

Fonterra's buy-out of NZDL raises questions. **PAGE 3**

# DAIRY NEWS



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# PLEDGE TO SERVE

"The board has appointed me chairman-elect and it's now up to farmers to give their approval. I can't have a clearer mandate."

- John Wilson

**PAGE 5**




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# DAIRY NEWS

# Submitters cry foul over NZDL sale



How damaging is volcanic ash? **PG.07**



Good transition diet before lactation. **PG.42**



Future-proofing business. **PG.50**

ANDREW SWALLOW

**A CONFIDENTIAL** submission to the Commerce Commission about Fonterra's bid for New Zealand Dairies Ltd (NZDL) calls on the commission to investigate the fairness of the sale process.

The submission maintains Fonterra's bid was not the highest or best, and "significant pressure was placed on NZDL suppliers to accept the Fonterra proposal..."

It alleges Fonterra insisted on all suppliers signing, effectively tying them to Fonterra for seven years "...which is clearly anti-competitive and is outside the normal contract whereby suppliers are able to [annually] withdraw from supply to Fonterra..."

"We understand the NZDL farmers are required to purchase shares in Fonterra with a value of approximately \$45-\$50 million... Thus in reality the suppliers will have to buy their own company and the net cost to Fonterra is effectively zero."

"As a contrast the [submitter's] offer did not require suppliers to acquire any shares linked to supply but did offer a board position for a supplier representative and offered a voluntary opportunity for suppliers to purchase shares in the company."

The submitter also maintains Fonterra did not pursue the acquisition but was "approached and almost cajoled into buying the company."

"This suggests that the receivers [BDO] may not have conducted a fair process but rather one that was predetermined in favour of Fonterra despite the presence of higher competing bids."

The submitter's bid would have "returned a much higher price to the receivers and therefore would have ensured full repayment to suppliers," it subsequently adds.

The submitter also says a letter from law firm Buddle Findlay advised the bid was "not preferred as the view was that the bid would require Overseas Investment Office (OIO) approval."

Who Buddle Findlay was acting for is not clear. Receiver BDO didn't answer *Dairy News*' questions



Fonterra's purchase of NZDL assets has raised the ire of some industry players.

as to whether it had engaged the firm, or whether Fonterra's bid was the highest and whether OIO involvement had been a consideration in the decision process.

"The receivers are subject to confidentiality obligations in relation to the bid process and the conditional agreement with Fonterra," BDO partner Stephen Tubbs responded.

However, he did defend the bid process. "The receivers are confident that the sale process for NZDL's assets was robust and secured the most

credible and attractive outcome for the creditors [secured and unsecured, including farmer] of NZDL."

As to whether BDO had initiated contact with Fonterra, or vice versa, Tubbs said that to ensure as competitive a process as possible the receivers "took all reasonable steps to ensure that all potential bidders were aware of the opportunity to bid for NZDL's assets."

The commission will rule on Fonterra's application at the end of this month.

## NOTHING TO ADD – FONTERRA

WHEN *DAIRY News* asked Fonterra to confirm Federated Farmers' summary of the deal offered to suppliers (story page 4), and justify Fonterra's insistence on all suppliers signing with a seven-year commitment, it referred to its submission to the Commerce Commission.

"This is a public document and can be viewed on the Commerce Commission website. Our bid followed normal business practice and we have nothing

further to add," the co-op says.

That submission argues, at length, why Fonterra's acquisition of NZDL would not be anti-competitive, but, as far as *Dairy News* can ascertain, fails to answer these questions.

Fonterra also declined to comment on who approached who in the bid process, whether there had been any "cajoling", and why NZDL suppliers would not be able to start acquiring shares this season.

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# TAF meeting on

**THE GROUP** Our Co-op, born out of the anti-TAF campaign, is at last to get its audience with Fonterra Shareholder Council.

However, the agreement to a meeting on September 26 or 27, three months after Our Co-op requested it, has come with a string of stipulations from council chair Ian Brown.

Those stipulations have left Our Co-op regional coordinator Lindsay Blake, Waikato, yet again questioning the council's representation of shareholders.

"I simply ask [*Dairy News*] readers to give these stipulations the test of 'are SHC being reason-

able as our elected representational body or does [the council] once again find themselves isolated



Lindsay Blake

from the farming base?"

Among the stipulations are that only Blake and one other Our Co-op representative may attend, the meeting is limited to 60 minutes, the

agenda is pre-approved by the council, and all discussion is in confidence.

Blake points out that the issues Our Co-op wishes to discuss with the council will not be resolved by [TAF vote] resolution 2 as it stands, and if the two Our Co-op members are not to relay the discussion, how else will shareholders learn of the outcomes.

"The Shareholders' Council think this is engagement? I'm afraid this is game playing and controlled propaganda.

"The meeting will also be too late for resolution 2 [controls on Trading Among Farmers] to be amended ahead of the vote at the AGM."

# Westland against, Feds back NZDL buy-out

**ANDREW SWALLOW**

**AT LEAST** three other submissions on the NZDL sale other than the confidential one detailed (see story page 3) have been received by the Commerce Commission.

In its submission, cooperative Westland says it strongly opposes Fonterra's acquisition of NZDL on the grounds it would substantially lessen competition for supply in the area "removing opportunities for both affected farmers and potential investors...."

Westland slams Fonterra's insistence on en bloc signing of suppliers, arguing transport and other efficiencies claimed would actually be greater if [Fon-

terra] were to take over the plant without the associated milk supply.

"The implication therefore is that Fonterra have made this a condition of their bid in order to block competitors from potentially obtaining that milk supply."

**"On the whole, we think this acquisition by Fonterra is very good for the industry as well as for Fonterra itself." - Feds**

Westland also argues the deal would enhance Fonterra's already dominant dairy industry market position, allowing it "to aggressively target other independent processors" and reducing the incentive of such processors - existing or prospective - to invest.

"These consequences would lead to a substantial lessening of competition across the New Zealand dairy industry."

Viable and substantive alternatives to Fonterra's bid exist and would ensure continued competition "in line with the intent of the

Dairy Industry Restructuring Act and the competition provisions of the Commerce Act."

Federated Farmers' submission welcomes Fonterra's intervention to ensure continued milk collections, but criticises the "Hobson's choice", all-or-none offer to sup-

pliers which effectively pitted farmer against farmer.

It also notes suppliers' concern at being prohibited from buying shares this season and facing a higher buy-in price subsequently, and takes issue with the seven-year commitment, arguing farmer choice as to who they supply "is what the Dairy Industry Restructuring Act is all about."

"On the whole, we think this acquisition by Fonterra is very good for the industry as well as for Fonterra itself, and does show the strength of the cooperative model," it concludes.

The third submission had not been posted on the commission's website late last week.

# Seven-year supplier deals

**ACCORDING TO** Federated Farmers' submission to the Commerce Commission, Fonterra's purchase of NZDL was subject to all suppliers signing with Fonterra under the following terms:

For the current season (2012-13), suppliers will get 10c/kgMS less than the Fonterra farm gate price (FFGP).

For the following three years, any unshared supply will be 5c/kgMS less than other Fonterra suppliers with unshared milk.

Year five will be as per the normal growth contract for all shareholders.

All farmers must be fully shared up by year six.

Farmers can start sharing up from next season, but are not allowed to buy

any shares this season.

All farmers are locked into a seven-year contract.

A suppliers' representative confirmed to *Dairy News* all NZDL suppliers have now signed with

Fonterra, however some had strong reservations about doing so, notably in respect of the seven year lock-in clause.

The insistence all suppliers commit to

Fonterra has left a bad taste, particularly as other bidders, including Westland and Synlait, had indicated they would settle for 80-85% of current suppliers signing.

## MYSTERY SUBMITTER

WHILE THE submitter's name is withheld from the Commerce Commission release of the document, as is the price tendered, the document does indicate the submission is made on behalf of a company "formed to invest in and operate dairy farming and dairy processing assets."

The said company's bid was supported by another party, which appears to be "an international equity investor controlled by a New Zealander," and which has

"invested in a wide range of assets and projects in a number of continents and countries."

The investor requires a minimum investment running into millions for at least 20 years. To date its main investments have been in "renewable and conventional energy, heat and power generation. Recently the company has shown interest in the natural resource sector and in-ground commodities, such as pastoral farming and dairy production."

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# Ready for farmer approval

## SUDESH KISSUN

### FONTERRA CHAIRMAN-ELECT

John Wilson has one hurdle to clear before he takes the helm of the co-op in December – and he's happy about it.

Wilson is one of three directors up for re-election. Wilson is the board's choice for chairman-elect but the co-op's 10,500 farmers have first to re-elect him to the board. Nominations will be called soon for directors. Wilson says he's seeking re-election.

"In one sense it's a good thing," he told *Dairy News*. "That's the way the dice has rolled and I'm one of the three retiring directors.

"The board has appointed me chairman-elect and it's now up to

the farmers to give their approval. I can't have a clearer mandate than that for the job."

Wilson, who grew up on the family farm in Te Awamutu, has been a director since 2003. A previous chairman of Fonterra Shareholders Council, he chaired the board's capital structure committee.

The committee's work culminated in TAF (trading among farmers) being approved in June by the co-op.

However, the TAF debate left the co-op divided with some shareholders still harbouring reservations on allowing outside investors to buy share units.

Wilson is aware of the need for a united co-op.

He intends to spend the four months before the annual meeting "visit-

ing and listening" to farmers.

"I'm critically aware of the need to have a united co-op. But the most important thing we do as a co-op is have good discussions, listen to varying views, debate issues and move on."

Wilson is confident Fonterra has everything in order at home. With TAF almost finalised and chief executive Theo Spierings' strategy refresh in place, he believes the focus should now be global.

Volatility reigns in global markets and Fonterra must be in control of its business to tackle economic headwinds, he says. "The milk price is low and currency high; I think the strategy direction to focus globally is spot on."

Fonterra's board has for two years worked on a succession plan, including

the departure of previous chief executive Andrew Ferrier and succession by Spierings.

Fonterra chairman Henry van der Heyden says he will work with Wilson over the next few months to assist with a smooth transition to provide continuity for the cooperative.

With van der Heyden in charge until December, Wilson says this gives him the opportunity to engage with directors, shareholders, councillors and farmers. "It allows me to go in with a new pair of lenses, so when I'm re-elected there is a smooth transition and I can hit the ground running."

Wilson says he's humbled by the appointment. "The number of phone calls, emails and text messages from farmers has been remarkable."

Apart from the family farm, Wilson is a stakeholder in several Canterbury farms.

He is also chairman of South Auckland Independent Testing Society Ltd and a director of Turner & Growers Ltd.



Fonterra chairman-elect John Wilson on his Te Awamutu farm.

## ARMER'S SUDDEN DEPARTURE

FONTERRA DIRECTOR Colin Armer quit the board earlier this month.

In a statement this morning, the corporate farmer gave no reason for his decision.

He was reportedly on a shortlist for the Fonterra chairmanship. Armer says for many years he has been a strong supporter of the New Zealand dairy industry and an advocate for Fonterra's important work. "I will continue to be," he says.

Armer thanked shareholders who supported him and says he will continue to support the cooperative model. He says he has nothing but praise for the Fonterra chief executive and the management team. He made no mention of the board.

Fonterra chairman Henry van der Heyden says while the co-op is disappointed with Colin Armer's resignation, it respects his decision.

## Gallagher NAIT Exchange Software Makes Electronic Identification Data Transfer Easy

Gallagher has launched two new software products that simplify the process of transferring animal information to NAIT.

Available through the Gallagher website, Gallagher NAIT Exchange software enables farmers to easily transfer animal data collected on Gallagher Weigh Scales and Tag Readers to the NAIT (National Animal Identification and Tracing) database.

Dan Loughnane, Gallagher Product Manager for Weighing and Electronic Identification Systems, says the free software has been designed so that even users with minimal computer skills can use it effectively. He says information can be transferred from a computer to NAIT in just three simple steps.

"You just locate the required animal tag details in your files which you have downloaded from your Weigh Scale or Reader, specify the information you want to send and then hit go. The software handles the rest."

Gallagher NAIT Exchange software can be downloaded through the Gallagher website [www.gallagher.co.nz](http://www.gallagher.co.nz)

Gallagher has also released a second software product, Gallagher Animal Data Transfer for Android, which has been designed to interface the Gallagher Hand Held Electronic Tag Reader HR3 with Android-compliant mobile phones. This application enables the user to extract animal tag details from the tag reader and attach them to an email on their phone via Bluetooth. The email can then be sent to a computer where NAIT Exchange software is used to send the animal information to NAIT.

Dan says this simple transaction means the reader doesn't need to be connected directly to the computer for data to be transferred.

"It's a very useful application for farmers, graziers or livestock agents. For example, if your grazier is scanning your heifers before he loads them onto a truck for transport, he can email you the ID information before the heifers even leave the farm. At the same time he can also email that information direct to his own computer."

The 'Gallagher Animal Data Transfer' for Android application can be downloaded from the Google Play Store at no cost.

Dan Loughnane says the new software applications are part of a suite of products designed to help farmers capture the benefits of Electronic Identification while simplifying the process of transferring livestock information to NAIT.

"Gallagher has a reputation for backing up our high quality products with excellent customer support. It's all about making these products easy to use, and helping our customers to get the maximum benefit from them."

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\* Gallagher Animal Data Transfer App available to Hand Held Tag Reader HR3 customers only

Landcorp CEO Chris Kelly says plans are in place to take over and manage Crafar farms.



# Landcorp ready to run Crafar farms

**PETER BURKE**

**TWO MONTHS** could pass before Shanghai Pengxin takes possession of the Crafar farms and up to a year before its management partner Landcorp has full control.

With the Court of Appeal last week rejecting an attempt by the Sir

Michael Fay consortium to stop the sale to Shanghai Pengxin, the long-running saga appears to be nearing its end.

A spokesperson for the consortium told *Dairy News* it would not appeal. It also seems unlikely an iwi group will appeal to the Supreme Court given the wording in the judgment from the Court of Appeal.

Irrespective of this, little action is likely until the lapse of the 20 days allowed for the filing of an appeal. Shanghai Pengxin is likely then to indicate it will settle and has a further 30 days to do so.

The farms will be owned by a wholly owned subsidiary of Shanghai Pengxin called Milk New Zealand Holding Ltd. Below that will sit the

50/50 joint-venture company involving Landcorp called Milk New Zealand Farm Management Ltd.

Landcorp chief executive Chris Kelly says he's delighted with the latest judgment from the Court of Appeal. Plans are well in hand to take over and manage the farms but he says there are some limiting factors.

"Because of the time delays that have gone on, the receivers have signed up the existing sharemilkers for another year so they are in place until the end of May 2013," he told *Dairy News*.

"What will happen is that we will take over the oversight management of those farms and keep those existing sharemilkers in place. During the

year we will [talk] with them about whether they want to work for Landcorp or move on. So by the end of May 2013 we'll be in a position to take over all the staff as well."

Kelly says a special team in Landcorp will look after the farms. The receivers have also employed staff to look after the farms, one of whom is a former Landcorp employee.

"We'll look to those staff in the first instance and see if they want to switch from working for the receivers to working for us and if they do we'll take them on board. In any event we have our own staff available."

Once Pengxin takes ownership of the farms Landcorp will start spend-

ing some of the \$16 million Shanghai Pengxin has set aside for upgrading the properties provided this doesn't interfere with their day-to-day running.

"Our immediate priority will be to check that all the compliance issues are ok: making sure all the effluent ponds are as they should be and that sort of stuff. Then we'll start regular upgrades of the farms including fencing, subdivision, water, re-grassing, fertiliser - all the sorts of things you do when you upgrade farms."

Landcorp will be checking the cows Kelly expects them to be pretty stressed, beginning to milk and trying to get into calf again and also endeavoring to put some fat on their backs."

## 'Itching to start work'

**PETER BURKE**

**CHINESE COMPANY** Shanghai Pengxin is delighted with the Court of Appeal decision on the sale of Crafar farms.

Hoping last week's decision marks the end of the legal battle, company spokesperson Cedric Allen says it wants to get on the land, put on the gumboots and start running the farms.

The actual running of the farms will rest with Milk New Zealand Farm Management Ltd, a 50/50 joint venture between Shanghai Pengxin and Landcorp Farming.

Each organisation will supply three directors and there will be an

independent chairperson. The role of that company will be to run the overall 'milk business' and will include managing the sale of any surplus farms.

Allen says while the company is effectively locked in to supplying milk to Fonterra until the end of the 2012-13 season it plans to settle on a company or companies to process its milk for the following season.

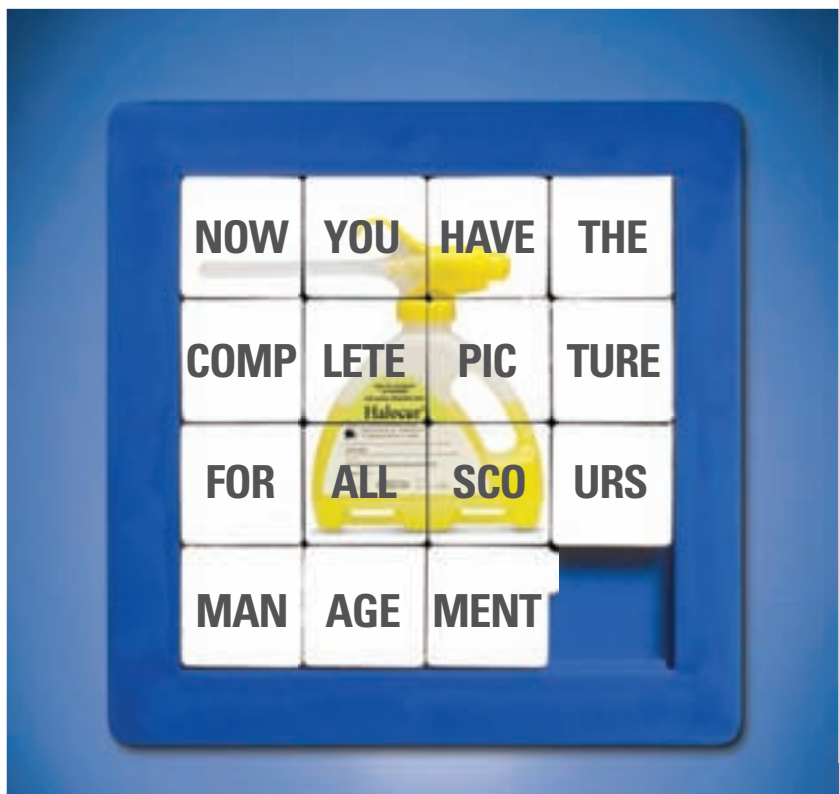
"We are putting together a team to deal with the processing side of the business to see if we can finalise an agreement with a processing company to produce the sort of products we want. We may do a deal with Fonterra, or another processing company, or with two different processing companies. Alternatively we might set up

a new joint venture as we can't own more than 50% of a processing company."

Allen says as soon as it gets the go ahead from its lawyers Shanghai Pengxin will sign the deal with the receivers. "We are itching to get going."

Meanwhile Michael Stiassny, a partner in KordaMentha, the receivers for the Crafar farms, told *Dairy News* he's also delighted with the outcome of the Appeal Court.

"This has gone on far too long. We would like to complete our job which is to realise the assets for the best price possible," he says. But KordaMentha must wait until the appeal period lapses.



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# Large eruptions may be harmful - expert

**MASSEY UNIVERSITY** researchers say ash from the Mt Tongariro eruption last week poses

no great threat to human health or farming. But if larger eruptions of Mt Tongariro also pro-

duce ash with similar concentrations of fluorine, a significant agricultural hazard can be anticipated.

Professor Shane Cronin says ash can cover pasture and be ingested by grazing animals.

"Further, livestock drinking water in open troughs may be contaminated. Also, rural dwellers with roof-catchment drinking water should be vigilant in avoiding ash runoff into water tanks. During and immediately following ash fall the intake pipe to water tanks should be disconnected until ash has washed off the roof with rain."

Massey University's volcanic risk solutions and the fertiliser and lime

research centre, together with University of Canterbury researchers, tested ash samples collected beside state highways 46 and 1, near the volcano, and one sample collected from Gisborne.

Cronin says initial tests show moderate levels of soluble fluorine. "Concentrations between 20 and 70mgF/kg of ash were measured, in a similar range to the widespread volcanic ash produced during the 1995 and 1996 eruptions of Ruapehu.

"Due to the restricted distribution and thin ash fall, this poses no current human health or agricultural threat beyond the immediate vicinity of the volcano. Also, heavy rain-

fall since the eruption has removed much of the ash and associated contaminants."

In grazed pastoral systems, following ash cover some livestock will be put off grazing by the high levels of acidic and abrasive ash; others will continue to graze. If supplementary feed is unavailable, this may lead to starvation of stock, especially calving stock that face high energy demands at this time of year.

