

RURAL GUARDIAN

South Island
wide



SEPTEMBER 2022 EDITION

TO EVERY FARM IN THE SOUTH ISLAND



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QUINN ON THE UP P20-23



RABBITS, RABBITS... P32-33



ANIMAL ABUSE OR PURE FUN IN THE SUN?

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Pat Deavoll

RURAL REPORTER

Nitrogen is every farmer's dirty word!

Farmers are on the run, seeking ways to reduce nitrogen and comply with both local and national regulations.

But all is not lost. Lincoln University Dairy Farm (LUDF) has been trialing a number of nitrogen-reducing initiatives and has had quite a lot of success. (p 14-16)

The farm uses lysimeters—there are 60 spread across the farm—that collect the water and measure the nitrate concentration. This gives the farm a way of knowing how much nitrate is leaching from the farm.

It also uses Italian ryegrass which reduces the amount of nitrate leaching by 25 per cent compared to a perennial ryegrass/white clover mix.

Dealing with the nitrogen ogre



The farm also uses fodderbeet to reduce the amount of nitrogen deposited in the individual urine patch.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Italian has a lower leaching loss, the reason being that it has a higher growth rate in the late autumn when uptake from the plant is critical to reducing the risk of leaching.

The farm also uses plantain, maize, or fodderbeet to reduce the amount of nitrogen deposited in the individual urine patch. These plants can reduce the nitrogen in the urine patch from 700kg

per hectare down to 500kg per hectare—a 42 per cent reduction in nitrogen leaching from the LUDF lysimeters.

Next LUDF reduced the stocking rate from four cows per hectare down to 3.4 cows per hectare. That took off about 100 cows. It got the same milk solids by improving the cow's diet.

It reduced the fertilizer applied from 277 kg per hectare

down to 148 giving about a 15 per cent reduction in leaching.

It also introduced improved irrigation management and irrigation infrastructure. And these changes combined to give it around about 25-30 per cent reduction in nitrate leaching, taking it from 72 to about 42, and well meeting its target of 30 per cent.

If this interests you, go to pages 14-16.

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Rodeo: Family fun or animal abuse?



Pat Deavoll
RURAL REPORTER

A blustery nor' wester whips down Lake Wanaka picking up the sand in the rodeo arena and forcing the 5000 spectators seated on the embankment to hang on to their hats. The dry heat has been building all morning.

On the north side of the arena in a corralled area there is a ruckus- a clatter of hooves on metal and the snort and bellow of a large animal. Is the animal distressed? Opinion is divided.

A bunch of cowboys in chaps, Stetson hats, and checked shirts perch on the top of the railings like a flock of birds watching the commotion evolving beneath them.

Suddenly a gate opens and a bull with cowboy rider astride bursts from the coral. The crowd roars. The beast is spectacular- all horns and muscle and sleek copper coat,



When you chase a little calf around, flick it in the air and dump it on the ground, this causes distress. SAFE.

burnished for the occasion.

The animal bucks and writhes in the air while the rider hangs on grimly to a rope around the bull's girth. The Stetson flies off, the chaps flap wildly. The rider's other hand is raised in the air grasping gamely at nothing.

The spectacle goes on for a split second then just as suddenly the rider is flipped in the air and dumped on the

ground in a cloud of dust.

He scampers out of the way of the flying hooves. Three men in matching pink shirts rush arms aloft at the bull which gives another half-hearted buck then turns with a snort of derision and trots head high out of the arena.

Bull riding, the penultimate discipline of any rodeo, is underway. The expectation of spectacle is high. The crowds



Bull riding: the penultimate discipline of any rodeo.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

love it. This is what they have come from all parts of the country to Wanaka to see.

But outside on the dusty road, two dozen tired protesters hand out leaflets to the last of the arriving carloads. Some drivers stick their hands out the window and take a flyer, others ignore them.

The leader of this small protest group, Queenstown Animal Activists, is Kat Gollop

and she says it is her third year campaigning at the event.

Rodeo does not qualify as a sport, she says.

