

RURAL GUARDIAN

South Island
wide



MARCH 2023 EDITION

TO EVERY FARM IN THE SOUTH ISLAND



RALLYING AROUND P3



SOLAR COMING SOON P8



PIGS READY TO RUN P17



HORSE RIDER SHEARING UP A STORM

Page 42



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Time to pick up the phone and give a mate a call

It's been a harrowing insight into the raw power of mother nature over the past few weeks after Cyclone Gabrielle struck huge parts of the North Island. But it's feared the worst is yet to come for those in the rural community. Entire farms wiped out, stock and feed gone, orchards destroyed, machinery irreparable and lives in tatters with no real sunshine on the horizon yet.

Visibly, it's horrific. Mentally it's disturbing. And all you want to do is reach out and lend a hand of support.

Luckily, there's avenues we down here in the South Island can follow to help. And while food, offers of shelter, clothes and feed for stock will be welcomed, we also shouldn't forget about the emotional damage caused by such a disaster either.

It's easy to focus on what you can see in front of your eyes, or what's showed to you on the television or in print.

But it's the unseen damage, the mental toll and emotional impact that can often be the



A simple phone call can open the door for someone who needs help.

most devastating.

Our farming community across the country has been under pressure for the past few years and further beyond with increasing pressure from outside parties to see regulatory changes put in place and alterations to the way the Kiwi farmer has gone about their role for as long as

anyone cares to remember.

Add to that the devastation of what Cyclone Gabrielle has caused in the North Island and it's a lot to deal with.

Rural support networks will be working tirelessly to ensure that every avenue under the sun is available to the farming community in terms of mental health networks, counsellors and all

other forms of support.

But we can do our bit too. Every single person out there reading this edition of Rural Guardian this month will know of someone impacted by this natural disaster. Be it friends, families, associates or that guy you had a beer with in a pub once – there's some connection somewhere.

Reach out to them, if you can, extend the olive branch and just check in and make sure they're OK.

Something as simple as a phone call, or a text message can be immense in opening the door for someone who needs help, to get it.

Now's not the time for the all-powerful farming outlook of 'she'll be right and kick it in the guts Trev. People are going to be hurting, but won't want to show it.

So do your bit, if you can – you never know how much help it could end up being to someone who needs it.

– By Matt Markham
matt.m@theguardian.co.nz

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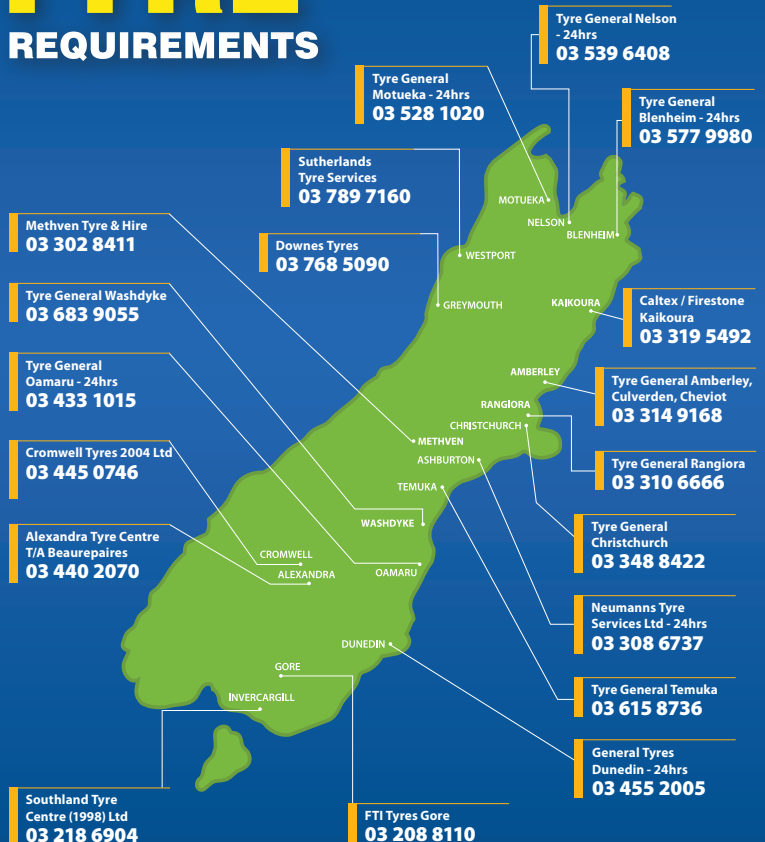


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Rural community set to rally around cyclone-ravaged North

With the cost of annual produce set to increase and many factions of the rural farming community in the North Island still coming to terms with the aftermath of Cyclone Gabrielle, those around them less-impacted are reaching out to come to the rescue this month.

A \$4 million cash injection from the government to help farmers and rural communities would just be the start to help begin the road toward recovery as farmers battle with the loss of land, stock, income and in some cases, sadly life following the devastating disaster.

And Damien O'Connor, the Minister for Agriculture, said the initial \$4 million is only the start and the rural community will require additional funding as time stretches on.

"Producers, farmers and growers are very resilient, and this has hit some of them very, very hard – there will be some shortages in some areas," O'Connor said.

"It will impact on their ability to get the crops off to harvest and the ability to get a lot of



Reports have come through of entire orchards being swept away by the flood waters across the North Island.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



Minister for Agriculture, Damien O'Connor says produce shortages will affect prices around the country in the wake of damage caused by Cyclone Gabrielle.

that produce into the New Zealand markets.

"There will be some shortages in some areas and that probably will affect prices, but at this stage it's hard to know when and where those impacts might be felt."

While at the time of production of this month's Rural Guardian the full picture of the impact of the Cyclone was still

becoming clear through the debris and devastation, already some corners of rural life were showing their struggles.

Milk production and collection has been a major issue with some farms unable to milk cows for over a week due to access, power and safety. Fonterra reported that as of the beginning of this week they were still unable to reach up to 40 dairy farms

across the cyclone ravaged lands. Entire orchards have been swept away in the floodwaters and the loss of livestock is set to be immense for those unable to get their stock to higher ground. It's been reported in Northland that up to a 50 per cent reduction in kumara availability in the New Zealand markets will be felt.

Additional funding is coming though, O'Connor said, and it

will keep coming to ensure the continued viability and offer a safety blanket to those impacted most by the natural disaster.

"There will be additional funding and government has already announced that through MSD (Ministry for Social Development), there is direct support for those people who need it."

Continued on P4

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From P3

As the clean-up begins and continues over the coming weeks, Federated Farmers – along with many other rural organisations – are trying to help control and direct the outpouring of support from the rural community around the country.

From access to feed, supplies or offers of stock being able to be housed until things are able to return to a working capacity, they've been inundated with help from all corners of New Zealand.

It's a show of support that has come to be expected from the rural community – a coming together to lend a hand when and where it's needed.

"We need that more than ever," Federated Farmers president, Andrew Hoggard said.

"Feds has had calls already from less-impacted farmers asking how they can help colleagues who have taken a hit. We've set up buttons on our website to register those offering labour, resources or donations."

Their primary focus during the past week has been concentrating on reaching out to the hardest hit districts, particularly those in Northland, Coromandel, Tairāwhiti and Hawke's Bay and helping to pass information to Emergency Management to



Significant damage caused to roads has made access to many farms impossible, Fonterra has reported that up to 40 dairy farms were still inaccessible for drivers at the beginning of this week.

help them ascertain priority needs and keep people safe.

As well as facilitating the offers of support and helping to reach out to those in need, Federated Farmers are also pushing through on lobbying work to various agencies to

ensure that the coming weeks and months are as stress-free as possible for farmers.

Hoggard said that the initial \$4 million to help farmers, growers, whenua Maori owners and rural communities was pleasing – but perhaps just

the tip of the iceberg.

"Federated Farmers will be advocating strongly to government that it's prime focus, and additional resources to fix infrastructure should be top of their (government) agenda."

"We've also been in contact with New Zealand Banking Association, Inland Revenue and other agencies to ask them to explore postponement of hard deadlines and other ways to help lessen immediate financial impacts."

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Beef + Lamb NZ are also ready to roll up the sleeves and help where they can.

“We’re working with our partner organisations, DairyNZ and Federated Farmers along with the Rural Support Trust and Ministry for Primary Industries, as part of the Civil Defence-led response,” chief executive Sam McIvor said.

Ensuring that there was a stress-free and simple process for farmers to gain access to the initial \$4 million of relief from the government was high on the priority list.

“We’ll be working with other agencies to ensure there is a well-coordinated process for farmers to receive this support and to ensure that farmers’ needs are well

understood and communicated to government agencies.

“We know many farmers from around New Zealand are already reaching out to help, we will be drawing that expertise and experience.”

– **By Matt Markham**
matt.m@theguardian.co.nz



Entire farms were devastated by flood waters from burst rivers.

Farmers understand plight all too well

Mid Canterbury farmers who survived the long haul back from a flood damaged property in 2021 understand the plight of North Island farmers whose properties have been inundated by flood waters after Cyclone Gabrielle, says Mid Canterbury Federated Farmers president David Acland.

Those farmers understand only too well how much help will be needed in the weeks and months ahead by those farmers, but the most important thing for people wanting to offer goods or time, is for those offers to be delivered in a co-ordinated way, he said.