Cronin says if much ash is ingested, livestock risk the disease fluorosis.

"Experience from the 1995-96 eruptions has shown that ash coverings greater than 2mm,

Testing times: Massey post-doctoral fellows Dr Anke Zernack and Natalia Pardo test ash from the Mt Tongariro eruption.



low-grazed pastures and low rainfall following ash deposition are critical factors increasing hazard."

Stock deaths normally begin 4-10 days after ash fall if no supplementary feed is available. Heavy or persistent rain quickly

disperses ash and rapidly leaches the fluorine, reducing the hazard.

Fluoride is absorbed rapidly by grazing animals from ingested ash or contaminated water, but in moderate levels it does not pass into milk.

## ADVICE FOR FARMERS

In the event of future ash falls Cronin advises as follows:

If ash fall exceeds 2mm or coats more than 50% of pasture/feed crops, either move stock to less affected areas of the farm or supply supplementary feed.

In these situations also refill stock drinking troughs from bore or river supplies.

If ash has not washed off pastures after two-three days, raise the quantity of supplementary feed and monitor stock condition closely.

In general, to reduce impacts from ash fall, maintain pasture length by regular rotation rather than close cropping. Longer pastures are less likely to be completely covered.

**CLASSIFIED FARM REPORT**

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**Rabobank**



# Iwi fuming over verdict

**AN IWI** forming part of the Sir Michael Fay-led consortium, is deeply disappointed by the Appeal Court decision to allow the sale of the former Crafar farms to Shanghai Pengxin.

Hardie Pene, chairman of the Tiroa E and Te Hape B Trusts, says his Ngati-irereahu Iwi and their fellow iwi buyers Tuwharetoa have not been treated well by the Government over the sale process.



Hardie Pene

Pene's group has for nine months tried to buy two former Crafar farms at Benneydale between Te Kuiti and Taupo. He says its interest stems from these farms originally having been land belonging to his people and lost during the 1800s through land acquisition.

"We are bitterly disappointed at the decision. It seems all you need to enjoy the privilege of owning New Zealand farm land is deeper pockets and some knowledge of business to become a major owner of dairy farms.

"Shanghai Pengxin still won't dis-

close the purchase price but I'll bet it's a pittance compared to the more than \$66 million we were asked to pay for the three farms we were interested in buying from them. If that's the protection the law and the Government is going to give Kiwis and iwi from deep-pocketed overseas buyers then it won't be long before a whole lot more Kiwi farmers are left feeling as disenfranchised as we are at the moment."

Pene says they are now evaluating their position but won't say what action, if any, they will take. But he insists there must be changes to the law on the sale of agricultural land to overseas buyers. "In the meantime our traditional lands have been sacrificed because the OIO Act and its interpretation has been screwed around and allowed the deal to go through."

Pene is also noncommittal about buying the farms when they are eventually owned by Shanghai Pengxin. He says the asking price is too high.

But Landcorp chief executive Chris Kelly is equally unmoved, saying he is happy to talk to Pene and saying "he knows roughly our expectations on price but doesn't like them."



An iwi wants changes to the law on sale of agricultural land to overseas buyers.

## END OF THE ROAD

THE SIR Michael Fay led consortium have conceded defeat in its bid for the Crafar farms. A spokesperson for the group told *Dairy News* they will not take the matter to the Supreme Court.

Fay says in a statement the consortium feels disappointed and disenfranchised by the decision. The group's actions in trying to buy the 16 Crafar farms had

raised important issues about the sale of productive New Zealand farm land to overseas investors. The actions had made the Overseas Investment Office's interpretation of the Act governing sales to overseas buyers more transparent, Fay says.

"We are all disappointed to see this significant parcel of highly productive dairy land pass out of

New Zealand ownership.

"The issue of overseas buyers aggregating large parcels of farm land is important to our most productive export sector and I don't believe we have heard the end of the discussions raised by our group.

"Clearly the majority of New Zealanders have significant concerns about this issue."



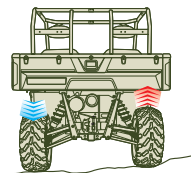
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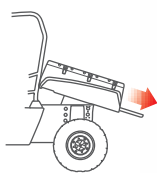
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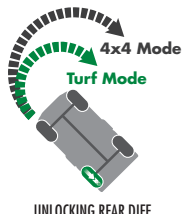
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Rod Quin

# Kiwi's surge dampens payout predictions

**WESTLAND SLASHED** 70c/kgMS off its payout forecast earlier this month in a move some suggest is a harbinger of Fonterra's next forecast.

"Westland is a bit of

bell-weather for Fonterra," ANZ economist Con Williams told *Dairy News*.

"Personally I wouldn't be surprised if Fonterra downgrades theirs as well, but 2013 still looks okay for dairy markets so

there's a possibility it will go back up even if they do."

The bigger cooperative hasn't commented on its 2012/13 forecast since May 22 when it opened with a \$5.50/kgMS milk price prediction, plus net profit after tax of 45-55c/share. At the time it said dividend policy is to pay 65-75% of profit after tax, implying a dividend of about 35c/share, i.e. a total farmgate return of \$5.85/kgMS.

That compared with an initial all-inclusive payout range prediction from Westland of \$5.70-6.10/kgMS but on August 2 that was cut to \$5-5.40/kgMS, despite a rally in the Global Dairy Trade index of 3.5% at the August 1 auction.

Fonterra board policy has been to revise forecasts quarterly, or sooner if there's more than a 30c/kgMS departure from the previous figure.

Last week a Fonterra spokesman told *Dairy News* the cooperative wouldn't comment on whether, what and when a payout revision is due, but did confirm the board was due to meet this week.

Williams says the surge in the New Zealand dollar, up 4.5c against the US dollar since mid June, is likely a key factor in Westland's revision and any move Fonterra may make. As a rule-of-thumb every one cent shift in the Kiwi/US cross-rate equates to 8c/kgMS, so the recent rally alone implies a 35-40c/kgMS cut.

Rabobank analyst Hayley Moynihan notes

the dollar's strength too, and the fact markets have stayed low longer than perhaps some were expecting. "Prices have stayed stubbornly below US\$3000/t and now the dollar is back above US80c."

However, Rabobank's view remains that dairy commodity markets will firm later this year, and into 2013, with the recent heatwave-induced spike in US corn prices reinforcing that outlook.

"We were talking first quarter 2013 for the recovery [in global prices] to get legs but we brought that forward to the fourth quarter of this year because of the US situation. How soon it starts now hinges on how the season starts here and in Australia. If we get off to a rocky start then the [price recovery] will be sooner. If we get off to a bolter, then it could be pushed out a bit."

Westland chief executive Rod Quin confirmed to *Dairy News* that currency was a key factor in its forecast revision.

"It's not so much the price - that's below where we expected it to settle but not dramatically - but the dollar. It was supposed to be in the high 60s or low 70s by now but it's actually 80c plus."

Crucially, forecasts for exchange rates have shifted too, he adds. "The forex message has gone from a forecast fall, back to being firm in the 80s and possibly going higher. That's the most significant driver," Quin says.



**Give your weed problems the Uppercut... (and the lower cut!)**

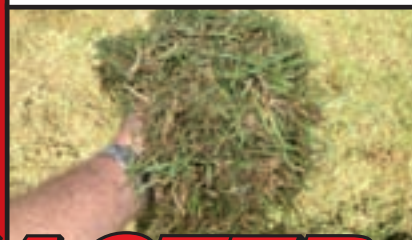
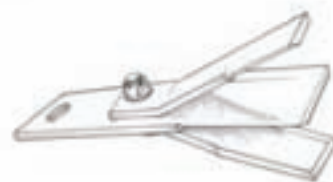
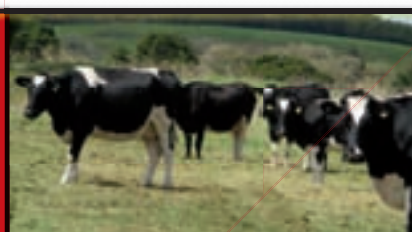


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## IN BRIEF

### Ex-All Black's river crusade

FORMER ALL Blacks captain Anton Oliver is throwing his weight behind a new environmental cause - protection of the country's outstanding wild and scenic rivers.

Although now living in London, Oliver says on recent visits to New Zealand he's been staggered by the rate of decline of many of our country's rivers and waterways.

"I'm like many Kiwis who love and have a great affinity for our rivers. I grew up swimming, playing and fishing in crystal clear water you'd drink without fear of sickness or pollution.

"Living in the UK I see the promotions aimed at luring tourists to New Zealand, the land of crystal-clear waterways.

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New Zealand's two main fertiliser co-ops have announced solid profits.



## Solid profits for co-ops

ANDREW SWALLOW

**NEW ZEALAND'S** two main fertiliser suppliers, farmer-owned cooperatives Ravensdown and Ballance AgriNutrients, have announced solid profits.

Ballance made an operating profit of \$77.3m on \$915m turnover in the year to May 31, while Ravensdown made \$51.8m from \$1.1 billion. For both turnover was up, but profit down compared to 2010/11 (see table).

Ballance supplied 1.44mt of fertiliser, a 3% increase, while Ravensdown, including its Australian operations, supplied 1.56mt, a 4.7% increase.

Ravensdown's Australian sales were up 16% but took a loss of \$1.8m. That follows losses of \$1.6m in 2010/11 and \$11.2m in 2009/10, but Ravensdown chairman Bill McLeod remains positive about the various trans-Tasman ventures.

"This is only our fourth year of Australian operations and to date these farmer-owned operations have been funded by Australian shareholders' equity. Because our business is about scale efficiencies and we're seeing more customer numbers and tonnages being

ordered, the prospect for profitable growth is strong."

McLeod told *Dairy News* Ravensdown's Australian shareholders collect a rebate and share bonus on a par with their New Zealand counterparts, except for some who qualify for a premium rebate having been among the vanguard to sign up to Ravensdown. However, such premium rebates are only paid when certain sales targets are met – which they weren't last year in Western Australia, he notes.

During the year \$40.5m was spent on logistics and infrastructure, mostly at Ravensdown's production plants: Awatoto near Napier, Hornby in Christchurch and Ravensbourne in Dunedin. New stores were opened at Balclutha, Otago, and Mata, Northland. McLeod says physical and chemical testing regimes have been tightened following some quality issues, notably in Australia and on cropping farms in New Zealand.

"We have been rationalising our suppliers and selecting those who can meet our detailed specifications.... We continue to negotiate with multiple suppliers to secure value for shareholders."

Ravensdown's profit figure includes a pending insurance payout of \$10.9m for earthquake damage at Hornby and \$3.6m already received from insurers for urgent earthquake-related repairs.

Ballance's results also include a substantial insurance provision: \$33m following the fire at its Kapuni urea plant last August.

Chairman David Graham says without the fire and an extended maintenance turnaround later in the year profit could have been \$20m higher.

Ballance spent \$62m over the year, including scheduled maintenance and improvements at Kapuni, new and upgraded service centres, and information technology designed to improve inter-

action with customers.

Chief executive Larry Bilodeau says it's "delivering on our strategy to expand our complete nutrient management business and have a growing portfolio of resources, products and people to support growth in our economically crucial agricultural sector."

That said, he told *Dairy News*'s sister paper *Rural News* there are no plans "whatsoever" to follow Ravensdown into animal health or agrichemical supply.

Ravensdown says it is now the third-largest drench provider in New Zealand and is working hard to keep prices competitive in that industry.

"Our animal health, agrichemical and nutrition business units stand on their own feet financially," says McLeod.

Meanwhile it's still "early days" for Ravensdown's September-announced alliance with Canterbury forage, brassica and cereal breeder and wholesaler Cropmark.

Co-ops compared: results to May 31, 2012\* (2010-11 result in brackets)

	Ravensdown	Ballance
Revenue	\$1.07bn (+15% from \$933m)	\$915m (+20% from \$760m)
Operating profit	\$51.8m (\$71.6m)	\$77.3m (\$85.9m)
Total distribution	\$53.5m (\$58m)	\$47m (\$49m)
Distribution/t	\$40.48/t	\$44.29/t
Rebate/shares split	\$15.10 rebate; \$25.38 in shares	\$40/t rebate + 10c/share dividend

\* Preliminary results. Final figures with annual reports due September.

## NEW BOSS FOR RAVENSDOWN

GREG CAMPBELL, currently chief executive of Ngai Tahu Holdings, will take on the same role at Ravensdown when incumbent Rodney Green retires in December.

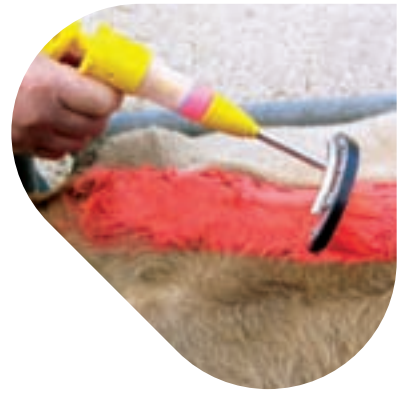
The cooperative's board says Campbell was selected because of his international experience and role in making Ngai Tahu a successful

and vibrant business.

"These achievements, plus many other positive attributes, make Greg the ideal person to continue with the exciting developments within Ravensdown that our current chief executive Rodney Green has instigated during the years in which he has lead us," says chairman Bill McLeod.



Greg Campbell



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# Keep your foot out of the firing line

**PETER BURKE**

**ANY FARMER** who pollutes a waterway is dragging down the whole dairy industry, says Associate Minister for Primary Industries Nathan Guy.

He told *Dairy News* farmers are now much more aware of their environmental footprint because it's directly related to the market. "So if a farmer pollutes [his] waterway he shoots the whole industry in the foot."

Guy says Fonterra and others in the dairy industry know this, hence the Clean Streams Accord.

"We're getting more teeth every year to ensure farmers are fencing their waterways and planting riparian zones. There's now quite a bit of carrot as well as stick, and I'd like to think there will in time be less stick."

"Certainly a few players in the industry need a stick to ensure they comply. For me as a politician and as an industry leader it's disappointing that we have a few



Nathan Guy

who tend to drag down the majority who are doing their utmost to ensure we're sustainable in all our environmental practices."

The spotlight is on the dairy industry, the public being far more aware of its contribution to the New Zealand economy, Guy says. Perception is a big thing and dairy farmers need to be aware of this. "For example, bobby calves by the side of the road is not a good look."

Guy was in China recently and

was amazed at what it offers New Zealand in trade. But New Zealand must also look to other markets such as India, Indonesia and Russia, now the subject of free trade-agreement negotiations.

Farmers must be in tune with the needs of consumers – something Guy is passionate about. "They're interested in the 'story' and we need to do more to promote [this]. The story is what we take for granted: blue sky, idyllic natural landscapes, animals farmed sustainably outdoors all year round in most cases. The market – the consumer – is excited to hear more about this."



Andrew Hoggard

## Vandalism hard to fathom

**WHILE PEOPLE** occasionally intentionally damage farms, by and large it's uncommon, says Federated Farmers Dairy vice chairman Andrew Hoggard. He was commenting on reports of calf killing and milk destruction by Ewen MacDonald, recently found not guilty of murdering Feilding farmer Scott Guy.

Hoggard, also Manawatu-Rangitikei provincial president, says in his experience farmers help each other out and don't indulge in the sort of crimes MacDonald has admitted.

Some farm equipment, such as motorbikes, chainsaws and tools, are attractive to thieves and he's had burglars on his property and has suffered minor vandalism.

"I had a series of letterbox thefts. On one occasion they threw it in the river but fortunately the river wasn't in flood and I found it. The next time the river was in flood so it was gone for good. They then set fire to the letterbox stand before the police caught up with them and gave them a good talking to. They were just kids."

Hoggard says last year when wool prices were high there were many thefts of wool bales from sheds right around the country. The other common problem is theft of stock, in some cases for personal home-kill.

But he was shocked to learn MacDonald, a farmer, could kill calves in the way he did. "We genuinely thought crimes like this were committed by some low-life toe-rag who'd never worked a decent day in their life."

"It's a real shock to discover MacDonald has admitted to acts of sabotage and cruelty. MacDonald also knows how hard it is to produce quality milk. Milk is the lifeblood of any dairy farm and I cannot understand why anyone would maliciously and callously empty a vat."

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  - These first lactation heifers had a 97% conception rate and out produced the remaining herd on average by 7% in volume, 6% in milk solids and 9% in protein.
- Results - Obtained from LIC records and contents verified with four herd tests.

### What this means:

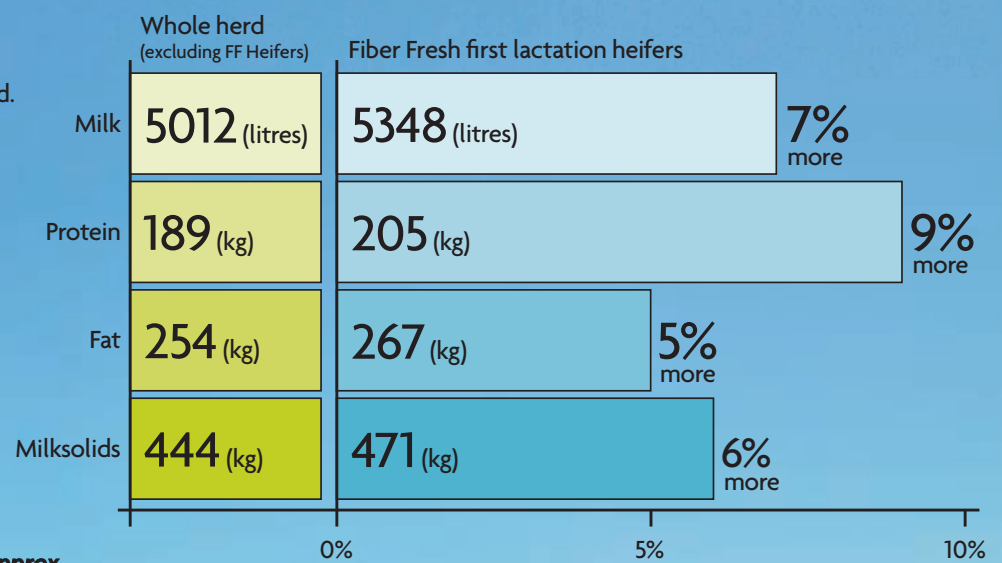
- It is well accepted that first lactation heifers normally produce 80-85% of their adult herd mates. (ref: Pickering J 2001).
- In this case these heifers produced 25% above what would normally be expected.
- In cash terms a 25% gain over the expected norm would mean 94kgs extra milk solids.

eg: 94kgs at 2011 / 2012 est pay out of \$6.55 kg/MS = \$615 per heifer approx

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### Increase in LIC herd lactation averages



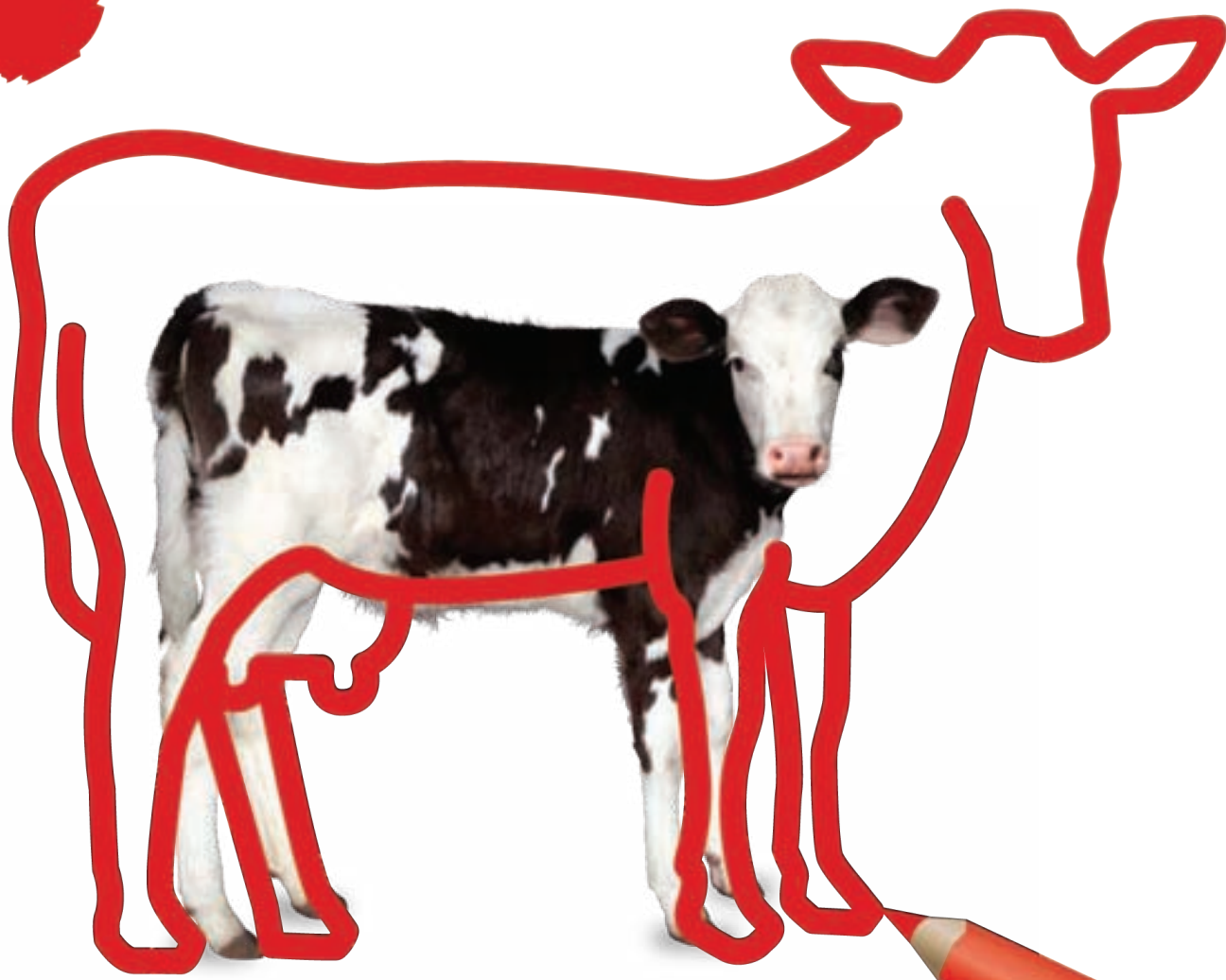
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1. Fitzgerald PR & Mansfield ME. American Journal of Veterinary  
Research 1972 Vol. 33 1391-1397.





