett conducted the study, the hormonal and metabolic changes of pregnancy can increase nutritional demands and strain. Certain diets then exacerbate the issue, especially as animal’s transition from non-lactating to lactating.

“Maternal nutrition in late gestation also influences lamb birth weight and the stress experienced by lambs in utero,” he said.

“Our findings have significant implications, as farmers can enhance animal wellbeing using simple dietary measures and adding further value to New Zealand pasture-based animal products, because animals would be ‘happy’ from the get-go.

“It’s clear that feeding lambing ewes a wider variety of foods will enhance both animal welfare and production.”



**Livestock Production Professor Pablo Gregorini : hormonal and metabolic changes of pregnancy can increase nutritional demands and strain.**

PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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# Apprentice gets big opportunity

Ollie Sutton traded high-tech tractors for high-octane V8s when he joined the supercars pit crew for the Auckland Championships three weeks ago.

Sutton is in the second year of an apprenticeship in automotive engineering/agriculture equipment with New Holland dealership Norwood Christchurch and was keenly anticipating his weekend in the pit lane with the successful Red Bull Ampol Racing team, led by New Zealand-born driver Shane Van Gisbergen.

Sutton was chosen for the unique experience as part of New Holland Agriculture's sponsorship of the Red Bull Ampol Racing team for the 2022 Supercars Championship season for a chance to join the team in the pits for the weekend.

"I was looking forward to seeing the types of tools and the different equipment they used to work on the cars, and how they set up their cars compared to how we did it for speedway racing (which I compete in), and I was keen to talk to the technicians to see where they started and how they became part of a supercars pit crew," Sutton said.

Mark Simmons, branch manager of Ollie's dealership, Norwood Christchurch, said everyone at the business "believed Sutton was the best apprentice in New Zealand".



**Oliver Sutton won the chance of a lifetime when he joined the supercars pit crew for the Auckland Championship round last month.**

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

"He started his journey with us after lockdown in 2020 and he has quickly become an integral part of our business.

Sutton credits his grandfather for his love of farm machinery and the agriculture industry.

"I wanted to work in the industry after working alongside my grandad on his farm as a kid, driving his tractors and helping him restore the old tractors he had," Sutton said.

"Supercars was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I am very grateful I was able to get this awesome opportunity to work alongside such a great professional team," he said.

# Obligations in employment

Employers risk costly claims if they do not act appropriately and in good faith towards their employees. It is critical an employer deals with performance issues in the right way. Ideally, after some support, training and direction the employee will get back on track and a dismissal can be avoided.

Many employers struggle to resolve performance issues when an employee reveals they have a mental health condition, or where the condition becomes obvious. Employers need to be proactive and responsive. Employers should:

- Seek medical information to help their understanding of the condition and how they should respond – employers cannot simply hope the employee volunteers that information;
- Follow a proper process to deal with any performance issues and adjust that process to suit the situation and the employee – including adjusting or reconsidering the process where the employee's behaviour might be a symptom of their condition;
- Act in good faith – treat the employee fairly, genuinely consider their responses and clearly communicate with them at each stage; and
- Take care to avoid discriminating against the employee, protect the



**Tim Burtenshaw**

employee's privacy and ensure the employee has a safe workplace.

All too often employers face a claim because they adopted an unfairly rigid process without realising it. Employers can avoid scoring an own goal but they need to be prepared to change the game plan.

Information in this article does not constitute legal advice and specific advice should be taken as to your circumstances. If specific advice is required then please contact Tim Burtenshaw, Senior Associate, at Argyle Welsh Finnigan Limited.



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# Zero Carbon Bill seeks to achieve 'no additional warming' by 2050



**David Clark** President of MC Federated Farmers

We live in times of a changing climate – the popular agreement is that human activity is speeding up that change.

New Zealand is fixated on agriculture being the single largest contributor to our emissions, primarily from the belching of methane by livestock. As a result, the Zero Carbon Bill has legislated for a 24-47 per cent reduction in biogenic methane emissions.

The intent of the Zero Carbon Bill is to achieve “no additional warming” by 2050. That is also the goal of the Paris Accord on climate change.

Our industry was then given two options; decide amongst ourselves a plan to price and reduce those emissions or be forced into the Emissions Trading Scheme.



The notion that agriculture contributes 48 per cent of our emissions is a falsehood.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The industry agreed solution was He Waka Eka Noa, a pricing system to raise funds to research and encourage the development of methane-reducing technology and fund the sequestration of CO<sub>2</sub> on farm

The notion that agriculture contributes 48 per cent of our emissions is a falsehood as it compares fossil carbon

emissions and biogenic methane emissions in the same manner.

Biogenic methane belched from livestock is quite different. As it grows, the grass eaten by the animals absorbs CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and converts it to carbohydrates in the photosynthetic process.

No “new to the atmosphere” CO<sub>2</sub> has been released, and so long as stock numbers are

static, then the amount of methane in circulation is static.

