Supplement to Te Awamutu Courier, Tuesday, June 10, 2008

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Look back with pride, ahead with anticipation

National Fieldays set to celebrate 40th anniversary at Mystery Creek

As the countdown continues to Fieldays' 40th annual event which opens tomorrow, the 2008 Premier Feature ‘The Science of Farming’ reminds us to look back with pride, as well as forward with anticipation.

The Premier Feature area, outside the Mystery Creek Pavilion on M Road, and prime display space inside the pavilion will showcase technologies and developments to a very wide range of Fieldays visitors with exhibitors covering developments from GPS to nutrition, research to organic farming.

The Premier Feature will offer visitors essential tools to increase their productivity and profitability on farm, as well as showcasing the new product developments and advances that bring our nation success in high value niche markets worldwide. Fieldays team leader Vanessa Richmond says that the Science of Farming underpins the international success of our primary producers.

This area will be the heart of Fieldays, as it has been the heart of New Zealand's success in competitive domestic and international markets.

This is a chance to bring this crucial ongoing research and development into the spotlight at our greatest farming event.

Premier Feature supporter, AgResearch and Strategic Partner, the University of Waikato are two of New Zealand’s most innovative organisations and will present the latest research and amazing interactive displays at Fieldays.

AgResearch Chief Executive Dr Andrew West says New Zealand farmers have always been early adopters of technology driven by creative science and this has been key to their success.

Increasing global demand for our primary produce makes it an exciting time for the pastoral sector. AgResearch is committed to helping New Zealand farmers continue to raise their productivity, profitability and sustainability through research and development.

Further opportunities to take new ideas back to the farm will be provided by The National Bank Seminar Series and the University of Waikato Seminar Series during the event.

Fieldays 40th anniversary event (June 11-14) will be bursting with new ideas, technologies and methods.

Fieldays facts

The concept of Fieldays was first developed in 1968 by a group of Waikato farmers.

- Fieldays first held at Te Rapa Racecourse in 1969 with a budget of $90,500.
- The first Fieldays attracted an estimated 13,000 people.
- The event was moved to the land known as Mystery Creek in 1973.
- The Mystery Creek Pavilion and Mystery Creek Events Centre were created in 1999.
- Today Fieldays attracts visitors from an average of 38 countries.
- 2007 Fieldays attracted 120,000 people.

Fieldays 2008

Fieldays is set to celebrate its 40th year with the biggest agricultural party New Zealand has ever seen!

Look out for big changes around the site with a brand new meeting area at Gate 1, changes in the Tractor Pull and Fencing Areas and the new Eastern Marquee in the Eastern Exhibition area showcasing even more rural lifestyle exhibits undercover.

Don’t miss ‘Kiwi’s Best’ (see also page 8), a new initiative that celebrates products coming out of agriculture and horticulture with the finest New Zealand grown food and beverage providers showing, sampling, selling delicious products.

The official Fieldays opening ceremony will be held on the Village Green at 9am tomorrow (Wednesday June 11).

Gates open daily at 8am and close at 5pm.

Free parking is provided.

Ticket Prices

Adults $15 (or pre-purchase at the Te Awamutu Visitor Centre for $13 per adult)

Children (5-14 years), Pre-schoolers - free.

Buses run from the Te Awamutu Rose Gardens to Fieldays. Call now for plan take-offs pricing and delivery

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Rural Roundup, Tuesday, June 10, 2008

Lake Cameron real Waikato treasure

Ruakura man John Pretty reckons Lake Cameron is one of the Waikato’s best kept secrets. You could ask 100 people on the main street of Hamilton if they’d ever heard of Lake Cameron and I bet they wouldn’t know, he said. But while many may be unaware of the daintiest little peat lake in the Waikato, for Mr Pretty it is a neighbourhood treasure, a favourite duck shooting spot and an absolute passion.

Mr Pretty is a member of the Lake Cameron Care Group which has spent a number of years transforming the lake reserve from a weed-choked mess into a beautiful recreational reserve.

The group has ripped out weeds, removed nuisance willow trees, planted more than 12,000 native trees, installed seats, created viewing areas and built walkways, complete with bridges over drains.

A stile is being removed so parents can push prams down to the walkways, raised boardwalks are being built over swampy areas, duck shooters are tidying up their maimais and more trees will be planted on the lake’s western boundary.

The care group is also working with Melville High School students to landscape a wedding photography area with a huge established tree as the centrepiece. Once that’s been done, the group plans to officially hand over the reserve to Waipa District Council, which owns the land and has been extremely supportive of the restoration project, helping with funding and resources.

Environment Waikato has actively supported the care group for many years, providing advice and helping to supply about 11,000 native plants through the Honda Tree Fund.

Environment Waikato care group coordinator Bala Tikkisetty said the Lake Cameron project was a shining example of what could be achieved when councils and the community worked together.

Continued page 12.
Amazing Ag Art Wear entries

After picking up three of the top four places in the Ag Art Wear Under 21 section last year, Te Awamutu College 2008 Wearable Arts students have a hard act to follow. But the majority of the Year 11 students entered into this year’s event have certainly brought innovation to the competition.

Wearable Arts teacher Pauline Henderson says she is always surprised by the creativity shown by her students. ‘‘They always come up with something different or interesting, but the real challenge is to transform that into something wearable.’’

The students have a long list of considerations when making their first creation for Ag Art Wear.

‘‘It’s not just a matter of making a stunning design. It has to be worn and walked in by a model – so it has to fit reasonably well and allow her to walk across the catwalk.’’

Using materials like wire and metal have to be considered carefully – they don’t bend or stretch like fabrics do.

‘‘The finished item then has to be transported to the Fieldays site and has to be sturdy enough to last for 10 shows on the catwalk – strong construction and fastenings are vital. How items are worn also has to be carefully described.’’

Seven Te Awamutu College entries were delivered to Fieldays for this year’s Ag Art Wear competition – six of them for the Under 21 section and one for the Landcare section.

Entries for the Under 21 section must be made from products or by-products found and or used on a farm.

Those in the Landcare section are made from products found solely on the land, reflecting New Zealand’s unique landscape, flora and fauna.

The students will visit Fieldays on Friday to see their creations on stage.

PRINCESS: Waimaria Daniels (left) and Annalise Nelson used hundreds of feathers and hand woven flax pieces to create this entry ‘Te Puia’ (worn by Katelyn Massey).

TWISTER: Jessica French wears her own creation Maelstrom which reflects a vortex of emotion, strung together with dog clips and chains.

RAINBOW CONNECTION: Rochelle Taylor and Laura Brown (left) used new flow pipe from sponsors Farmlands as the central material for Colour Connections (modelled here by Joanna Brogden). They painted each piece of pipe with tail paint and drilled holes to connect them with split links and chain. The colours represent various personalities while the bodice combines all colours – showing how each unique personality stands alongside each other.

THREADS OF LIFE: Katelyn Massey (above) and Danielle Smillie utilised 2000 artificial insemination straws and 100 examination gloves from sponsor LIC to create their entry New Beginnings. They used hot glue and cable ties to create the straw skirt over silage wrap and a glove tight bodice. It is completed with an intricate head dress.

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PRE-CALVING EVENINGS

We would like to invite you to join our team at our Pre-Calving Evening to be held on Wednesday 18th June at our Te Awamutu Clinic kicking off at 5pm. There will be supplier reps on site, a B.B.Q. and never repeated prices.

Special guest on the night
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Focus on Kiwi food at Fieldays

All of our best home-grown food and beverage is destined for export markets right? Wrong! As part of Fieldays 40th anniversary celebrations, Kiwis Best comes to Fieldays to showcase the very best products coming from our farmers and growers.

Kiwis Best is a new marquee, situated at the heart of Fieldays, that will feature some of New Zealand’s finest food and beverage products in a package encompassing sampling, sales and cooking demonstrations, all under the watchful eye of celebrity chef, Al Brown.

Brown will be familiar to many as co-owner of top Wellington restaurant, Logan Brown, and host of popular television series Hunger for the Wild. He enjoys eating just about anything, but most of all, simple food, cooked perfectly and believes that more time should be spent pleasing the palate than garnishing to please the eye.

Chef Brown has created some special Kiwis Best recipes using ingredients available from Kiwis Best exhibitors.

He encourages visitors to watch the demonstrations, pick up a recipe card and the ingredients and enjoy Kiwis Best in their own homes.

Brown’s exclusive recipes will be supported by a packed demonstration and tasting schedule in the Kitchen Studio kitchen from other Kiwis Best exhibitors including NZ Pork, The Game Keeper, Kaweka Food Company and Southern Clams (which featured on Country Calendar in April).

Kiwis Best is proudly supported by L&P – World Famous in New Zealand.

Women’s network meets ‘Out in the Styx’

The next meeting of Dairy Women’s Network is to be held at Out in the Styx in two weeks.

The morning tea meeting is a chance to meet other dairying women and share helpful information on being successful in business.

The meeting, on Tuesday, June 24, begins at 9.30am for coffee and informal session where women will share hints, ideas and plans on how they got through a busy calving period.

From 10.45 the group will be addressed by guest speaker Robyn Clements.

Mrs Clements is a Women in dairying trust board member and is well known by many in the industry as a past shareholder councillor for Fonterra.

She will present an introduction to the network, a brief history and what the trust board sees as the future for the organisation.

There will be time for a question and answer session before the meeting concludes at 11.30am.

More networking time is planned. Women are welcome to stay for coffee and a bite to eat, or can book for lunch.

Anyone interested in Dairy Women’s Network is welcome to contact Sue Forsythe (07 871 1552 or forsythesue@xnation.co.nz).

Women attending the meeting are asked to confirm with Mrs Forsythe for catering purposes.

For comprehensive advice on farm financial management

Finn & Partners has particular expertise in advising on taxation minimisation, accounting and cash flow budgeting, partnership restructuring, the use of companies and trusts, farm finance and succession planning.

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Special events for 40th year

Two competitions that centre on routine farm tasks - tractor driving and fencing - attract the attention of over 120,000 Fieldays visitors each year.

They also reward entrants with substantial cash and product prizes.

The Fieldays National Tractor Pull competition is one of the most watched attractions at the event.

The fencing area also draws a crowd throughout the day to see top quality fencers create the best quality fence against the clock.

The Fieldays Wiremark & Cyclone Fencing Championships has been a feature at Fieldays since its beginning at Te Rapa Racecourse.

For this 40th event, the Silver Spades (doubles) competition will face the challenge of fencing without the assistance of modern powertools.