# Polled HF bull joins team

**FOR THE** first time New Zealand dairy farmers have the option to breed a polled Holstein Friesian without overly compromising on breeding worth, says LIC.

The cooperative is offering farmers interested in breeding for the polled gene a high genetic merit New Zealand progeny tested Holstein Friesian polled sire: Costers Poll Axe.

LIC breeding manager Allan McPherson says Poll Axe's daughter proof is showing positive fertility, shorter gestation length, easier calving and good somatic cell score BVs (breeding values), along with the polled gene and a BW of 17. Farmer reaction to Poll Axe has been positive.

"Feedback from farmers I have spoken to is that Poll Axe is creating a lot of interest, as he adds varia-

tion to individual herd's breeding programmes, particularly for those farmers who want polled animals in the future. The combination of polled, fertility, easy calving and SCC mean Poll Axe daughters are an easy care, robust type of cow. Poll Axe is also fully registered with Holstein Friesian New Zealand."

McPherson says most of the New Zealand dairy herd is horned, but the polled gene is dominant over the horned gene.

"Poll Axe was bred by the Coster family of Kaimai, and inherited a polled gene from his dam. As he carries one copy of the polled gene, 50% of Poll Axe progeny from horned cows will be polled. But if mated to polled cows 75-100% of the progeny will be polled depending upon the cow's genotype."

Costers Poll Axe



McPherson says though Poll Axe was just below the selection threshold for the 2012 Premier Sires Daughter Proven Team, he was available through Alpha Nominated.

"Where Poll Axe is used to mate cows, either

horned or not, LIC would potentially be interested in screening resulting bull calves of significant BW, and high BW polled heifers could potentially become dams for future breeding."

LIC has been work-

ing on pursuing the polled gene for a decade and has had some partial success.

But this is its first Holstein Friesian polled bull to successfully graduate and represents an important milestone in developing polled animals, he says.

"Historically in New Zealand farmers interested in breeding polled Holstein Friesian cattle had to compromise with a lower BW.

"With Poll Axe these farmers can now have the best of both."

## IN BRIEF

### Merger chair

SOUTHLAND FARMER Jeff Grant has been appointed chairman of the board of a new entity that will embody the Animal Health Board (AHB) and Nait Ltd. Also appointed are Keith Sutton, Ted Coats, Lesley Campbell and Michael Spaans. Andrew Coleman, MPI, is the government appointee.

The new entity starts work July 1, 2013 at the latest.

"The board will be involved with the development of the new entity's structure and constitution and its transition to a single organisation responsible for TBfree New Zealand and NAIT," Grant says.

"Farmers and stakeholders can be reassured that for the bovine TB control and NAIT schemes, it's very much business as usual."



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New Zealand farmers have been urged to have good input buying strategies.

# Good farm inputs strategy essential

**A MORE** complex global farm input market is making it imperative for New Zealand farmers to have good buying strategies, a Rabobank report says.

Focusing on ways to

conserve soil nutrients and input use will also be a key to success, says the report 'Efficiency with farm inputs - a recipe for productivity'.

Rabobank says more efficient use of fertilis-

ers, chemicals and fuel will be essential in ensuring profitability, driving productivity growth and improving environmental sustainability of farm businesses.

The report's author, Rabobank senior analyst Michael Harvey, says all farmers in New Zealand are exposed to the dynamics of procuring farm inputs, the essential components of modern production systems.

"In more recent times these markets have been evolving and becoming more sophisticated, which is altering the business landscape for farmers as end users," he says.

Harvey says improved soil nutrient management will be critical to meeting the challenge of feeding the growing global population. "To meet the challenge of feeding nine billion people by 2050, agricultural production volumes need to increase by more than 70%. New Zealand will play a large role as a global food producer; however the extent of this role will be determined by the innovation and productivity improvements farmers are able to make."

New Zealand relies heavily on global markets for its inputs, making them price takers and cre-

ating challenges because of 'seasonality' and the long lead times for sourcing products, the report says. This import reliance requires farmers to understand what drives the prices they get for commodities, and the forces at play in the global input market; inputs can account for as much as 40% of on-farm working expenses.

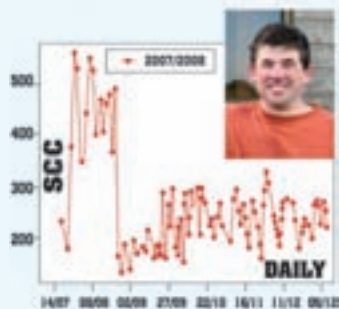
Global input prices are expected to remain above long-term averages, underpinned by the elevated base cost of raw materials. Similarly, oil prices are forecast to remain structurally higher into the medium term, as global demand remains high, the Rabobank report says.

"With farm input prices set to remain structurally higher, farmers need to focus on ways to manage the efficient use of fertiliser, chemicals and fuel on-farm.

"Having nutrient budgets and nutrient management plans in place, and precision agriculture technologies to pinpoint application, are some of the strategies many farmers are adopting to manage their fertiliser use."

Farmers' input use is also increasingly driven by environmental factors.

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Best wishes and thanks again!  
Hamish & Maree Tong  
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Steven Robb, Dairy Farmer,  
Morrinsville, NZ



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Andrew Ferrier will take over as New Zealand Trade and Enterprise chair in November.

## FTA prospects bright but time-consuming

SUDESH KISSUN

**PROSPECTS FOR** new free trade deals are looking good but finalising them will not be easy, says New Zealand Trade and Enterprise chairman-elect Andrew Ferrier.

He says a broader Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) and an FTA with India will boost our trade. But such agreements take time to ensure New Zealand's interests are fully considered.

The former Fonterra chief executive was last month appointed by the Government to head NZTE for three years from November 2.

New Zealand is viewed internationally as "a true free trade nation, and as such is often an attractive partner in free trade agreements," Ferrier told *Dairy News*.

"We have already done very well, with such agreements as the New Zealand/China FTA, and the existing Trans Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership (P4) trade agreement that is the pre-cursor to the larger TPP, and, of course, our relationship with Australia.

"Our prospects for new agreements look good, but nothing is easy and these agreements take time to ensure New Zealand's interests are fully considered."

New Zealand is presently negotiating free trade deals with the US, as part of the TPP, and with Russia and India. Ferrier says we have opportunities through further FTAs to increase our access to a number of key markets.

The Government hopes Ferrier's experience in international business will boost NZTE's work. Economic

Development Minister Steven Joyce says Ferrier also brings strong governance and strategic capability to the NZTE board.

Ferrier says he was honoured to be asked to take on this role. "It is an important role in helping improve the economic wellbeing of New Zealand, and I am pleased to have an opportunity to contribute."

Ferrier last September stepped down as Fonterra chief executive. A New Zealand citizen since 2008, he is a director of Orion Health Ltd and CANZ Capital Ltd. He was appointed to the University of Auckland council in March 2012.

Prior to joining Fonterra he was president and chief executive of GSW Inc, a listed Canadian company. Ferrier spent 16 years in the sugar industry working in Canada, the US, UK and Mexico.

## Dairy snag in trade talks

**DAIRY REMAINS** a sticking point in a potential free trade deal between New Zealand and India.

But Trade Minister Tim Groser says farmers in India, the world's largest producer of milk, should not be concerned that allowing New Zealand dairy products into the country will affect their livelihoods.

Speaking last month at ANZ India Viewpoint Launch and Business Forum in Auckland, Groser expressed frustration at the time being taken to finalise the deal. The last round of negotiations in June in New Delhi saw useful progress but New Zealand is still waiting to complete the exchange of revised goods offers with India initially scheduled for March, and necessary to enable progress.

Indian dairy farmers are wary of allowing New Zealand milk into the country. But Groser points out New Zealand produces the same amount of milk as the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. New Zealand milk will be used to develop sophisticated food ingredients rather than compete directly with farmers in Uttar Pradesh, he says. "So our milk will not be competing with milk supplied by Indian farmers."

Groser later told *Dairy News* the dairy industries in the two countries are like "talking chalk and cheese".

"We are interested in the high end, developing sophisticated food for upper and middle class income

earners."

He also says an FTA will allow Fonterra to invest in dairy farm technology in India as it does in China. Fonterra plans to have at least 30 dairy farms in China within five years.



Tim Groser

"A free trade deal will allow Fonterra to give long term commitment in India," says Groser.

ANZ India chief executive Subash DeGama says India's economy is slowing with annual growth of 5-6% expected this year. But it remains one of the fastest growing economies.

Food security remains a major issue, DeGama says. There is a massive food deficit due to low yield and poor infrastructure.

### IN BRIEF

#### Synlait bags award

SYNLAIT MILK has scooped the agribusiness award in the Sensational Selwyn Awards, which recognise business excellence in the Selwyn District, Canterbury. Since operations began in 2008,

Synlait has grown to become one of Selwyn's largest companies, processing 500 million litres of milk a year from about 150 Canterbury farms, and employing 128 staff. Synlait exports to 40 countries.

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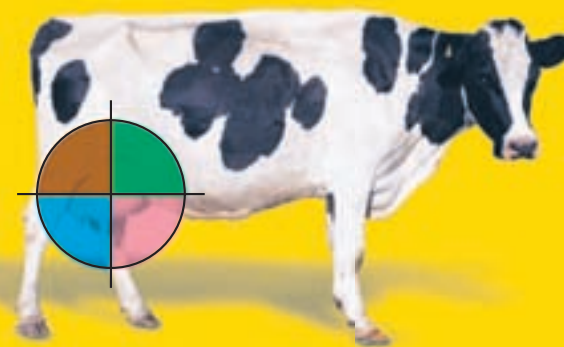
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# US farmers face 'looming crisis'



Jerry Kozak

**US DAIRY** farmers warn they are approaching a crisis which could be worse than the 2009 downturn that left a \$US20 billion loss in equity.

The National Milk Producers Federation (NMPF) is asking politicians to use the August

congressional recess to meet with struggling dairy farmers in their districts.

US farmers are facing high input costs. Feed prices are rising as a drought bites the farming belt. NMPF president Jerry Kozak says there is an urgent need for Congress to pass a new farm

bill in 2012.

"NMPF believes this type of one-on-one dialogue will enable members in both the House and the Senate to see firsthand the need for passing a five-year farm bill, including the vital reforms to the nation's dairy policy in the form of the Dairy Security

Act (DSA)."

He hopes Members of Congress will take time to visit local dairy farms to see close-up the challenges dairy farmers are facing and understand why it is imperative to pass a five-year farm bill including a better safety net for farmers.

"We are approaching a crisis comparable to or worse than that of 2009, when dairy farmers lost \$US20 billion in equity and thousands of farmers went out of business. When you factor in additional operating costs, such as labor and energy costs, on top of the sky-high price of feed caused by the drought, dairy farmers are selling their milk for far less than the cost of production," says Kozak.

the hope Congress can be spurred to action next month.

About 51% of all counties in the US have been designated disaster areas by the US Department of Agriculture in 2012, mainly due to drought.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced on August 1 two new pieces of disaster assistance for farmers and ranchers impacted by the drought: first, expanded

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**About 51% of all counties in the US have been designated disaster areas by the US Department of Agriculture in 2012, mainly due to drought.**

The Dairy Security Act would give producers and their bankers the assurances they need to continue their operations through these tough times, he says.

Kozak says farmers themselves should take this message to their elected officials during the next two weeks, with

emergency haying and grazing on 1.52 million ha of conservation land; second, agreement by crop insurance companies to a short grace period on insurance premiums in 2012. This gives farmers 30 extra days to pay without incurring interest penalties on unpaid premiums.

## Dutch co-op eyes pasture-fed milk

**DUTCH CO-OP** Royal FrieslandCampina is moving to secure sustainability in its global operations.

Its plans for 2020 include a 30% reduction in greenhouse gasses, cutting the use of antibiotics to the 1999 level, 100% sustainable use of soy in cattle feed from 2014 and maintaining the current level of outdoor grazing.

The co-op stimulates outdoor grazing by allocating \$68 million annually for this purpose. Dairy farmers whose cattle graze for a minimum of six hours a day, 120 days a year, receive 76c/100kg of milk. This year Campina milk from pasture-fed cows was available in shops, so was cheese made from pasture-fed milk.

The co-op last year bought raw materials such as soy meal for cattle feed, palm oil, cocoa and FSC-certified packaging materials.

FrieslandCampina Piet Boer says "We held discussions on these topics in the past year and took important decisions intended to contribute to sustainable dairy farming."

Co-op chief executive Cees 't Hart believes there will be an increased need for nutritionally rich food.

"Milk and dairy can play an important role here provided, of course, that we focus our efforts on further reducing the environmental consequences of our chain. These include greenhouse gasses, water and energy consumption and the deterioration of biodiversity."



Cees't Hart

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Murray Goulburn is undertaking a major upgrade of plants.

## Oz co-op's \$260m upgrade

**AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST** dairy processor will spend \$260 million over the next three years in leading-edge facilities for UHT milk, butter/spreads and cheese manufacturing.

The co-op wants to double its UHT milk capacity to 500m litres per year to supply growing markets in Asia and the Middle East. UHT milk demand is also growing in Australia.

MG is the market leader in UHT milk in Australia produced from sites at Leongatha, Victoria and Edith Creek, Tasmania.

Murray Goulburn managing director Gary Helou says the upgraded facilities will better equip MG to compete internationally and deliver the best possible returns to suppliers.

"In my previous presentations and discussions with shareholders I flagged the need for a clear focus on achieving operational excellence and innovation, whilst creating a balanced portfolio of ingredients and consumer dairy foods," says Helou.

"During the past ten months we have made good progress towards lowering our cost base and identifying interna-

tional growth opportunities. We are now entering the next phase of Murray Goulburn's development that requires significant investment in leading-edge manufacturing facilities that generate higher value products and enable greater innovation as well as cost leadership.

"The emphasis will be on the dual objectives of global cost leadership and consumer-based dairy food innovation. This is a significant initiative to rejuvenate and grow MG's presence in consumer markets, in Australia as well as strategic international markets."

The co-op's proposed UHT facilities will feature one step milk processing, the highest degree of automation, high speed lines and variety of pack formats. These facilities will allow MG to achieve cost leadership, improve product taste, launch innovative products and enter adjacent categories, it says.

MG is Australia's largest bulk butter producer and Devondale is the brand leader in butter blends.

Helou says it has been approached by several Australian and overseas

customers who want additional consumer butter and blends supply.

"To meet this demand, we need to significantly increase our consumer butter capacity to 20,000 tons per annum and rejuvenate our butter blends plant," he says.

A new butter packing line will be installed at its Koroit plant that will allow MG to become a leading supplier of butter pats to fill existing and projected demand.

"We will further review our total butter and blends facilities to enable production of innovative new butter blend products and to create consumer products directly from cream or use excess bulk butter produced in peak milk supply periods.

"Our goal is to produce the lowest cost consumer

butter and blends in Australia and tap into the strongly growing retail and food service markets in Asia and the Middle East."

In cheese, MG will establish a state-of-the-art, highly automated cheese cut and wrap facility to produce more than 60,000 tons per annum of cheese blocks, shred and slices at the lowest cost.

The co-op will evaluate a variety of pack formats and processing technologies for this facility to launch a new range of consumer cheese products that meets the stringent demands of time poor consumers, he says.

"These investments will complement and strengthen our ongoing commitment to MG's high quality dairy ingredients business portfolio," says Helou.

### ABOUT MG

Murray Goulburn Australia's largest dairy food company and marketer receiving and manufacturing approximately three billion litres per annum or one third of Australia's milk. MG was formed in 1950 and remains 100% dairy farmer owned. MG is Australia's largest dairy food exporter.

Its flagship Devondale brand is sold nationally.

### IN BRIEF

#### Selenium milkshakes tops for froth

UK DAIRY company Shaken Udder has launched two milkshakes made from milk enriched in selenium via supplements fed to supplying cows. The Britishberries and Strawberry Stash shakes are enriched with organic selenium from Sel-Plex, an Alltech product.

The milk comes from herds participating in a 'healthy herd programme' set up by Naturally Enriched Milk innovations (NEMi), a group including Andrew Henderson, dairy nutritionist, and Steve Leonard, veterinary surgeon and wildlife presenter.

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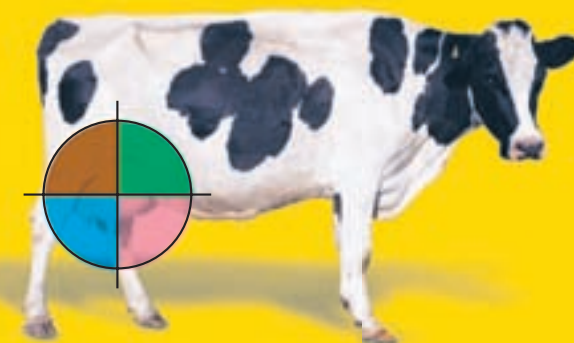
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# Milk price cuts deferred as protest grows

**UK MILK** processors have bowed to farmer pressure and postponed cuts to the farmgate milk price.

Farmers were due to face a price cut between 2.5 and 3.5c/L from August 1. However, farmer groups

mobilised members and staged protests throughout the country.

The UK's largest dairy co-op, First Milk was the first to announce it was backing down.

Chief executive Kate Allum says it has a respon-

sibility to farmers to show leadership in this situation and remove any uncertainty.

"On that basis, we have decided to immediately withdraw the planned August price cuts [resulting from] moves by our liquid customers. This has been a turbulent time for the whole industry, but unless we immediately grasp the nettle, the progress we are seeing right now will be short-lived.

"Dairy farmers have spoken with one voice over the last few weeks, and they've made it clear they reject the existing model where they are

price takers and favour working together to gain an equal seat at the negotiating table. It is therefore critical the whole dairy supply chain now looks to develop better structures and relationships for the short, medium and long term."

Arla Foods, Robert Wiseman Dairies and Dairy Crest also dropped plans to cut the farmgate price.

While welcoming the processors' decisions, farmers have vowed to keep pressing retailers and processors for a fair price. Food sector unions have joined farmers in launching the 'SOS Dairy Campaign'.

NFU president Peter Kendall acknowledges great successes so far, but says the battle is far from over.

Farming leaders also want some guarantees from retailers that payments for milk are not being balanced against payments for other dairy products such as cheese, Kendall says.



UK farmers have vowed to keep pressure on retailers and processors for fair milk prices.

"This is a unique coalition and our success to date in reversing those planned price cuts for August 1 is a sign of strength and solidarity. However, there is a long way to go and we need to build on the successes of the past few weeks. We will be working hard to complete the contractual code of best practice and then we need to ensure those key elements are

adopted. "Rest assured we will continue to name and shame retailers and other buyers of milk who do not pay their dairy farmers a price for milk that meets the cost of production." The UK National Federation of Women's Institutes, backing farmer campaign, says its members will also pressure retailers. NFUI chair Ruth Bond says it wants a fair

milk price for British dairy farmers. "We challenge milk processors to visibly demonstrate how money is passing down the chain so that dairy farmers benefit from the recent price commitments of some retailers. "We will be mobilising our membership to put pressure on retailers and processors to ensure a fair price is paid."