The problem we have in New Zealand is that we are determined to achieve a goal of 24-47 per cent reduction over 28 years which could only be achieved by reducing stock numbers and would see agriculture forced to a target well in excess of zero carbon.

See, we have got ourselves in

a bit of a ditch on this, because the rest of the world is waking up to the difference between fossil carbon and livestock methane and methane’s relative impacts on warming long term.

Where the ditch gets deeper for New Zealand is that other countries are likely to begin to promote their agricultural food products as not contributing to climate change, particularly their grass-fed animal production systems.

Whereas here in New Zealand we are busily telling the world that our farmers need to reduce emissions by 24-47 per cent before we cease to be warming the climate.

It is highly likely that this rhetoric is going to turn on us as market and consumer resistance as we self-proclaim that agriculture contributes 48 per cent of our emissions and requires drastic reduction.

If we are genuinely concerned about a changing climate, then we need to start and have genuine and honest conversations about the actual warming impact of each of our emissions.

## Now is a great time to reflect

The current farming environment poses many challenges for those involved from both a financial and non-financial view.

The wet winter for many has taken a toll and if like us there was plenty of mud you will be pleased to see some sun and the grass start to grow.

Taking time to step back and reflect on your business is just as important as working in it. Often it can be difficult to see the big picture especially when weather conditions are challenging.

Coming out of winter is a great time to reflect on the coming season.

By now you will be a few months into the financial year, it is important that you have a cashflow budget that you can compare your actual results to regularly. The current payout provides a good platform for our dairy farmers although with rising costs we should be reviewing contractors’ quotes and pricing to ensure we are getting the best deal. While also ensuring we maintain a good relationship with our suppliers.

With increases in costs and a reasonable dairy payout we need to be continually reviewing our tax obligations, although provisional tax is based on the previous year’s results it can be re estimated during the tax year, this is where the reforecast and reporting is useful.

We are also faced with constant environmental regulation changes and requirements which can be difficult to keep up with. Implementing systems



**Belinda Kelly** who can assist you with many areas of your business.

to record what’s happening on the farm during the season will assist in completing all the requirements from our milk and meat companies and the Regional Councils at the end of the season. At HC Rural we can assist with templates to assist you with this.

This article was written by Belinda Kelly who can assist you with many areas of your business using her Chartered Accountant background and her own experience within her farming operation she runs with her husband in South Canterbury. Much of her advice is tried and tested in her own farming operation.

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# Afforestation a big concern



**Pat Deavoll** RURAL REPORTER

The latest Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) Stock Number Survey shows farmers have continued to adapt quickly to challenging circumstances including droughts, processing delays and COVID-19, while afforestation remains a significant concern.

The report highlights the extent of farmland being converted to forestry, which continues to have a negative impact on rural communities. B+LNZ Economic Service chief economist Andrew Burt said that while the increase in farm sales into forestry was yet to lead to a significant reduction in stock numbers, it could be expected very soon.

"There is usually a lag between farm sale and plantings, and planting is constrained by the availability of seedlings and labour to plant them," he said.

B+LNZ chief executive Sam McIvor



The extent of farmland being converted to forestry, continues to have a negative impact on rural communities.

said the extent of sheep and beef farmland being converted to forestry, along with the cumulative impact of a range of other policies on farm viability, was concerning.

"New Zealand is the only country to allow 100 percent forestry offsetting. Other countries only allow about ten per cent. Without these limits all other policy changes, while helpful, will not solve the problem."

The report shows sheep numbers in New Zealand were steady over the last 12 months and beef cattle numbers fell only slightly, despite unfavourable conditions in some regions.

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# If you are buying used farm machinery – take care

Buying used farm machinery can help you gain a whole lot of functionality on the farm at a much more affordable price. But there is always some risk involved in buying used machinery from online classifieds.

If you don't do your inspections properly you can

easily end up buying farm machinery that has a lot of mechanical problems and that could end up costing you a lot more in repairs and maintenance than new machinery would have cost you.

Here are a few tips to help you buy the best-used farm machinery online so you can

get great value for money and machinery that ends up being an asset instead of a liability.

## Check the overall appearance

Before you make the final decision to buy, you should do an operational inspection. Start up the farm machinery or inspect used equipment carefully. Any off-engine sounds

are a sign that there might be some pretty big mechanical issues with the machinery. You can also check the steering wheel for looseness and check to see if you can identify any patch jobs that might indicate a bigger underlying issue.

## Check the engine

It is always a good idea to lift

the hood and check for leaks. You can also check the wiring to see if everything looks professional and to see if you can spot any nibble marks from rodents. An incredibly messy engine is a good indication that not much maintenance was done on the engine. A clogged-

*Continued on P48*

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From P47 up air filter is another sign of neglected services. You can also check the amount of horsepower to see if the engine is performing up to standards.