The Golden Pliers (singles) competition will use the latest technology graphically illustrating the progress made in tools over the years.

There are cash prizes up for grabs in addition to trophies and product packs in all classes.

The cash prize - $5000 - awarded to the Golden Pliers winner will buy a lot of fencing equipment and farm supplies, with plenty left over for something a little more indulgent.

Not to be left behind, the Fieldays National Tractor Pull competition boasts plenty of improvements for 2008 as well.

The track has been redesigned, viewing areas improved and additional exhibitor sites added into the area.

Following a successful launch in 2007 the Weight Transfer Class will return, where competitors pull an increasing weight as far as they can.

Organisers have looked abroad to expand the competition, this year introducing the Farm Stock class.

This new class will encourage farmers and younger entrants to have a go.

Tractors in the standard Farm Stock class are two wheel drive with no modifications with a Farm Stock Sports class allowing modification to the injector, injector pump and turbo.

The Farm Stock class is popular in Europe and should see equal interest in New Zealand.

The Supermodified Tractors will also return to rumble the Fieldays site and thrill crowds.

One of the Supermodified tractors lines up for the Fieldays Tractor Pull competition.

FENCING legend Paul van Beers in action at Fieldays.

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Kiwis ‘fly’ into new farming lifestyle

Former Te Mawhai farmers Geoff and Paula Warriner packed up their home, farm and family in June last year and headed for Victoria, Australia. At the time that country was in the grip of a drought, but the Warriners felt the shift across the ditch provided them with an opportunity to advance their dairying career. So what have they achieved in their first year?

The Warriner family – Geoff, Paula, Elizabeth (8), Rebecca (6) and Robinson (3) – now live on a 260 ha farm in Poowong North (around 90 minutes south east of Melbourne).

After plenty of research and several trips to Australia, they chose the area to buy a farm because of the mix of rain fall, soil type and general locality.

“We wanted it to be in close proximity to a city and beaches, have plenty of choices for schooling and be well serviced,”

When they bought the farm it was fairly run down and included a cheese factory – so there were plenty of challenges to deal with in their first year.

Not surprisingly it was actually their first two weeks on the property that proved to be the most frantic.

“We had a family wedding to attend in Melbourne on June 6 and started building the new dairy shed on June 12.”

There was also plenty of work to do on the farm.

“Due to ill health, the previous owner hadn’t milked on work to do on the farm. The herd was fed a mix of grass silage, cereal silage and maize. We milked on the farm on June 12.”

We milked at 3 a.m. and started building the new dairy shed on June 12.

“Mrs Forsythe actually milked on the Poowong property for three months prior to the Warriner arrival as the Australians didn’t operate a June 1 changeover as we do in New Zealand.  

Due to the climate and contour not being a lot different, the Warriners say the farming isn’t really a lot different either.

“The biggest difference would be that the farmers here do ensure they have a lot of feed on hand at all times, particularly after the drought. We weren’t really affected by the drought when we got here as this farm hadn’t been milked on for a few years. The winter had above average rain fall and this summer has been pretty good.

Although more rain wouldn’t have been welcome we were actually in a better position than the poor New Zealand farmers.”

GOUMT CHEESE

The Kina (Kiwis in Australia) Dairy Partnership has also entered into a partnership with Te Awamutu-based cheese maker at Jindi Cheese, winning a world title whilst there.

“The cheese is handcrafted on the property using milk produced on the farm. Barry was head cheesemaker at Jindi Cheese, winning a world title whilst there. It had been his dream for a number of years to have his own cheese-making business.  

The factory is currently producing about 100kg of cheese a week.

“This includes blue cheeses - Oak, Tarwin and Mossvale, two semi-sweet hard cheeses and a semi hard Camembert.

“We were unable to obtain medicare cards because we couldn’t prove that we weren’t carrying 400 cows.”

“So - a year on - we are still fairly busy. But have settled well and we are loving it. Our only regret would be not taking time off for a holiday before we got here - we weren't expecting to be as busy as we have been since we moved!”

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Welcome to another Rural Roundup Farm Management column, especially to all of you who have just moved into the Te Awamutu area!

We certainly enjoy a great location with very good soils, climate and support businesses to help achieve your farming goals.

As we rush towards the start of another calving period, this month I will cover off a checklist to make sure that you have all the important areas covered, as the next 4-6 week before calving can pass all too quickly!

**PASTURE MANAGEMENT**

Even if you do not regularly plate walk your farm, June is a critical month to do this. From June we have rapidly declining window to correct any shortfall in pasture cover.

Is your farm at 2,200 kg DM/ha? If not, does your feed budget say that you can make it through? Many farms that usually had a few bales of balage lying around to help get them through a wet muddy period of weather do not have these available. What is your alternate plan?

Most farms systems should be on around an 80-100 day round by now. This is important to ensure that a good pasture wedge is created. If cows are underfed (due to low APC and low pre-grazing covers), then look to add in supplements instead of going on a faster round.

**SUPPLEMENTS ON HAND**

Take an inventory of all supplements that you do have on hand. Plan out how the different forms can best be fed to different mobs to minimise wastage and soil and pasture damage.

Contracts for PKE are now available from most stock feed companies. By contracting ahead you can budget on quantities, get lower prices and better guarantees of having the feed when you need it.

**ANIMAL HEALTH**

Now is a good time to start supplementing with magnesium to your dry cows. You need to start at least 3-4 weeks before calving. We do this to build up a reserve of Mg in the cows and get the cows metabolic system primed to be able to mobilise both Mg and Ca from body tissue.

Double check your usual system and re-read the directions and rates suggested on the product labels. Often I find that these rates are incorrect when checked. Get these rates written up and posted in easy to read places for staff to follow. The rates in the table apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magnesium required</th>
<th>(grams/cow/day)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Mg</td>
<td>12 16 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mg Oxide (50% Mg)</td>
<td>22 29 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mg Sulphate (10% Mg)</td>
<td>122 162 202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mg Chloride (12% Mg)</td>
<td>100 134 167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Remember that if dusting, it is quite normal to lose 50% of what you are intending the cows to ingest, so double the rate that you want the cows to be getting.

Now is also a good time to get a pour-on drench onto all stock. Talk to your vet for what is the best option for your farm.

Drenching now will certainly help get those lower BCS cows up to condition.

Now is a good time to talk to your vet to discuss mastitis management options. There have been some good results with some reductions of 30-40% of clinical mastitis (CM) from using TeatSeal in heifers one month out from PSC. With the cost of CM costing up to $250 per cow from lost production, products and time, (and that’s not including the cost of culling) you could reduce the amount of CM by spending $5 per cow by TeatSeal- ing. There are some other options as well, so seek advice to what is the best option for your farm.

**FARM RECORDS**

Now is a good time to make sure that all the records for the past 12 months are all completed. Get all those animal record queries tidied up now before calving starts, which will only compound the problem.

Now is a good time to get your farm loaded into DairyBase if you haven’t. And for those of you who are already registered, now is a good time to put in the 2007/08 physical data.

---

**Pre-calving checklist**

By Darren Sutton — Waikato FarmWise consultant.
We Welcome... all new residents to the Te Awamutu area

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Lake Cameron a treasure

From page 4:

There are lots of people out there willing to roll up their sleeves and get stuck into improving their local environment, but they don’t always have the technical knowledge or experience to get things off the ground, he said.

That’s where we are very keen to help Environmental management is not rocket science; it simply requires three key factors: technical knowledge, resources and commitment. We can help with the first two but the commitment has to come from the community.

Ask Mr Pretty why he has spent so much time and effort helping to restore the reserve and he finds it hard to explain.

‘‘I’ve got no kids, but I just want to leave it to future generations.’’

It was there a hell of a long time before us and it’ll be there a hell of a long time to come.

Lake Cameron lies about 10 minutes drive south of Hamilton. Accessed off Rukuhia Road.

June is also a good time to re-write and laminate all the procedures carried out in the dairy shed. These should include: washing of plant, management processes of cows into and out of the co-strum mob call collection and rearing administration annual remedies, and mixing recipes of minerals.

There is also a great time to take a holiday! So take a well-deserved break even if only for an extra long weekend. It is also a good idea if staff can get a short break just before calving to keep everyone fresh.

Like many of the other 31 peat lakes in the Waikato region it is home to many rare and threatened plants specially adapted for the unique, slightly acidic water conditions. Protected native birds seen at the reserve include the large black shag, pied stilts, white-faced herons, sprininger plowers and grey warblers.

Lake Cameron is probably one of the five peat lakes around where we actually have the genuine old rushes that the Maori people used originally for thatching on the hut roofs, just growing naturally in the peat, and we want to preserve that,’’ Mr Pretty said.

In 100 years time we want people to have school trips down to the lake so people can see how it was 8000 years ago.

Once farmed right to the lake edge, the reserve was a mess before a large-scale restoration effort began more than 10 years ago. Chocka with yellow and overgrown with stock.

You couldn’t even walk down there because of all the blackberries, Mr Pretty said.

The best thing about the project is the support from absolutely everyone who’s been involved,’’ Mr Pretty said.

Waipa District Council and Environment Waikato have been 100 per cent behind us and backed us to the hilt. Every time we’ve needed something, it’s there.’’

Mr Pretty is very keen to see more people visiting the lake reserve which covers about 8ha and takes about 20 minutes to walk around.

“We’ve got a very serviceable little lake now, if you had any little kiddies they’d have a whale of a time here,’’ he said.

And more and more people are coming to visit the lake because of the way Environment Waikato has created a networking system among the care groups.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

Most staff changes should have occurred by now. Do you have an induction programme? If not, at least take the time to write a list of the most important jobs or systems that apply to your farm and then ensure these are adequately explained. Don’t just assume that someone will have experienced your way of doing things! Legally you are also required to have staff trained in using all machinery and have identified with them the most common hazards on your farm.

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from page 12

STAFF MANAGEMENT

Most staff changes should have occurred by now. Do you have an induction programme? If not, at least take the time to write a list of the most important jobs or systems that apply to your farm and then ensure these are adequately explained. Don’t just assume that someone will have experienced your way of doing things! Legally you are also required to have staff trained in using all machinery and have identified with them the most common hazards on your farm.

Lake Cameron is probably one of the five peat lakes in the Waikato region, it is home to many rare and threatened plants specially adapted for the unique, slightly acidic water conditions. Protected native birds seen at the reserve include the large black shag, pied stilts, white-faced herons, spur-winged plower and grey warbler.

Lake Cameron is probably one of the five peat lakes around where we actually have the genuine old rushes that the Maori people used originally for thatching on the hut roofs, just growing naturally in the peat, and we want to preserve that,’’ Mr Pretty said.