## NEXT STEPS

Putting the meat on the bones of terms agreed on the contractual code of best practice between farmers and processors.

Ensuring pressure mounts on retailers and processors still not paying farmers a price that reflects the costs of milk production.

Checking that monies promised by the supply chain are making their way back to farmers.

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## Demand for lactose-free dairy

**WITH ESTIMATES** that 70-75% of the world's population may be lactose-intolerant, and with total milk, yogurt and cheese consumption at least 200 million tonnes in 2011, lactose-free dairy products represent a huge opportunity for dairy manufacturers.

In a comprehensive study of the lactose-free dairy market in 33 countries, food and drink consultancy Zenith International found the

most developed markets include the US, Scandinavia, Germany and Spain. Families are an important target market for lactose-free products, especially parents who, though themselves lactose-intolerant, want their children to consume dairy nutrients.

Plant and nut-based dairy alternatives such as soy beverages are a competitive threat, but do not always provide the nutrients found in dairy.

Encouraging dairy consumption is particularly important in addressing deficiencies in calcium and vitamin D, the Zenith study says.

Although lactose-free dairy products are currently a niche segment, it is clear that they have considerable long term potential, especially in markets with a prevalence of lactose intolerance and where dairy consumption is rising, such as Asia and Latin America. Manufacturers are in a strong position to drive milk and dairy consumption through lactose-free offerings, provided they meet the challenge of affordability.

"Another vital challenge for manufacturers

looking to enter underdeveloped markets is education," says Zenith senior analyst Laura Knight.

"Consumers need to be educated about what lactose intolerance is, how lactose-free dairy products can help them manage their condition and to overcome the misconception that lactose-free milk is not real milk.

"Education of health professionals is also important, so they are encouraged to advise those who are lactose intolerant to avoid cutting dairy products from their diets and use lactose-free products as a way of continuing to consume dairy without discomfort," Knight says.

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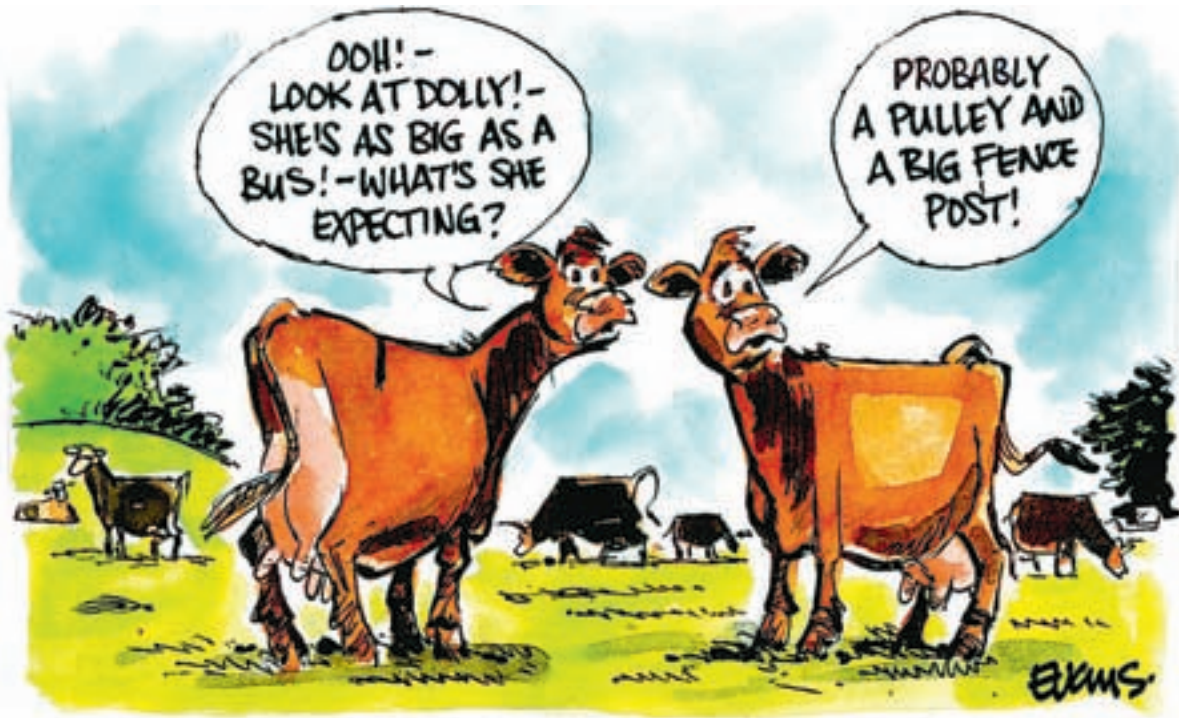
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**RUMINATING**



**MILKING IT...**

**Shanghai 1, Fay 0**

SO THE Court of Appeal has ruled in favour of Shanghai Pengxin and, with Landcorp, the Chinese company "looks forward to beginning a programme of improvements on the Crafar farms as soon as it is able to settle on the properties".

Surely the only honourable thing left for the Fay-iwi bid to do now is lie down and let it die, just as Fay did the first time he lost the America's Cup. Oh, wait.



**Work to do**

SHANGHAI PENGXIN is now free to buy the Crafar farms in the name of its subsidiary Milk New Zealand Holding Ltd. It will be run by Milk New Zealand Farm Management Ltd, a joint venture with Landcorp Farming Ltd.

"Our immediate priority is to begin the process of improving the farms, increasing production and making sure we comply with all the conditions imposed by the Overseas Investment Office," says Shanghai-Pengxin.

If reports of the decline of the farms while the receivers were in control are half true, they'll have their work cut out.

**Uneasy alliance**

THE RESIGNATION of Colin Armer from the Fonterra board will make life complicated in some circles of the dairy industry.

Take, for example, Liberty Genetics, a Hamilton-based company. It lists among its shareholders Colin Armer and John Wilson, appointed chairman of Fonterra ahead of Armer.

The next Liberty Genetics shareholders meeting should be interesting.



Colin Armer

**Happy cows, happy farmers**

MALAYSIAN FARMERS are finding out that happy cows produce more milk.

Milk quality has improved while production has increased 100% over the last four years as local farmers are trained how to better handle cows.

A pair of droopy ears may indicate that the cow is sick. An uplifted tail may be a sign that she is suffering from pain in the birth canal. And if the cow develops shoulder bumps, then it is time the farmer checks the feed fence or feed distance in his farm.

By looking at different 'cow signals', farmers get to know their cows better and recognise when the animals are at risk. Studying cow signals was a highlight of a nationwide Dairy Development Programme, initiated recently by Dutch Lady Milk Industries Berhad (DLM) in collaboration with the Department of Veterinary Services (DVS) in Malacca.

**DAIRY NEWS**

**EDITORIAL**

**DairyNZ scores with BCS**

A BOUQUET this week for DairyNZ. It is in every sense an industry 'good' organisation. Its substantial efforts in the past year to get farmers to take a more strategic approach to the management of their cows seem to be paying off.

DairyNZ's pilot scheme in Manawatu/Horowhenua and South Waikato has seen at least 300 dairy farmers volunteer to try getting their cows up to BCS 5.0 and their heifers to BCS 5.5. This is not a new concept; what's new is DairyNZ's effort to get this message out to the dairy farming community.

Many farmers *Dairy News* spoke to have openly embraced the scheme, seeing the logic of the information put out by DairyNZ via its consulting officers, key farm advisors and vets.

It's often hard when times are tough to look too far forward, but farmers are smart and the value proposition sold to them is appealing.

Earlier mating, better production next season, earlier calving, better cows and calves – these are future dollars that can be banked immediately.

Also good is that DairyNZ has sought to define exactly what a BCS 5.0 cow looks like.

It has tried to take the subjectivity – the guesswork – out of this and that's a selling point for farmers.

There's nothing worse than getting inconsistent advice.

New Zealand is fortunate to have such an organisation as DairyNZ connected with farmers and responding quickly and professionally to farmers' needs.

The discussion groups, field days and one-on-one meetings are incrementally improving the state of our dairy industry.

The body condition score pilot scheme is just one of many good initiatives DairyNZ has on its books.

Its scientists, consultants and policy makers all make a difference to an industry making a massive difference to the life of every New Zealander.

It's now up to dairy farmers to take advantage of the offerings. – *Peter Burke*

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# Export growth hinges on tough decisions

JOHN DROPPERT

**INTERNATIONAL DAIRY** markets have in recent months been characterised by dramatic growth in milk output, resulting in a big drop commodity prices.

This has directly affected farmgate pricing in Australia's dairy exporting regions, where opening milk prices are 8-10% lower than those announced at the start of 2011-12.

For an insight into the causes of such dramatic worldwide supply growth last season and an indication of what might come next, we need look no further than across the Tasman, to New Zealand.

In the international trade in dairy commodities New Zealand is a key player. At least 20% of the world's traded dairy commodities originate from our Kiwi neighbour. While New Zealand is a relatively small dairy producer com-

**“When it comes to the international trade in dairy commodities, New Zealand is a key player.”**

pared to India, Europe and the US, its limited domestic market encourages the exporting of about 95% of what it produces. And because international trade represents such a small proportion of the volume of dairy products produced worldwide each year, 95% of 18 billion litres gives New Zealand a lot of clout in the global dairy market.

Near-perfect seasonal conditions during the 2011-12 production year allowed New Zealand farmers to maximise pasture production. As New Zealand dairy production systems are almost wholly pasture-based, this has been the magic ingredient for a big year, production growing by at least 10% in the year to May 31. This equates to an extra 1.8 billion litres that, given a flat domestic market, was virtually all destined for world markets.

Trade figures show this unfolding: NZ exports of WMP grew by 3% in the

year to May, while SMP grew 5% and cheese by 9%. China is the biggest destination, as New Zealand enjoys preferential access due to the China-NZ Free Trade Agreement. Other major destinations included the Philippines, US, Australia and Venezuela.



John Droppert

Global dairy markets are currently in a transition phase as the northern hemisphere season winds down and the southern hemisphere ramps up. Despite the drought in the US, and the economic challenges in Europe, many traders are awaiting indications of how the New Zealand season will shape up before committing to forward sales or purchases.

Few analysts expect New Zealand to experience growth of the same magnitude again in 2012-13. Having had good seasons two years in a row, the likelihood of near-perfect third seems low. Early indications suggest the North Island is experiencing wet, cold conditions that may lead to pasture damage, but any effect on production remains to be seen.

Farmers themselves are increasingly cautious: a recent Federated Farmers survey found 39% expect economic conditions to worsen in the next 12 months, while 40% expect their own farm's profitability to suffer. As in Australia, falling dairy commodity prices have resulted in a reduced farmgate price outlook for the season ahead.

Thus, the incentive for New Zealand farmers to retain livestock in the face of still-lucrative export opportunities and to invest further on farm to support continued growth

is reduced.

While events such as the drought in the US, and the euro zone debt crisis, are under careful watch, the scale and timing of a dairy commodity price recovery is likely to hinge

on the production decisions these New Zealand farmers make, and the weather conditions under which they make them.

• John Droppert is an industry analyst with Dairy Australia.



New Zealand has significant clout in the global dairy market.

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# Allow for certainty of feed on your new farm

JOHN SHEDDAN

**FARMING HAS**

changed, it's no longer a lifestyle decision, if it ever was; farming is a commercial business. This reality has been recognised by dairy farmers for some time. Land and feed can be seen as inputs, to be used and harnessed, to generate a profitable output.

Farms however, particularly dairy farms, differ from other businesses in that their production cycle is seasonal. Dairy farm sales, share milking and employment contracts revolve around June 1 – the start of winter; sheep and beef farms revolve around April 1, the start

of the financial year and, more practically, late summer.

Unlike a sheep and beef farmer, when you walk onto your new dairy farm on June 1, you know the grass won't grow before spring. It's therefore crucial your winter feed needs are already in place. If not, quantity and quality of supplementary feed may be variable and, depending on the season, may be in short supply. While feed can always be purchased, it may come at a premium cost which gnaws away at the bottom line.

**Have a measurable quantity of grass**

To have certainty of feed when buying your dairy farm, a standard

clause is usually included in the agreement for sale and purchase. This clause provides that a measurable quantity of grass will be left on the farm for your arriving stock. It's important you first consider what quantity of grass you will need for your on-going farming operation, be it the maintenance of your stock until spring or to ensure there's sufficient feed for winter milk supply. Grass is measured in kilograms of dry matter (kgDM) using a rising plate meter, a device that looks like an oven tray mounted to a polo stick. Invariably, it's wielded by an independent farm consultant. These measurements provide an average

quantity of feed over the effective pasture area of the farm. These calculations factor in the effect of the farm's feed wedge (read *Fineprint* Autumn 2012 for more on this), the diagrammatic concept of the pasture length over the entire farm on a field-by-field basis that results from rotational grazing. **Feed not available?**

Difficulties arise, however, when the feed isn't available, either through grazing practices or the season. Unlike other businesses where you only pay for what stock is present on settlement, as determined by a stocktake on the last day, the seller must leave a certain quantity of grass while, at the

same time, continuing to feed their own stock until they are removed from the farm.

If there's a shortage in feed, depending on the agreement's wording, the seller must compensate you for the feed shortage. It's usual for the seller then to provide a similar quantity of feed, measured in DMkg, of silage or grain, or its cash equivalent as the shortfall.

Unfortunately the amount of feed to be left is agreed upon months – if not seasons – before settlement day. Seasonal fluctuations such as a poor summer followed by a wet autumn may result in a shortage of pasture, and supplement feed may only

be available at a premium cost. A possible outcome may be for the seller to use the pasture for his own stock and willingly pay you a compensation price for a feed shortfall if the previously agreed price for supplement feed is less than the then market rate for such feed. This makes perfect commercial sense. **Get a commercial outcome**

While dairy properties tend to change hands more frequently than sheep-and-beef farms, most farmers would admit buying and selling properties is not something they do frequently.

To get the deal that works best for you, talk with us before you sign



John Sheddán

the agreement. This will ensure that together we determine what is important to your particular circumstances, how the stock will be dealt with and the best manner in which to approach the transaction. It's exactly the approach any commercially focused business person would do in the circumstances.

• John Sheddán is partner in Gore law firm, *Bannermans*. This article was first published in the Winter 2012 edition of *Fineprint*, client newsletter of NZ LAW Limited member firms. *Bannermans* is a member of NZ LAW.

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# Genomic testing service for Holstein Friesians

**A NEW** genomic testing service for young Holstein Friesian calves and yearling heifers has been launched.

HFBoost, a joint venture of Holstein Friesian New Zealand and CRV Ambreed, is available to members of Holstein Friesian New Zealand who can have heifer calves and yearling heifers up to age 24 months tested and genomic information supplied.

“The genomic information available to members who use this service will give them an additional tool to use in their breeding programmes,” Holstein Friesian New Zealand general manager Cherilyn Watson said last month at the launch.

Breeders will get



**Cherilyn Watson, HFNZ and Angus Haslett, CRV**

genomic breeding values (predictions) for each animal tested to use. They could use the information to select a mating sire to meet on-farm requirements or to identify potential brood dams for flushing.

“This service provides the owners of registered Holstein Friesian females an opportunity to find out more about the hand they have been dealt, with genomic information on their animals,” says Watson.

CRV Ambreed managing director Angus Haslett underscored Holstein Friesian New Zealand’s commitment to genomics. “Globally CRV now has a considerable investment in genomics; an indication is the investment in New Zealand alone which will top several million dollars.

“Globally CRV has worked hard to create value from genomics and genomic services, and to ensure its use... is well supported by facts and

research. This means when it is applied, as is the case with products like HFBoost and HF TurboBoost, it will provide real benefit to the farmers who choose to use it.”

HFBoost, a service in its own right, can also be extended for females getting exceptional genomic information. Females that come back with the top genomic proofs may become potential dams for bulls to enter Genetic Leaders, a young sire proving joint venture between CRV Ambreed and Holstein Friesian New Zealand.

This part of the programme, called HFTurboBoost, enters the female into a contract mating, where the bull calf born will have the opportunity

to enter Genetic Leaders. Any female progeny born may be genomically tested at no cost to the breeder as a potential bull dam.

HFBoost and HFTurboBoost will extend Genetic Leaders with the opportunity to provide more young bulls to the programme. “Young bulls that have entered Genetic Leaders have been genomically tested over the last three years,” Watson said, “Now we can gather more information about the dam as well as the bull with HFBoost.”

Genetic Leaders has already seen some bulls graduating being marketed by CRV Ambreed – notably Top Deck KO Pierre, recently retired from the CRV Ambreed line-up of active sires.

## Evolving technology

**WILL THE** sun soon set on heat-detecting tail paint? Certainly the technology for heat detection is evolving, says CRV Ambreed.

The company says tail paint has been the preferred heat detection tool for decades, helping improve industry standards in reproduction management. But the technology underlying heat detection has evolved.

Estrotect heat detecting patches, which CRV Ambreed recommends, are now proving more accurate than tail paint, the company says. In a recent heat detection trial Estrotect heat detectors were 20.96% more accurate as a clear indicator of standing heats compared to tail paint.

The trial, on two seasonal-calving Waikato dairy herds, had cows put up for AI based on first observed oestrus after PSM using a pedometer system and then scored for the degree of removal rub of Estrotect heat detectors and tail paint.

Says CRV Ambreed, on the first farm Estrotect heat detectors confirmed 84.6% were in oestrus compared to 63.64% with tail paint; on the second farm Estrotect heat detectors confirmed 91.8% to be in oestrus compared to 83.3% with tail paint.

Both farm observations by the inseminators and scorers supported these results and it was noted that Estrotect markers were sticky, easy to interpret and indicated clearly if a cow was in standing heat.

Doug Storey, one of the trial farmers, says Estrotect heat detectors were more effective when picking silent heats that tend to be missed with tail paint.

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# Tanker fleet upgrade

**FONTERRA WILL** this season despatch 90 new milk tankers, the product of a \$45 million fleet upgrade – the co-op's largest.

The Morrinsville fleet service centre has almost finished the new tankers, averaging one per day, says Fonterra director New Zealand operations Brent Taylor.

"This year we have been replacing 67 of our existing fleet and adding

23 new Volvos. Once complete we will have [at least] 500 tankers on the road, the largest fleet in New Zealand."

Fonterra regularly updates its tankers to keep the fleet in optimum condition. Each tanker is stripped of old equipment and where possible refurbished components are fitted to new cabs and chassis. Any components not meeting a certain standard are replaced by new.

In April 2009, the cooperative began introducing Volvo tankers due to their lower total cost of ownership and because they are more efficient and have lower running costs.

Taylor says the Volvo trucks have sophisticated emission control systems and put out 35% fewer emissions than the older fleet.

"Fonterra regularly reviews its equipment to make sure our milk collec-

tion operations are more efficient both environmentally and economically.

"All our tankers are fitted with TAMS (tanker activity management systems), an in-cab vehicle management system which track every tanker's daily movements. A range of data is captured including the amount of time each tanker spends idling, levels of fuel burn, braking, acceleration and cor-

nering trends. Since TAMS was implemented in 2009 we've been able to further increase fuel efficiency and decrease repairs as poor driver habits have been identified and addressed.

"The Volvo tankers have state of the art braking technology, which when coupled with our trailers with electronic stability control, make them as safe as possible on the road."



Craig Sutherland from the Fonterra Morrinsville Fleet Service Centre putting new mudguards on the new tankers.

## Nutrient software in slicker version

**A MAJOR** upgrade of Overseer Nutrient Budgets software was released at the beginning of August.

Overseer is available free of charge through a partnership between the Ministry for Primary Industries, the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand and AgResearch.

The upgrade to Overseer Version 6 reflects user feedback on previ-

ous versions says Mark Shepherd of AgResearch, the Overseer technical team leader.

"Nutrients are a valuable input, and Overseer is a tool that advisors can use to help farmers and growers get the best use from them. We are continually striving to make it as useful and relevant as possible. This is a major upgrade."

The owners have worked closely with fertiliser companies as key users, and also with stakeholder groups including local and central government.

The new version of Overseer includes many changes to better represent farm systems, adjustments following a review of underpinning science, and new software.

In addition, it includes two new features: the ability to produce a life-cycle assessment of greenhouse gas emissions and a new dairy goat model.

Philip Mladenov, Fertiliser Association, says the fertiliser industry is pleased to be a partner in the Overseer development programme.

"Overseer Version 6 represents a major advance over the previous ver-

sion and will help our nutrient management advisors provide the best advice possible to farmers and growers on using nutrients sustainably."