"It is simply animal abuse."

The number of organisations lobbying for New Zealand to join a burgeoning quota of countries to ban rodeos is growing. New Zealand is one of only six countries around the world to still allow rodeo.

Continued on P4



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A bunch of cowboys in chaps, Stetson hats, and checked shirts perch on the top of the railings like a flock of birds.



Rodeo does not qualify as a sport, it is simply animal abuse: SAFE.

From P3

Save Animals from Exploitation (SAFE) CEO Debra Ashton says the organisation is “strongly opposed to rodeo mainly because we believe it’s cruel to animals and imposes unnecessary stress and at times causes pain and death.”

“We do not believe in this for the sake of entertainment,” she says.

SAFE also believes rodeo is against the Animal Welfare Act which states that “animals must be handled in a manner that minimises the likelihood of unnecessary pain and distress.”

“When you chase a little calf around, flick it in the air and dump it on the ground, this causes distress – even the rodeo people will acknowledge this.

“The act says we can’t do this and yet we allow it to happen. We have a law that says one thing, but it’s not enforced.

“If a farmer were to do things to his farm animals that are done in rodeo there is a good likelihood that farmer would be prosecuted for animal cruelty. Have you ever seen a farmer lasso a calf and smack it to the ground?

“Any farmer knows that if you treat an animal with

respect and don’t cause it any distress the animal will be calm. But a calm animal is not performing. So the animal must be put under a certain level of stress to perform for the people watching,” Ashton says.

President of the New Zealand Rodeo Cowboys Association (NZRCA) Lyal Cocks says rodeo has an image problem, but thousands enjoy it.

“What attracts people to compete in rodeo? It’s a very competitive sport involving male, female, and animals against the clock. It requires teamwork with and against animals. Competitors have an

affinity with animals and want to work and compete with them.

“It is a family affair- children, parents, and grandparents can be competing against one another,” he says.

In any sport with animals, regrettably, there are accidents, but it is no different from farming or horse racing, he says.

“Without healthy competitive animals, we don’t have a sport. Everyone involved in rodeo is an animal lover, that’s what the sport is all about. We are people who like to interact with animals.

“There is an unawareness out there that all the animals that

compete in rodeo are trained and prepared before they get anywhere near a rodeo arena.

“The steers, the horses, the bulls – people seem to think they come straight from a paddock, onto a truck, and down to an arena. That’s why there are accusations out there that these animals are in pain and distress.

“But there is evidence to show that this is not the case- the animals are trained and know what’s happening and our injury statistics show that there has been a 0.5 per cent injury rate over the last five years which is very, very low.

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"It is like any sport- occasionally there are accidents but we are complying with the Act, and we have made significant progress since 2018.

"For example, we now have an independent welfare oversight committee that reviews everything that rodeo does. We have altered the length of runs, and we have made sure that only approved animal stock trainers can supply the trained animals- you can't just go down to a farm and secure a bunch of steers for an event and take them down and buck them out.

"So there are lots of changes and there are more to come. We are putting together a whole welfare assurance system that makes sure we adhere to all the minimum standards in the code. "And that's where we are at!"

Wanaka farmer and builder Patrick McCarthy won last year's points tally for the open division of the New Zealand rodeo circuit.

He accrued points based on the amount of money he had won across the season. One dollar equated to one point. "Things were tracking pretty well as far as points go for me last season. My team roping partner and I just had to try and keep doing what we are doing leading up to the national finals," he says.

There are 30 rodeos across the country culminating in the national finals in Canterbury in March. The top eight



It is a family affair- children, parents, and grandparents...

finalists from each discipline get to compete. At 45 years, McCarthy, who has been competing all his life, is no longer a youngster in the sport.

"It's a sporting environment I grew up with; it was part of our lives every summer - being involved with horses and animals," he says. "Dad was always into it, so I grew up with it."

These days he limits himself to the rope tie and team roping events, but used to do bull riding.

"Bull riding is a young man's event, and I don't really fit into that category anymore," he says.