In 100 years time we want people to have school trips down to the lake so people can see how it was 8000 years ago.

Once farmed right to the lake edge, the reserve was a mess before a large-scale restoration effort began more than 10 years ago. Chocka with yellow and overgrown with stock.

You couldn’t even walk down there because of all the blackberries, Mr Pretty said.

The best thing about the project is the support from absolutely everyone who’s been involved,’’ Mr Pretty said.

Waipa District Council and Environment Waikato have been 100 per cent behind us and backed us to the hilt. Every time we’ve needed something, it’s there.’’

Mr Pretty is very keen to see more people visiting the lake reserve which covers about 8ha and takes about 20 minutes to walk around.

“We’ve got a very serviceable little lake now, if you had any little kiddies they’d have a whale of a time here,’’ he said.

And more and more people are coming to visit the lake because of the way Environment Waikato has created a networking system among the care groups.

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And more and more people are coming to visit the lake because of the way Environment Waikato has created a networking system among the care groups.
Parents can still feed a family of four with a nutritious meal for under $16 with eggs — which is why egg consumption is up — according to New Zealand's egg marketing organisation, Eggs Incorporated.

Even though egg producers are battling with sky rocketing feed and grain prices which have forced the price of eggs up, they still work out to be a very economical and nutritious meal solution and mums turn to them when luxuries are off the menu,” says Eggs Incorporated CEO Peter High.

According to latest survey results, consumption figures are the highest they have been for over 12 years.

Today, the average Kiwi eats 225 eggs a year up 14% from 1995, when there were 194 eggs per person consumed a year.

Consumption figures peaked in August 2007 as rising living costs started to bite and have remained strong since.

“Eggs just can’t be beaten when it comes to helping stretch the household budget,” he says. “Through our research, we know that parents are serving the family up dishes like frittatas and omelettes made from leftover meals the night before and boiling an egg for breakfast as an alternative to costly cereals.”

“Making cost effective desserts such as a hearty bread and butter pudding and more home baking are also areas where people are using eggs to help save the pennies when food shopping.”

And let’s not forget that as well as being economical, eggs are also a vital part of the New Zealand diet and nature’s original health food,” says Mr High.

Eggs contain protein, vitamins B12, A and D, lutein, folate, calcium, zinc, selenium, magnesium, zeaxanthin, choline and a number of antioxidants, which may aid in health promotion and disease prevention.

LIC and Ultra-Scan working together

 Farmers increasingly use pregnancy scanning information to help tighten the calving/farrowing lambing window. A collaboration between two technologies now means those results can be translated immediately to herd/mob records.

Livestock Improvement (LIC) whose MINDA animal performance management system is used by dairy herd shearers and deer farmers, has worked with pregnancy scanners, Ultra-Scan, to integrate pregnancy scanning information which they then had provided with a report with this data into animal records means Farmers were traditionally provided with a report with this information which they then had to manually enter into their herd or animal management program. Now that’s all done for them.”

LIC’s General Manager of Farm Software Bob Ward says the ability to integrate pregnancy scanning data into animal records means farmers have a management tool at their finger tips.
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**Natives in demand**

Discounted native trees and shrubs offered for environmental restoration projects by Environment Waikato have gone like hotcakes this year. Farmers, landcare groups and Environment Waikato ordered 80,000 plants, most of which will be planted beside rivers, streams and wetlands. They will help to stabilise erosion prone areas, reduce flood risks, improve water quality and create more habitat for native plants and animals.

Environment Waikato takes plant orders on behalf of land owners and care groups every year and puts huge orders through local nurseries. The council also orders plants for its own environmental restoration projects.

By buying in bulk through our contacts we can get native plants at excellent rates, giving people great bang for their buck,’ Environment Waikato River and Catchment Services committee chair Andrea Neeley said.

“We are helping to get more trees planted in riparian zones around the region and we know they’re good quality so everyone wins.

More than 130 farmers and groups ordered plants this year.

The council is grateful to Hamilton Airport staff who stored the trees for free and keeping them watered.

There are a variety of species, including cabbage trees, kahikatea, flaxes and grasses, supplied by eight Waikato nurseries.

*Last year we sourced 68,000 plants for farmers, care groups and Environment Waikato projects, so to have 80,000 ordered this year is fantastic,’ Cr Neeley said.

Environment Waikato Coromandel land management officer Emily Ohmomell said the response from land owners had been overwhelming.

“They’ve been thrilled with the quality of the plants and lots are really enthusiastic about doing more plantings next year. We had more orders than we could fill and it’s been really heartening to have so much support for the project.”

This is the third year the discounted native plant offer has been run in the region.

If you are interested in planting trees to improve natural waterways on your property, please call 0800 800 401 and ask for your local land management officer.

环境怀卡托的规划和流域服务委员会主席安德烈·尼利说：“通过批量购买，我们可以以极好的价格获得本地植物，这样每个人都能得到很好的回报。”

安德烈·尼利说：“他们对植物的质量感到非常满意，而且大家都非常热情地表示愿意明年做更多的种植。我们收到了比我们能填写的更多的订单，所以有这么多的支持，真是令人鼓舞。”

这是该地区第三次提供折扣的本地植物供应。

如果您有兴趣在您的财产上种植树木以改善自然水道，请致电0800 800 401并询问您当地的土地管理官员。
Budget pest control funding a good start

Regional councils are praising an extra $3.1 million a year for pest control outlined in the budget.

The new money for the Crown’s exacerbator fund will be used to support Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand pest control efforts on their lands.

Money from the exacerbator fund is used to help the two Government agencies comply with regional pest management strategies. The Government is not legally obliged to comply with these strategies, even though they are a very significant landowner and its participation in pest management schemes can be crucial to their success.

Regional councils have long argued more money should be placed in the exacerbator fund so that the Government is paying more of its fair share of pest control.

Prior to the Budget announcement, the exacerbator fund had been at the same nominal level for a decade.

Speaking on behalf of regional councils, the chairman of Local Government New Zealand, regional affairs committee Stephen Cairns thanked the Ministers of Biosecurity, Conservation, and Land Information for delivering this much needed increase for Crown agencies pest control efforts.

“This is a good start,” said Mr Cairns, who is also chair of Otago Regional Council.

The extra additional $3.1 million in 2008-09 will help Crown agencies improve their compliance with regional pest management strategies and act as better landowners.

However, councils hope the Government will dig even deeper in future to ensure enough money is in the exacerbator fund to help bridge the large shortfall in Crown pest control work carried out by regional councils.

Regional councils feel this work has never received sufficient support from the Government and that the exacerbator funds total should reach more than $10 million, which is more than double the current level of this budget.

DOC does a considerable amount of pest control to protect habitat and biodiversity in its priority areas. But failing to control pests on non-priority Crown lands may exacerbate pest issues for regional councils and private landowners.

“Without proper compliance with regional pest management strategies, regions must sometimes delay or curtail their pest management goals.”

Horizons Regional Council chairman Garrick Murfitt also welcomed the extra funding.

“Far too long now regions have been encouraging the Crown to be a better neighbour when it comes to pest control of private land.”

“In our region we spend approximately $3 million each year from rates to fund a comprehensive pest control programme on private land.”

“Without adequate pest control on public land our ratepayer investment can be put at risk. The funding boost is a good step forward and sends a positive message to us and the private landowners about the Crown being a better neighbour.”

Moreover, it’s a hopeful sign as councils and the Crown begin to discuss the very important issue of the future of pest control throughout New Zealand.”
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Testing for residue

A survey of a range of New Zealand produce has shown generally good pesticide practices were used when growing them. This year capsicum, strawberries, lettuce, mushrooms and courgettes went under the microscope.

The latest results from the Food Residue Surveillance Programme (FRSP), which looks at chemical residues found in fresh, unwashed produce, were released recently. Although some samples showed residues slightly over the permitted level, Paul Dansted, NZFSA Principal Advisor (Chemicals) says none of them represent any food safety or health concerns.

The annual FRSP targets between four and eight types of produce with the choice of crop determined by a range of factors. The foods are often varieties that authorities overseas have found to contain higher residue levels, or minor crops where growers may not have access to specific information about use of a particular agricultural compound on that crop.

Dr Dansted says as the study focuses on areas where NZFSA suspects there might be problems, it is no surprise that non-compliant produce is sometimes found and he is pleased with the overall findings of this year’s survey.

Because the FRSP sets out to probe specific foods, for example those that may be problematic because they are susceptible to attack by pests or disease, it is more likely to identify problems than a purely random survey chosen from all foods.

We are generally pleased with the result of this survey, but we fully expect that, from time to time, we will uncover problems that require corrective action.

Only when such problems are identified can they be dealt with by education, regulation, sanctions or even legal action in extreme circumstances.

In some cases a combination of these is required.

Of 36 samples of strawberries, there were four non-compliances. Of 24 samples of capsicum, three non-compliances were found. Of 24 samples of mushrooms, two non-compliances were found and of 24 samples of courgettes, there was only one non-compliance.

None of the 24 samples of courgettes showed detectable residues for any of the compounds.

Dr Dansted says a dietary intake assessment of all non-compliant results has been conducted and the residue levels found in this year’s problem crops pose no health risk to consumers.

These levels, although over the MRL, are well below that needed to produce any human health effects.

However, although the non-compliant samples are not a risk, Dr Dansted says work is going ahead to reduce the number of non-compliances.

He says the study findings are used to inform growers about areas of concern and they enable NZFSA to discuss with the relevant sectors the best means of bringing the residue levels down to acceptable levels or to produce data that supports a new MRL.

The individual growers are also told that problems were found in their crops, so they can improve their practices.

If we find problem crops we follow up again and if we find that it’s the same growers that are the problem, we will take a much stronger regulatory approach,” he says.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Food Residue Surveillance Programme is one of NZFSA’s ongoing monitoring programmes. It sits alongside the Total Diet Survey (TDS), which is carried out every five years to assess the public’s exposure to a range of contaminants and nutrients (eg, iodine) through analysing foods as consumed.

Another part of the suite of monitoring programmes is the National Residues Programme (NRP), which randomly samples animal products at the point of harvest for a wide range of contaminants and agricultural compounds.

The Dairy Residue Monitoring Programme tests raw (unpasteurised) milk at the farm and before it’s transferred to the tanker or dairy factory.

The surveys together give a picture of what New Zealanders are exposed to through their food.
WET working to enhance waterways

Two seminars organised by the new Waikato group Waterways Ecology Team (WET), were enjoyable and educational for local farmers and landowners who attended.