Paul Stocks, MPI, says Overseer has proved to be a valuable tool for land managers. "We expect this upgrade will drive further use."

Overseer Version 6 has been in development over four years.

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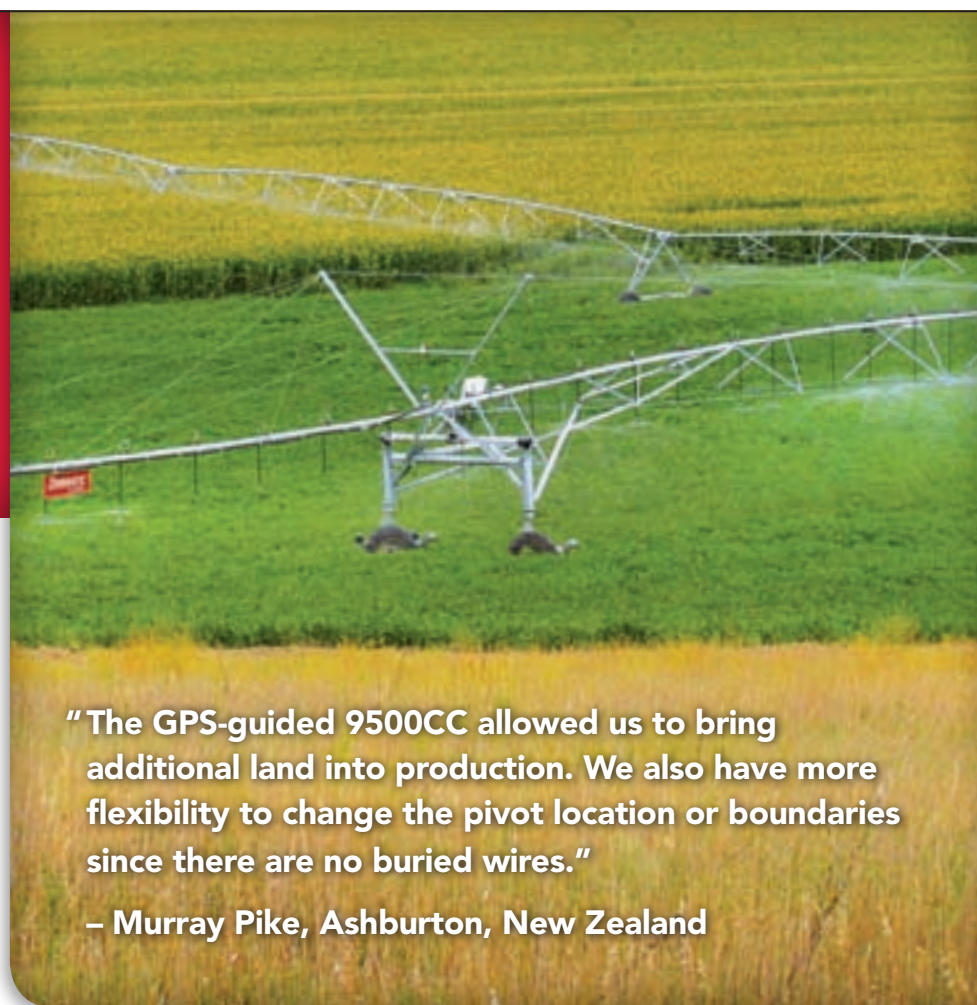
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# Profit rise reflects LIC's 'elite' assets

**LIC NET** profit was \$24.4 million, up \$6.8m from last year, reflecting the increase in fair value for the year of the elite biological assets.

Excluding the fair value profit and related tax effect, underlying net earnings decreased from \$17.65m to \$14.99m which flow through to a net dividend to farmer shareholders of \$11.99m.

All profit is returned to LIC's 10,500 New Zealand dairy farmer owners/shareholders in products, research and development or dividends.

Revenue growth of 10% was offset by a \$4.7m credit issued to co-op members who were early adopters of genomic technology introduced in

2008. LIC says it is now demonstrating the gains in genetic merit the fledgling technology promised, but did not deliver when first introduced.

Revenue for 2011-12 was \$177m, 7% ahead of the \$166m achieved during 2010-11.

LIC chairman, Murray King, says dairy industry volatility saw more farmers invest in innovations that make farming easier and more efficient.

"LIC Protrack farm automation range and GeneMark DNA parentage verification products, for example, enjoyed record sales.

"Our web based software products, Minda Milk, Minda Weights and Minda Land & Feed, also

[sold to many customers], reflecting the value farmers place on dairy cow performance and being able to make better, more informed decisions on farm."

King says the price freeze which LIC applied to all products in the 2009-10 season, in recognition of tough financial conditions, remained in place for Premier Sires in 2010-11 and 2011-12 with only a slight increase in the price of Minda and herd testing.

"These increases were, however, offset by the launch of innovative free products like Minda Milk, Minda Weights and Land & Feed," he says.

LIC is concerned to maximise dairy cow perfor-



Murray King

mance and help farmers make better decisions to improve farm prosperity. "LIC has been around for [at least] 100 years, and our closeness with our farmer owners has always been our success factor and our reason for being. Over the years we've delivered a huge range of innovations which have changed and accelerated the New Zealand dairy industry."

# Energy lights up award scheme

**A NEW** category award that rewards energy-efficient farming will be a feature of the 2013 Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

The New Zealand Farm Environment (NZFE) Trust, which runs the annual competition, has welcomed Meridian Energy as a sponsor. Chairman Jim Cotman says the trust long ago identified the need for an energy award.

"Efficient energy use is an important part of sustainable farming, so we are delighted Meridian has sponsored this award."

The Meridian Energy Excellence Award will recognise farmers' achievements in generating energy and maximising energy efficiency.

"We're encouraging our agribusiness customers to be more energy efficient on their farms and in their homes," says Bill Hight, Meridian's general manager retail. "A lot of finalists in the awards are Meridian customers and this is our way of supporting our customers."

Chiefly promoting profitable and sustainable farming, the awards scheme now includes category awards recog-

nising farm management and business practices; energy, nutrient and water use; crop and animal husbandry; protection or enhancement of special habitats on farms; and outstanding innovation. The awards also acknowledge the lifestyle and people factors associated with modern farming.

Entries for the 2013 Ballance Farm Environment Awards opened on August 1 and Cotman urges farmers to get their entries in.

"A common excuse for not entering is that the farm is not ready, but it's never going to be ready. Other farmers might have only just started on their sustainability quest. While they may feel their farm is not the full package, they might be performing well in one specific area. That's why we have such a broad range of category awards."

Cotman says the awards help farmers gain knowledge and benchmark their progress.

Entry forms and competition details are available from the NZFE website at [www.nzfeatrust.org.nz](http://www.nzfeatrust.org.nz)



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# Organics player eyes exports

**SUDESH KISSUN**

**ORGANIC DAIRY** company Biofarm Products is making another foray into Australia. The organic milk and yoghurt processor has linked with Organic Times, an Australian distributor of organic products.

Biofarm director Cathy Tait-Jamieson hopes by linking with Organic Times it can tap into the Australian organics market. The last time Biofarm products were in Australia, they were placed with custard on store shelves. "They did not know what to do with our products," she told *Dairy News*. Now, Tait-Jamieson is comfortable with the trade links with Organic Times.

Complementing the Organic Times tie-up is Biofarm's inclusion in a new Indigenous New Zealand Cuisine Cluster, a grouping of 18 Maori-owned food and beverage producers collectively marketing and selling products locally and overseas.

Tait-Jamieson, Ngati Tuku-

rohe, believes the 'cluster' is a great opportunity for fledgling exporting Maori businesses to grow.

"We are aware of export opportunities but there is a cost factor in sending our produce using air freight. To export we all need to have our own brokers, distributors and freight forwarders. If we work collectively, we can all engage the same people to do job. This will mean cost savings all around. For small businesses like ours, it makes sense."

Biofarm, located overlooking the Manawatu River, has been certified organic since 1986.

Tait-Jamieson says it is the second-oldest commercial organic farm still operating and still run by its original owners. It produces the milk and dairy products on the one farm.

The first yoghurt marketed under the Biofarm label was made in 1986 at a Palmerston North town-milk factory, but the factory closed and in 1987 Biofarm developed its own MAF-approved (now MPI) processing facility on



Cathy Tait-Jamieson

its farm. The factory has grown to include a large cool store and packing area.

The company daily processes 2000L of milk produced on its 230ha farm running 200 cows and milking 120 all year-round.

As part of its deal with Organic Times, Biofarm distributes butter

under the Australian company's label. New Zealand organic milk collected by Fonterra provides cream which is churned into butter and packaged in Hamilton under the Organics Times label.

Biofarm products are available in supermarkets and stores throughout New Zealand.

## Cheese making at your fingertips

**MAKING YOUR** own cheese at home has just got easier with Kiwi company Mad Millie's DIY cheese making kits.

These allow "even the most inexperienced home cooks" to make mozzarella, ricotta, mascarpone, quark, cottage cheese, feta, halloumi, cream cheese, cheddar, caerphilly, asiago, gouda, Colby, camembert, double cream brie, stilton style cheese, Neufchatel and blue vein.



"The best part about a Mad Millie cheese kit is that everything is provided; you won't need to go out in search of obscure, impossible-to-find ingredients. In fact, all you need is milk," says Saskia Thornton, Mad Millie.

The whole idea is that anybody can make delicious cheeses at home, she says. "I know it sounds too good to be true, but you really don't need to be an expert to make your own cheeses."

"Everything except the milk is provided, and the instructions are clear and simple."

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# Extra calves set to crowd out any gloom

PETER BURKE

**MORE COWS** in milk and more calves this year, predicts BLNZ's economic service director Rob Davison.

He told *Dairy News* that in the past season as many as 100,000 fewer cows were culled because of the good climatic conditions and these cows have been added to the national herd. This trend was predicted in the recent Ministry for Primary Industry's Situation Outlook.

Davison says the low empty rates of cows has this year contributed to more calves being born. And the lower milk payout and improving prospects for the cow beef market may also have influenced farmers' decisions.

Inquiries by *Dairy News* has revealed that demand for calf feed is much higher than last year.

On farms this season is a challenging time, with calving at its peak. For example, Tim and Cynthia Wilson, farming near Otaki, Horowhenua, run 300 cows plus 75 replacement heifers on their 140ha milking platform, and they have another 85ha used for support including growing maize, hay and baleage.

Production in the past season was close to 126,000kgMS, well up on last year's 112,000kgMS.

Cynthia has the task of looking after the calves and is pleased with the quality of the animals so far. She says they are coming in nicely and in good health.

"They are well sized animals and we've had no animal health problems. My role is to come in morning and night and make sure they are all fed

and clean, are dry and have fresh water."

Wilsons have added to their barn and Cynthia has re-arranged the calf rearing shed. Only five calves go in each pen to ensure each gets a share of the feed and that certain animals don't dominate. To make calf feeding easier, they've bought a pump and hose to fill the calf feeders with milk instead of lugging buckets. A milk warmer also helps.

As the back-up to AB, Wilsons use Angus and Hereford bulls. They've done this for 10 years, first for the heifers, then also mating some cows with Angus.

"The Angus calves are small easy to handle," Cynthia says. "They are quiet in nature but also vigorous. The Angus calves are pretty switched on and are easy to get sucking, whereas the some of the white faced ones can be a bit dopey."

Much of Wilsons' land is peat prone to flooding. With July wet and August beginning the same, the mud has added to the difficulties.

For 2012-13 the Wilsons are moving to seasonal production and in the last few months Tim has focused on getting his cows up to DairyNZ's recommended body condition score (BCS 5.0). "The aim has been to get them into a situation where they'll be in excellent condition for mating. I dried them off early to enable them to get up to that 5 BCS at calving and they look pretty good at the moment."

As part of his plan to get more replacement heifers in the coming year, Wilson has signed up with LIC's sire improvement scheme. "90% of the cows

this season will be get AB'd with unproven Friesian semen. It's all semen LIC is wanting to prove and that matches with our desire to have more replacements so we can

lift our numbers and probably do so in quite an economic fashion because of the good financial incentives."

For Cynthia that's also good news. "I love work-

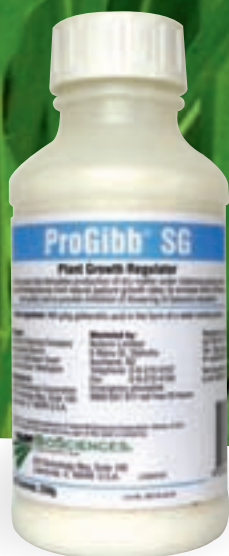
ing with animals. It's an ideal job. I'm originally from Dunedin and have worked in an office Wellington. But I like the lifestyle, the fresh air -to me it's just ideal."

Cynthia Wilson warming milk for calves.



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\*Duffield et al. Impact of hyperketonaemia in early lactation dairy cows on health and production. J. Dairy. Sci 2009 92: 571-580

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# Uni recognises farmer volunteer

ANDREW SWALLOW

**SOUTH CANTERBURY** dairy farmer Alvin Reid has been awarded a Lincoln University Medal for long and meritorious voluntary service to the university.

Reid's involvement with Lincoln stretches back to the early 1980s when he started sharemilking with 115 cows about 100km south of the university, at Winchester, on a farm he subsequently bought. "The old Lincoln dairy farm was running then and they used to have some great field days," he told *Dairy News*.

However, the model grew tired and foundered. Reid helped develop its successor, the Lincoln University-based South Island Dairying Development Centre (SIDDC) and today's Lincoln University Dairy Farm, though he's quick to play down his part. "The late Dr Bill Kain was absolutely inspirational. He started SIDDC."

But Reid was a founding member of the SIDDC board and prominent in setting up the Lincoln University Dairy Farm (LUDF) in 2000 – 2001, later serving in its business advisory group.

Recently he led a review of LUDF's direction, leading to its 'Precision Dairying' focus which has been in place just over a year. "I could see history was going to repeat itself if we didn't do something. We were just doing the same thing year after year... It had lost its zing."

Industry leading farmers, once regular attendees of field days, were starting to stay away. "I said 'we have to reinvent this thing. What's the next step?'"

The resulting policy appears to be paying off: milking slightly fewer cows but pushing for even higher



Alvin Reid with daughter, Desiree (left) and wife Judith at the awards ceremony.

pasture and milk production, and in turn profit, without increasing – and preferably decreasing – the environmental footprint.

"I'm pretty rapt with it," Reid admits, reflecting on a 70kgMS leap in per-cow output in the first season, with record production per hectare too (*Dairy News*, July 24). "It's an absolute credit to the management team."

Reid is a past winner of the University Foundation's South Island Farmer of the Year Award. He was a director of Alpine for 11 years before it became Dairy Group, served on the board of the DairyNZ predecessor Dexcel, and is still on the board of LIC.

Meanwhile his farming business has grown to 3500 cows and he's still hands-on whenever possible: when *Dairy News* spoke to him late one night last week he'd just come in

## WELL-DESERVED MEDAL

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY chancellor Tom Lambie, also a South Canterbury dairy farmer, says Reid has made a sustained and significant voluntary contribution to the agricultural extension activities of Lincoln.

"He continues to abundantly contribute his time, wisdom and energy and fully deserves the honour of receiving the Lincoln University Medal."

Reid's medal is the 16th awarded since its inception in 2008. A medal committee assesses nominations and recommends recipients.

Previous recipients include two other notable Canterbury dairy farmers: Leo Donkers and, in a joint award, Max Duncan and David Jones.

from selecting calves, after a day on site helping build a shed on his latest conversion farm. "I've got a fantastic job that's kept me self-employed for 36 or 37 years. I just love dairy farming."

The Lincoln University Medal,

awarded by the university council, was instituted in 2008. It acknowledges meritorious service by staff members, alumni or community members for long and outstanding contributions supporting the "fabric and reputation" of the university.

## Expert says time is right for precision ag rollout

**GERMAN PRECISION** agriculture expert Dr Armin Werner has joined Lincoln University as head of its Lincoln Ventures, a subsidiary of the university.

Werner joins from Germany where he headed the Institute of Land Use Systems at the Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research in Müncheberg.

Lincoln Ventures chief executive Peter Barrowclough says now is the right time for precision agriculture in New Zealand.

"We have the convergence of the roll-out of rural broadband and IT systems combining with a time when we need to grow more to pay our way in the world," he says.

"However, growing more cannot come at any cost to the environment. We need to grow more with a smaller environmental footprint. Lincoln Ventures is ideally placed to develop this area of agriculture and we are pleased to have Dr Werner joining the team to assist with this."

Precision agriculture is based on observing and responding to intra-field variation. It relies on new technologies such as crop sensing, information technology and geospatial tools, and is aided by a farmer's ability to locate his precise position in a field using satellite positioning when applying inputs.

Werner has led several collaborative R&D projects in Germany and for the European Union. In 2003 he organised the European conference on precision agriculture in Berlin which for the first time addressed research into precision livestock production systems.

Werner expects to further his research in New Zealand and to apply his experience and connections gained in Europe. He expects to work closely in the Lincoln/Massey University collaboration on precision agriculture with Professor Ian Yule, Massey University.

Lincoln Ventures and Massey University are also interested in working with farmers, private sector companies and other research providers in helping promote and implement precision agriculture in New Zealand.



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# New maize genetics coming soon

**ONE OF** the key benefits of maize is its high silage yield potential. Plant scientists have calculated the theoretical genetic yield potential to be at least 50 tonnes of maize silage DM/ha. New Zealand maize silage yields

are increasing and farmers in most dairy districts can grow crops that yield 18-28 tDM/ha.

Local research plots including a trial planted at DairyNZ's Scott farm have produced at least 30 tDM/ha.



MAIZE  
IAN WILLIAMS

rated the BMR gene into its elite in-breds. This has enabled it to produce new silage hybrids that combine the BMR fibre digestibility advantage with excellent yields, high starch content, strong drought tolerance and a robust disease and pest resistance package.

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Pioneer breeders are using a range of new breeding technologies to more rapidly and accurately identify superior maize hybrids. This is enabling them to double the incremental rate of maize genetic gain, reduce yield variability and improve performance predictability. They have a range of new products either recently commercialised or in the research and development pipeline. These include:

### Brown mid-rib (BMR) hybrids

BMR silage hybrids have been available in the

### Pioneer has incorporated the BMR gene into its elite in-breds.

USA for many years. While they have more digestible fibre, previously available BMR hybrids have not been popular with growers because:

They produce lower drymatter yields and they generally have poorer agronomic performance.

Only high producing cows limited by gut fill tend to show an economic milk production response to BMR maize silage. In a recent article Kurt Cotanch from the W.H Miner Institute (New York) cited a trial where cows were fed either BMR maize silage or high quality grass silage as their sole forage source. There was a clear difference in production response to BMR based on the cow's initial milk production level. Cows producing over 80lbs (about 35 L) milk/day responded to a BMR-based diet. Cows producing less than 80lbs milk did not. Cotanch concluded "Low cows, not being limited by gut fill, should not be fed BMR since they will not pay back on the investment in this forage".

Pioneer has incorpo-

### Nitrogen-use efficient hybrids

Pioneer Hi-Bred is developing hybrids to improve nitrogen-use efficiency. These hybrids can help maintain yield under low nitrogen levels and increase yield potential under normal nitrogen usage. Decreasing the amount of nitrogen needed per tonne of maize produced improves farmer profitability while at the same time reducing potential environmental impacts from applied nitrogen.

BMR and Nitrogen-use efficient hybrids are not currently available in New Zealand however we launched one AQUAmax® hybrid - Pioneer brand P0791-- in spring 2011. Pioneer brand hybrids are producing industry-leading yields and even better hybrids are coming soon.

*\* High, fresh and close-ups only for BMR corn silage.* The William H Miner Agricultural Research Institute Farm Report, March 2011.

• Ian Williams is Pioneer Seeds' forage specialist. Contact him at [iwilliams@genetic.co.nz](mailto:iwilliams@genetic.co.nz)

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PA140006



A two-year project on organic dairy farms has found quality heifers can be raised without conventional drench treatments.

## 'It all depends on how well you grow heifers'

**MASSEY UNIVERSITY** veterinarian Alan Thatcher says good quality heifers can be raised without resorting to conventional drench treatments.

Thatcher comes to this conclusion after monitoring calves/heifers from six commercial organic dairy farms for two seasons as part of the 'grow organic dairy project'. The project is an initiative by the Organic Dairy and Pastoral Group and Massey University with funding from Sustainable Farming Fund and DairyNZ.

Matamata farmer John Vosper, who took part in the project, says making your farm perform starts with the heifers and how well you grow them.

Accurate weighing is vital to ensure heifers reach key targets and Vosper admits his approach to this was a bit hit-and-miss before he started the project.