Acland said using the registration function on the Federated Farmers website was the best way for the rural community of the South Island to help out those in the North.

“If you have the time or skill-set then you can register as right at the moment they’re trying to draw things together. They’re trying to structure that help.”

“There was a lot of energy in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to get things done, and to offer help, but it was a little further down the track that help would be needed,” he said.

After the floods in Ashburton in May 2021 farmers were receiving offers of help and items such as fencing material weeks after the event and that was even better, it’s the grind down the track when help is really needed, Acland said.

“A co-ordinated effort, that’s our goal,” he said.

As well as larger farms where there may still be options for stock feed, there were a multitude of small lifestyle blocks that had been devastated and where there were no other feed options for stock.

“There’s a real intensity of population on those small blocks and they need support too.”

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Winter feed crops obliterated by Cyclone Gabrielle

It is feared some farmers have had their valuable winter feed crops completely wiped out by Cyclone Gabrielle, which will cause further headaches in the coming months.

Dairy farmers typically spend the warmer months preparing hay and silage as feed for winter and spring.

Last year about 1.2 million tonnes of maize silage was produced as supplementary feed for livestock, particularly on dairy farms - but entire crops have since been lost to the cyclone.

Federated Farmers' president Andrew Hoggard said there would be feed challenges in the coming months after crops were flattened or destroyed and the group would co-ordinate donations and supplies when needed.

AgFirst consultant Tafi Manjala said with so much crop destruction, especially in Hawke's Bay, many farmers would now be well behind on their normal feed supplies come winter, and would need to rely on supplementary feed.

"If people don't have enough



Entire paddocks of winter feed are now just sludge.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

supplement on hand, they're going to have to purchase additional feed from the market, which adds on to farm costs," Manjala said.

"Crop yields have generally been low, given the wetness that has delayed planting and in some instances damaged

planting over the past few months and of course, the recent cyclone that flattened some maize crops in certain areas."

Manjala said Cyclone Gabrielle had hit farmers at a bad time, as they tended to take things a bit easier right

about now in order to be well-rested ahead of the busy winter period.

"It will make things really stressful at a really busy time of year," he said.

"At this time of the year, people expect to be taking a bit of a break and you

want to be going into winter refreshed, especially for dairy farmers.

"But some farmers have got a huge cleanup ahead of them and if you're going into winter after a huge workload like that, it will compound onto that stress."

His advice for affected farmers was to sit down, take stock and make a list of priorities.

"There's a lot of things to be done, but there's some activities that are more important than others, like making sure that your cows are milked, making sure that you've got secure boundary fences so you can secure your stock, making sure that you can feed those animals so that you keep them in production.

"The other important thing was to accept help when it was offered," he said.

"A lot of us in farming communities feel we can do things and make things happen ourselves, but a huge effort will be required to recover, get as much help as you can."

- RNZ

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Development through innovation

Research and product development are long-term investments and Fieldays has been the platform for launching innovations in Aotearoa New Zealand for more than 54 years.

While most economists predict a downturn this year, if history repeats itself, the silver lining is that innovation thrives as a solution to challenging environments.

With entries now open for Fieldays June 14 – 17 2023 and a total prize package of cash, services and product worth more than \$60,000, Fieldays Programme Manager Steve Chappell said they predict a high calibre of entries this year.

“We expect to see development in all areas, especially Agritech, autonomous systems, software developments, robotics in manufacturing, and solving worker shortages” says Steve.

“Innovation in these areas usually reflects the climate we are in, and often we see companies needing to think smarter and be more efficient when times are harder. Data collection and measuring tools, management apps, and a big focus on environmental reporting are also topical currently.”

The Fieldays Innovation Awards is a globally renowned award programme and

innovation in the agricultural and primary industries provides a stable growth market with plenty of opportunity.

Fieldays Innovation awards represent the innovation lifecycle in three categories: Prototype, Early-Stage, and Growth & Scale. Special recognition is also given to younger innovators, with an award for the Fieldays Young Innovator of the year award.

“The short turnaround since Fieldays 2022 means this year’s entries will really be hot off the press. We expect entries from all around the world in the food and fibre sector”.

The Fieldays Innovation

Awards are an opportunity to showcase an idea or innovation, receive feedback from Fieldays visitors, and connect with potential partners, distributors, investors and the New Zealand innovation eco-system.

Entries are encouraged from across the Primary Sector, which refers to: Dairy, Meat & Wool, Forestry, Horticulture - including Viticulture, Seafood - including Aquaculture and Fishing, Arable, and Agri Tech - including Food Tech and Green Tech.

Building on a similar format from 2022, the following criteria have been altered:

The Young Innovator Award is now for entrants 19 years

and under.

Fieldays wants to showcase the amazing innovations coming from school-age entrants. “So many great ideas are coming through that deserve acknowledgement, and we expect a lot of competition”, said Steve.

The Growth & Scale category is now for innovations commercialised in the last four years and for sale in at least two countries, one of which must be New Zealand.

Entrants can now add additional information to their entry once it is accepted into the awards to ensure the judges have the most up-to-date information.

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Genesis Energy and its joint venture partner, FRV Australia, have secured a fully consented, large scale solar site near Lauriston where it will construct something similar to the pictured site in Winton, Queensland. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Solar Farm expected to be generating power by 2024

A large-scale solar farm in Lauriston is expected to start generating electricity by next year.

Genesis Energy, and its joint venture partner FRV Australia, have secured the fully consented 90-hectare site that will hold around 80,000 solar panels with a capacity of 52 MW and generate around 80 GWh of renewable electricity annually.

The site has been purchased from United Kingdom-based Hive Energy for an undisclosed amount, and being fully consented, with advanced grid connection approvals, it is ready for panel installation to begin.

The solar farm will be connected to EA Networks' Lauriston zone substation and will produce the equivalent of approximately 13 per cent of EA Network's annual energy needs

from using just 0.03 per cent of the land, and sheep will still be able to graze under the panels.

EA Networks is a Mid Canterbury owned co-operative network company, which owns and operates Mid Canterbury's electricity distribution network – with the Ashburton District Council being the majority shareholder.

Ashburton Mayor Neil Brown said it sounds like an exciting development and anything that adds to local power generation is a good thing, "especially if it will benefit the district by reducing power bills".

Brown said representatives from Genesis will be meeting with the council later this month to provide an overview of the project.

The district already has the Highbank hydroelectric power

station that can generate up to 25 MW.

EA Networks chief executive, Roger Sutton, said the development aligns a strong community focus and a key goal of achieving lower electricity costs.

"We're pleased to have the opportunity to support this development, as we expect it will drive lower energy prices for our customers when they are using the most," Sutton said.

Sutton has previously said the average load on the network during the day in winter is around 50mw and rises to 180mw in summer when irrigators are in full swing.

The rural network was built to support the large irrigation load it currently manages he said and can absorb large-scale solar farms.

"We anticipate renewable solar generation will help with summer peaking electricity demands, as well as providing greater resilience for the local community.

"Also, one of our leading opportunities to decarbonise is to electrify, using electricity for commercial heating processes and ensuring there is capacity for increasing numbers of electric vehicles.

"We are ready to play our part in this transition, but for it to work, we will need more renewable generation. It's great to see a solution being developed in our own backyard."

The project is expected to create more than 50 jobs during the construction phase, set to start later this year, and employ up to three full-time staff once it's operational.

Genesis interim chief

executive Tracey Hickman said solar is a good addition to New Zealand's generation mix and "when it reaches scale it will play an important role in helping manage dry year risk when hydro levels are low and the wind doesn't blow".

FRV Australia will bring its international experience to complete the installation and commissioning of the Lauriston development.

FRV Australia chief executive, Carlo Frigerio, said the site should be up and running relatively quickly.

"We will focus our efforts on completing preparations so we can start construction later this year and connect the project as soon as possible," Frigerio, said.

– By Jonathan Leask

jonathan.l@theguardian.co.nz

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Meat exports climb in 2022, but experts warn volatility remains

Red meat exports from New Zealand surpassed more than \$11 billion in 2022, but experts are warning that the market still remains in a very volatile state.

Analysis conducted by the Meat Industry Association confirmed that despite a drop-off in December of last year the export market here still reached \$11.4 billion for the calendar year.

And that's despite the red meat sector's global markets softening with high inflation eroding the purchasing power of consumers around the world.

"Some consumers in our key markets are trading down to cheaper proteins and dining out less in restaurants," MIA chief executive Sirma Karapeeva said.

"For beef, we are seeing record imports of beef into

China from Brazil. The relaxation of China's Covid-19 policy has also created some uncertainty in the market."

Overall in December a nine per cent drop was seen in the value of exports, down to \$966 million compared to the same time a year earlier.

Sheep meat exports accounted for a chunk of that, down 19 per cent while beef exports fell by 15 per cent and fifth quarter products by nine per cent.

Despite the downturn in the final month of the year though a 13 per cent overall increase for 2022 comparative to the 2021 results showed some promise.

China still remains New Zealand's major market, accounting for \$4.3 billion worth of export.

There were also increases in the overall spend from exports



Despite a drop-off in December of last year the export market here still reached \$11.4 billion for the calendar year.

to the United States (seven per cent), Japan (20 per cent) and also the United Kingdom (11 per cent).