"But that's the beauty of rodeo, there are disciplines you can do at whatever age. My dad still competes in team roping, and he is over 70 now. And still loves it

"You travel all around the country doing rodeo especially if you are trying to get points for a national ranking.

"You get to know all the competitors, it's like a big family with everyone easy going, and on the same page," he says.

"Sadly rodeo has had some bad press over the last few years. We are a small group that seems to have got a lot of attention."

A legal challenge against rodeo was dismissed in the High

Court in Wellington last month.

The court declined to make a ruling on the legality of rodeo and the judicial review sought by the New Zealand Animal Law Association (NZALA) and SAFE instead referred it to the National Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (NAWAC).

Animal advocate groups said they were disappointed and the ruling amounts to a passing of the ball.

However, Ashton said they respect the decision but will not give up.

Cocks said the NZRCA fully complies with the Animal Welfare Act.

"We are happy with the outcome, but we are not happy with the action taken..."

"It was a frivolous waste of time and taxpayers dollars," he says.

Before the review was even heard the parties had agreed whatever minor mistakes may have occurred in the issuing of the 2018 Code of Welfare could be remedied in the current Code review, he says.

"Both animal rights groups are participating in the current review and have the opportunity to make their views heard. The judicial review was just grandstanding."

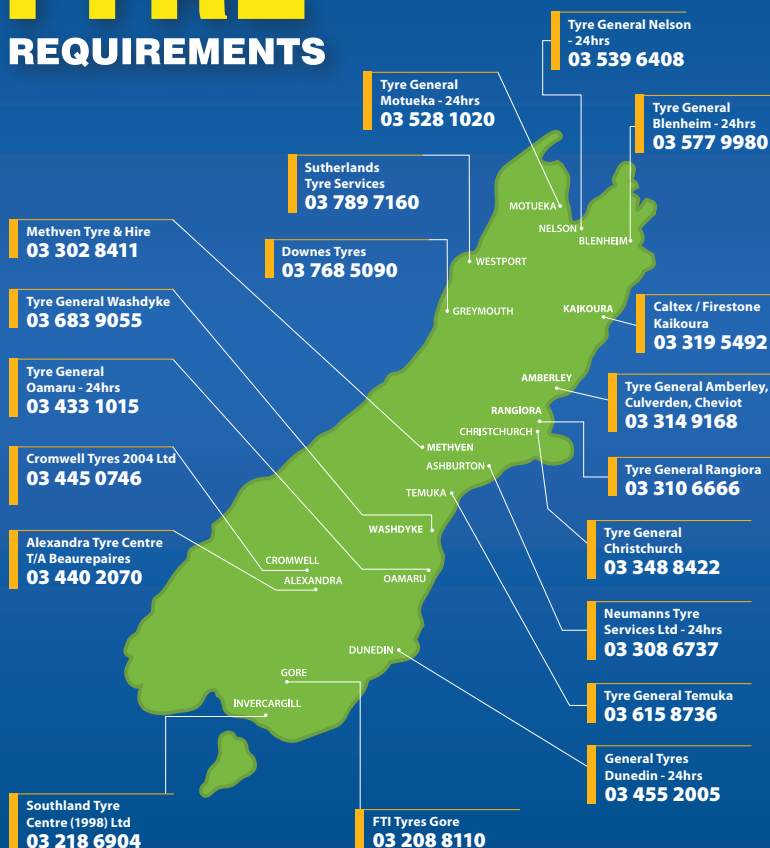
Cocks said he was looking forward to a new season of rodeo, which begins at Labour Weekend, including Wanaka's annual rodeo scheduled for January 2, 2023.

The sun goes down, the dust settles and it's the end of the Wanaka Rodeo for another year. The spectators leave, sunburned and wind blasted but content with a day of spectacle and excitement.

The competitors are either happy with their performance or disappointed and hoping to do better at the next event. The protesters out on the road hand out their flyers with renewed vigour as the cars stream past.

So what has this Wanaka day been? A family day of fun in the sun? A competitor's thrill? Or a blatant abuse of animal welfare?