The targeted area was the west side of Maungatunatun and the seminars were held in the small classroom behind the Paketutt School called Matapihi.

Those who attended agreed that the mornings were well packed full of good information and best practices to enhance farm waterways.

Speakers were Dr John Quinn and Dr Rob Davies-Colley both of NIWA, Tony Roxburgh from Waipa District Council, Colin Stace of Environment Waikato and Monica Peters from Landcare Trust.

The mix of speakers provided a good variety of content and perspectives on waterways enhancement which generated a lot of discussion, particularly regarding past successes and suggestions on where to go for further information, guidance and funding.

Martin Bennett, an award winning local dairy farmer gave views from the farmers’ perspective, with his own farm as the working example.

At the end of the seminars a trip was taken to see Mr Bennett’s farm and planted waterways, near Arapuni.

All present were most impressed with the water quality and native plantings seen there.

The opportunities for more discussion questions and networking occurred during the morning tea and lunch breaks.

At the end of each morning there was general agreement that farm stewardship is a constantly evolving effort and that information sharing days such as these are encouraging and inspiring.

The WET team look forward to further such events in the future.

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WATERWAYS Ecology Team check Arapuni waterways as part of their seminar series.
If it weren’t for your gumboots...

Remember those immortal words from self appointed Kiwi Cultural Ambassador Fred Dagg? "Gumboots are an integral part of Kiwi life - and Skellerups Red bands are probably our most iconic [despite not the favoured boot of Mr Dagg it appears] and they are turning 50. And celebrations have turned up lots of interesting gumboot data.

For instance did you know New Zealanders typically have wider feet than other people? Well wider than Australians anyway, which is something the Skellerup footwear designers have found out over time. Judging by the popularity of Skellerups Red Band Gumboots however, they’ve got the measurements just right.

The wide-topped mid calf step in boot with its recognisable red bands and toe caps celebrates 50 years in production this year.

50 years later the boots are still a staple in most rural New Zealand households. The first pair of Red Band Gumboots rolled off the production line on 31 October, 1958 and became an instant hit around the country, says Randall.

The practice grew from there into a form of entertainment in the overcrowded dormitories and spread into an art form which now has a global audience.

The bachelors are going to have six minutes either in one group or two groups of four to show they’ve got the right moves,” says Bester. “We say there will be some light African music in the background but an important part of the dance is the noise created by slapping the gumboots.

And what better way to showcase their skills than in traditional farming footwear? Skellerup is sponsoring the gumboot dancing heat as part of its celebrations to mark 50 years of the company’s iconic Red Band gumboots.

“Ladies love a man with good rhythm,” says Skellerup marketing co-ordinator Deborah Allen. “Each of our dancers will take one of the bachelors and coach them through a simple routine” says George. All the finalists will get the same routine. When it comes to judging we’ll be looking for a certain ‘rawness’ that shows they’ve interpreted the meaning of the dance as well as just learning the moves. Despite its cheerful nature now, gumboot dancing actually has heart rending origins. It developed deep in the South African goldmines as a form of Morse code where miners worked in the dark and in silence. The mines were always deep in water that was considered too expensive to drain. Miners were given gumboots to protect their feet and so slapping the gumboots became a way of sending messages and communicating with each other.

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The series of heats is designed to cover all aspects of the typical rural Kiwi blokes lifestyle including fencing, digger driving, chain sawing, dog trailing and this year - gumboot dancing.

With each boot is made up of 19 individual components with at least six different rubber formulations used in every boot.

The hangsga factory has the capacity to produce up to 1000 Red Band boots a day and the New Zealand market soaks them up.

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50 years later the boots are still a staple in most rural New Zealand households.

Skellerup divisional manager footwear, Paul Randall, says the Red Band Gumboots were the first short boots ever to be produced in New Zealand, if not the world.

Traditionally gumboots have always come up to just below the knee. No-one is quite sure who it was at Marathion Rubber Footwear – the forerunner to Skellerup – who had the idea to create a shorter boot but sometime during 1958 the new concept was tried out.

The first pair of Red Band Gumboots rolled off the production line on 31 October, 1958 and became an instant hit around the country, says Randall.

Fifty years later the boots are still a staple in most rural New Zealand households.

Natural rubber compounds with built in UV inhibitors allow the Gumboot to last for years in the sun and rain.

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Quad bike safety research

New research into New Zealanders on-farm handling of quad bikes has revealed how an incompatibility between design and use plus a tendency for farmers to learn by trial and error, has turned this common farm vehicle into a $1.8 million annual liability. Recently completed research by Dave Moore, ergonomics scientist with Scion’s Centre for Human Factors and Ergonomics (COHFE), is helping farmers and industry bodies reduce fatalities and injuries resulting from work-related quadbike accidents on New Zealand farms.

Dr Moore was recently awarded a PhD from Massey University for his groundbreaking research into what the Department of Labour referred to as “the single most worrying trend in work-related accidents in agriculture.” Quadbike accidents are responsible for hundreds of injuries and several fatalities on New Zealand farms every year. Associated insurance costs have more than doubled in the past five years—$813 million in 2007 for ACC alone. The study was the first of its kind to apply a systems perspective to quadbike use using interviews and reconstructions at the site of the incident, to capture data.

“There had been plenty of media attention on quadbike accidents over the years, so it was amazing to find how little research had been undertaken onsite.”

By developing a new investigative methodology drawing on fields such as forensics and air accident investigations, Moore was also able to identify 71 areas where quadbike safety could be improved through modifications, training, regulation or reorganisation of work. He believes many problems stem from quadbikes originally being designed for recreation rather than as a vehicle tailored for farm tasks and because they look more ‘error tolerant’ than they actually are.

Many farmers like to test equipment to the limit. Unfortunately, quadbikes can be too error intolerant. “For example, unlike larger wheel-based vehicles, the quad will often tip before it slides, potentially trapping the operator. They don’t have as much opportunity to learn from mistakes as they expect.” Research also highlighted concerns about the wider industry.

“We clearly identified a need for greater error tolerance to be built into the design of quadbikes used in a wide diversity of off-road situations. Overseas designers, those deciding specifications for imported quads, and implement manufacturers in New Zealand should look closer at how they can offer a tool that farmers really need. Adequate skills and task-specific training would also help, as would advanced training to give users the ability to get out of difficult situations that are commonly encountered, most notably running out of traction on an ascent with a trailer in tow.”

He also considers the domestic accessory market to be under-regulated. “Trailers and other add-on designs should be proven to match buyers’ expectations. At the moment, many farmers buy in good faith and are too likely to get an unpleasant surprise.”

“ACC, the Department of Labour and the Agricultural Health and Safety Council (AHSC) are now looking to adopt some of the suggestions made in the study into their own policies and guidelines, for example the fitting of reversing beepers.”

“Unfortunately, fatalities and many injuries can be attributed to inadventent reversing accidents in recent years. Reversing beepers are a simple modification which cost less than $100 to fit,” says Moore.

Of additional concern to Moore is that payouts for existing claims are today double those of new claims, having been roughly equal in 2002. “These statistics indicate an increase in the severity and longevity of injuries caused by quadbike accidents. We need to find out why this is happening.”

Moore is now working with ACC, the Department of Labour and AHSC on further research. Key targets for this follow-on research include training of riders new to the industry, improvement of investigation methods for off-road incidents, and improving rider attention to the route ahead while working with stock.

“It is the indirect costs to the injured rider’s family and the local infrastructure that are the real burden of these long-term cases. We are looking forward to adding depth to our understanding of how to not only reduce the incidence of quadbike injuries but, perhaps even more importantly, the severity.”

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MediaLab plans to trial an Effluent Monitoring Application on a wide range of dairy farms throughout New Zealand.

The application is a software tool developed to provide farmers with real-time, property-specific information to help monitor and manage dairy effluent.

Farm effluent management is becoming more challenging as dairy farms intensify and become larger operations.

The application is designed to simplify the system and to provide decision support for the management of dairy effluent including irrigation and nitrate monitoring.

‘We are pleased to be moving to the next stage of development and see great potential for this solution,’ says Bridgit Hawkins, Programme Manager, MediaLab.

‘Essentially we are harnessing technology to benefit farmers and the environment. The effluent monitoring application is a proof of concept system and we are progressing to develop the solution to be tested on dairy farms over the next six to twelve months.

‘The plan is to take into account feedback from a variety of farms on the benefits of the application, ease of use and the resulting improvements to farm practice.’

The application was recently demonstrated as part of a Massey farm field day on the latest dairy effluent farm research.

It was presented by Sean Newland, Sustainable Dairying Strategist for Fonterra. He says good effluent management is a real issue for some farmers and is vital to the sustainable growth of our industry.

‘Fonterra is keen to see more practical tools developed for farmers in this area and will be watching MediaLab’s work with interest.’

MediaLab works with partners to develop integrated solutions and has developed this application in conjunction with Massey University, Telecom and BayCity Technologies, supported by the MAF Sustainable Farming Fund.

The full effluent monitoring solution could potentially lead to reduced compliance costs, reductions in effluent management infringements, improved pasture growth and productivity, as well as a cleaner environment.

Currently information is collected and interpreted on contributing factors such as pond and soil moisture levels, irrigator function and local weather conditions.

Eventually the application could be developed to include information on fertiliser application and pasture growth. Information collected at the farm monitoring site would be distributed via Telecom’s 03 mobile network and be accessible to farmers via website, email or text message.

The Effluent Management Application will be shown at Fieldays this week and presented at the TUANZ Rural Broadband Symposium on July 3.
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Uni scientists take Fieldays to schools

Why does nitrate in waterways matter? What is the runoff? And can we keep planting radiata pines in New Zealand soil? These questions, and their answers, are posted on a new website by the University of Waikato, which is designed to help New Zealand secondary school students with their studies.

The website is designed to coincide with National Agricultural Fieldays, is aimed at Year 11 to 13 school students. It’s a wealth of information about science which fits into the school curriculum and will be available to students and teachers year-round.

University of Waikato senior lecturer Dr Alison Campbell from the School of Science and Engineering said the website was designed as a first-stop shop for students and their teachers wanting to know more about science.

Most students wanting that information would probably Google it. “We’re hoping the university’s website will give them everything they want to know in one easy site,” said Dr Campbell, who has overseen the website.

Dr Campbell, who has previously won a Kudos award which recognises scientific excellence in secondary school biology, said Fieldays, and innovations such as the website for schools, were a great way to show the community the university’s involvement in land-based industries.