#### Check the interior or cab of the machinery

A messy, dusty, and dirty cab can be a sign of neglected services if the machinery has low mileage. This only applies to closed cab farm machinery, of course. Signs of torn seats and dashboards will give you a good idea of just how many hours the machinery was parked in the sun. Open

cab farm machinery will be a lot messier and more worn down inside the cab than closed cab machinery even though their mechanics and engine are still in great condition.

#### Check the mechanics

While you are giving the machinery a test drive you should also check to see if all of the mechanics of the machinery are still operating smoothly. If the machine isn't operating up to standard or if the engine seems to get high on revs while you are using it then something might be wrong with the mechanical parts.

Perhaps a good grease is needed to get everything running smoothly again, perhaps there is a major internal break that needs to be fixed before the machinery will function well.

#### Log documents can give you a lot of clues

A lot of farmers enforce employees to log their working hours on the machinery because it enables them to see who is responsible for damages and to keep track of actual work schedules. You can scan through the logs to see whether there are any

accident reports or other signs of neglect.

#### Papers should be up to date

All machinery that needs to be registered will have paperwork that should be up to date. Ask for licensing or enquire about any paperwork requirements before you buy.

With these tips, you should be able to spot relatively good farming machinery a lot easier and with a bit of research and proper inspection, you can choose something that will give you fantastic value and use for money.



It is always a good idea to lift the hood and to check for leaks.

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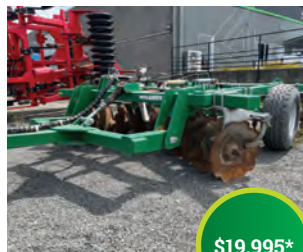
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# New Zealand to upscale open ocean aquaculture sector

A five-year project to develop New Zealand's offshore seaweed and shellfish aquaculture industries received government funding in 2021. ODUCTION SYSTEMS

Called Nga Punga o Te Moana: Anchoring our Open Ocean Aquaculture Future, the project is led by Cawthron Institute and aims to deliver the knowledge and technology New

Zealand needs to accelerate and scale-up its shellfish and seaweed open ocean aquaculture systems.

"Open ocean aquaculture has long been recognised as a major global opportunity for sustainable food production and Aotearoa New Zealand is well-placed to capitalise on this potential and diversify investment options for industry.

"Our aquaculture industry can grow rapidly in response to increasing international demand, but it is constrained by limited sheltered inshore farm space. There are large tracts of consented space available offshore and in the open ocean, but robust farming technology is required if we are to develop successful aquaculture operations in exposed and

dynamic waters," said the institute in a press release.

Cawthron senior aquaculture scientist and programme lead, Kevin Heasman, said: "Our shellfish aquaculture industry is already achieving success through innovation, and this programme of R&D will build on that progress.

"We will work with industry to create opportunities for open

ocean aquaculture expansion across the country and build the capability and capacity for the scale-up that is needed to reach commercial critical mass.

"At the same time, we will address social, environmental and te ao Maori perspectives, to ensure the widest social and environmental benefits to Aotearoa New Zealand from open ocean aquaculture."

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As New Zealanders, we pride ourselves on our 'Kiwi ingenuity' – making do with what we have and getting the most out of a situation that may not be ideal. It's a great attitude, until it starts affecting our productivity and output. While we all want to get the most out of the machinery we've already invested in, if that equipment isn't in top condition, it's likely to become an increasing expense, rather than an asset.

## Technology enhances productivity

GPS intelligence, performance precision, robotics and automation, sustainability... there's a growing trend towards automation in the agricultural sector, which translates to less resource expense and higher efficiency. Automatic counting, weighing, mixing and shutoffs (to name a few) ensure more accurate output, creating cost savings and increased yields.

All this means agricultural machinery technology will

continue to steam ahead, making it more important than ever to implement the right machinery for the job.

## Compatibility lessens labour hours

These days, it's not often a piece of ag machinery operates in isolation and, if it does, it's likely to be a fair bit older and possibly wearing down. The result? Reduced productivity and potentially higher man hours to operate.

New farm machinery on the other hand will likely be compatible with more of its kind, thus increasing efficiency on the farm.

## Less downtime, more return

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that worn-out ag machinery brings with it increased downtime. Slower and less efficient operation and frequent breakdowns lead to reduced productivity, which affects your bottom line.

When we talk about downtime, we're not just talking about machinery malfunctions – it also includes training and handling of machinery by new staff. As machinery evolves, usability increases and the rate at which workers learn new systems decreases. Easy-to-use equipment is a game-changer



If our equipment isn't in top condition, it's likely to become an increasing expense, rather than an asset.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

when it comes to efficiency and productivity.

## Partners in innovation

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world as a leader of innovation. Contractors are constantly on the lookout to employ their Kiwi ingenuity to stay ahead of the game, driving the industry

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**Call either Paula Hems on 0275118814 or Kelly Gould on 0272261288  
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