A trial was set up to

weigh the heifers on a regular basis and monitor heifer performance at critical times of the year. Faecal egg counts and blood tests were also carried out to measure parasite worm burdens. The aim of the organic heifer rearing trial was to establish a set of principles that could be applied across farms. Good grazing management regimes have relevance to all farmers, whether you choose to drench young stock or not.

The trial results show a relatively low prevalence of *Ostertagia* unless calves were put under real pressure. Growth rates remained good despite a moderate level of parasitism. On farms where mean FEC exceeded 3-400 epg, there was an associated decline in growth rates. The calves with the least worm infections were especially well fed. They were treated as a priority even at the expense

of some milk production.

"We stock two-three to a paddock until January, then break feed through the best paddocks and never graze the same paddocks twice", explains Phil Bax, whose Cambridge farm was also part of the project. "As summer dries out we add silage to the

feeding system.

"The key is minimizing exposure to the autumn larval peak, so it's important to manage calves carefully at this time."

Thatcher recommends creating a 'clean bank of feed' and spreading calves out during autumn to minimize larval intake.

### STUDY SUMMARY

It is possible to rear good quality young stock without resorting to drenching.

Success depends heavily on avoiding early exposure to the autumn larval peak and grazing strategies must revolve around that. This requires an understanding of the biology of the parasites involved (especially *Ostertagia*) and tailoring that to an individual farm situation.

Creating a bank of clean, good quality feed for autumn is essential.

Once calves have a significant worm burden, it is difficult to correct without the use of ivermectin. Organic remedies may assist in prevention but appear to perform poorly once the burden is sufficient to stop or reverse weight gains.



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**IN BRIEF**

**Think about bobby calves**

BOBBY CALF welfare is an increasingly important issue, with all parts of the system having a role to play in ensuring the welfare of these animals, says DairyNZ.

Meeting the needs of bobby calves is important, as the Animal Welfare Act 1999 places a

'duty of care' on all those involved with managing livestock – including farmers, transport operators and processors.

"Once they leave the farm, although every effort is made to transport and process them as quickly as possible, there are occasions where bobby calves can be on the truck for 12 hours or more."

FutureDairy researcher, Dr Cameron Clark, says software programs have been developed to 'learn' from pasture data collected across a farm, to determine the cause of poorer-performing paddocks and to identify ways to improve yields.



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**Honing in on pasture yield**

ADVANCES IN technology are allowing Australian dairy farmers to use a combination of data from their own farm and climate records to 'learn' from seasonal yields.

This new learning function will enable farmers to determine the causes of poor pasture performance and to identify ways to improve yields.

FutureDairy senior research fellow Dr Cameron Clark last month highlighted some of the opportunities offered by new technologies for improved pasture production at the Dairy Research Foundation's annual symposium, held at Camden, NSW.

"Technology is transforming pasture management from an approach of 'working from averages' to dealing with individual paddocks," Clark says.

"This is important, given the large range in pasture yields between paddocks. For example, the best paddocks typically yield double that of poorer performing paddocks on the same farm.

"Advances such as automatic pasture meters have greatly increased the amount of data available to farmers but the challenge is to convert this data into meaningful information for making management decisions."

Clark says software programs had been developed to 'learn' from pasture data collected across a farm, also drawing upon climatic records. They can help determine the

cause of low pasture yields and define areas for similar management.

"This is likely to be an 'add-in' function to the pasture management or feed budgeting programs currently used by many dairy farmers and their advisors."

Clark said these advances allow dairy farmers to place greater focus on soil: for example, customising soil testing and fertiliser application at the paddock level and selecting the most suitable paddocks for cropping.

"The application of these technologies on farm is in its early stages but it has the potential to dramatically change the way we approach pasture management on dairy farms," he said.

The software is likely to be available to New Zealand dairy farmers in the near future.

In the meantime, Clark suggests those without paddock yield records can identify poor production paddocks by keeping note of grazing days for each paddock, and focussing attention on the paddocks with few grazing days.

"Nearly every dairy farm has the potential for improved pasture yield, and a good place to start is by lifting the performance of poor performing paddocks.

"Taking a shovel out to dig a few holes will often highlight a problem. For individual paddocks, there can be surprisingly big gain in yield for a small effort and cost," Clark says.

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# Good transition diet sets up cow for lactation



A good transition diet encourages trouble-free calving.

**THE DAIRY** cow is going through one of the most important times in its annual cycle, transitioning from a 'dry' to a 'lactating' state.

Liquid animal feed supplier Agrifeeds says the three-four week period prior to calving is when the rumen is adapting to a milking diet and the cow is preparing for calving and milking.

"Done properly, transition management improves cow performance in a number of ways, but essentially it sets

the appetite ceiling for the pending lactation," says Andrew Oakley, Agrifeeds technical manager.

"The cow responds with reduced metabolic issues and increased dry matter intake and is more likely to achieve target peak appetite and maximum production," says Oakley. Following some basic steps helps minimise the negative effects clinical and sub-clinical milk fever has on herd productivity and profitability, he says.

The principle aims of

a good transition diet are to encourage a trouble free calving to ensure a healthy calf and cow, plus eliminate all preventable primary and secondary metabolic diseases. Done properly the net effect of a successful transition diet is an increase in DMI, which improves the overall nutrient intake. This will minimise weight loss with an opportunity to achieve milk production targets.

"There are real productive and reproductive gains to be

made from adopting a well-managed transition diet. Ultimately, the cow must be able to maximise and maintain her appetite and feed intakes so the rumen muscles and

microflora are properly prepared to cope with lactation diets."

Oakley also says rumen adaptation requires a minimum of three-four weeks to properly prepare the

rumen microbes for the type of feed being offered post calving, hence the need to introduce the lactating diet pre-calving.

"A good transition diet provides a palatable, high-energy mix as well as low dietary cationic anionic difference (DCAD) minerals, plus a good mix of effective fibre and fermentable energy.

Another transition alternative is to feed Rumag300 to provide a blend of molasses, magnesium chloride and Rumensin, which aids in the control of ketosis at calving while ensuring energy is optimised for late foetal development and colostrum production."

As another transition diet option, Oakley also suggests using Himag, which is a molasses and magnesium chloride blend with a low DCAD and is ideal for cows on transition diets.

Adding a low DCAD mineral mix such as NutriMin Springer Cow Balancer in either Rumag300

or Himag, plus a good mix of effective fibre and fermentable energy, will help stretch the rumen, maintain and encourage rumen capacity and cud chewing before and after calving and provide the cow with the necessary negative DCAD mineral balance pre-calving to help prevent metabolic health issues.

Also, Oakley says it is important to calculate the cost of milk fever in a herd.

"Milk fever may only represent a fraction of the total losses associated with the transition period and calving, but it gives some compelling reasons to want to change.

"In New Zealand herds, 2-30% of cows can go down with milk fever. At a cost of \$1500 per cow, allowing for treatment, and in a 500 cow herd, lost production can be [at least] \$200,000. With those figures, it's worth investigating a good transition management programme," he says.

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# Getting cows over the stress of calving

**JUDY HOPE**

**RECENT RESEARCH** and field studies have shown how important is a trouble-free transition

in getting high-producing dairy cows over the stress of calving and prepared to produce milk at the start of lactation.

Add to this the importance of getting a calf

off to a proper nutritional start to help ensure growth and rumen development and you face a critical time in which management can impact long-term health and per-

formance of cow and calf.

Production records show cows with a 0.5-1kg daily reduction in milk production at the peak of lactation will produce 450-900kg less milk during the

entire lactation period.

Immediate post-calving problems such as reduced appetite, milk fever, hypocalcaemia and retained placentas can individually or collectively impair



When cows freshen, they lose a large reservoir of nutrients.

a cow's ability to reach her optimum peak in lactation.

When cows freshen, they lose a large reservoir of nutrients. The nutrients the cow requires have been identified and are available in products such as Fresh Cow YMCP, which works to boost levels of yeast, magnesium, calcium, potassium and niacin. Each is an essential nutrient needed for the transition into lactation.

Replenishing these nutrients immediately post-calving can help reduce complications, help the cow recover quickly and lead to improved production throughout lactation.

Along with the large number of nutrients lost during calving, another more obvious – but often overlooked – challenge is dehydration. Cows typically lose body fluids equal in weight to the calf during calving.

Without adequate fluids, nutrients are not available to the digestive system nor are readily distributed through the circulatory system.

These disruptions in nutrient flow adversely affect recovery when the

cow needs it most — especially when heading into lactation. A product rich in electrolytes and vitamins, such as Bovine BlueLite, helps replenish those fluids and facilitate nutrient distribution.

Finally, the calf needs proper nutrition to get off to a solid start. Colostrum replacers typically have more of the nutrients the calf needs than those provided naturally by the cow. Additionally, colostrum replacers can be delivered without harmful organisms that can cause sickness such as Johne's.

To ensure a calf's gut gets quality nutrients while it's still pure, feeding colostrum replacers, such as First Day Formula, help ensure an adequate amount of proteins and nutrients for optimal growth and development. Combined, these nutritional strategies during the critical transition phase will help improve both cow and calf performance.

Techmix products are available through World Wide Sires NZ. Tel. 0800 607 070 Email: [wwsiresnz@clear.net.nz](mailto:wwsiresnz@clear.net.nz)

• *Judy Hope is general manager of World Wide Sires NZ.*

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## IN BRIEF

### Welfare code review

ANIMAL WELFARE codes are under review and likely to gain more legal 'clout'. Such is the preference of the chairman of the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC), John Hellstrom. The New Zealand Veterinary Association (NZVA) concurs.

The 15 codes specify minimum standards and recommend best practices for the care of animals, including farmed livestock and circus and rodeo animals.

The NZVA has been pressing for change to the status of the welfare codes and welcomes the possibility of greater status in law. A review of the Animal Welfare Act by MPI and NAWAC has raised the matter of the codes.

# Multi-tasking technicians save farmers time

ROBYN EDWARDS

**CALVING IS** one of the busiest times of the year – if not the busiest – on a dairy farm.

Last month we looked at the advantages of using outside contractors to disbud calves, but have you considered the range of auxiliary services an Ultra-Scan technician or vet can provide at the same time?

With calves restrained in calf crates for disbudding – or under a general anaesthetic by a vet – other tasks can be done at this time, leaving farmer and staff free to get on with calving and milking.

#### Spare teat removal

Spare teats can cause problems and should be removed early in a calf's life, to prevent distortion of the udder and resulting cupping problems in the milking shed. Spare teats will often develop their own little quarter, leading to problems such as mastitis because they will often contain milk not stripped out during milking.

While spare teat removal is simple at a young age, it can be time consuming – another task to be done at the time of disbudding. Spare teats are removed using surgical scissors, ideally with the site is sprayed with antibiotic spray to avoid infection. Ultra-Scan technicians are happy to undertake this for farmers at the time of disbudding.

Vaccinations can also be done

by a contractor at the time of disbudding. Vaccinating using a 5-in-1 vaccine protects against Clostridial diseases including blackleg, malignant oedema, pulpy kidney, navel ill and tetanus. Calves should be vaccinated twice, the first injection at about six weeks, the second a booster shot four-six weeks later.

Pfizer Animal Health, maker of the Ultravac 7-in-1 vaccine, says early vaccination using this vaccine covers protects against the diseases covered by a 5-in-1 vaccine and minimises the risk of animals becoming infected with leptospirosis and urinary shedding. This product has been shown efficacious in the presence of maternal antibody, therefore calves can be vaccinated from age 1 month. Whether you choose to use a 5-in-1 or a 7-in-1 vaccine, these timeframes coincide perfectly for a contractor to vaccinate at the time of disbudding.

With the introduction of NAIT, electronic tagging is yet another task facing all farmers and this may be done efficiently at the time of disbudding. With the primary tag in place from soon after birth, the electronic tag still needs to be inserted. Correlation between the two tags will ensure ease of identification using either tag and will minimise risk of confusion during future identification.

Correct placement is important. Tags should be placed close to the inner part of the ear, preferably the right ear, between the two veins, close to the head and with



Spare teats can cause problems and should be removed early in a calf's life.

the 'female' tag facing forward. Correct placement will prolong the life of the tag and lessen the risk of it being ripped out which can result in an open wound and infection or disfigurement of the ear. Regular disinfecting of the taggers will minimise the chance of infection and this is something all Ultra-Scan technicians are mindful of. Tagging while the calves are in the calf crates ensures ease of application of the tag in the correct part of the ear.

This is another task that can be done during dehorning. DNA testing is an important manage-

ment tool for many farmers who rely on positive identification of calves to determine selection of replacement stock and to manage the quality of the herd. Profiling the herd ensures no miss-mothering occurs and averts the need to match the calf to the dam in the paddock.

DNA sampling is a simple process involving the removal of a sample of tissue from the ear.

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• Robyn Edwards is New Zealand franchise manager for Ultra-Scan Ltd.



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"Protects my herd and my pasture during extreme weather and lifts my farm production as a result" Northland

"The soft floor system is easy on the cows and I can hold them inside for as long as I want, I mix the litter into my feed crop when finished" Gore

"I feedout along the sidewalls of my Redpath shelter, it saves me a lot of time and my feed waste is almost nil" Waikato

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Most farmers have improved cow condition, says DairyNZ.

# Cow condition scheme rings bell for some

**PETER BURKE**

**A PILOT** scheme by DairyNZ to get farmers focused on lifting their cows' body condition score (BCS) to 5.0 before calving appears to

be working.

Rob Brazendale, DairyNZ's team leader for productivity, says about 300 dairy farmers in South Waikato and Manawatu/Horowhenua chose to take part. He says for 30 years people such as Professor

Colin Holmes of Massey University and others have urged farmers towards BCS 5.0 for cows and BCS 5.5 for heifers but without much success.

"Historically farmers have struggled to get to that target and by and large they haven't been able to implement it. For them the drivers are often short term imperatives: milk production in the current season seems more important than milk production in the next season."

The problem, says Brazendale, has been defining exactly what constitutes a BCS 5.0 and often farmers heard two different opinions from advisors. So DairyNZ and some key consultants together set standards, trained advisors then worked with individual farmers.

"It's hard to assess BCS because everyone sees a cow differently and while we have made a lot of progress we have a little way to go."

For the pilot study, DairyNZ ran public-events that attracted

170 farmers – or about a third of dairy farmers in Manawatu/Horowhenua, plus 140 from South Waikato. They then sent vets and advisors to help farmers set and achieve goals, targeting especially cows that without help would not easily achieve BCS 5.0.

"We were not focused on the average BCS of a herd. The average is not important, it's actually how many cows are below target and need special attention. This can include priority feeding, moving to once-a-day milking and drying off earlier. Farmers know they should be doing those sort of things but it's not until they're told by someone else that they will. It's a bit like going to a gym and having a trainer to tell us to do exercises."

While DairyNZ has yet to fully evaluate the trial, anecdotal evidence suggests it has succeeded, Brazendale says. Most farmers have improved their cow condition and the publicity about it has given the BCS 5.0 strategy "significant momentum".

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## BCS MESSAGE GETTING THROUGH

MANAWATU VET Lindsay Rowe says dairy farmers are starting to get the message about the value of getting their cows up to BCS 5.0 before calving. Rowe is an advisor helping in DairyNZ's pilot scheme to raise BCS.

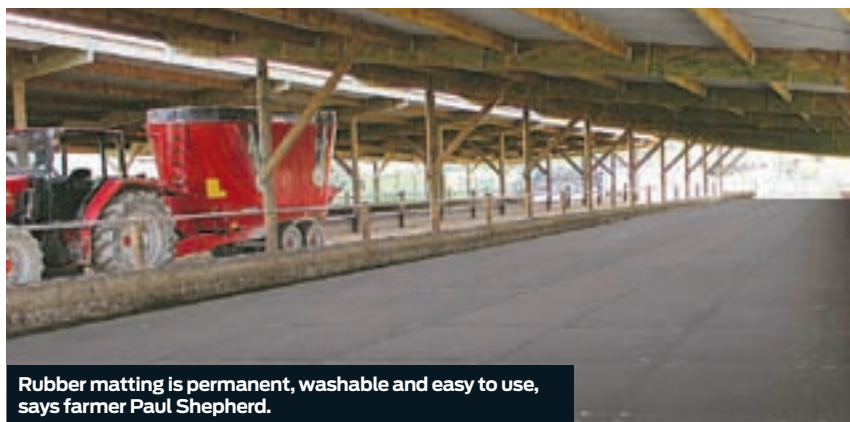
The key message is that if cows aren't reaching the target BCS by the time they calve, that will affect their productivity in the coming season. "It's also going to delay how quickly they get pregnant which will mean a few more empty cows at the end of the season than otherwise."

"It will also mean the subsequent season's calving will be slower so it affects the following year's production as well. The cows that do get pregnant later also affect next season's production... by as much as 20kgMS/cow."

Despite a good year weather-wise, Rowe says overall cow condition in Manawatu is not as good as last season, for two reasons.

"The autumn was very dry and some farmers milked too long and that stripped the body weight off and there wasn't enough time to recover that loss of body weight before calving."

"Second, the grass silage and bialage on hand for feeding through winter was harvested late so the quality was poor. Some of it was low in energy and protein levels and because of the upcoming reduced payout some farmers appeared reluctant to add in supplements such as PKE to improve cow condition," Rowe says.



Rubber matting is permanent, washable and easy to use, says farmer Paul Shepherd.

## Rubber mats keep lameness at bay

**WELLSFORD FARMER** Paul Shepherd, who runs 400 dairy cows, has covered his two cow feed pads with Agri-Mat Kura mats made by Numat. He chose these because he prefers to wash his two covered cowshed floors daily.

"I'd looked at alternatives such as bark and sawdust, but with these you get a build-up of cattle dung and urine – organisms that cause mastitis and E.coli. So you have to change the bedding frequently, and often it's not readily available. Rubber matting is permanent, washable and easy to use."

He installed Kura mats on one feed pad 12 months ago. "They are an excellent product, still in perfect condition after 12 months."

Overall, there is less lameness than before. "No lameness problems have been caused by the Kura matting, which is much better on cows' feet than concrete or wet ground, which dried out to be so hard. If a cow has a sore foot, we let her stand on the rubber matting, which is much kinder than concrete or rough pasture, especially if it's wet."

Because rubber mats can be washed, there is less chance of infection in cows' feet. "The bugs can be washed away." Fewer cows are taken out of the milking herd and put into the special herd on antibiotics. "It's the smallest it's ever been. Once we could have had 15 cows in the special herd. Now it's down to five or six. Also,

antibiotics cost. And the milk from cows on antibiotics has to be discarded."

Farm management is easier now. "We were sick of pasture damage, especially in winter and wet weather. A big advantage with the rubber matting is zero grazing. The cows don't need to go outside, but can be fed on supplements inside."

Kura mats are warm and relatively dry. "We can bring cows into the shed whenever we need to, especially if it's wet."

Shepherd milks 150 cows in winter and 400 in summer. Dry cows are put in one shed and milking cows in the other, where they are each fed different supplements. Some of the dry cows will stay inside four weeks or more when it's wet. Their feed goes into putting on body condition not into keeping them warm. "They probably put on condition up to 50% quicker than if outside because the temperature is so much more even in the sheds."

Cows find the sheds pleasant. In hot weather they are out of direct sunlight and it is usually 5-6 degrees cooler than outside. In winter the sheds are much warmer. "We open the gates and the cows just walk in. They choose to come inside. And now, because of the rubber matting, we don't mind bringing the cows into the shed at any time."

Kura matting comes in 1190 x 850 x 24mm interlocking sheets which clip easily together. Tel. 0800 686 122

## Riverstone cleared as calf bedding

**CALF REARING** on riverstone meets welfare standards, a DairyNZ and AgResearch study found, but more work on stocking density is underway.

"The six-week study showed there are no detrimental effects on calves raised on river stones and that MAF Animal Welfare (Dairy Cattle) Code of Welfare minimum standards for housing calves are met," says Dairy NZ animal husbandry and welfare team leader Nita Harding.

The study was on a commercial farm near Mossburn, Southland, last September-October with 20 calves stocked at one/2m<sup>2</sup> in four pens with a 200mm deep base of 30mm round riverstone compared to the same number of calves, at the same density, on sawdust. The calves were evaluated at one and six weeks of age.

"We monitored the health and cleanliness of the calves, assessed their behaviour and recorded the temperatures of the calves and the environment," says Harding. "Both sets of calves grew at the same rate and both bedding materials were relatively dry and clean throughout the study period."

"We now have to go back and investigate the effects of rearing calves on riverstones at different stocking rates, as this is likely to be more relevant to commercial conditions. Studies this year will also include more detailed examination of calf behaviour, as well as monitoring health and growth rates."

The stocking density used was that recommended for calves reared on riverstones. Harding says remember that bedding is only one part of a successful system.