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Participation in sport is essential to a boy's growth.

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Waihi's programmes help build character.

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— Allan Short, Headmaster



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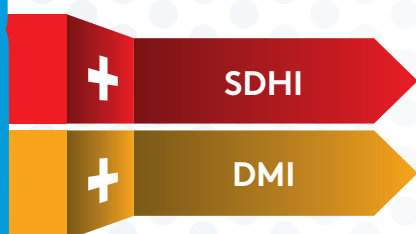
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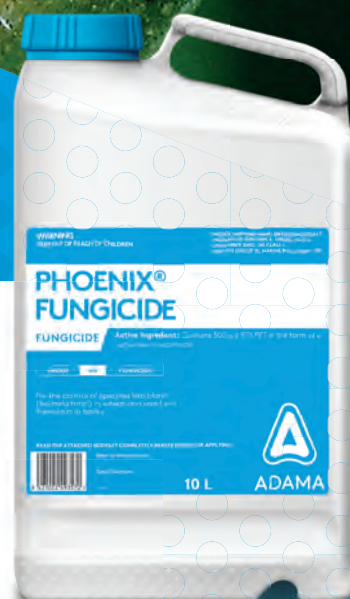
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Replacement strategies for farm machinery

A complete line of machinery is one of the largest investments that a farm business can make. Yet, unlike land or buildings, machinery must be constantly monitored, maintained, and eventually replaced. How and when equipment is replaced can mean a difference of thousands of dollars in annual production costs.

Costs related to the machinery line clearly have a large effect on whether farms are high-profit producers. Many producers give less attention to machinery costs than other cost areas because cash expenditures are made infrequently. And, once the investment is made, depreciation and interest (except on loans) become noncash costs, and are less visible.

Machinery costs change over time

One of the difficulties in analysing machinery costs is that they change over time. Depreciation tends to be high at first, especially for a machine purchased new, but declines over time. Likewise, interest expense is high initially but gradually diminishes. This is true whether the interest cost is cash interest paid on a loan, or an opportunity cost based on revenue foregone by continuing to own a machine year after year.

On the other hand, repair costs may amount to little or nothing



Unlike land or buildings, machinery must be constantly monitored, maintained, and eventually replaced.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

when a machine is still under warranty, but eventually, increase as parts wear out and maintenance requirements rise. Fuel and lubrication costs usually do not change much over time, although an older engine may eventually lose some degree of fuel efficiency.

Reasons to replace machinery

The decision to replace an item of farm machinery can be made for several reasons.

Cost minimization

The standard rule for minimizing the long-run cost of equipment is to make a change when the annualised total cost of owning and operating the machine begins to increase.

While the rule of increasing total cost can give a general picture of when to

replace a particular machine, it cannot give a precise answer. Note that repair costs are projected to increase gradually over time. In reality, though, repair costs tend to be quite variable from year to year, ranging from only routine maintenance items to a complete overhaul. Being able to anticipate when large repair costs will be needed is a key consideration in deciding when to replace a machine.

Continued on P10

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One of the difficulties in analysing machinery costs is that they change over time.



In reality, repair costs tend to be quite variable from year to year.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

From P9 Reliability

Besides the standard machinery costs, most operators also consider timeliness costs in their replacement decisions. Timeliness costs occur when crops are not planted or harvested at the optimal time. They can be attributed to losses in yield, such as when maize or barley are planted too late to enjoy a full growing season, or a loss of quality, such as when hay or silage is not harvested at its peak nutritional value.

If a machine breaks down at a critical time, timeliness costs can be quite high. Timeliness costs are very hard to measure,

however, and their importance depends on the weather in any given year. Nevertheless, they should not be ignored, especially in climates where the optimal planting or harvesting period is rather short, and for crops that are particularly sensitive to the effects of weather. Owning machinery that has a high probability of breaking down increases the risk of crop losses.