Research generated from the university, particularly from the School of Science and Engineering, continued to add to the body of knowledge around agriculture in the farming heartland of the Waikato and the whole country, Professor Crawford said.

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2008 RURAL ROUNDUP DATES

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To assist with your forward planning below are the dates and features for the Rural Roundup for the Balance of 2008.

July 15 Call Rearing
August 19 Grow Maize 2008/09
September 16 Summer Crop options and Silage Making
October 14 Cropping, silage and hay
November 18 Hay/Silage and calf Club Results

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Network for Women in Dairying revealed a new name and identity at the organisation’s recent annual conference.

The Network has changed its name to the Dairy Women’s Network and unveiled a bright pink logo to the delight of nearly 200 women in attendance at the conference.

General Manager Lynda Clark, says the new name and identity will help the organisation move forward into its next decade.

“This year, the Network turns 10. We felt this was a significant milestone for our organisation and one that deserved a fresh look,” she says.

The new name clearly identifies our strengths – it emphasises our dynamic, professional organisation that is unique in its approach to empowering women in the dairy industry. It’s just a subtle name change, but helps to simplify our existing words.

Our new logo also identifies all aspects of our organisation. The sunburst represents the network, the cow represents the dairy industry and the pink colour is clearly feminine. It’s definitely a logo that stands out from the crowd.

“We revealed our new name and look to our annual conference attendees last week and were pleased it was widely welcomed,” she says.

Ms Clark went on to say the organisation’s very different logo provides a platform for growth into the next decade, while still adhering to the organisation’s original vision and purpose.

The 10 year vision for the Dairy Women’s Network is to be a pathway to excellence for women working in the dairy industry, while the organisation’s purpose is to provide professional development for women in dairying.

A second highlight of the Network’s annual conference was the awarding of the organisations Celebrate You Award, given annually to a woman who has stepped outside her comfort zone and pushed herself further to achieve success in her life.

This year’s recipient is Linda McGinty of Mana-watu who started out in the dairy industry at the young age of 9 when she bought a flat that provided her share of equity to go 50-50 sharemilking.

Following marriage and having four children in six years, she still found time to do the accounts for her Ian nevirke family farm and rear calves and continued to educate herself by founding and running a local farmer discussion group.

In 1999 Linda moved to Taranaki where she studied for a diploma in Agribusiness Management and organised Farmsafe workshops throughout the district.

She moved to Manawatu in 2004 where she stepped into an equity partnership with 800 cows. She became involved with the Dairy Women’s Network and also became Chairperson of the local Ag ITO Committee. Today, Linda continues with her successful equity partnership which now runs 1000 cows on 860 hectares plus drystock.

The Network for Women in Dairying was set up in 1998 to inform, educate, support and mentor women in dairying. Through its 20 regional groups, the Network now represents thousands of dairying women who play critical roles in dairying businesses around the country.

Dairying women thinking ‘pink’
Two of my articles over the past four months have been about coping with the drought and its consequences. Wherever the drought has struck, farmers have responded with their typical resilience, despite the extra labour and costs.

So it was with some dismay after last month’s article that I was rung by a real estate agent to see if I would sell my farm since I ‘was strung out like a shang-ai’. Just because I had mentioned feeding out since February, he thought I was about to throw in the towel.

I am still debating whether it was naivety or sheer opportunism. Either way he was left under no illusion that I wasn’t selling.

May hasn’t been a quiet month – my wife was travelling Eastern Europe with our two daughters so I was left ‘to keep the home fires burning’.

We have had fencers in to replace an old 40 year old fence which had been built with barbed wire and was mostly rusty. The old concrete posts had all disintegrated so it was necessary to rebuild. I took the opportunity of putting in a new gateway and creating some wind-breaks. One was with flax plants and the other with Redwood trees.

Shaun Bainbridge, a local builder, finished the conversion of our barn into calf-rearing sheds with a new adjacent storage shed. It has taken a fair bit of time and effort for all concerned. I have been the building manager getting all the materials and seeing that all the sub-contractors were engaged.

June should see our first batch of calves. A new post and rail fence has been erected to make a safe environment for their arrival and to make movement easier.

The paddocks are trying to grow grass and it is a balancing act as to whether the animals be allowed on the new feed or to preserve it for winter. Rainfall at the beginning of the month was a welcome relief but unfortunately it hasn’t been followed up with any more. Altogether 124 mls fell in the first 10 days of the month and none since. Consequently the paddocks have not come away as expected.

The cows have been injected with B12 plus selenium to help on the lead up to birthing. The rising one year old cattle have been drenched with Cydectin for worms. Hopefully there will not be any more animal health issues.

All our steers have now been sold so it will enable my silage stocks to be spread further. I also sold my last two wethers to the local butcher trade. My stock rate is now the lowest for ten years.

I try to cover a month’s activities per article but as I finish this, it is June 1 and I have watched a magnificent procession of vintage vehicles go past our front gate. I don’t know what the animals thought but there were approximately 150 vehicles of all shapes and sizes and I thought it was the cheapest entertainment I had seen in quite a while. It started with vehicles of the 1920’s from the Al Capone era through to more modern Jaguars and MGs’. There were delightful small trucks, baby Austins, and Ford Prefects. I must say though that my favourite was the 1938 Fiat two seater. Somehow I couldn’t see Mussolini in the driver’s seat!
Rural Women donate to leptospirosis research

Massey EpiCentre scientists were absolutely overwhelmed on being presented with a jumbo-sized cheque for $87,500 by Rural Women New Zealand at the organisation’s national conference in Blenheim last month.

The funds will be used to kick start new research into leptospirosis, New Zealand’s most significant occupationally-acquired disease, which is caught by humans through exposure to the urine of infected animals.

Funding by Rural Women New Zealand in the 1970s and 1980s enabled extensive research into the disease by Massey University and the development of vaccines that are widely used in the dairy and pig farming sectors.

Evidence that the disease was on the increase in beef cattle and sheep, along with news that a meatworker had died from the disease prompted the organisation to re-launch its fundraising efforts with a year-long nationwide campaign.

In offering his heartfelt thanks to Rural Women New Zealand members, Massey Associate Professor Cord Heuer said “we had been warned about the strength of your organisation and the fundraising you did in the 1980s and the remarkable results of getting the numbers of sick people down tremendously.”

The RNZNZ-raised funds will be a springboard for new leptospirosis research, with further contributions coming from the Sustainable Farming Fund and other sources.

Massey’s new research will focus on the incidence of the disease in sheep and beef cattle.

“There is a much higher prevalence of this disease in beef cattle than we thought,” said Professor Heuer. Recent study suggests that 70% of beef herds are infected and every second animal showed positive antibodies for the disease. Similarly 80% of deer herds tested positive.

If you translate that into shedding of bacteria, about every fifth animal is shedding leptospira. There is a huge amount of shedding of this organism in rural areas.”

While meat workers tend to be heavily protected during their work, farmers, vets and other rural workers may be extremely exposed to this disease which can be very serious, and in rare cases fatal.

Massey’s EpiCentre that will create a new leptospirosis research position, with a focus on establishing whether vaccinating of sheep, beef and deer is economically viable.

“The other factor is human health and the risk that you and your families are running,” said Prof Heuer. The researchers will be sampling farmers and looking at risk factors and sources of infection, including transmission pathways, from animals to humans.

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Service Team from left: Alastair Phillips, Grant McCracken, Johnny Wynd, Aaron Whitehead, Ollie Gaddum, Greg Kelly, Jared Vierboom, Brian Dakin, Lou Brown, Jono O’Callaghan, Kris West, Steve Towers (foreman), Nadia Vossen (office admin), Cedric Borlase (service manager).
Absent - Shane Galbraith (training in Belgium at New Holland harvesting factory).

Parts and Administration

- Parts Department and Administration: Aaron Whitehead, Debbie McCormick, Warren Longman, Liam James

Road Bike Wheel Balancing

- Technician: Lou Brown balancing a road wheel bike
Five years ago, a remote control vessel built by then Morrinsville College student Steven McCabe won first prize in the engineering section at the Japan Science Fair. This year, Steven — now an undergraduate at the University of Waikato — has brought that winning streak to bear on agribusiness with a breakthrough in electronic pasture probe technology.

Steven made the advances during a work placement over the summer with Hamilton-based electronic product development company Novel Ways. Pasture probes are used by farmers to measure the dry matter in grass — this helps them estimate the pasture yield and make feed-budget decisions. Some devices for determining pasture mass are purely mechanical, measuring the stiffness and height of the grass stalks, but they don’t work well on pugged soils and they can’t be used on hills.

Electronic capacitance probes use an electromagnetic field to measure water content within the grass as a way of determining its dry matter content, and Steven’s task was to find out exactly how the device worked and see if he could come up with ways to improve it. “I’d been doing assembly work at Novel Ways during the holidays ever since I was in Year 9,” says Steven, a self-confessed electronics enthusiast. “But this time, I had the opportunity to apply a lot of the stuff I’d learned at university.”

Under the guidance of electronic engineering expert Professor Jonathan Scott, Steven’s task was to improve the pasture probes accuracy and quadruple the sample area the probe could measure. “I thought we might find it was too difficult to improve the existing probe, but we got some results very quickly thanks to Steven and Jonathan’s input,” says Novel Ways’ Graham Lynch. He says the plan now is to incorporate the developments into a new version of the probe.

University Vice-Chancellor Professor Roy Crawford said it was innovative to see the likes of Steven that allowed the university to continue to add to the body of knowledge in agronomy and agriculture.

The University of Waikato is a strategic partner for this year’s National Agricultural Fieldays. Crawford says Waikato is a champion of the initial Fieldays 40 years ago.
HELP FOR FARMERS: University of Waikato student Steven McCabe, left, and Graham Lynch from Novel Ways with the improved pasture probe.

This year’s Fieldays theme of the Science of Farming was a perfect opportunity for all the community to understand what the agricultural sector had to offer, including the research and innovation that was being generated from institutions such as the university, Professor Crawford said. University programmes contributed greatly to the land-based industries, he said. Students at Waikato could study anything from animal behaviour to biological sciences (eg specialisation in restoration ecology) to earth sciences, environmental sciences and environmental planning.

At the University of Waikato, about 200 science and engineering students like Steven benefit from work placements every year. They provide students with practical skills of interest to employers, as well as fulfilling the degree accreditation requirements of industry bodies such as IPENZ.

Dr Karsten Zegwaard helps co-ordinate the work placement programme, which involves nearly 400 companies. "The educational advantage for the students in gaining real-world workplace experience is immense," he said. "And for Steven to be able to go into a placement and come out with something that could be commercialised is fantastic."