More than 375,000 tonnes

of sheep meat was exported during the year and while that was a five percent downturn, the overall value rose up six per cent to \$4.3 billion.

Beef exports also drop in quantity but drove up in price with 482,000 tonnes exported with a value increase of 20 per cent up to \$4.9 billion.

China accounted for the largest market for beef with more than 219,000 tonnes exported there but there was a significant drop to the United States which Karapeeva said could be put down to the high levels of drought-driven domestic production in the last year.

Fifth quarter product exports were worth \$2.2 million for the year – a 13 per cent increase on 2021.

The greatest demand was for casings and triple which was up 29 per cent, edible offals and hides and skins.

– **By Matt Markham**
matt.m@theguardian.co.nz

Search for good employers begins

The search has begun for the cream of the crops ahead of the 2023 Primary Industries Good Employer Awards.

Entering into their fourth year this year, the awards are run by MPI and the Agricultural and Marketing Research and Development Trust and celebrate employers who show new and innovative ways of managing their staff and go over and above to create a productive, safe, supportive and healthy work environments for their staff.

MPI's director of Investment Skills and Performance, Cheyne

Gillooly said that it was the people who make the primary industries such a success.

"People have always been at the heart of our food and fibre sector businesses," he said.

"These awards are a fantastic way to showcase innovative ways in managing staff and spreading excellence throughout the sector."

And there's no real limit on who can be nominated with food and fibre sector businesses and those who support them being eligible.

That means the scope is wide.

"Nominees can range from rural accountants to veterinary practices, through to large industry bodies or small start-ups and others," Gillooly said.

With exports from the food and fibre sector predicted to reach an impressive \$55 billion in the year to June 2023 the work being done is worthy of reward.

"This ongoing success is thanks to the 360,000 people who work in the food and fibre sector including employers across the country."

"The Primary Industries

Good Employer Awards celebrate and recognise good employers who show genuine passion for ensuring the success of their people. They recognise that when their people thrive, so too do their businesses.

"We encourage food and fibre sector employers to put their names forward for an award. Employees can also nominate their own employers or others."

Entries are now open and close at 5pm on Friday, March 17.

– **By Matt Markham**
matt.m@theguardian.co.nz



MPI's director of Investment Skills and Performance, Cheyne Gillooly.



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Honey yields expected to drop significantly this season

Honey yields are predicted to be well down this season compared with the 10-year average of 19,000 tonnes.

Final figures are not produced until the end of June. But Apiculture New Zealand chief executive Karin Kos said everyone was talking about how much the yields were down and the season was nearing its end.

She said it was no surprise, given spring was wet and cold, summer has had too much rain, flowering had been poor, bees hadn't been out foraging and when they had there had been little to feed off.

"If I look at the beekeepers I've been speaking to in Auckland, Waikato, East Cape, pretty much most of the North Island, they're saying it's one of the worst seasons in 10 years.

"It's a very interesting story down south ...In Southland they're reporting a bumper crop and Canterbury is also looking good. So overall, I think it's going to be a poor season yield wise.

"I know that beekeepers are just sort of working through

and hoping that with a bit of fine weather at the tail end of the season, they might be able to recuperate something, but overall not a great season honey yield wise."

Prices were also down as the honey surplus continued to haunt the sector.

Honey was seen as liquid gold in recent years and people donned beekeeper hats and white overalls and flocked to the industry. The prices of hives soared.

But Kos said now both manuka and non-manuka values were down and beekeepers were exiting the industry as the margins were just not there.

She expected hive numbers would continue to drop over the next two years.

"There's been pressure on beekeepers, undoubtedly, it's been very tough for them. And I know that we've seen the hives, they peaked at 918,000 in 2019. And they've dropped to 731,000 hives in operation for the 2022 season. And we're expecting that drop to continue this year.

"There's been a lot of

upheaval over the past few years, the correction has been happening and is continuing to happen.

"But you know, I think if we look at international markets and international demand, there is still strong demand for our honey overseas, particularly manuka honey.

"So I think that while it's definitely tough time for the beekeepers at the moment, there are still some positive things on the horizon... the fact that we've got some free trade agreements, (16 percent tariff removal in the UK) coming into effect, all of that does actually help just improve their competitiveness overseas as well," she said.

Kos also believed the Middle East was an interesting new market, along with the United States, which had been growing reasonably well.

"But I think one of the big factors, too, was our exporters hadn't been able to travel over the last few years. And so now they're able to travel freely, they're able to actually develop and search out those



Both manuka and non manuka values are down and beekeepers are exiting the industry.

new markets.

"I think that's something we can't underestimate. It does take time to build new markets. But I

know, just talking to exporters, the ability to get out and just firm up and shore up contracts is really important."



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\$2 million trial to test efficacy of regenerative farming

The government is backing a research project on regenerative farming practices of arable and vegetable crops in Hawke's Bay.

Minister of Agriculture Damien O'Connor announced \$2 million will be spent over six years for the New Zealand-first project.

Led by Hawke's Bay Future Farming Charitable Trust in partnership with LandWISE, the project aims to build evidence on the application and effectiveness of regenerative farming in arable and intensive field cropping.

Trust chair Phillip Schofield said the demonstration farm would be split and managed with three different systems to validate any benefits.

"One which will be the standard grower practice treatment... what commercial growers are currently doing in New Zealand.

"Another called the regenerative treatment which is full transition or movement away from use of cultivation and much reduced use of

herbicides, fungicides and insecticides.

"And a third treatment which will be a hybrid of those which we see as helping build a transition into farming practices that are better for the soil than the current conventional methods."

The project had been in the works for three years with crops going in the ground this summer, Schofield said.

"We are keen to learn what we can in order to help growers with production systems that will be better for their profit and better for their environment."

LandWISE had provided four hectares of land in "average condition" for the project to take place.

Dan Bloomer of the incorporation said the project would measure the financial benefit to the farmer on top of other parameters.

"We're measuring soil carbon, we're measuring soil quality parameters, we're measuring crop quality yields but we're also tracking profitability.



One part of the trial will focus on reducing the use of herbicides, fungicides and insecticides.

"You can focus on fixing one thing but if something else is not working then it's no good. So we're tying the whole package together."

Potential outcomes could include improved water quality, reduced nutrient losses and resilience to climate change.

Bloomer said the 90-metre long by 12-metre wide plots were big for science plots, however, they allowed for conventional farm machinery to do the work and ensured their findings could be transferred to a working farm.

The 'Carbon Positive -

Regenerating soil carbon' project is co-funded by the Ministry for Primary Industries' sustainable food and fibre futures fund.

The project is supported by a collaboration of regional and national organisations including Kraft Heinz Wattie's NZ, McCain Foods NZ, Hawke's Bay Vegetable Growers, Hawke's Bay Regional Council and BASF.

O'Connor said it complemented research already underway on the effectiveness of regenerative farming practices in pastoral farming systems.

"Worldwide we're seeing increased demand for food grown sustainably with a reduced environmental footprint. There are exciting opportunities for New Zealand to tap into this market, which is why we're co-investing with industry.

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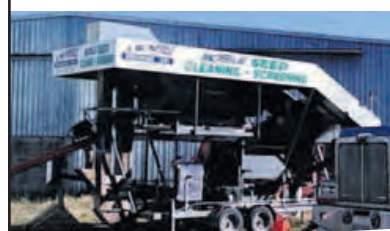
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Methven back on track after a year away from the show limelight

Rural health and wellbeing is the focus of this year's Methven A&P Show, which breaks free from the shackles of Covid this year and returns to the Methven Showgrounds for the 107th time.

Hamstrung by the restraints of the traffic light system in place last year the show was forced to stand aside for 12 months but through the tireless work of a strong group of volunteers the promise is that the 2023 edition will be one of the best yet.

There are some new additions to the show's features and a few adaptations to some of the tried and true features of the show from year's gone by that will both intrigue and excite those who come along for the day on Saturday, March 18.

Methven A&P Association president, Ben McIntosh told members in February that everything was coming together and that the weeks leading into the show would be busy with organising and

ensuring all was as it should be before the big day.

He said his role at the helm of the big committee of people who are passionate about ensuring the show's success was easy.

"My role as president has been a very rewarding and interesting one and made all the more successful with the tremendous support afforded to me from out committee," he said.

"An incredible amount of sheer work has been achieved in the last twelve months – the show grounds look fantastic."

McIntosh said the major developments including the continuation of Pin Oak trees being planted which were previously planted to recognise past presidents.

"11 Pin Oaks were purchased last year as replacement trees, and a further 21 have been planted this year to create a new avenue. These are protected with individual rail fence surrounds and have been put on



a drip feed watering system. "Commemoration names and plaques will also be added." New features added to the

show schedule this year include the new art precinct in which local artists will be able to display their craft and the

animal shed will create plenty of excitement with both young and old with some new features as well.



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New beginnings and some alterations to old traditions...

Frequent attendees to the Methven Showgrounds each year for the show will notice some changes in place for the first time this year as the Methven A&P Association look to breathe some new life into the show experience.

The traditional, and always popular, sheep and wool section will – as always – be in place, but there’s been a bit of a change up with farmers able to showcase what leading firms in the industry are doing to enhance the livelihoods of farmers.

These features include leading Australian genetics company Nextgen, Mid Canterbury based fashion label, Hemprino and the NZ Merino Company.