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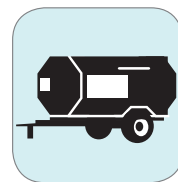
### DOSAGE METHODS



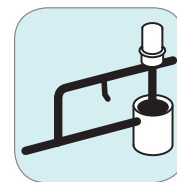
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**AGVANCE**

# Well-fed newborns set for life

**WELL-MANAGED CALVING** lays a foundation for the lifetime productivity of a dairy herd; there is little room for error, says Agrifeeds technical manager, Andrew Oakley.

“Calves are born without immunity and therefore have no defence mechanism against bacteria and viruses. Immunity for newborn calves comes from Immunoglobulins (Igs) present in their mother’s colostrum.

“It is essential a calf receives 10% of its body weight in colostrum in the first 10 hours of its life – the optimal time when cell ‘gaps’ are open along the small intestine wall to allow the transfer of Igs. After 10 hours these cell ‘gaps’ close so no further transfer can occur. First-milk colostrum is the best as it contains the most Igs, when compared to the second milking.

“It is important to never assume the calf has had adequate colostrum from its mum; tube feed if in doubt.”

Oakley says farmers need to carefully consider what to feed a calf.

“Rearing calves using the best available knowledge through a well managed calf rearing system will give every chance to get the development of the

**“It is important to never assume the calf has had adequate colostrum from its mum: tube feed if in doubt.”**

calf right, turning it into a healthy, profitable animal.

“You need to be thinking about what the feed offers, what it contributes to rumen development and body growth. Other things to consider are how much milk a calf needs, when to introduce meal and whether they can digest and use the nutrients in the meal.”

A newborn pre-ruminant calf has four stomachs but the rumen is only 20% of its mature size. This means it requires the feed to be in a form that can be utilised by the growing finger-like projections called papillae that absorb many of the nutrients for growth and later milk production. According to research, by eight weeks of age the number and size of papillae are set for life.

“It is important to maximise the lim-

ited time available for rumen papillae development. Milk alone does little to develop these papillae and forages don’t provide sufficient or the correct profile of volatile fatty acid (VFA) needed for effective papillae development.

“Only one product, RumenX, encourages the correct VFA profile needed to maximize papillae growth from an early age,” Oakley says. [This] presents the nutrients including starch to the calf in a useable form. The manufacturing process ensures the starch is already in a form rumen bacteria can digest.”

For a calf to break down the starch present in solid feeds to glucose (then VFA), there needs to be adequate amylase present in the gastro-intestinal tract (GIT) to facilitate this. It takes up to three weeks for the pancreas to be sufficiently developed to produce sufficient quantities of amylase, so many of the starches present in meals are inadequately digested at an early age which is why RumenX can be fed from day four.

“A feature of the RumenX product is the reduced amount of milk needed to grow a well prepared calf,” Oakley says.

“This allows earlier weaning from



milk and onto solid feeds earlier than most traditional systems. Calves are weaned onto meal and then pasture according to dry matter intake when they are ready, not based on age or live-weight.”

Having a solid foundation to build

on is essential to what happens to the calf becoming a well grown R2 heifer ready to milk.

“A well-managed calf rearing system that applies attention to detail is paramount to a successfully, well reared calf meeting the farm objectives.”



## salt-essential to life

Salt may be one of the most cost-effective methods of increasing production. Research<sup>1</sup> has shown that sodium supplementation can give a significant production response.

### THE KEY CONCLUSIONS ARE THAT:

- Sodium in some form should be available at all times all year round
- Dairy cows' salt requirements increase significantly when lactating as large amounts of sodium are excreted in milk
- Young animals in rapid growth need sodium for new tissue formation
- Appetite suppression is linked to sodium deficiency
- Supplementary feeds can be low in sodium

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<sup>1</sup>AgResearch trials at Te Waikite Valley, 2000, Mike O’Conner and Martin Hawke



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Lindsay Rowe

# Genetics impact on BCS

## PETER BURKE

**A MANAWATU** dairy veterinarian says getting some cows up to BCS 5.0 is being made difficult by the introduction of a lot of overseas genetics into the New Zealand dairy herd.

Lindsay Rowe says while the genetics have

given us cows that produce a lot of milk, this has come at a price in other ways.

“The cows have a tendency to strip body weight off to produce milk... [And] our feeding systems are quite different from... [the] feedlot systems [these overseas cows are bred for]... We feed them

merrily on pasture [so] there is a problem and it's a recipe for cows getting very thin.”

Rowe says even though farmers manage these cows well, they can't counter the genetics of the animals and get them to put on weight at critical times of the year. In some cases New Zealand

now has cows whose body weight is harder to maintain than was the case 20 years ago.

“The overseas genetics are from the American Holstein. In a feedlot they can just put the weight back on because of the high energy meals in front of them, perfectly mixed for what they are. But

we put them out on pasture where they have got to aggressively graze and compete for feed.”

One dairy farmer says he watched kiwi-cross cows diving off into a ditch to forage, while the cows with the American genetics stood in the middle of the paddock bellowing to be moved.

## Less animal health issues this season

### PETER BURKE

**DAIRYNZ'S TEAM** leader for animal husbandry and welfare says cows in most regions are in better condition than last season with fewer health problems.

Nita Harding told *Dairy News* she hears cow condition in the Waikato and much of the South Island is generally very good, because of the good season in most places.

**“We put out quite a bit of publicity [urging farmers] to ensure they were well organised for winter. Having adequate supplies of supplements on hand was a priority.”**

“It was a pretty good summer and autumn particularly in Canterbury and Southland and the winter hasn't been bad as well. The feed-back is cows are generally in better health with no major concerns.... Overall it's better than last year.”

Feed supply has been good through winter as well. “Normally we'd expect metabolic problems and poor condition at calving, and some nutrition issues because of a lack of supplements, but this season there hasn't been the same problems. With cows being in good condition, calves are also much better.”

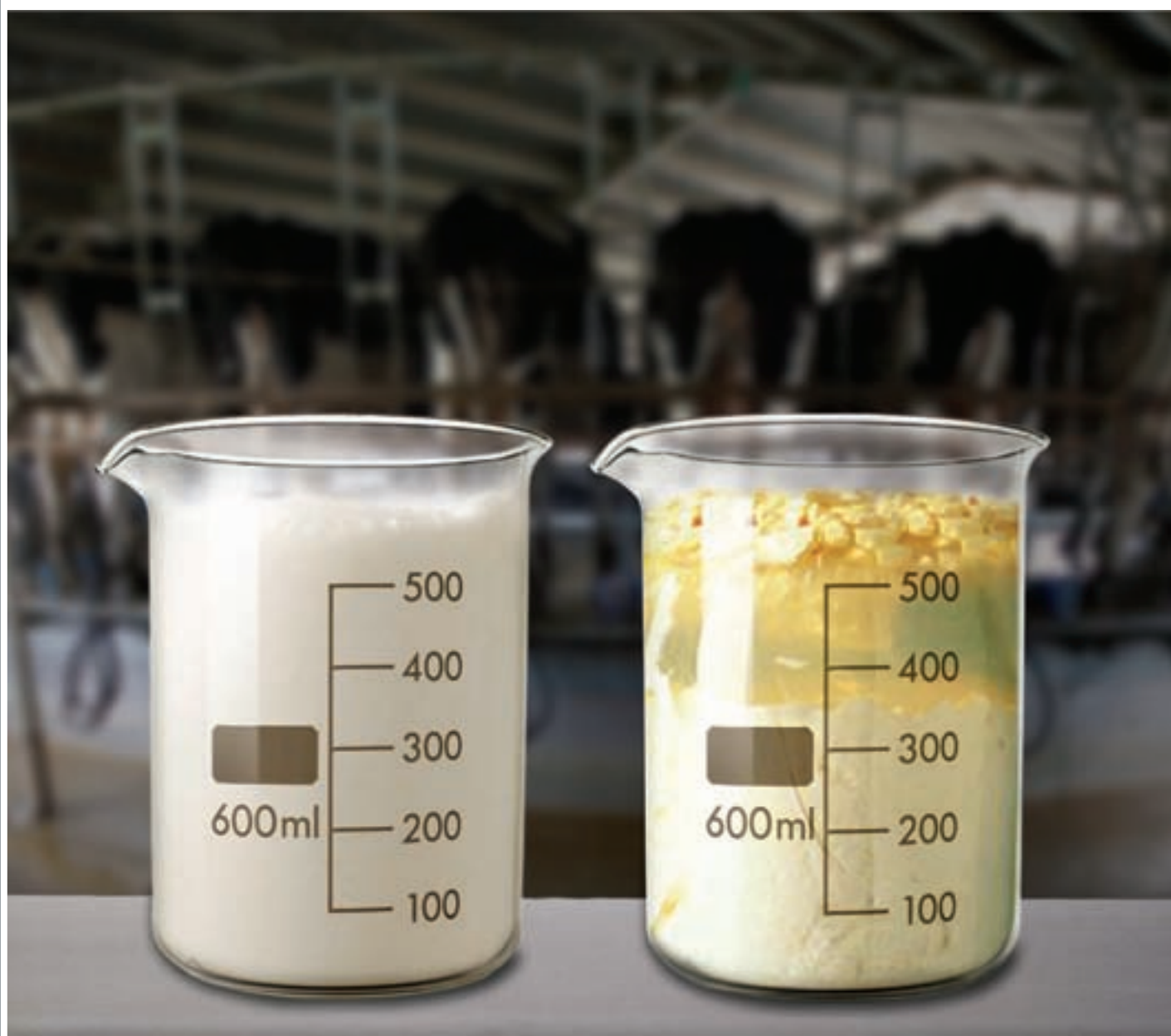
Harding says farmers in the South Island have been conscious of the need to feed their cows well given the dry spell in summer. “We put out quite a bit of publicity [urging farmers] to ensure they were well organised for winter. Having adequate supplies of supplements on hand was a priority. That made a difference especially in Southland, but in Canterbury they've had a good winter and have been able to utilise pasture and crops really well.”

Publicity about body condition scoring was linked to a DairyNZ scheme on reproductive performance. This has obviously paid off, Harding says.

“Late last year we produced a reference guide to BCS – a companion book to our field guide to BCS. It explains the science behind BCS and why we are recommending particular targets and also advises on how to manage cow condition throughout the year.”

### Check out our new websites

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<sup>1</sup> When compared to other 1g penicillin intramammary products available in New Zealand.

# Farm automation 'future-proofing' the business

**AN LIC** Protrack Vector unit on a Waikato farm is seen by the owner as a means of 'future-proofing' the business, the system supplier says.

Brian Frost, of Tauhei, this year installed Protrack Vector in his 24-aside herringbone shed to help him get out of the cowshed completely in the near future.

The Frosts have in recent years spent money on technology to ease the running of their 77.8 ha farm, making it manageable by one person.

The Protrack Vector automatically identifies and drafts animals, and a touch screen in the shed allows access to all their herd and animal information in MINDA.

Combined with new automatic cup removers and in-shed feeding, Protrack enables one-person operation, Frost says.

"Milking 340 cows is a reasonably long job for one person, so our aim over these last few years has been to upgrade the facilities where we can and make the farm manageable

for one person. If it saves us one labour unit, or even half, then it has paid for itself.

"Technology in farming is advancing so quickly, you have to do these things in certain years when you have surplus money otherwise you don't keep up, your business technology becomes outdated and you're going backwards all the time."

Frost looked at three farm automation systems offered by LIC, settling on the Vector as best for their farm's future.

"It was an affordable option for us, but you've got to make sure you put something in that's not just for you but for the next person too.

"We're all competing for good staff, and the farms with good facilities and technology are more attractive than those with basic gear. Having this automation system will help attract a switched-on manager."

The combination of benefits in drafting and



Brian Frost

recording was also appealing.

Previously they'd needed an extra person in the shed to identify and cut out cows for treatment or mating, but now Protrack does it for them, Frost says.

"Our old system for drafting was probably like most other farms – all by hand and a nightmare, especially when you've

got 34 or 40 cows to get out and you still have to milk. Now we'll be able to do it with ease; I tap in the numbers and Protrack will do the rest, while we get on with milking.

"Having Minda in the shed makes it a tool for more than milking; it means we can do all the records down there too. I can enter details in Protrack immediately,

such as when cows calve, treatments and mastitis, whereas normally I'd have to write that down in the book and then it's just something I have to remember later. It makes running the place a lot easier."

LIC farm automation manager Garth Anderson says 1000 Protrack systems have been sold since its launch in 2003.

## Canterbury A&P Show entries open

**ENTRIES ARE** now open for the 150th Canterbury A&P Show.

The A&P show's last big anniversary was its centennial show in 1962, says Canterbury A&P Association president Richard Lemon. It was recorded as the best show ever; the weather was kind except for one heavy shower, he says.

"We had 5002 entries, a Canterbury A&P Show record that stood for almost 20 years.

"With all the excitement an anniversary year attracts, we're set for a record year in 2012. If you enjoy showing then it doesn't get any better than a supreme champion win at the 150th show."

The Canterbury A&P Association hosts the largest such show in New Zealand.

It averages 7000 live-

stock and feature competition entries: 3000 animals in 1700 classes including horse/pony, beef/dairy cattle, sheep, alpaca, llama, pig, wool, goat, dog trials, poultry, shearing and wool handling, wine, gourmet oil, mint lamb, woodchopping and vintage machinery.

Fourth generation Holstein breeder and show regular Dean Geddes will this year return to the show with his family and a truckload of cattle.

The Tahora Holstein Friesian Stud at Tai Tapu often fields winning animals. It won 2011 Supreme Champion All Breeds Dairy Cow and in 2010 Supreme Champion Animal of Show.

"The family will be back this year, and with the kids also involved in junior judging it will be one big party."

The 150th Canterbury A&P Show will be held Wednesday 14 to Friday 16 November at Canterbury

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# Remote water system takes innovation prize in Oz

**A COMPANY** making water monitoring and management systems has won the Irrigation Australia 2012 new product/innovation award.

Observant received the award – for its C3 remote water monitoring system – last month in Adelaide at the Irrigation Australia annual awards night. C3 was recognised for originality, quality of design, scope for acceptance by the market, water and energy efficiency contribution, and potential to reduce environmental impact through water savings.

The company says evolution of the C2 to the C3 was inspired by customer's needs for managing their equipment and maintaining their properties. After 18 months of development and launching next month, the C3 will offer a flexible, simple, reliable, affordable method to remotely manage water systems, Observant says.

The system averts the need to drive around a farm. Instead it offers simple, reliable tracking for a single viewpoint of a property. Available in modular and stand-alone systems, the C3 "takes the flexibility of Observant's remote monitoring equipment to [a new] level, and provides a higher quality device" at lower cost.

The Observant C3 gives farmers and irrigators a means of remotely managing a large range of equipment using wireless communications. Monitoring and managing water systems may require only looking at a smartphone or logging into Observant Global via the internet.

Observant chief executive officer Matthew Pryor says the award is "a great tribute to the Observant team for... flexible and simple solutions to manage water systems."

Trevor LeBreton, general manager of Irrigation Australia, acknowledged

Observant's contribution to agribusiness and water management. "We were delighted to present Observant with this award for their innovative approach to new product development. This rec-

ognition was due in large part to the considerable benefits, the businesses are reaping... savings in labour, fuel, mileage and water loss costs." [www.observant.com.au](http://www.observant.com.au)



Observant C3



## Fast, cheap ponding fix

**RECENT WET** weather has left some paddocks waterlogged, with poor drainage and flooding affecting pasture, making it unpalatable to livestock.

Help is at hand, says Fieldmaster, whose fast, inexpensive Vortex rotary drain digger/cleaner deals with surface flooding and ponding on paddocks.

The Vortex prevents waterlogging or helps solve the problem where it has occurred. It mounts on a tractor's 3-point linkage. Its a high-speed 6-blade rotor (540rpm rotation) cuts channels or drains to streams. Minimum power requirement is 40hp.

Operating features include a safety clutch, adjustable discharge chute and depth control shoe.

The concave shape of the formed drain is cattle friendly and retains its shape longer than a U-trench dug by an excavator, Fieldmaster says.

The machine has lots of on-farm uses: gutters on farm track edges, leading stormwater away from dairy sheds and other buildings, handling overflow drainage from ponds, and even making planting beds for hedgerows and raised gardens.

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Tym tractors are popular in Australia, says distributor Inlon.

# Tym for a change

A NEW tractor from TYM (model 903) "gives the performance, productivity and comfort to farmers and growers look for – true value for money," says Australian distributor Inlon.

From the Perkins power plant with its torque and efficiency, to the tireless power shut-

tle, ideal for front-loader work, the TYM 903 and 1003 models offer a great package, Inlon says.

The 100hp model also offers powershift change-on-the-go and Bosch 3-point linkage control as standard – features normally only seen on higher priced tractors, Inlon says.

The TYM 903 has a

## Power and luxury

- TYM 903- Perkins 91hp/66.9 kW
- Power shuttle transmission
- Large air-conditioned cab.
- Easy to operate.

large, flat-platform air-conditioned cab, radio/CD player, roof hatch and integrated front-loader joystick. Operator features include high-back seat with adjustable suspension.

"These benefits will win many over to the value of TYM", says Inlon sales and marketing manager Gary Surman,

The TYM 903 is powered by the latest Tier-III 4-cylinder 4400cc Perkins diesel producing 91hp.

"Perkins is a global manufacturer with a reputation for reliability and support in Australia," says Surman.

Power shuttle transmission is standard with three mechanical range ratios, all synchronised to the four-speed box, giving speeds from 1.1 to 40km/h at rated engine revs; practical and progressive speeds suitable for a wide variety of uses. The separate shuttle-lever duplicates all speeds in forward and reverse, ideal for loader work and headland manoeuvring. Creeper provides speeds as low as 0.4km/h.

All TYM tractors have a 3-year 2000-hour warranty. [www.tym-tractors.com](http://www.tym-tractors.com).

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## Remedies for all from direct seller

**ANIMAL HEALTH** Direct says it has a host of products to get farmers through calving this season.

The company, which supplies merchandise stores and vets, says its injectable metabolics and energy drench formulations stand apart from the rest.

Managing director Richard Kettle says its metabolic range is recognised for its weather-proof packaging and simplified options. In 4-in-1 metabolic formulations AHD has gained a significant market share, Kettle says.

The AHD metabolic range includes Minject 4-in-1, Calject 40%, Magsulp, Dextron and Vetmin 4-in-1 plus Vetcal 40%. These are provided as pillow packs supported by Caljet oral, a calcium gel formulation given orally to extend the period of available calcium to a cow by another 24 hours to protect against relapse.

Kettle says another key point of difference is the Biogro certification for the Dextron, Caljet and Vetcal metabolic. Also included in the oral metabolic range is Acedex, a quickly absorbed energy supplement.

"In the energy drench category AHD [offers] Over the Moon, Resolute, Rite Start and Cow Boost. Over the Moon and Cow Boost now offer... Protexin, a probiotic that will flood a cow's rumen with beneficial bacteria. This... offers farmers the option of the fence at the top of the cliff rather than the ambulance at the bottom."

AHD also offers calving support products: calf oral electrolytes, D-Scour paste, Protexin, antiseptic lube, iodine tincture spray, PVP spray, iodine udder cream and Teatease udder cream (with a mastitis protection claim), two colostrum preserver formulations, liquid and powder, disinfectants such as Varicide, Vetacide and disinfectants Virukill, Oral-Mag and stock iodine.



## Ford Focus offers more

**NEW ZEALAND'S** Car of the Year, the Ford Focus, has just got better, says its maker.

Various enhancements, including Sync and Active City Stop, offer buyers of the 2013 Ford Focus safety and connectivity previously only available in premium vehicles, Ford says.

Sync is software that provides hands-free, voice-activated in-car connectivity; it is standard in the Focus range. It allows customers to connect a compatible mobile phone or digital media player via Bluetooth or USB.

Ford New Zealand marketing manager Chris Masterson says Focus has always been a rewarding car to drive with its smart technologies and engaging dynamics.

Since its launch in 2011 the Focus has won many customers and awards, including New Zealand Car of the Year – an award voted on by motoring journalists. June sales put the Ford Focus in the number one position in its segment, beating the Corolla. The Ford Focus was also among the top five of all vehicles sold that month.

Key Sync features include:

**Automatic phone book download:** when connected to a compatible phone, Sync automatically downloads the names and numbers stored in the phone making them available via voice commands, removing the need to create individual voice-tags for contacts.

**Voice-control a phone:** use Sync to answer a call with the push of a button and make a call with the sound of your voice. Sync also includes the same features offered on most phones, including caller ID, call waiting, conference calling, caller log, contact list, a signal strength icon and a phone battery charge icon.