The work placements also help students find a job when they finish their studies – something Steven doesn’t have to worry about. There’ll be a job waiting for him at Novel Ways when he graduates, says Graham Lynch.
Don’t drop fertiliser urges soil expert

Sheep and beef farmers are urged not to put away their cheque books for fertiliser despite the tough times experienced this season.

Leading soil scientist and consultant Dr Doug Edmeades is urging hill country farmers to learn from the mistakes of the past when tossing up about autumn applications this year.

Anyone farming today who recalls when subsidies came off fertiliser in 1985 will know a lot of farmers put the lid on any fertiliser applications. However, we know the longer term results of this were very detrimental to farm production for years afterwards.

Even if they were only able to put a small amount of fertiliser on, Dr Edmeades said it was better than none at all. Since 1985 modelling technology had come a long way with computer programmes capable of estimating the return on capital for applying fertiliser.

Some better years in the past decade have seen increased applications and now presented the opportunity to cut back on phosphate inputs. Super phosphate is the single most common and now expensive nutrient input on New Zealand farms.

Modelling meant it was possible to calculate what an average sheep and beef property should work towards as an economic optimum for P levels.

It also means bank managers will tend to look favourably on applications that preserve a farm’s economic viability.

Dr Edmeades said an average unit returning a gross margin of $500/ha could work to an economic optimum of P at a level of 17. A higher producing property with a gross margin of $1000/ha would work on a P level of 20.

This was allowing for anticipated increases in super phosphate to $300/t in coming months.

Dr Edmeades said it would be necessary to top up phosphate applications once things improved again.

The good news is that P stays in the soil once it is put there, and can be drawn on for a period of time. Of equal importance were other nutrients required on hill country farms that did not remain in the soil as long as phosphate. Many of the soils on New Zealand sheep and beef properties were low in sulphur and potassium (K), and even molybdenum (Mo) which would require applying more frequently.

Meanwhile dairy farmers although cushioned against higher fertiliser prices by good payouts also had opportunities to sharpen their fertiliser decisions this season.

Many are running with more than ample P levels and this is often at the detriment of other vital nutrients that are depleted, which in turn is depressing clover production.

Potassium and sulphur levels were not uncommon on New Zealand dairy farms, resulting in lower clover density. However, this was often disguised by excessive application of expensive nitrogen fertilisers.

Redressing this imbalance could reduce fertiliser bills and longer term boost valuable clover growth which provides nitrogen at a fifth of the cost of fertiliser nitrogen.

Better use of dairy farm effluent would also help shave thousands of fertiliser bills this year, with the value of effluent for the average sized farm worth $600 per year.

It is a highly cost effective source of nutrients. With better fertiliser analysis and efficient management we can see farmer clients saving as much as $30,000 a year in fertiliser costs.

Dr Edmeades latest issue of the autumn 2008 Fertiliser Review highlights some of the significant increases in fertiliser costs.

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Yamaha

Yamaha

Yamaha

Yamaha
The Carbon Farming Group has launched an easy to use online calculator which enables farmers to identify how the Emissions Trading Scheme may affect them and their business.

The Carbon Farming Group has been set up to provide farmers with independent information on issues surrounding carbon farming and the Emissions Trading Scheme. Established with funding from the Tindall Foundation, the Carbon Farming Group is a charitable trust. It is focused on ensuring the agricultural sector is fully informed about all aspects of the ETS and possible opportunities for carbon farming prior to the industry’s inclusion in the scheme in 2013.

Carbon Farming Group’s website www.carbonfarming.org.nz aims to provide independent information to farmers on the ETS and related issues. The website includes an easy to use online calculator which will provide an estimate of a farm’s potential carbon liability using data averaged across New Zealand conditions. This will give farmers a head-start on what carbon costs they may incur in the future. The website also includes practical information on how farms can reduce their carbon emissions.

Under the Government’s proposed Emissions Trading Scheme the agricultural sector will start paying for their carbon emissions in 2013, initially farmers will have to account for the increase in their emissions above 90% of what they were in 2005. Farmers will be liable for 100% of their emissions under the scheme by 2030.

“The agricultural sector has been bombarded with a large amount of information on the Emissions Trading Scheme, the Kyoto Protocol and what individual obligations may be. Carbon Farming Group sees its role as providing independent information on all the issues surrounding climate change for the farming community. The sooner farmers have access to this information, the better. Implementation of emission reducing processes and systems takes time but can save money and may increase productivity and profitability,” says Clayton Wallwork, Trustee - Carbon Farming Group. “The CFG website provides a one stop shop for information on climate change issues and how they affect farming. The calculator is extremely useful, by inputting basic information about your farm, number and type of stock and amount of forestry planted it will calculate your projected liability. Given that agriculture has five years to get ready before the ETS comes into effect, it gives me time to plan how I can best achieve my goal of minimising the impacts of carbon related costs,” says Bill Busby, Pauariki Station.

The CFG plans to regularly update its website to include the latest information on carbon farming from a variety of sources: government and private sector. A newsletter will also be distributed to interested parties and can be subscribed to online through the CFG website: www.carbonfarming.org.nz
When Rick and Julie Hancox moved onto their bare property at Ngutunui three years ago they set about building their own home business, workshop and small block farm.

The exposed southern slopes of Mount Pirongia can deal out some fairly harsh weather, so Mr Hancox, who is a carpenter/joiner by trade, also built some shelters for their animals.

The original shelters were for their flock of Wiltshire breeding ewes – so they had to withstand windy conditions and uneven ground, but still be relatively light. I used outriggers for stability and plywood for strength. They also had to be portable and easily transported by road.

Word quickly spread and soon his Eclipse animal shelters were being sought after by other farmers in the area to house everything from pigs, calves and dogs to goats, sheep and cattle.

“The general concept can be adapted to suit the size and needs of most stock and pets.”

The shelters can be completed with openings to suit individual requirements, while a floor is optional.

“I’m essentially a one-man band and have a workshop at home, so I can keep costs down.”

As well as stock shelters, Mr Hancox also makes custom ute canopies and dog boxes. Again they were developed for their own dogs, but the designs grew from there.

To discuss requirements or find out more about the Eclipse Animal Shelters, contact Rick Hancox (ph 871 9737) or leave a message on 027 474 2965.

Alternatively email your enquiries or requirements to rick.dufast@hotmail.com
You may well be aware of someone who has been fined by the Court for the discharge of effluent that fell outside the permissible limits of their discharge consents. But do you know what factors are taken into account by the Court when determining the fines to be imposed?

The recent case of Waikato Regional Council v GA and BG Chicks Limited decided in late 2007 by the District Court set out clearly what factors are considered by the Court in determining the level of fines to be imposed.

The company pleaded guilty to three charges, under the Resource Management Act 1991, relating to effluent discharges into the Piako River. In Chick, the Court noted that the above levels helped him to establish a starting point for any fine he was to impose on the Chicks. He was then required to adjust it to take into account the aggravating and mitigating features which related to the offender, in this case these included the timely entering of a guilty plea, the remorse shown by the offender, whether any profits were realised and the previous record and character of the offender.

CONSIDERATION OF OFFENCE

In relation to the offending by the Chicks, the Court noted the following:

- There was evidence that any effluent discharge reached the Piako River or the extent of the spillage
- There was an element of deliberate reprehensibility to the offence and the attitude of the offender.

In Chick, the Court noted that there is a need when dealing with environmental offending to consider both a general and specific deterrent. It defined three levels of seriousness of offending.

These are Level 1 – least serious - $0 to $5,000 for offending which is unintentional and one off caused as a result of systems failure. Level 2 – moderately serious - $5,000 to $25,000 reflecting offending which is unintentional but careless, recurring over a period of time or from incidents arising from the malfunctioning of different parts of a system. Level 3 – more than moderately serious - $25,000 plus. This level of offending indicates the more serious offending which is either deliberate or caused through lack of care. It is often linked to large multiple discharges occurring over a period of time or to a single large one-off event.

The Judge noted that the above levels helped him to be consistent in establishing a starting point for any fine he was to impose on the Chicks. He fixed the starting point for the fine at $25,000. But having regard to the early guilty plea and remedial works undertaken, the fine was reduced to $15,000.

SEEK ADVICE EARLY

Fines for effluent discharges outside the scope of what is allowed under your discharge permits, whether intentional or not, have the potential to be huge. If you do not get an area of non-compliance with your farming activities, you need to seek advice sooner rather than later. Advice sought at an early stage can potentially lead to the avoidance of prosecution and large fines being imposed.

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from Fonterra has surpassed summer drought. than in previous years due to the coupled with lower production such as feed, fuel and fertilizer costs farmers with higher costs of inputs. payout predictions for most dairy farmers in the Waikato are now facing and also try to reiterate why the price for dairy products has risen so much. The start of the financial year saw record payouts forecast with Fonterra at $7.90/kg of milksolids.

The announcement last week from Fonterra has surpassed previous predictions with a final upwards adjustment to the current seasons payout to $780/kg of milksolids. This record announcement from Fonterra at $780/kg of milksolids would have affected Dairy Farmers in the Waikato in many different ways. For some it has turned an extremely bad year to a more palatable year and for those who managed to keep production up it has turned a good year into a great year.

The increase in local dairy prices has risen due to world commodity prices for dairy products rising and they look likely to continue to rise. The increase in world commodity prices is due to increased demand coupled with higher costs of production, particularly for those dairy farmers who have to use stock feed. The New Zealand Dollar (NZD) had hit record highs earlier this year mainly against the United States Dollar (USD), which generally cuts into exporter’s profits, however amongst all of this there has still been a record payout this year. The NZD has now slightly fallen off the USD, which is likely to increase the costs of imports (afflicting prices for fuel and fertiliser) however this should correspond with increased returns from exporting.

History tells us that an increase in the payout for milksolids generally means inflating the value of land prices. We have recently seen a record sale value for a sheep and beef farm in the King Country area of $2.5m and this was prior to the latest Fonterra announcement. This increase in land values will mean that for those who own their land their equity should have increased potentially allowing them to borrow more money.

This increased borrowing potential could be used for a multitude of things such as servicing short term cash flow issues, buying another block of land, capital purchases or luxury items such as beach houses or new vehicles.

Others in the industry may see this as the prime opportunity to get out of farming whether it is dairy or beef. Some may have had enough of farming for one reason or another or some may simply be nearing retirement and have no succession plan in place.

What ever your circumstances are I am sure you will be affected in some way shape or form by the latest announcement and the events over the past dairy season. Some of you may be facing large tax bills while some may be facing large supplier’s bills.