Noting the number of aspiring and already well-credentialed artists around the local community the Association elected to introduce a space at this year’s show to help those artists showcase their work.

And so, the Art Precinct has been born at the far end of the

traditional trade area.

Featuring local talents including Susie Millichamp, Hannah Kidd, Amelia Guild, Ben Groters, Amanda King, Gina Ensor, Robyn Hood, Karen Smith and Jo Gerard among many more there will be a wonderful collection of sculptures, paintings and photographs for visitors to enjoy.

Artists will also be on hand to speak with anyone who wants to know more about their work.

The always popular Animal Shed is back in action again in 2023 too and it has also undergone a small makeover with a real focus this year on people being able to experience animals up close and personal.

Without giving too much away there’s a few surprises in store too – (apparently dependent on the animals being complicit in loading into the trailer to get to the show) – and everyone of all ages is encouraged to pop in and check out who’s there and grab an image or two along the way.



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A little bit of something for everyone – from art to horses

While the traditional A&P Show is always about the farming side of life and everything relating to it – there's always a lot more to it when it comes to Methven.

From the involvement of the local schools through their displays of artwork and talents, to the produce and baking sections right through to the equestrian ring, there's something for everyone to enjoy along the way around the grounds.

At the last show a Ute Muster was introduced to the day's activities and it was met with great enthusiasm, setting the wheels in motion to make it a regular fixture at the Methven A&P Show.

Entries for this year's muster will be taken up to the morning of the show and all vehicles must be parked up and ready for judging at 10am on Show Day.

One singular entry puts vehicles into all of the categories and with significant prizes up for grabs it's expected that plenty of enthusiasts who travel around the South Island

circuit will be in attendance to show off their pride and joys.

Along with everything previously mentioned, all the usual show traditions will still be in place with an extensive display of machinery on hand, dog trials, entertainment, dancing and music and of course, the most important part of the day, the Grand Parade plus a whole lot more.


McIntosh said in an effort to better the experience for everyone, the Association was always on the lookout for little things that can be done to help advance that and car-parking is usually at the top of the list.

"Car parking is something that we always aim to do better," he said.

"And this year we have worked hard at realigning fences, and gateways to achieve this."

But it doesn't stop there.


"We have also increased the number of eftpos machines and signage and have updated maps so that members, non-members, exhibitors and entrants know what gate to use."

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Mayfield ready to open show gates again, after Covid break

For the first time in two years Mayfield will be celebrating all things rural when the gates open for its annual A&P show.

The second Covid lockdown saw last year's show cancelled but this year there's a high level of enthusiasm for bringing the show back to Mayfield, said president Andrew Mackenzie.

Show day is on the calendar for March 11 and for the organising team the one year gap makes planning seem like a completely new undertaking, Mackenzie said.

"It's great to be back after a one year break. It's a bit harder because neither the president nor the past president have run a show before, but we're all on track for a great show."

Mayfield's show might be part of the traditional A&P Show circuit, but in recent years a real effort had gone into making it an event that was as much about entertainment and a great family day out as it was about the traditional show day elements, Mackenzie said.

"We're always evolving and we'll have heaps of entertainment, something for everyone."

Trade stall sites were being snapped up and entries for the equestrian, produce shed and stock competitions was flowing in, he said.



World famous in Mayfield, the annual pig racing is back for this year's show.

Continued on P18

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From P17

Traditional show competitions - sheep, cattle, goats and a full range of produce shed competitions would be returning and they would be boosted by a number of new events. These will include helicopter rides, milking sheep, a clydesdale horse versus children tug of war and gold coin donation big truck and silage chopper rides for children, with funds raised going to charity.

Pig racing was always a popular event and that was back on the programme again.

The show's produce shed was always well supported by local exhibitors, some of whom had been putting items on the show bench for many years, Mackenzie said.

This year he will be among the exhibitors, planning to enter the chocolate cake section for male cooks as well as the compulsory event for show president, a flower arrangements. He admits to being a bit anxious about his abilities in those areas.

"I do feel a bit intimidated," he said.

Mayfield might be one of the smaller shows on the circuit, but it was always big on entertainment offered and the crowds it attracted, he said.

"Our committee is pretty excited about the show this year and I'm lucky to have a great team."

In spite of having a one year break, the show grounds were in top order, he said.



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Dairy Focus

MARCH 2023 EDITION



**MOVING ON
MACKLE RESIGNS**

Page 20

Mackle announces resignation after 15-year tenure

DairyNZ's chief executive has announced his resignation after 15 years in the job.

Tim Mackle, who was involved in the levy body's formation back in 2007/08, said he felt extremely privileged to have had the opportunity to lead and help develop DairyNZ's solutions and services on behalf of its farmer members.

Not announcing his next move, Mackle said he would stay on as chief executive until the end of June to give DairyNZ's board time to recruit a successor.

"I am proud to have had the opportunity to lead DairyNZ over this period, the dynamism and constant challenge and change in our sector has made it an exciting and purposeful role."

He said a highlight of his time in the role was the progress farmers have made around sustainability practices.

"Particularly over the last 10-15 years. There's always

going to be a need to keep doing better on farms, but it's important we do acknowledge the progress made by our farmers and sector as a whole.

"I am deeply passionate about farming, it's in my blood, it always will be. I am lucky to have been able to work for farmers. Last but not least, my family deserve a special mention, and I owe a great deal to them in supporting me."

DairyNZ chairman Jim van der Poel acknowledged Mackle and his huge contribution to DairyNZ and its farmers.

"We're fortunate to have had Tim at DairyNZ through many challenging periods.

"Tim has played a key role in developing the research and development programme and the development of our science-based policy and advocacy function.

"Tim has always been a strong, passionate chief executive and he's built a strong people culture at DairyNZ, with a highly engaged, capable and



DairyNZ boss Tim Mackle will end his 15-year role as chief executive in June.

purpose-driven team. That puts us at DairyNZ in a great position to continue to deliver

more for farmers and New Zealand."

The board will begin the

process of recruiting a new chief executive shortly, van der Poel said.

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Farming – a marathon, not a sprint

It's not often that I find myself agreeing with Green Party Co-Leader, James Shaw, but here we are.

Earlier this month, Shaw, who is also the Climate Change Minister, called for cross-party support on new rules for adapting to climate change. Todd Muller, National's Climate Change spokesperson, also agrees there is a need for bipartisan legislation that would remain unchanged across successive governments for years to come.

While Shaw and Muller are talking about changes to the Resource Management Act, I couldn't help but think that the call for all parties to agree on a way forward with climate issues sounded very familiar.

Back in 2019 in their submission on the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Bill, Fonterra made exactly the same plea.



Craig Hickman and James Shaw agreeing on something isn't a common occurrence.

"A cross-party approach to this critical issue," they said, "will provide New Zealanders with clarity about the pathway ahead, and give our farmers time to adjust and adapt their businesses."

In the same submission Fonterra went on to say, "Political consensus is vital.

Farmers adapting their businesses and making investments need certainty that the targets are not going to suddenly and radically change. Consensus across the political spectrum will provide certainty about the pathway ahead."

Anyone who has tried to buy

eggs recently has witnessed the result of sudden and radical change. Supermarkets threw suppliers into disarray by announcing they would phase out colony cage eggs, a move that was entirely consistent with the supermarkets' sustainability goals but that was poorly timed as it came shortly after many farms had just spent millions converting from battery cages to colony cages in order to comply with new government regulations.

Farming is not a sprint, it's a marathon where farmers make incremental changes over time in order to streamline their businesses and gain greater efficiency. Huge changes requiring massive infusions of capital and a change of mindset are rare, but when they do happen they're usually prompted by an external force

like a change in government policy or customer preference. When change forced by external factors is more frequent, say a new government policy followed a few years later by a more restrictive policy from a customer, such as the case with egg farmers, confusion reigns and farmers are left unwilling to act lest more changes should be coming their way.

So yes, I find myself in agreement with both the Green Party's James Shaw and National's Todd Muller; cross-party support is vital for any climate policy going forward because certainty is vital for our nation's farmers.

I do wonder though if Shaw ever thought he'd find himself in agreement with Fonterra, or wishing he'd listened to them earlier?

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Escalating slug risk makes monitoring essential

When it comes to protecting autumn-sown crops from slug damage, close monitoring and measuring of slug populations is the vital first step.

Mike Goodwin, Central South Island Regional Manager for sustainable agricultural solutions provider UPL NZ Ltd., says even two- or three-days' inattention can prove to be an issue. He says feedback from last season highlighted the potential risks. "Direct drill and low till systems especially have seen some severe outbreaks including devastation in kale and in new pasture."

Mike says in the last four years the slugs have been prolific and their attacks unrelenting. "There just hasn't been a lull. Most farmers and technical representatives are very aware of the threat. "Everyone understands that the first six weeks after sowing are critical. You can't just shut the gate and walk away."

However, despite best intentions, he warns slug infestations can happen seemingly out of the blue. He

cites devastation of young plantain and a severe slug population pressure in high-value kale as recent examples. "Unprotected, that damage to plants can happen surprisingly quickly. Slugs are a vastly underestimated problem."

He says this is in part because slugs have the ability to produce 300-500 eggs in their 13-month lifespan. "To see if there's a risk, put a slug mat out and check it next morning. One slug per square meter already signals a problem and action should be taken immediately."