Pride of ownership

Many farmers take pride in owning and operating new, modern machinery. They may be willing to accept higher long-run costs in return. If the farm business is financially able to bear this cost, there

is nothing wrong with "new paint." However, the operators should have a clear idea of how their own machinery costs compare with those of other operations and the scope of their opportunity cost from not having capital invested in other assets.

New technology

In some cases a machine may be in perfectly good working order, but the introduction of new technology has made it obsolete. Newer models may do a better job of harvesting or planting, or operate more efficiently. Care should be taken to distinguish new technology that can increase profits from

changes that simply provide more convenience and comfort.

Need for capacity

When the number of hectares of crops being produced increases significantly, operators may need to replace machinery with models that have higher capacity to complete planting and harvesting without serious timeliness losses. Likewise, when farm size is reduced, it may be possible to cut costs by downsizing the machinery set.

The farm machinery market

The market for farm machinery is subject to changes in supply and demand, just as for any other product. In particular, the demand for both

new and used machinery is strongly affected by ups and downs in the farm economy. The operator who maintains a good capital reserve or borrowing capacity may be able to reduce long-run ownership costs by replacing machinery when dealers have excess inventory and are willing to offer deep discounts to make a sale. When the farm economy is below average, there may be bargains available in used machinery.

General replacement strategies

There are at least four general strategies that farmers can follow for replacing machinery.

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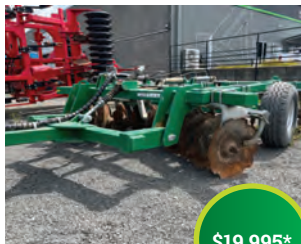
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The market for farm machinery is subject to changes in supply and demand, just as for any other product.



The demand for both new and used machinery is strongly affected by ups and downs in the farm economy.

Replace frequently

This approach minimizes the risk of breakdowns and costly repairs by trading key machinery items every few years. Even when repairs occur, they often will be covered by the original warranty. Operators who cover a large number of acres each year and would be severely inconvenienced by extended downtime are most likely to follow this strategy.

Although this is probably a more expensive approach over the long run, some of the extra costs are offset by fewer timeliness losses, the ability to farm more acres, and less need to invest in repair and

maintenance tools and facilities.

Operators who trade machinery frequently may find that leasing or rollover ownership plans are more feasible for them than conventional purchase plans.

Replace something every year

A second approach is to try to replace one or two pieces of machinery every year. The goal is to spend about the same amount on new equipment each year. This avoids having to make a very large cash outlay in any one year. However, it also could result in replacing machinery before it is really necessary.

This strategy often is used by

operators who prefer to finance machinery purchases out of their annual cash flow rather than with borrowed money. It works best when the net cash income of the operation is fairly constant from year to year or when significant cash reserves are available.

Replace when cash is available

A third approach is to postpone major machinery purchases until a year when cash income is higher than average. This keeps the machinery purchase from cutting into funds needed for other purposes such as family living and debt servicing.

It also helps to level out income

for income tax purposes, although rapid depreciation methods and the ability to use income averaging have made this less of a consideration than in previous years. The biggest disadvantage of this strategy is that it is very hard to predict when extra cash will be available. Furthermore, a machine may become seriously unreliable before the business has sufficient funds to replace it.

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Finally, some operators simply hang on to machinery until it reaches the point where it can no longer perform its intended function and is not worth renovating. This may be the least cost approach in the

long run, but it runs the risk of a machine failing at a crucial time, or having to arrange financing on short notice.

The operator also must be willing to use less than the latest technology. Some older items can be relegated to less critical uses, such as keeping a second planter for a backup unit or using an older tractor for jobs such as powering an auger. This strategy works best for operators who have considerable flexibility in when they complete key field operations, and who have the skill, patience, and facilities to do their own repair and maintenance work.

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Huge interest in native planting in urban areas



Mary Ralston
FOREST AND BIRD

Here's a positive bit of conservation news! There has been a huge interest and growth in native plantings in urban areas as well as along riparian margins in rural areas.

This has great benefit to native species, water quality, and also human health and wellbeing. New plantings aren't as good as original native vegetation cover, but they're the next best thing.