What ever your situation is you should talk to your accountant as you may be charged use of money interest on underpaid tax or you may be entitled to a tax refund for overpaid tax.

In summary the next few years are looking pretty good for the dairy payout so with a little forecasting and tax planning you can avoid any unnecessary surprises and feel easy about spending your money how you choose to.
New faces ready to give total service

Total Farm Services now have a number of new faces ready to take on the challenges of another new season in the dairy-ing industry.

Keith Mitchell has now left the company and Robin McGregor steps up to the company managers role.

Mr McGregor has 20 years experience in the commercial and farm refrigeration trade and has been working closely with wholesalers to develop farm refrigeration units that are robust and reliable.

He has travelled as far away as France to secure the rights to the Serap range of horizontal vats.

Farmers struggle to get milk down to the right temperature as it enters the vat when they have limited supplies of water and horizontal vats are exceptionally quick at bringing the milk down to compliance temperatures.

These vats are one of the most popular worldwide and Mr McGregor sees these as being a big part of our future here in New Zealand.

Mr McGregor can help farmers with all farm chilling requirements and is available at anytime for a free consultation.

Trevor Foley is Total Farm Services new sales/project manager. Mr Foley comes to us with over 20 years experience running one of Taranaki’s most successful farm services company and has already slotted into his new role with ease.

He brings with him a wealth of knowledge in milking machines and farm water systems.

Continued page 42.


We would like to Welcome all New Farmers to our Area.
A former nurse who grew up in Kihikihi is now making her mark with Lowline cattle in Toowoomba, Australia.

Nina Quirk grew up in Kihikihi with parents Max and Aileen Quirk, attending Kihikihi Primary School then Te Awamutu College.

She did her nursing training at Taumarunui Hospital and after she was registered worked at Auckland Hospital.

It was there she met future husband - Australian Geoff Buttsworth - out here on a three year transfer from the RAAF to the RNZAF flying helicopters.

They married in Kihikihi in 1987 and moved to Australia, where Mr Buttsworth instructed helicopter trainees.

They moved to many new homes around Australia with Mrs Buttsworth working part time at hospitals in between having two children.

It was only after Mr Buttsworth was posted to Oakey, an army air force base west of Toowoomba, that they were able to put down more permanent roots.

They bought a property south west of Toowoomba and started raising Lowline beef cattle - along with Mr Buttsworth working for Boeing training army helicopter pilots and Mrs Buttsworth working part time in administration at Toowoomba Hospital.

Neither of them had any experience of farm life or working with animals but they are dedicated to the role and after four years of learning they are collecting ribbons and establishing a reputation for breeding quality Lowlines.

They recently lost two of the cattle to snakebite and had to build a fire over them to dispose of the carcasses - the ground is too hard to dig and there is no dead cow lorry where they live.

Their stud Amberfield has 20 stud Lowline cattle, including a growing mentor of commercial cows and calves.

‘Our aim is to breed high quality Lowline cattle,’ says their website www.amberfield.com.au

‘We have set up our herd firmly believing in quality over quantity.’

Amberfield Angel took out the supreme award at the Toowoomba Royal Show in April.

This competition brought out grand champions from three small breeds - Lowlines, Dexters and Miniature Gal-loways.

The Queensland Country Life newspaper noted that ‘This very correct cow paraded with her heifer calf Amberfield Dane at foot and had earlier graduated to grand champion after being senior champion and over 24 months winner’.

The Buttsworths say they have had plenty of helpful advice from friends and acquaintances and from Queensland Lowline Plus promotion group.

The couple are certainly showing that despite their lack of previous farming experience, hard work, dedication and willingness to learn are a recipe for success.

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Coping with effects of drought

Firstly welcome to all new farmers to the district, you may have in the Waipa district roap rewards and enjoyment. Secondly the effects from the drought is far from over! The summer/autumn conditions has put enormous pressure on cow condition. Supplementary feed supplies and pasture cover.

The compensatory growth expected after the initial rain has not eventuated, either due to pasture damage or the continued dry weather.

Without effective management in the next few months production, reproduction will be at risk and significant animal health problems will be experienced.

While it is tempting to bury your head in the sand and continue to use the drought as an excuse, it would be much more enterprising to take a detailed look at where you are at currently, what you have available and where you are heading in calving and beyond.

Unfortunately your position now is where you are likely to end up at calving.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT DEFICIT AND HOW ARE YOU GOING TO FILL IT?

With good planning, strategies can be put in place to ensure early season production and cow condition are maintained and the economic impact will be minimized.

Even if you don't make changes to your current plan it is better to know what is in store for you, and then you can be moving forward around this.

So where do you start as far as a drought management plan goes?

1. Look at current cow condition score calculate what any CS gain is required pre calving.

2. Look at current pasture cover and set target pasture cover for P/C and 'balance day' after calving.

3. Estimate expected pasture growth rates between now and balance day.

4. Get an accurate count of cows numbers to be serviced in early lactation.

5. Look at how much supplement you have available and plan to use.

By using the above information combined with the cows DM requirements for maintenance, pregnancy, CS gain and milk production you can calculate your deficit/surplus between now and balance day. Sounds confusing? We can help!

We have developed a spread sheet that takes out all the complicated calculations and allows us to formulate a drought busting feed budget tailored to your own farm.

It will not make your grass grow any faster but it will help you to see where you are at now and allows us to have a look at the impact that different strategies will have on the various parameters discussed above.

Don't be an ostrich, come and talk to us, and we can help ensure you head into spring confident you have a drought strategy.

Total service

Mr Foley is now visiting all clients to introduce himself and give them all an update about new services.

Anyone wanting a quote for a new shed or extensions should give Mr Foley a ring and arrange a visit.

Gavin Chetwin is our senior fitter and has many years experience servicing farm dairy units throughout the Te Awamutu and Otorohanga areas.

Mr Chetwin is well known for his role in carrying out accurate farm testing and individual advice to solve problems connected to your vacuum systems and pulsators.

He is an AATF qualified tester and has already got a large number of sheds to do this year. If you are wanting, a test done you should ring the office or Mr Chetwin direct and arrange an appointment.

Helen Hansen joins our team and has experience in the farming industry.

She is responsible for our showroom and is adamant that if we haven't got what you want in stock she can get it super quick.

Mrs Hansen is keen to put a face to the voices on the end of the phone so if you get a chance, pop in and see her at our showroom.

Total Farm Services is committed to providing fast efficient service to all our customers and when we are busy we use the services of two experienced contractors, Warwick Jellie and Graeme Randell.

These two qualified fitters have been working for TFS for quite some time and regularly help out with new plant installs and service work. They both provide a high standard of workmanship and are available to us on an on call basis.

Total Farm Services have five new sheds to install this month using the quality Westfalia equipment, three of them being high performance 50 bali Westfalia rotaries.

We have a wide range of Westfalia spare parts in our showroom along with a number of Lowara water pumps and Realcold vat refrigeration units.

We write all our existing customers and any new arrivals to our area to call in and introduce yourself and have a look at what we can offer.

Biological farming a healthy alternative

Janette Perrett has been dairy farming for 35 years but over the last 15 years has noticed the face of the land changing.

We were adding nitrogen for grass growth, administering worm and lice control, more using CIDs for reproduction, extensively grazing grass pasture when it was grazed, cows being immune to antibiotics and fungi such as eczema having a bigger effect on the herd.

Janette Perrett has been dairy farming for 35 years but over the last 15 years has noticed the face of the land changing.

She also believes the general population is becoming sicker and people are filling themselves with artificial vitamins to combat the shortfall that their food is not providing, and the illness industry is really booming.

She says the nutritional value of our food has decreased 63% in the last 50 years, and our milk is not the quality it used to be.

The Perretts began to turn to biological farming two years ago. It has been an exciting and challenging journey and they are still a bit to learn.

Now she feels it is time to share with others the alternative ways to treat our animals and soil.

On June 20 at Te Awamutu Sports Club she will introduce the five speakers under whose influence she has healthier soil and animals, and a much healthier product in the vat.

The day runs from 10am-4pm and costs $525 including lunch and all proceeds will go to The True Colours Charities. Register at greatwebsites.co.nz/organicfarm or phone Mrs Perrett (07 850 6345).

                     42 RURAL ROUNDUP, TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008
Experience, caring

VetEnt has a mission to provide the highest quality veterinary medical care in a friendly but professional environment.

Our entire healthcare team is committed to providing personal care and attention to suit the unique concerns of each individual patient and their owners.

Our clinics operate as mixed practices. Despite this we have a team dedicated to small animal medicine and surgery.

This ensures you are dealing with veterinary staff primarily interested and focused specifically in this area.

We appreciate that our farming clients and patients have different requirements and expectations to our urban clients.

We understand that dogs are vital and very valuable members of your farming team.

Due to the rural placement of our clinics, our vets have worked with and understand conditions common to working dog injuries and ailments.

We are thorough with working up each case and will provide practical solutions to any problems arising without compromising patient care.

Our focus is to get the patient well and back working as soon as practically possible.

Our individual clinics are fully equipped with modern diagnostic equipment to ensure our patients receive the best possible care.

We pride ourselves on having knowledgeable vets practising high quality medicine and surgery.

VetEnt is large enough to ensure experience is available in all areas on companion animal veterinary medicine but small enough to maintain individual quality, care and attention to detail.

NZ Crop and Food know their onions, or do they?

The Environmental Risk Management Authority expects to hold a public hearing in Christchurch in August or September to hear oral submissions on the New Zealand Institute for Crop and Food Research’s application to field test a range of genetically-modified vegetable species.

Crop and Food Research has applied to plant genetically-modified GM onions, spring onions, garlic and leeks over a total of 2.5 hectares for a 10 year research project.

ERMA New Zealand’s GM New Organisms Libby Harrison says 133 submissions have been received on the application.

“We have received a wide range of submissions from community groups, scientists and members of the public who are interested in genetic modification research,” Dr Harrison says.

She says the number of submissions is a lot less than the 1933 received for Crop and Foods previous genetically-modified onions application in 2003.

The number of submissions is fewer than we have historically received for GM field test applications. However, it’s not about how many submissions the Authority gets to consider, but rather the quality of public input.

“The submissions we have received represent a full range of views on GM and will greatly assist the Authority as it makes its decision.”

The next step is for ERMA New Zealand staff to assemble an evaluation and review (E&R) report on the application. This report, which will summarise the relevant science and the submissions, will be sent to submitters and put on the ERMA New Zealand website before the hearing.