"In the case of the young plantain crop damage, the technical advisor put out a slug mat in the paddock overnight. There were 180 slugs under it the next morning!"

He says slugs can cover a lot more ground than people think they do. Even in paddocks that have been worked conventionally, low and no tillage areas (such as areas around troughs and streams, and along fences) mean slugs readily can find a safe refuge and beneficial environment.



A slug on a sugar beet plant.

From there, they can move out to feed on seedlings.

Mike says once the presence of slugs is detected, swift action is required. He says a recent welcome addition to the slug control arsenal is proving highly efficacious, while being gentler on the planet and users.

Manufactured by French company DeSangosse, the global leader in molluscicide technology, Ironmax Pro works as well as sister product, and industry leader, Metarex® Inov. With the added value of solid green credentials.

Mike says BioGro NZ organic

certification is making Ironmax Pro increasingly popular with farmers and contractors. "There's a real demand for products that are safer for the environment, and more pleasant to work with, without compromising efficacy. It's just what the country needs."

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New Zealand's temperate climate is especially slug friendly. And Mike reckons in recent seasons, and with changes in farming practices, it's become even more so. Unchecked, grey field slugs (*Deroceras reticulatum*) and their close relation brown field slugs have the potential to wipe out entire crops. The voracious feeders cause damage across a broad range of plants but are especially tough on vulnerable seedlings.

Ironmax Pro's superior science has provided the slugs with an even more attractive (although deadly) feeding option. Research shows slugs actually actively prefer feeding on Ironmax Pro to feeding on seedlings.

The product's breakthrough Colzactive® technology gives it that exceptional palatability – putting it head and shoulders above conventional baits. Created by the De Sangosse research and development team, Colzactive is made up of specially selected oil seed rape extracts. Mike 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 down to just two molecules from oil seed rape for their outstandingly attractive and palatable characteristics from the slugs' perspectives. These

are the basis of the Colzactive technology, which enhances the Ironmax Pro bait taste and, importantly, the speed at which the baits work compared to others."

Ironmax Pro contains the optimized active ingredient 24.2 g/kg ferric phosphate anhydrous, referred to as IPMax. Iron (ferric) phosphate is a natural component of soil. In Ironmax Pro, it works as a stomach poison on slugs and is fatal once ingested. Feeding stops almost immediately.

Ironmax Pro is manufactured with the finest durum wheat using a unique wet process, which makes it very rain fast, so it will not disintegrate in the first shower. Ironmax Pro is IPM friendly and has limited 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.

Ironmax Pro has a recommended application rate range of 5 to 7 kg/ha. With 60,000 baits per kilogram, Mike says the product has excellent ballistic properties. "The uniform pellet size and innovative Ironmax Pro manufacturing process mean bait can be spread at widths of up to 24 m. That saves a lot of passes, time, and fuel."



Central South Island Regional manager for sustainable agricultural solutions, Mike Goodwin.

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Getting ready for Autumn

Summer strategies still apply in late summer.

Continue to monitor and evaluate feed demand and have a BCS plan.

It's important to consider the approaching change in season and have a plan for when it rains; reassess feed demand after January pregnancy testing, evaluate remaining summer crop yields, and think about autumn pasture renewal/or autumn feed crops where applicable.

Pasture management

Good grazing management is about maximising the pasture you grow and utilise balanced with allowing pastures to recover following any dry periods in the summer. If it's still dry in late summer, manage for over-grazing. Frequent intense grazing before plants reach the three-leaf stage reduces recovery of tiller numbers and recovery time.

Pasture renewal

Start thinking about pasture renewal early so paddocks can be properly prepared.

Body condition score

Assessing cows' BCS in mid-February to mid-March determines if actions are required and helps plan for autumn, e.g. drying off decisions, OAD and feeding.



Have a BCS plan

A number of strategies will allow you to achieve BCS targets at calving. Drafting cows based on BCS, age and time of calving; milking OAD, and running more than one herd may be appropriate.

What to do when it rains - managing after the dry

How much rain does it take to break a drought?

After a long dry period significant rain is required. 50mm+ is sufficient to return soil moisture deficits to within 15% of field capacity.

It is better to apply nitrogen sooner rather than later – apply after 20-25mm of rain or more.

Feeding supplement after a very dry summer

Available pasture can halve after rain as can decay causing cows to be underfed. Up to fifty percent of the pasture available before rain is lost as it quickly decays.

To avoid under feeding, it may be important to have

supplement available to feed out after rain. If feeding out before the drought the amount required after rain will at least double in the first 7-10 days, reducing as pasture cover improves.

After autumn rain and very rapid pasture growth there is the opportunity to increase pasture cover by keeping on a slow rotation. Do not speed up the rotation to fully feed the herd as this will not allow pasture covers to increase.

Nitrogen (N)

Use of fertiliser N can result in pasture responses of up to 12kg DM/kg N. Autumn nitrogen responses vary considerably.

The only certainty to applying N fertiliser after the autumn rains is the grass will be greener. After a severe drought, nitrogen applications can be delayed for two weeks after it has rained as the soil has good reserves of mineralised nitrogen and pastures take time to recover. The response period to autumn applied N fertiliser is over three months and this has to be considered when making the final drying off decision i.e. the response of 12kg DM/kg N does not occur over a 2-3-week period.

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Yard weaning benefits both growth rates and calf health, trial shows

Yard weaning involves keeping calves in dry yards for four or five days after weaning and giving them access to high quality silage or hay (quality is important) as well as clean, fresh water.

With calf weaning about to get underway, farmers are being encouraged to consider yard weaning as an alternative to traditional paddock weaning.

In Australian trials, yard weaned calves were 15.3kg heavier after three months and had a lower incidence of respiratory disease compared to paddock weaned calves.

Yard weaned cattle were found to be easier to handle over their lifetime and were more likely to adjust quickly to feedlot or cell grazing systems, improving the chance of superior weight gain.

A farm trial carried out in Gisborne showed even more impressive results, with the yard weaned Angus/Hereford/

Simmental cross calves gaining 10kg over the six and a half day yard weaning trial compared to 0.5kg in the paddock weaned calves. All calves were around 140 days old.

Yard weaning involves keeping calves in dry yards for four or five days after weaning and giving them access to high quality silage or hay (quality is important) as well as clean, fresh water.

To help socialise the calves, at least one person should walk through the yards at least twice a day without dogs.

Calves between 180kg and 260kg should be allowed at least 4m square/head while smaller calves should be allocated 2.5m square/head. It is important calves are kept reasonably close together as this helps quieten



Trials in Australia and also Gisborne have shown that yard weaning of calves has great benefit to both growth rates and overall health.

them down.

Another farm trial in NZ highlighted the importance of

providing good quality feed for the calves in the yards, as well as the on-going benefits of

running noticeably quieter more settled cattle.

- B+LNZ

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- Shaun Pound - Pokene

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Keeping the water trough in tip-top shape with smart maintenance

Rotational preventative maintenance will help your water reticulation system continue to deliver the right stock water capacity for your animals.

As you rotate stock to meet grazing demands prior to paddock changes, checking the performance of your valve will ensure that troughs remain full and eliminate pooling from leaking valves.

This is not only best practice but also means that during times of high demand the trough valves are operating at their optimum.

Trough valve maintenance may not often be top of mind, but it's vital for a healthy water system.

An annual cycle of water-related maintenance is particularly important prior to summer when dry periods place increased demand on the water system.

Servicing is recommended once every twelve months and in some cases, depending on the severity of winter and the valve's exposure to



the elements, the servicing recommendation can be every six months.

When maintaining the valves it is important to sleeve or plunger-type valves to have a non-petroleum-based grease applied to ensure the longevity of O-rings and other rubber

components. Do not use Vaseline as it will only create issues, not resolve them.

The ability to isolate the water supply to the trough will make maintenance easy and the best solution is to have the ball valve inline prior to the trough valve.

The valve can be either

plastic or brass depending on the installer's preference.

Retrofitting a valve can be difficult unless the area in question can be isolated at another point. For best practice, the isolation valves should be included when the water system is installed.

Variations in water quality can provide a real challenge on farm. The particles that create build-up in a trough valve are often not visible to the naked eye.

The surrounding topography should be a consideration when choosing a valve. If the area is prone to gravel, lime and other particles in the water, the recommendation would be to avoid diaphragm activated products or make sure that you have a good filtration system that can eliminate any particles fouling the valve.

With new installations it's a good idea to flush all lines prior to installing trough valves to eliminate any foreign matter from the system.

Initial signs of problems are leaking valves or valves that are not shutting off completely. The issue could be as simple as sand, grit, grass or even insects.

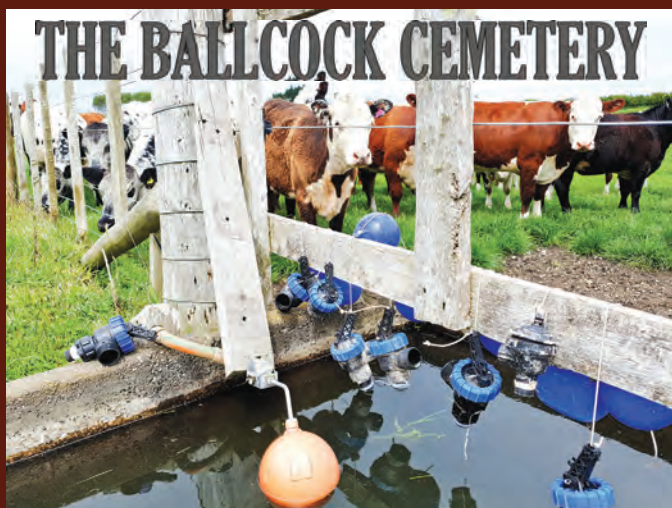
The offending matter may have lodged in your trough valve, reducing the ability of the valve to operate at maximum. When conducting maintenance, replacing all moving parts is best practice.