Urban forests can fairly quickly become home to native birds and lizards and improve species richness, especially for the species that are less susceptible to the pressures of introduced mammalian predators.

Restoration of remnant urban forests also is also a good news story.

Researchers Elizabeth Elliot Noe, Andrew Barnes, Bruce Clarkson and John Innes showed that restored urban forests can return native birds to cities and improve species richness.

Although older restored forests support more species of native birds than new ones, some restored patches are close to the species richness of untouched remnants of

native forest. The abundance of birds increased as the forest canopy became denser in both new plantings and restored forests.

More good news is that introduced invasive mammals have no significant effect on either species richness or abundance of native birds in new urban forests.

Birds such as the small-bodied, insect-eating, and omnivorous silvereyes, fantails, and grey warblers – species that lay many eggs at a time and have multiple clutches in a season – cope with predation more successfully than the ground-nesting, single-egg laying species such as kea, kakapo or kiwi.

The reason rats and possums were not detected in the youngest forests is probably that they prefer a certain level of vegetation complexity, canopy cover, and tree height that just isn't available in younger areas.

Once these habitat requirements are met, after about nine years, rats and possums become relatively widespread. Ironically, the changes in vegetation structure and complexity that occur as the restored forest ages benefit native forest birds, but also provide habitat for invasive predators.

The younger forests supported the small birds such as fantails, silvereyes, and grey warblers, and older plantings were also home to nectar and fruit-feeding species such as bellbirds and tui.



Newly planted and restored urban forests bring back birds to the city.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

But the not-so-good news is that it can take decades – perhaps nearly a century – for new forests to approach the species diversity of a natural area.

So the take home message is that even though new plantings are not as good as original in terms of species diversity, they are still good,

and they keep getting better over time. The only caveat is that mammalian predator control will be needed at some point down the track.

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Can our native vegetation improve water quality?

According to the report by the New Zealand Ministry for the Environment, the continuous degradation of water quality is the main environmental issue that needs urgent consideration.

The three main drivers of degradation of water quality are nutrients, pathogens, and

sediments. Run-off from farming areas is the main contributor of nitrogen, phosphorous and pathogens into waterways and groundwater. In addition to this, the deforestation of many areas adjacent to waterways has increased the erosion of river banks, and removed the

natural barrier that reduced the inputs of nutrients, sediments and pathogens to streams from agricultural and urban areas.

ESR Science for Communities is working on the potential of New Zealand native vegetation to improve water quality. ESR has demonstrated that the

antimicrobial properties of manuka and kanuka are present in root systems. This means that microbial contaminants die-off is much faster under manuka and kanuka than under pasture.

ESR hypothesizes that restoring native vegetation where manuka and kanuka

are included in the margins of waterways, would reduce the amount of nutrients, sediments and pathogens that arrive from farming lands. In the same way, plantations of manuka and kanuka could be used to safely land-treat biowastes such as municipal wastewater or biosolids.

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LUDF: Fighting the good fight



Pat Deavoll
RURAL REPORTER

Nitrogen is the dirty word on every dairy farmer's agenda and Government and council regulations are coming thick and fast. But there is hope on the horizon according to Professor Keith Cameron of Lincoln University. Take a read of what he has to say.

Lincoln University Dairy Farm (LUDF) has taken on a number of initiatives and is having positive results in reducing the amount of nitrogen leached onto its paddocks, he says.

"We all know that we have to reduce nitrate leaching into rivers, lakes, and groundwater," says Cameron. "And the regional council and the government have set some hefty targets and goals for dairy farmers to achieve.

"Here in the Selwyn Waihora catchment, we have to reduce nitrogen leaching by 30 per cent. How are we going to do

that? It is a challenge."

In grazed pasture systems most nitrate leaching occurs from the urine off the cows rather than from fertilizer.

When the cow urinates she deposits somewhere between 500 and 700 kilograms of nitrogen per hectare per year. That's more than what the plants can take up, especially in the autumn when the nitrogen can be washed out of the soil over the winter.