The next step is for ERMA New Zealand staff to assemble an evaluation and review (E&R) report on the application. This report, which will summarise the relevant science and the submissions, will be sent to submitters and put on the ERMA New Zealand website before the hearing.

The application details and answers to frequently-asked questions are available on the ERMA New Zealand website www.ermanz.govt.nz.

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**Vetpack's popular transition supplement Starter „Plus“** has had a formula makeover, resulting in a good product becoming even better the company says.

“Dairy farmers will be watching their cows’ health this season more closely than ever,” says Vetpack’s manager Mark Wyllie.

Effective transition management will be critical, and that’s where the new formulation Starter „Plus“ comes into its own this spring,” Wyllie says.

Vetpack has added soy bean oil to improve the flowability of the supplement, along with essential Vitamins B1 and B12 plus Chromium, he says.

“The result is a smooth, free-flowing product with improved viscosity at lower temperatures, making it easier to use on those cold winter mornings.”

On the nutritional front, Vitamin B1 not only plays an important role in helping the body metabolize carbohydrates and fat to produce energy, it is also essential for normal growth and development as well as proper functioning of the heart, nervous and digestive systems.

Vitamin B12 meantime is a vital co-factor in several metabolic processes including the conversion of propionic acid to succinate which then enters the Krebs Cycle to produce cellular energy.

In cobalt deficient areas, a depressed appetite resulting from a sub clinical B12 deficiency will place further stress on a calving cow with the huge energy demands required from her.

As for chromium, this micro-nutrient is known to function as a co-factor for insulin and is involved in the metabolism of glucose which is the prime energy source for cells. It has also been shown to be useful in times of physical stress, and may improve somatic cell counts and udder health.

Along with the additions, Vetpack has maintained and improved the essential qualities of what was already a good transition product. Mark Wyllie says.

A full dose of by-pass fats has been maintained, essential for the longer supply of energy, and the energy content has improved to 11.2 MJ ME.

The combination of MPG, molasses and by-pass fats ensures an immediate and longer-lasting release of energy for sick cows.

Veterinarian Lindsay Chitty emphasises that Starter „Plus“ should be given within 12 hours of calving.

It should be given at least once (a one or two litre dose) but following this with a 500 mL daily dose is often valuable while cows are in the colostrum mob.

Nutritionist Chris Newton says benefits from using the product range from reduced health costs through less metabolic disease to improved feed conversion efficiency, stronger early season appetite, and reduced cost of reproductive failure as a result of improved cow health.

**Give calves a good start**

**Transition management gets a boost**

Dairy farmers have plenty of incentive to make every post a winning post when it comes to calf rearing this spring, and vet-only Rotagen „Combo“ is a great way of helping them do so.

The unique natural product from Te Awamutu-based Vetpack has already established a solid following but this season presents a real opportunity to grow the market further, the company says.

With the increase in payout, and the demand for extra replacement stock – not to mention the prices being paid for them – it is essential that every replacement calf is not only kept alive this spring, but reared to perform to the best of her ability as an adult,” says Vetpack technical manager Lindsay Chitty.

“Rotagen Combo can also prevent and treat scours caused by Cryptosporidium, E.coli, Salmonella Typhimurium, and Coronavirus.

The main cause of neonatal calf scours is Rotavirus, which affects young calves but can hit older calves up until at least one month old.

Other pathogens can be involved, but Rotavirus infection is always present in at least 80% of scour outbreaks.

**To page 45.**
The disease is characterized by severe diarrhoea which has a distinctive smell, dehydration, and a death rate of 20% or more without treatment.

"Unprotected calves can result in an infection rate of 80% or more in severe outbreaks," Mr Chitty says.

The costs of treating scouring calves and the deaths are the obvious costs of an outbreak, but hidden costs are probably even more important.

Because affected calves receive a severe setback at a young age, and there is damage to the intestinal lining, growth rates are reduced.

"Most farmers who have experienced outbreaks know that calves that have had the scours never grow as well as non-infected calves and have difficulty reaching target liveweights. This is a huge cost because the lifetime production from an affected calf is going to be reduced."

A simple programme of treating calves at birth with a drench of Rotagen Combo once a day for five days will prevent clinical cases of Rotavirus.

Mr Chitty says like any prevention programme all calves need to be treated, not just the replacement calves.

The other important aspect of Rotavirus control is to reduce the environmental contamination of any Rotavirus virus that may be in the environment.

He says an effective virucide such as Vetpack Vetsan should be used to spray out the calf shed before the season begins.

The active ingredient of Vetpack Vetsan is stabilized chlorine dioxide which is a very potent virucide, bactericide, fungicide and oocide.

"A combined approach ensures the best results when it comes to calf health," Mr Chitty says.

"Rotagen works by coating the antigen particles with antibodies which render it inactive; it doesn’t kill the antigen, but prevents it from causing any damage to the intestinal lining.

"If the calf is later exposed to Rotavirus because of a breakdown in the control of the environmental contamination, Rotagen treated calves can still get Rotavirus, and will need to be treated again, as in any other form of treatment.

"So the key is to blanket treat as a preventative, and prevent environmental contamination by effective and regular spraying of calf sheds."

For more detail phone Vetpack 07 870 2214 or visit www.vetpack.co.nz

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Mark & Liz Dixon
(Owner Operators)

Environment Waikato has helped to rid Waipa farm and garden sheds of nearly 6.5 tonnes of nasty agrichemicals, thanks to an overwhelming response from local residents.

The council and the Ministry for the Environment, offered rural Waipa people a chance to dispose of unused and unwanted agrichemicals for free in April and May. About 1000 letters were sent to Waipa landowners before the collection.

A pick up service was offered for about 70 farmers who had large amounts of agrichemicals or leaking drums on their properties, while eight drop-off days ran at the Cambridge and Te Awamutu transfer stations.

Sixty per cent of the chemicals collected were intractable, meaning they will need to be shipped overseas to be disposed of safely. Environment Waikato was most interested in collecting persistent organic pollutants (POPs), which remain in the environment for long periods of time and accumulate in plants and animals. DDT is one well known type of POP.

Forty-five kilograms of POPs were dropped at transfer stations and seven kilograms were picked up from farms. Environment Waikato Environment Committee chair Jane Hennebry said many farmers did not realise they were obliged to stop using POPs and dispose of them safely, following New Zealand’s signing of the Stockholm Convention in 2001.

It is legal to store POPs, but only if they are in suitable containers stored in secure buildings with moisture control, ventilation and spill containment measures.

Environment Waikato says that agrichemicals that leak out of old containers can contaminate soil and waterways, posing a risk to human and animal health and the environment.

Koromatua resident Barry Blyde (photographed) said the collection was a chance to drop off chemicals left behind on his property by a previous owner.

``They’ve been sitting in the shed for years - it’s brilliant we can finally get rid of them.‘ he said.

But meat and dairy companies and fruit and veggie buyers are becoming more particular about not taking produce from farms if certain chemicals are still on the property. Some companies regularly send inspectors out because overseas markets are demanding more stringent controls.

Cr Hennebry is encouraging farmers who want advice on disposing of agrichemicals to call Environment Waikato’s contaminated land and waste advisor Michelle Begbie on 0800 800 401.

There may be a limited window of opportunity for disposing of agrichemicals free of charge, so if you still have them on your property please call us, Cr Hennebry said.
Flexible working arrangements

The Act imposes a statutory requirement on employers to consider any request made by an employee as soon as possible, but no later than three months after receipt. The employer must notify the employee within this timeframe whether the request has been granted or refused. An employer shall only have the ability to refuse a request on specific grounds.

Some of the grounds upon which an employer may refuse a request include:
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- if the request will have a detrimental impact on quality, performance or ability to meet customer demands;
- if there is an insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- if the request is being made for the purpose of employer convenience;
- if there is an insufficiency of any collective employment agreement covering the employee;
- temporary or permanent change to the employee's terms of employment.

An employer who is found to have followed a deficient procedure will be liable to a penalty not exceeding $20,000.00 (payable to the employee) imposed by the Authority. There is no right of appeal to a higher Court under the new legislation – the Authority's ruling shall be final.

Employees are also prohibited from making a further request for variation for a period of 12 months following their previous request. The new flexible working laws are based very closely to those operated in the UK. The only main difference being that in the UK, there is a requirement for the employer to conduct a meeting with the employee upon receipt of a request. This provides a two-way discussion process between the parties about the request, and allows possible alternatives and provides compromise should the employer be unable to meet the requirements of the request.

The New Zealand legislation does not require a meeting to take place. In any event though, employers must deal with any request under their duty of good faith as provided under current employment law.

The legislation amends the Employment Relations Act 2000, and provides a statutory framework granting eligible employees a statutory right to request a variation of their working arrangements if they have to care for another person.

An employee under the new regime shall have the right to request a variation to the terms of their employment in relation to their hours of work, days of work, and also the employee's place of work.

Flexible working arrangements legislation will come into force on July 1, 2008. In an increasingly complicated world, it's essential you have expert legal advice in matters such as:

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By Rachael Bain — a law clerk in the Te Awamutu firm Edmonds Judd.

The new flexible working arrangements legislation will come into force on July 1, 2008. The legislation amends the Employment Relations Act 2000, and provides a statutory framework granting eligible employees a statutory right to request a variation of their working arrangements if they have to care for another person.

An employee under the new regime shall have the right to request a variation to the terms of their employment in relation to their hours of work, days of work, and also the employee's place of work. The employee must make a formal request in writing to the employer, and must state that the request is being made pursuant to Part 6AA of the Employment Relations Act 2000.

The employer must notify the employee within this timeframe whether the request has been granted or refused. An employer shall only have the ability to refuse a request on specific grounds. Some of the grounds upon which an employer may refuse a request include:
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- if the request will have a detrimental impact on quality, performance or ability to meet customer demands;
- if there is an insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- if the employee is being made redundant;
- if the request is being made for the purpose of employer convenience;
- if there is an insufficiency of any collective employment agreement covering the employee;
- temporary or permanent change to the employee's terms of employment.

An employer who is found to have followed a deficient procedure will be liable to a penalty not exceeding $20,000.00 (payable to the employee) imposed by the Authority. There is no right of appeal to a higher Court under the new legislation – the Authority's ruling shall be final.

Employees are also prohibited from making a further request for variation for a period of 12 months following their previous request. The new flexible working laws are based very closely to those operated in the UK. The only main difference being that in the UK, there is a requirement for the employer to conduct a meeting with the employee upon receipt of a request. This provides a two-way discussion process between the parties about the request, and allows possible alternatives and provides compromise should the employer be unable to meet the requirements of the request.

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