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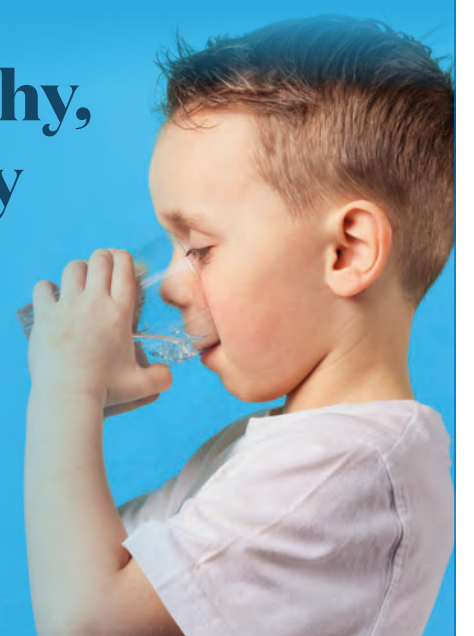
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Freshwater farm plans; the what, the why, the when and the how..

Freshwater farm plans will provide a practical way for farmers to meet freshwater outcomes. The Ministry for Environment is encouraging those who manage or work on farms to understand how the freshwater farm plan system will benefit them.

Who needs a freshwater farm plan?

- All farmers with:
- 20 hectares or more in arable or pastoral use
 - 5 hectares or more in horticultural use
 - 20 hectares or more of combined use.

What freshwater farm plans are

They are a legal instrument established under Part 9A of the RMA (sections 217A to 217M).

Freshwater farm plans will identify practical actions on-farm that help improve your local waterways. Actions will be tailored to a particular farm's physical environment and what is important in the catchment that farm is in.

Freshwater farm plans will

build from existing plans but are not the same as farm environment plans.

The final design of the freshwater farm plans and wider system has been informed by submissions, analysis and user testing. This includes extensive on-farm testing.

Why are freshwater farm plans needed?

The health of freshwater is vital for the health of people, the environment, and economy. However freshwater quality is declining. It is being impacted by urban development, agriculture, horticulture, forestry and other activities.

Current regulation has not been able to halt the decline in many of our waterways.

Freshwater farm plans are part of the Essential Freshwater package introduced in 2020 to:

- stop further degradation of New Zealand's freshwater resources and improve water quality within five years
- reverse past damage and bring New Zealand's freshwater



resources, waterways and ecosystems to a healthy state within a generation.

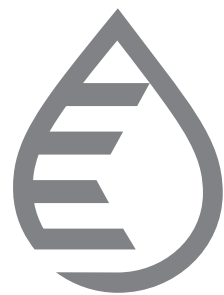
When do farmers need to have freshwater farm plans in place?

Freshwater farm plan regulations are expected to be ready for rollout from mid 2023.

The regulations will take effect region by region, with the rollout schedule for the 16

regional and unitary council areas informed by:

- existing farm planning infrastructure
- the investment needed in capability and capacity



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Regional council alignment with and progress on the development of new freshwater regional plans as required under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020.

The first regions for roll out in 2023 are: Southland, Gisborne, Waikato

Pilot projects ran in late 2022 in these regions to test the freshwater farm plan process at a catchment level. These were joint projects between the relevant regional council, iwi, hapu, and runanga, MfE, and MPI.

Subsequent regions for rollout are set out below; these remain indicative, noting regulations will not formally take effect in a region until they are activated by a Ministerial decision (note – the dates for rollout in these regions have yet to be confirmed):

Hawke's Bay, Otago, West Coast, Bay of Plenty, Greater Wellington, Horizons, Taranaki, Marlborough, Tasman/Nelson, Environment Canterbury, Chathams, Northland, Auckland.

How do the freshwater farm plans fit in with the wider regulatory system?

Freshwater farm plans can demonstrate how regulatory requirements are being met on farms such as those from the: - National Environmental Standards for Freshwater



- 2020
- nitrogen-cap regulations
 - stock exclusion regulations
 - intensive winter grazing regulations
 - regional plans and consent requirements.
 - Freshwater farm plans and stock exclusion regulations

are complementary ways to manage stock exclusion.
How will the freshwater farm plans be more flexible than previous regulations?

It's widely known and understood that 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to on-farm solutions. Freshwater

farm plans will be built using available local information and updated over time.

They will include a risk-based tailored approach to mitigating impacts on freshwater. This will help ensure that mitigation actions have real impact and are effective and practical.

You will be able to work with the certifier and farm advisor(s) to ensure that your vision and values are captured within your freshwater farm plan.

– More information can be sourced from the Ministry for Environment.

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It focuses on opportunities to view machines in their working state and reinforces the relationship between farmers, service providers, scientists and technical experts.

The main aim of the South Island Agricultural Field Days (SIAFD) is to give farmers and others in the rural sector the opportunity to see the latest in agricultural machinery and services that are available on the market, particularly home-grown products.

In past years the event attracts approximately 20,000-30,000 visitors over the course of three days.

SIAFD is:

- New Zealand's longest running Field Days
- New Zealand's biggest demonstrative Field Days
- The South Island's largest 2023 Field Days
- A non-profit organisation – all surplus goes back into



PHOTO: SIAFD FACEBOOK

developing the site, running the event or are given away as community donations or scholarships

• One of the few Field Days to allocate sites based on industry – making it easy for visitors to find

and compare products
• Committed to the development of its volunteer members

The 2023 edition of South Island Agricultural Field Days is set to be held on March 29, 30 and 21 at Kirwee.

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She's a full house at SIAFD 2023

The no vacancy sign is already up for exhibitors at the 2023 South Island Agricultural Field Days.

At the end of January organisers of the hugely successful event were able to announce the event was a sell out with all exhibitor sites snatched up with a waitlist created for anyone who missed the cut but still wished to be a part of the event.

And that will mean that anyone with an interest in agriculture and a desire to be up to date with all the latest trends, equipment and machinery will want to be on site on one of the three-days of this year's event on March 29, March 30 and March 31.

Held every two years, the event has continually grown in stature and still remains New Zealand longest and biggest demonstrative Field Days.

Controlled, organised and run by a tireless group of volunteers who work hard to ensure that each edition runs without a hitch there's been a huge amount of work once again go into the 2023 Field Days which will again be held in Kirwee.

Speaking to media, committee chairman Hayden Dorman said



The 2023 South Island Agricultural Field Days are a sell out with all exhibitor sites snapped up.

PHOTO: SIAFD FACEBOOK

with the shackles of Covid rapidly disintegrating there was strong expectation for a huge crowd to be in attendance this year and with news of the full house sign going up, there's going to be a bit of something for everyone.

And in turn, with Covid supply chain pressures easing exhibitors will be able to showcase some of the latest, most exciting products on the market.

"The exhibitors, who are either already booked, or about

to, appreciate having the space and facilities to showcase and demonstrate their equipment to visitors who mean business, who are coming because they want to see just how well it performs in field," Dorman told the Otago Daily Times.

Work has been undertaken since 2021 when the event was last held to upgrade and improve the facilities at Kirwee including an expanded electricity provider, new paved roads and a new-look water supply.



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All you need to know before you arrive at SIAFD 2023

GETTING THERE

Getting in and out of the 2021 South Island Agricultural Field Days will be quick and easy for anyone arriving in Kirwee from any direction. The Field Days will open at 8am each day and will close at 5pm with all routes into the event well sign posted for easy traffic flow.

FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS

There will be a number of lunch, coffee, and food stalls available on site with the SIAFD preferred caterer. This will be the only official licensed site. SIAFD will be accepting a very small number of other food vendors.

ALCOHOL

The SIAFD bar will be open until 6:00pm on Wednesday to Friday.

ATM

There will be an ATM on site located near the office.

BEST SITE AWARD

A prize valued at \$500 for the best large site and best small site will be awarded by the SIAFD committee.

The winning sites will be

those that attract a large number of genuine enquiries, are active stands with demonstrations likely to attract attention, and are tidy and staffed efficiently.

CAMPERVANS/ MOTORHOMES/ RVs

Overnight parking or camping is not permitted on the SIAFD site or in the carpark, however less than 5

minutes down the road the Courtenay A&P Showgrounds in Kirwee are offering camping.

Charges: \$10 per night for power, or \$5 per night non-power sites.

CATERING & FOOD VENDORS

There will be a number of lunch, coffee, and food stalls available on site with the SIAFD preferred caterer

They will be the only official licensed site and will be accepting a very small number of other food vendors.

COFFEE

There are many coffee options around the grounds including one at each entrance.

COMPARATIVE

DEMONSTRATIONS

Areas of crop available for demonstrations are as follows: 4ha barley stubble for cultivation, 1ha maize for silage and cultivation, and 4ha of grass for bales/silage. There will be an ATV demonstration course if there is enough interest.