**Smart voice activated music:** use Sync voice commands to browse the music collection on a compatible digital media player, mobile phone or USB drive by song title, album, artist and genre using voice commands such as “play artist Michael Jackson”.

**Listen to texts:** use Sync voice commands to read incoming text messages and to translate commonly used abbreviations.

Masterson says as well as voice commands, Sync can be operated via steering wheel-mounted controls.

# Spiked rotor and air seeder lifts work rate

GARETH GILLATT

**A FARMGARD** air seeder and Celli spiked rotor combination turned a major cropping and regrassing project into a simple operation, says Wellsford dairy farmer Paul Shepherd.

Shepherd milks 400 cows on a 185ha platform and cropped and this year regrassed 50ha of his farm using a new Celli Pioneer 140-305 spiked rotor hoe and Farmgard Proseed A8 air seeder.

There were no missed strikes in the regrassing, which Shepherd attributes to the weather and the new air seeder. “You couldn’t have asked for a better season. From March 1 conditions were perfect.”

Northland has been enjoying a mild winter, with weather moving from La Nina to El Nino patterns, but Shepherd says the air seeder contributed most to the



success of the regrassing.

“Certainly there were no jobs that had to be redone and that’s not always the case with direct drilling. Some people around the district this season had disappointing results with direct drilling and they don’t know why, while contractors who used air seeders seemed to be getting uniformly good strikes,” he says.

Shepherd last season planted 30ha maize silage,

a 10ha brassica/sorghum mix and 10ha of Italian annuals across the farm as part of a capital regrassing project.

While contractors planted the 30ha of maize Shepherd planted the 20ha of Italian annuals, brassica and sorghum with the air drill and did all the cultivation with the spike rotor hoe. He regrassed all the cropped area with the air drill.

Celli New Zealand dis-

tributor Farmgard says the tailgate at the back of the spike rotor hoe allows soil to be worked up twice

within the same pass. Tel. 09 275 5555 or 03 437 9000 [www.farmgard.co.nz](http://www.farmgard.co.nz)

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# Jaguar leaps to the top

**JAGUAR CARS** rank second in “vehicle nameplate appeal” and the Range Rover Evoque most appeals in the “entry premium crossover”

SUV segment, says auto industry researcher JD Power and Associates in its ‘automotive performance, execution and layout’ (APEAL) study

released last week. For the second successive year Jaguar ranks second out of 34 brands measured; the Jaguar XJ scored second-

highest large premium car.

Land Rover gained sixth (in a tie) among 34 brands, and the new Range Rover Evoque

scored as mentioned above.

Jaguar is the second most-improved brand, driven mostly by the Jaguar XJ (901 points), one of three models to score above 900.

Land Rover won sixth overall in the industry in a tie. The



Jaguar XJ and its improved interior.



Land Rover



Range Rover Evoque, in its first year in the survey, scored higher than other entry premium crossover SUVs. Buyers most appreciate its design and fuel economy. This is the 102nd global award for the Range Rover Evoque.

The APEAL study examines how gratifying a new vehicle is to own

and drive based on owner evaluations of 80 vehicle attributes.

The study influences product development. The 2012 study gathered responses between February and May 2012 from 74,000 buyers and lessees of new 2012 cars and trucks who were then surveyed after 90 days of ownership.



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## NAIT consultation begins

**PROPOSED REGULATIONS** governing the National Identification and Tracing (NAIT) scheme are out for public consultation. These cover infringements and the set-up of a panel to consider applications for access to the NAIT information system.

Regulations passed to date detail how to meet requirements of the NAIT Act, cover obligations and exemptions, levy types and various fees and forms.

The discussion paper sets out 12 proposed infringement offences, says MPI director of preparedness and partnership, David Hayes. The offences encourage compliance with the law.

“The NAIT scheme has a strong focus on education, assistance and direction... effective for the vast majority of people. The proposed regulations for



infringement offences give the scheme another way to enhance compliance.”

Six proposed regulations cover the

set-up of an access panel to consider applications to access data held in the NAIT information system. “The rationale... is that some applications

for access to NAIT data may be quite complex in terms of judging and balancing the ‘industry good’ benefit of the application against privacy rights,” Hayes says.

The panel, to be appointed and publicly notified, would have three or four members with specialist knowledge and experience in the pastoral sector and/or privacy law. “Public feedback will improve these proposals,” Hayes says.

Submissions must be received by September 5.



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# Smooth CVT tractor has all the extras

**CHRIS DINGLE**

**“THE HARDEST** thing about this tractor is to stay awake while you’re driving it”, says John Watson of Cobram East in northern Victoria, Australia. “The comfort, quietness and smoothness have far exceeded what I expected.”

He is talking about the new Fendt 822 delivered to his farm in mid-April. This tractor represented a huge change in technology, even in that relatively short time, he says.

Last year Watson and his wife Haylee ran 550 cows but moved 210 of them about 4km away when they started another dairy on another property. That other farm is now up to 300 cows.

“When we build back up to 350 cows on this farm,” Watson says, “we’ll do 200 to 230,000kgMS.”

With their expansion plans, they discussed the machinery options for a couple of months before making the purchase decision. “I was yet to hear anybody with any negative comments about the Fendt,” Watson says, “and in the end the dealer played a big part. The package from Cobram Farm Equipment was too good to turn down.”

The Fendt 822 uses a 6.056L 6-cylinder engine rated at 200hp, or 220hp if needed under load.

“The big thing people say is that it is expensive, but when you consider the extras that come with it, to build up other tractors to this level would be more expensive. It even has a GPS system, including autosteer, which can come on line in September. Working at night, the lights are far superior to what we’ve been used to,” Watson says.

“This will only be operated by me, Haylee and my dad, Peter. I am going to spend 90% of the time in it. I wanted the most comfortable and quiet unit. I hadn’t driven one before I owned it. There’s so much room around you compared with our previous

tractors. And the visibility is great. So far it’s done 130 hours.”

Fendt says the ease of operation in the cab owes a lot to the new touch screen Varioterminal which unites all the tractor, implement and Variotronic functions in one terminal to make demanding work more manageable.

They claim a huge reduction in the number of hand movements each working day as operators make all settings and adjustments from one central operating unit on the right-hand armrest.

The 800 series Vario tractors are equipped with a headland management system, so that drivers can activate automated operating sequences at the headlands with the touch of a button. The sequence can be edited and adjusted individually when the tractor is at a standstill.

“It has incredible transmission and fuel economy,” adds Watson. “We recently baled and wrapped 45 bales an hour over three days, using the McHale Fusion baler/wrapper. We used 11.5L of diesel per hour.”

John Shannon, from Cobram Farm Equipment, explained that with Fendt’s selective catalytic reduction (SCR) technology, the exhaust is treated with Adblue, a solution containing urea which converts 95% of nitrous oxides into non-toxic nitrogen and water to comply with emissions standards and lower fuel consumption.

The Fendt 822 seems bigger than your average dairyman’s tractor, and Watson explained they need the horsepower for deep ripping for lucerne and the Case tractor wasn’t quite big enough.

“We need it mainly for ground work and it doesn’t matter what load is on it – if you want more speed it doesn’t range change, because of the variable transmission. There’s no jerkiness through the gears. You just set the speed and it holds it, regardless of

hills, slopes up and down, sideways. There are few moving parts compared with other tractors.

“We do a lot of deep ripping and heavy work

that loads the transmission up. The main work for it will be cultivation, running the baler/wrapper, and it has been brilliant with our trailed boom

sprayer. We plan to laser 300 acres on the other farm; that’s one of the reasons that we went as big as we did. We’ll get a laser bucket when we need it.”



Victoria farmer John Watson

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# Lely toasts two decades of robotics

**TWENTY YEARS** ago Lely installed the world's first milking robot on a dairy farm in the Netherlands. The company says it was a historic milestone for what would later be called the most important invention of the 20th century for dairy farmers.

For the first time, cows were milked without manual labour and development continued from there with the introduction of the milk quality control system (MQC) and the time for cows (T4C) management programme.

"As innovators in agriculture we are proud to have been able to provide solutions to the customer for 20 years and consider consistent innovation to be the key to the future."

Lely is toasting its 20th anniversary with customers with an offer

of a '20YRS' celebration package. In this package the customer will find 20 years of knowledge reflected in its rumination and reproduction module and more special features including the bringing together of 20 years of experience in innovative developments.

**Total content of the 20YRS celebration package:**

- Pura steam cleaning system – offering maximum security in udder health, food safety and the environment.
- Stainless steel Gravitor system – accurate stable weighing floor, offering more information on the health of cows.
- I-flow selection gate including the Texas gate – manage cow



- traffic and cow treatment.
  - Consumables box (including parts for year-round use).
  - M4Use for easy and quick milk separation.
  - Rumination module for optimal results.
  - Reproduction module (including free user licence for five years) for less insemination and less labour costs.
- Lely says a network of sales people, certified service engineers and dairy farm management advisors are ready to assist.



## Quality fodder on the menu

**THE QUALITY** of fodder is crucial to achieving good milk production, animal health and enhancing farmers' business results, says Lely.

The forage harvesting machinery and milking machine maker says while there is no universal answer on how to produce the best roughage, its new machines are a great help.

"Each business is unique and requires its own approach. Therefore, Lely has developed an exceptionally broad range of forage harvesting machines always allowing customers to select the

machine that best suits their specific situation," the company says.

Lely's Hibiscus Vario boasts maximum working width and perfect swaths. The rake features a hydraulic Vario working width adjustment. This system also reduces the transport height to 3.95 m by lowering the rotors and locking them at the same time.

The broad range of the hydraulic working width adjustment gives the driver the possibility to adjust working and swath width while raking. The same movement of the suspension is used to

lower the rotors for transport and secure them at the same time.

A unique feature on all four CD models is the cardanic 3D suspension with the pivot points located slightly in front of the centre of the rotor which ensures stability.

The 'smart' front wheel assembly close to the tines takes care of proper raking while the wheel at the back of the carriage carries the weight of the rotor. The 745 has four wheels and the 915 models have two extra (tandem) wheels at the back to add more stability and quiet running for larger rotors.

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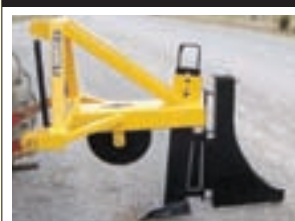
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# Rules change planned for agri vehicles

**PLANNED CHANGES** to the rules for agricultural vehicles will reduce compliance costs while still ensuring safety, says Associate Transport Minister Simon Bridges.

The change is to a two-tier system for agricultural vehicles based on a 40km/h operating speed. Vehicles operating below this speed will be exempt warrants of fitness and work time requirements.

A new licence endorsement will allow car licence holders to drive a greater range of agricultural vehicles if they have the skills.

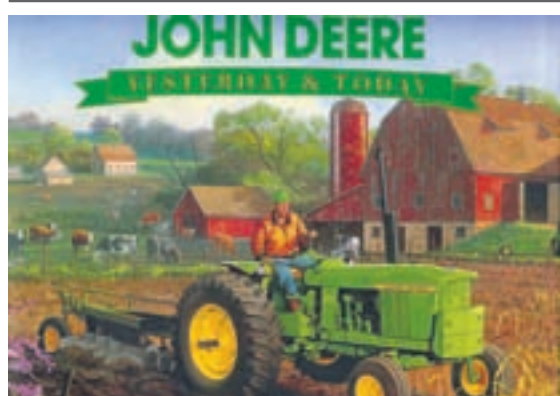
Other changes will improve and simplify the rules on pilot vehicles, work time variation schemes, hazard identification and vehicle visibility.

"Safety remains a key factor," Bridges says. "Agricultural vehicles [must] use a flashing amber beacon to better alert other road users to [their] presence. Better and less regulation [will improve] compliance and flexibility for

vehicle owners."

A review in September 2011 responded to farmers' and contractors' concerns that existing laws failed to take into account the special nature of farm vehicles and the demands of production.

Introducing the changes for agricultural vehicles will require land transport rule amendments, and Bridges says there will be further opportunities for industry and the public to make submissions.



## Sticking to core values

**FARM MACHINERY** maker Deere & Co this year marks 175 years in the business begun when founder John Deere in 1837 began making and selling a self-scouring plough.

"John Deere revolutionised agriculture and he made farming in the tough soil of the US Midwest a productive and profitable venture," says Samuel R. Allen, chairman and chief executive of Deere & Company.

"Our recognition of this special anniversary reminds us of the many thousands of John Deere employees who came before us to make this company a world leader."

Deere had moved from Vermont to start a blacksmith shop in Grand Detour, Illinois. He later moved the business to Moline, Illinois, where the world headquarters is still located. The company was incorporated as Deere & Company in 1868. Now it has 60,000 employees worldwide.

John Deere is noted for its farming, forestry, construction and turf care equipment. Also it makes engines and powertrains for its equipment and for other OEMs, provides credit and other financial services to those who buy equipment, and is a pioneer in precision irrigation.

John Deere instilled four core values in his company, Allen says.

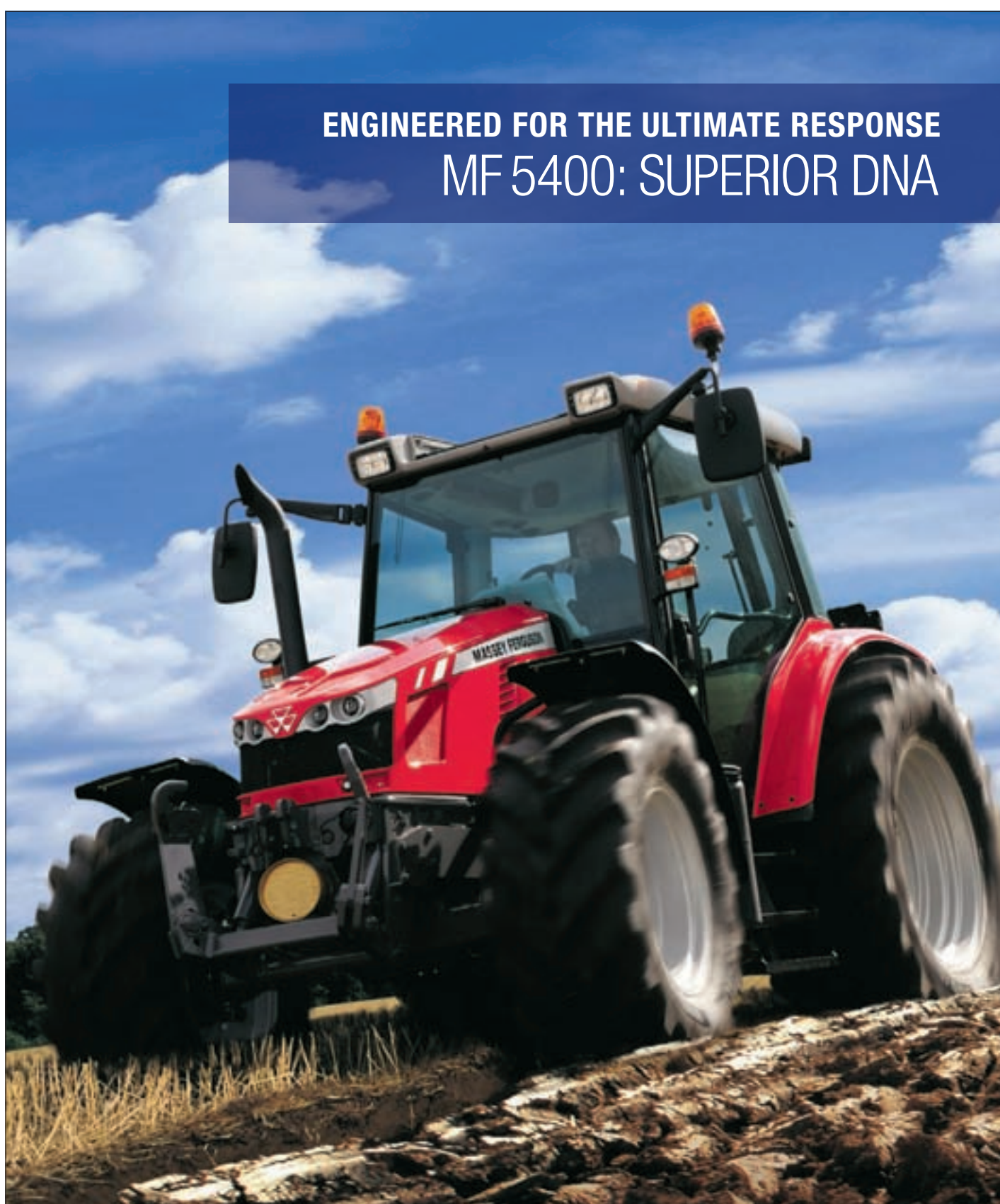
"Today John Deere employees still deliver on the important values of integrity, quality, commitment and innovation and we believe these values have been the key to the longevity of our enterprise."

The anniversary celebrations began recently when the John Deere Foundation gave money to help fund Feeding America's Backpack scheme that provides children food they need for a weekend. Since 2007 the John Deere Foundation has supported Backpack in several communities where Deere has factories.

Deere & Co's recent annual report simply bore the number '175' in large type on a simple silver cover.

Various Deere business units worldwide, including Australia and New Zealand, will recognise the anniversary for employees and Deere will help in many communities where John Deere employees live and work. [www.johndeere.co.nz](http://www.johndeere.co.nz)

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The new sports-styled Kia Carens is to be unveiled at the Paris Motor Show.

# A sneak peek

**KIA'S NEW** Carens compact people mover will make its world premier next month at the Paris Motor Show.

Photographs show a new cab-forward design with more room for passengers on the lengthened wheelbase. It also looks sportier than the vehicle it replaces, thanks to a lower roofline and larger (up to 18 inch)

wheels that fill the arches.

Kia Motors says the new Carens embodies the theme "responsive space", meaning more spacious functionality inside the vehicle. The vehicle's "sporty looks will garner the sort of emotional appeal that is becoming a regular feature of Kia products." The new model progresses the design concept of the

previous seven-seat Carens, says Todd McDonald, general manager of Kia Motors New Zealand.

"It has the hallmarks of advanced design and fresh thinking we have come to expect from Kia and chief design officer Peter Schreyer."

Details of the Carens are still to be released but it will be evaluated for the New Zealand market.

# 'Less jiggle in the ride'

**MARK MACFARLANE**

**NOISE, VIBRATION**

and harshness are the enemy of car makers worldwide. Engineers work with materials and design to make the internal environment as peaceful and relaxing as possible. But the risk is that cars can become lifeless and dull.

Not with Suzuki, which gets a big tick in the character box; a prime example is this manufacturer's new diesel-powered Swift.

With a frugal but powerful engine producing 190Nm in a car weighing little more than 1 tonne,

this was always going to be a drive to put a smile on my face.

I like the new Swift. It is a step up from the old model with a better-sorted chassis giving great driver appeal, high levels of grip and turn-in, and less jiggle in the ride.

It is well equipped in the diesel version with a good sound, all the expected safety gear including electronic stability and seven airbags and nice alloys. It is quiet inside despite the diesel and well put together with pleasant materials throughout.

The mostly black interior doesn't seem dark;

plenty of window space gives good all-round visibility.

My only grizzle is that despite this being a car made for city commuting, the comfortable ride and huge torque offered by the diesel engine would well match cruise control, but it isn't fitted. This would make for even more relaxing highway driving which this car does with ease.

As you would expect, the fuel economy is impressive - 4.2L/100km and the engine produces just 109g CO<sub>2</sub>/km.

In another nod to the environment all the colours are rendered in water-based paints.



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270 ltr	710 dia x 1350 high	3kW
270 ltr	810 dia x 1050 high	3kW
350 ltr	710 dia x 1660 high	2 x 3kW
350 ltr	810 dia x 1400 high	2 x 3kW
450 ltr	710 dia x 2010 high	2 x 3kW
450 ltr	810 dia x 1600 high	2 x 3kW
500 ltr	915 dia x 1400 high	2 x 3kW
600 ltr	810 dia x 1900 high	3 x 3kW
600 ltr	915 dia x 1500 high	3 x 3kW
700 ltr	810 dia x 2200 high	3 x 3kW
700 ltr	915 dia x 1700 high	3 x 3kW
800 ltr	915 dia x 1900 high	3 x 3kW
800 ltr	1160 dia x 1400 high	3 x 3kW
1000 ltr	915 dia x 2400 high	3 x 3kW
1000 ltr	1160 dia x 1650 high	3 x 3kW
SUPERHEAT STAINLESS SIZES		
600 ltr	920 dia x 1650 high	3 x 3kW
1000 ltr	1170 dia x 1640 high	3 x 5kW
1200 ltr	1170 dia x 1865 high	3 x 5kW
1500 ltr	1170 dia x 2180 high	3 x 5kW

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