DOGS

Dogs are not permitted at SIAFD with the exception of guide dogs and police dogs. Please leave your dogs at home.



PHOTOS: SIAFD FACEBOOK



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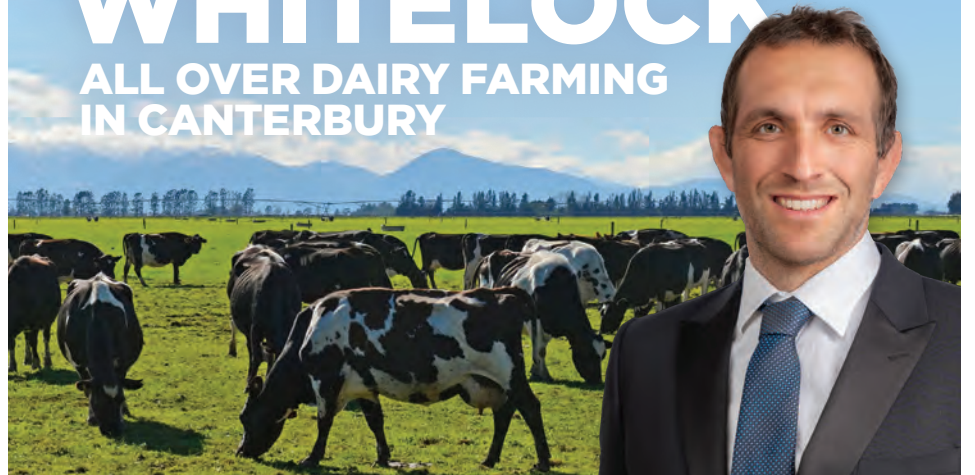


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THE EVENT

The main aim of the South Island Agricultural Field Days (SIAFD) is to give farmers and others in the rural sector the opportunity to see the latest in agricultural machinery and services that are available on the market, particularly home grown products.

Nowadays the event attracts between 20,000 and 25,000 visitors over the course of three days.

DAY 1

29 MAR 2023

DAY 2

30 MAR 2023

DAY 3

30 MAR 2023



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Building your new farm track by following the basic principles

Having a broad understanding of the principles, process and issues that can arise when building a track should help when dealing with contractors. Here are some basic race construction principles to follow.

- Remove all grass and topsoil
- Construct a sound base with strong foundation material
- Provide adequate compaction
- Provide a suitable walking surface
- Crown the race
- Construct an efficient drainage system
- Fence cows out of the drain but ensure access for cleaning
- Include a maintenance programme in the budget



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A good track is constructed in layers. A foundation, or base layer, is formed with a surface, or wearing layer, placed on top.

The base layer provides the structural support for the surface layer – if it is weak the surface layer may break up and collapse. If water can penetrate into the base layer it may lose its strength resulting in potholes.

The surface layer has two functions: to provide a comfortable surface for cows to walk on and to shed water to protect the structural integrity of the track.

Each layer should be thoroughly mechanically compacted using vibrating rollers. Loose, open layers have much less strength than well-consolidated ones. Cow traffic does not provide an adequate substitute for mechanical compaction.

Foundation (base) layer

Topsoil and grass are not suitable for use in the base layer and should be removed before beginning construction.

The base should be made up of layers, each up to 150 mm deep. After each 150mm layer is laid, it should be firmly compacted before the next is added.

Consider the following when selecting materials

- Moist sub-surface soil is a suitable material.



Having a good foundation, or base layer will be the start of a strong and durable track or laneway.

- Material dug out to make effluent ponds or the material removed from the table drains may be used, provided it is not topsoil.
- Use gravels, pit metal, or rotten rock but not river gravel.
- Soft clay is unsuitable for use in foundations unless stabilised with other materials.
- Hydrated lime, evenly spread and uniformly incorporated to a depth of 125mm, will allow soft clays to become stable once compacted.
- Cement can be used as a stabiliser in base layers – the usual recommendation is 1-4% of the total.
- If the material available does not create a satisfactory foundation, it is possible to use

a 'geotextile' (an industrial fabric used in earthworks) to cover the shaped based layer, before adding the surface layer. Geotextiles allow water to pass through but they hold soil and rock in place and will prevent the surface layer from being pushed into the foundation layer, particularly by heavy traffic.

Surface layer

- The creation of a satisfactory track surface requires compaction into a hard, smooth, wear resistant layer, with a minimum of particles that can cut or bruise feet.
- It should be 100 – 150 mm thick. Topsoil and grass provide a soft cushioned surface for cows to walk on but are unable to withstand

the rigours of frequent use.

- The surface layer is usually made from a mixture of fine materials – often sand, pumice, limestone, sandstone, zeolite, woodchips, small stones and clay.

Consider the following when choosing materials

- Crushed limestone (5-6 mm) – check local lime for suitability. It is generally spread as a 50-100 mm layer and needs firm compaction.
- Sand alone does not make an ideal surface – it is abrasive on cows' feet and washes away too readily.
- Well rounded gravel, less than 25 mm in diameter, is preferable to large stones. Large stones can be kicked aside, leaving the

- surface susceptible to water penetration and damage.
- Fine particles of clay will fill the gaps between larger particles, binding it together. It also gives the surface a long wearing and smooth finish. Incorporating 0.3-1% cement into the clay capping mixture can help stabilise the surface and prolong its life.
- To check if a material is appropriate for a top surface, a small sample rock should shatter under the heel of your gumboot when ground against a concrete surface. Trialling small loads of proposed materials will show which are going to work and which are not.
- Concrete tracks can be useful in areas of high rainfall as they provide a clean track and reduce mud on udders. However they do require management at the boundary between the concrete and paddocks. A section of lime fines at the intersection can help stones fall off before they get on to the concrete.
- A track on a steep slope can mean water runs down the lane before running off the side – resulting in long water scours in the surface layer. Ideally, design tracks to minimise slope, even if it adds distance it will be worthwhile as maintenance issues will be reduced.

Continued on P38

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Adequate drainage when building a laneway or track is paramount.

From P37

Drain Types Table

Creating table drains at the sides of the track helps to take water away, maintaining track condition. The recommended size for table drains is 300 mm deep and 1 metre wide.

Spur

Spur drains should be installed every 40 to 80 metres to empty the table drains on to paddocks - not to a watercourse. Spur drains should be closer together on steeper slopes.

Lateral

Small lateral drains should be cut into the tracks to allow water to flow away. Not all of the grassy edge should be removed as this is necessary to maintain the structure of the track.

Water Table Depth

Adequate water table depth

is essential to good drainage - ensure the water table is a least 600 mm below the surface to aid the draining of water away from the track.

A water table close to the surface will hinder drainage and may cause the track to become wet, reducing its structural

integrity and increasing its chance of collapse.

It may be necessary to build your track above the paddock level in areas with a high water table to ensure drainage occurs.

– Information courtesy of DairyNZ

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Planting rates key to yields

Maize crop plant populations will continue to increase as part of the ongoing drive to lift maize yields, says visiting United States maize expert Professor Fred Below.

Professor Below, who was keynote speaker at the Foundation for Arable Research's Premier Maize Event in Hamilton, says this will trigger other management changes including a shift to narrower row spacings.

While average maize yields in the US go up and down depending on the weather, overall these lift about one tonne every seven to eight years because of improved genetics and better management.

Associated with this is a linear increase in the number of plants. In the US, plant populations go up about 900 plants per hectare per year and are currently almost 79,000 plants/ha.

"This will continue to increase, despite the high seed cost."

Yield is based on three key components, the number of plants per hectare, kernels in each plant and the weight of each kernel.

"To increase maize yield, you have to increase at least one of these. Which one do you have the most control over? Its plants per hectare," says Professor Below, of the Crop

Physiology Laboratory, University of Illinois.

Professor Below calculates that the maximum plant population in the US at a 76cm row spacing is 93,000 plants/ha. "Over that, you are at risk of competition, shading and lodging."

FAR senior maize researcher David Densley says New Zealand conditions mean that the upper limit for plant populations will be higher than in the US before the need to switch to narrower rows.

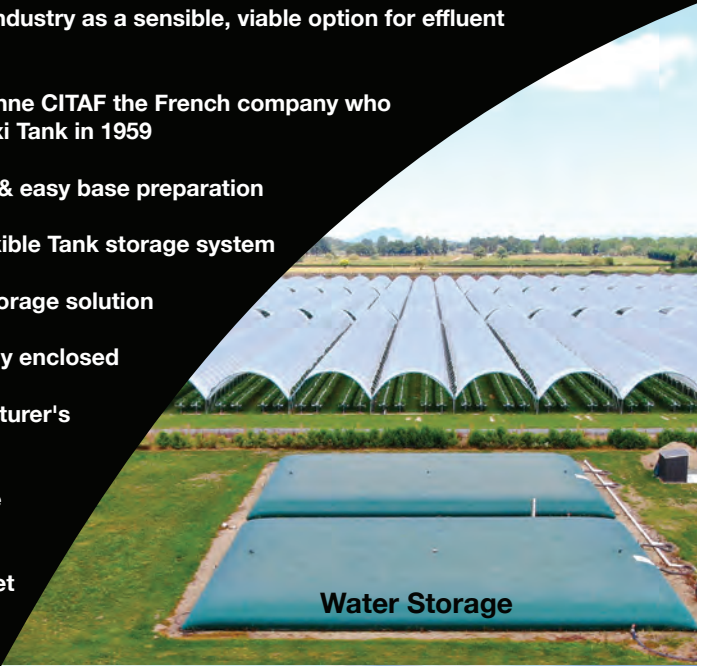
"Our cooler nights and even cooler days and fewer extreme temperatures allows more plants to be grown, but there will still be a tipping point."

Professor Below's research team have made a major investment in trial work to compare 76cm and 51cm rows. "One huge advantage of narrow rows is that they can intercept more light and manage a higher population of plants."

A planting rate of 109,000 plants/ha in a 76cm row resulted in a plant-to-plant spacing of 12.2cm, which is too close for grain production, but may be manageable for silage. "You don't want to sit too close to someone at the dinner table, you want some elbow room. Maize plants are the same."

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Management of farm machinery - there's no more important job

When it comes to the agricultural sector, the maintenance of farm machinery and equipment is the most important aspect. With prices sky-rocketing and supply demands lean there's never been a more important time to ensure that your gear is being kept up to standard to reduce the chance of breakdowns and issues throughout the busiest season. Issues arising can be one of the biggest impacts on productivity and then ultimately profit. Here's some key steps to take to ensure your farm machinery is kept up to working standard.

Maintenance, maintenance, maintenance....

It really can't be stressed enough – upholding a regular and thorough lubrication of all farm machinery can in the long run, save you thousands of dollars and plenty of hours stuck on the edge of the field.

Lubrication prevents friction and friction is one of the major causes of breakdowns in farm machinery constantly. But it doesn't just start and stop with



Regular maintenance and checking of your farm machinery can save you plenty in the long run.

lubrication. A build of debris and dirt is also a major cause of issue so regular cleaning out and wiping down of vital parts of your machine is critical.

A first-class service....

Regular inspections and ensuring your machinery is

constantly kept up to servicing and checks from mechanics and specialists can be the best decision you'll make on the farm. It gets hectic and it can be easy to take the, she'll be right approach, but by regularly getting your machinery checked

over you can save yourself plenty in the long run.

A masterclass in operation

You can have your machinery running at it's absolute optimum, but unless you've got the right person in control of it you're on a

pathway to trouble. Ensuring that operators are fully aware of what's required of them in terms of maintenance and use of each piece of machinery on your property can be critical to production and profit levels. Make sure the operating manuals are within reach for any piece of machinery but be prepared to give a breakdown in a simpler format if required.

An eye for detail....

You know your machinery better than anyone else. You know how when it's operating at its best and can readily tell when something isn't quite right. Use that knowledge to your advantage, look for the signs and be willing to lend a few minutes to observing and listening to your machinery to ensure everything is as it should be. That extends to how you store your machinery too. Ensure it's kept in a good environment for minimising the risk of animal intrusion, or the damage that can be caused by weather, particularly when it comes to rain and rust.

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Out and About

Catch up with the team at Euroagri in the coming weeks at one of the A&P Shows or Events they are attending.

Mayfield A & P Show – March 11

Methven A & P Show – March 18

South Island Agricultural Field Days – March 29, 30 & 31



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are committed to ensuring the success of their products both now and into the future.

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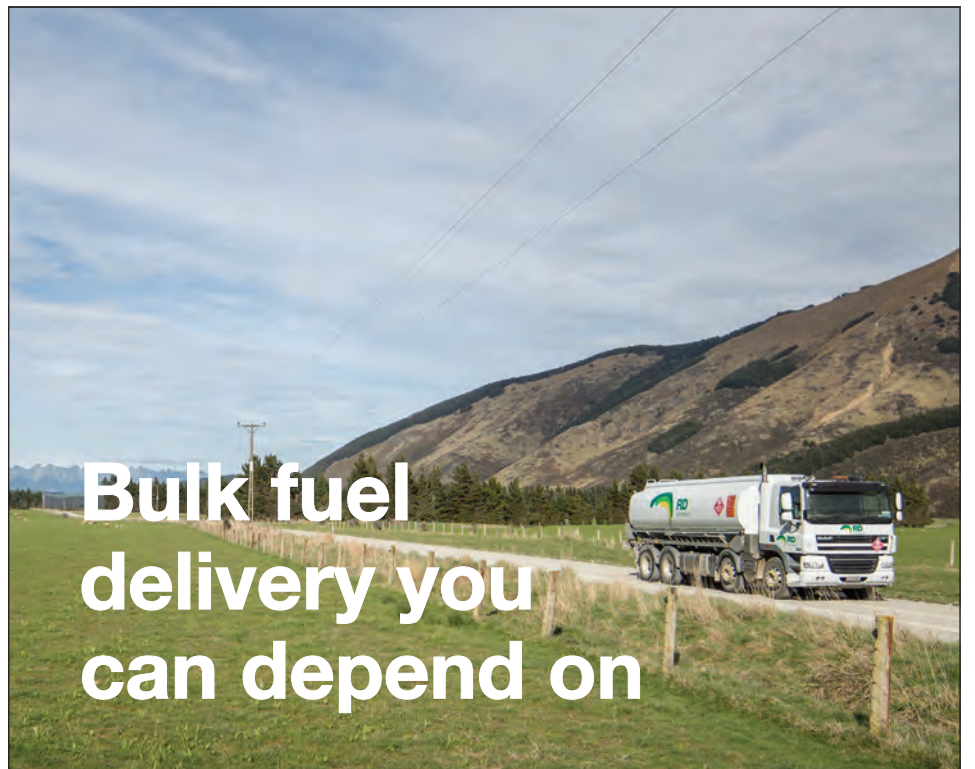
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Thomson onto a winner in shearing

“After hearing I had a background in physical jobs he said you should become a shearer and I said, Okay, haha.”

A North Canterbury sports hope who once dreamed of riding winners on the racetrack has found a niche winning as a shearer.

Having had fleeting moments with the champion Winx and a Gai Waterhouse Melbourne Cup runner while helping work racehorses in New South Wales, Lydia Thomson of Rangiora, abandoned dreams of being a raceday jockey because of what was needed to keep-down the weight.

Two years ago, at the age of 29, she took to shearing and is now making every post a winner, a victory at the Inangahua A and P Show's Reefton Shears early last month, - ironically at a racecourse - being her eighth win, in 12 Junior shearing finals in the three months of competition in the 2022-2023 season, more than anyone else in any grade in about 30 shows to date on the Shearing Sports New Zealand calendar.

There were alas just two in her grade in Reefton, but with a couple of national title wins

earlier in the season she was set to shear at major shearing and woolhandling events through February and in early March, culminating at the Golden Shears goal in Masterton on March 2-4.

“I'll have to shear a lot better than than I did in my Juniors, that's for sure,” she said.

Thomson had travelled about 240km to find out she was in the proverbial two-horse race, with just one opponent, making it a comparative shot's-eye of adding Reefton to the season's other wins, at shows in Rangiora, Ashburton, Christchurch, Nelson, Duvauchelle, Winton, and Tapawera.

They included national titles at the Corriedale championships in Christchurch and the Crossbred Lambs championships at Winton, she was also runner-up in the Waimate Shears' New Zealand longwool championship and the fullwool championships at Lumsden.

While disappointed with the turnout in her grade in the Reefton Shears - she didn't reckon she “deserved” to claim another



Lydia Thomson has swapped the hustle and bustle of horse racing in New South Wales and is right at home with a shearing blade in hand these days. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

red ribbon in the circumstances, she did make the most of the trip better of the day by teaming with Senior shearer Jock Fitzpatrick to win possibly the first match between a machine shearing team and a blade shearing team.

They shored four sheep each, and beat a team of former New Zealand World Championships team member Allen Gemmill and Tim Hogg, both also from Canterbury.

She also won a Junior and Intermediate cleanshear a few hours later at the Ikamatua Hotel. Turning her back on the

horses, pre-training and spelling operation The Hermitage, at The Oaks, about 20 minutes from Camden, NSW - where, she stresses, she didn't get to “personally” ride Winx - Thomson returned to North Canterbury, where she'd grown-up on a small block around Oxford, with sheep, cattle, chooks, pigs - and horses.

She had been doing a jockey's apprenticeship, and had the weight down to 50kg, but says she didn't feel healthy doing it.

“How I got the shearing bug was I was doing some part-time

shed-handing when a shearer from an outside gang was on lend for the day at one of our sheds,” she said. “He just asked me what my background of work was, I told him I rode race horses in Australia, and had done some building work and labouring in New Zealand over the years.”

“After hearing I had a background in physical jobs he said you should become a shearer and I said, Okay, haha.”

The same shearer took her “under his wing and taught me to shear from the get go.

“I would go to sheds that he was working at and shear the last sides of some of his sheep during the runs and shear through the breaks,” she said.

“We would go and do some life style blocks to get practice in too, or when he wasn't rostered on to work we would set up a hungry stand in sheds the other guys from his crew were working,” Thomson said. “Basically any chance I had to get some practice in I took, till I was ready to get my own stand.”

She's in just her second season, and said: “It was great to find shearing, because it's the only job I've felt the same kind of passion towards as I did at the time as wanting to be a jockey.”

- By Doug Laing
Shearing Sports New Zealand

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