The leaching loss from urea fertilizer is generally insignificant by comparison because it's applied at times when it's needed to create more pasture for the cows to eat. However, this creates recycling of the nitrogen back to the urine patch.

So a lot of the research being conducted in New Zealand is trying to find ways to reduce the nitrogen loss from this, Cameron says.

"At LUDF we use lysimeters – there are 60 spread across the farm – that collect the water and measure the nitrate concentration. That gives us a way of knowing how much nitrate is leaching from the farm," he says.

Using Italian ryegrass reduces the amount of



Nitrogen is the dirty word on every dairy farmer's agenda and Government and council regulations are coming thick and fast.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

nitrate leaching by 25 per cent compared to a perennial ryegrass/ white clover mix. Italian has a lower leaching loss, the reason being that it has a higher growth rate in the late autumn when uptake from the plant is critical to reducing the risk of leaching.

Another way to reduce nitrate leaching is to use plantain, maize, or fodderbeet to reduce the amount of nitrogen

deposited in the individual urine patch.

These plants can reduce the nitrogen in the urine patch from 700kg per hectare down to 500kg per hectare. Through the use of these plants there is a 42 per cent reduction in nitrogen leaching from the LUDF lysimeters, Cameron says.

There is a lot of research being conducted on the use of plantain to measure benefits

on the farm. Study has found that perennial ryegrass/ white clover mixture is higher in nitrogen but this can be reduced by putting plantain into the pasture mix. Including plantain and Italian ryegrass combined gives an even bigger reduction.

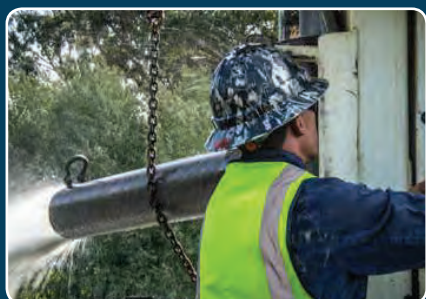
"We can use lower input systems to reduce nitrogen leaching and still be profitable," Cameron says.



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"In the Pastoral 21 Research Programme (P21) the effect of reducing a high stocking rate of five cows per hectare down to 3.5 cows per hectare was investigated. The nitrogen fertilizer application was dropped from 400 kg per hectare down to 150. The grain supplement was dropped from 800 down to 100 kg per cow per year. The important outcome was that the calculations showed there would be a reduction of 38 down to 30 kilogrammes of nitrogen per hectare leached. That is about a 30 per cent reduction."

LUDC liked this research outcome so much that it adopted it, says Cameron. It introduced a farm system change following on from P21 that gave a 15 per cent reduction in nitrogen leaching.

"So what did LUDF do? It reduced the stocking rate from four cows per hectare down to 3.4 cows per hectare. That took off about 100 cows. We got the same milk solids by improving the cow's diet. We reduced the fertilizer applied from 277 kg per hectare down to 148. That gave us about a 15 per cent reduction in leaching: from 72 down to below 60," says Cameron.

"We then also introduced improved irrigation management and irrigation infrastructure. And these changes combined gave us

around about 25-30 per cent reduction in nitrate leaching, taking us from 72 to about 42, and well meeting our target of 30 per cent.

"The irrigation management changes did this by reducing the amount of drainage from 330mm per year down to about 220mm per year. By using water more prudently we reduced the risk of excess drainage."

One of the reasons LUDF managed this was to use soil moisture monitoring with a scheduled irrigation application. It made sure water was only applied when and where it was really needed. Early season and late season LUDF reduced the amount of irrigation quite confidently because it knew how much water was in the soil profile.

The amount of water in the soil was measured using a system called Aquaflex which was developed at Lincoln University. It involves a sensed tape on an angle in the ground, and that sensor is able to detect how much moisture is present in the top layer of soil. The information from this electronic device goes to an aerial which sends a signal back to the farm office where it can examine the soil moisture on the farm.

"What we are able to do with this system is not exceed what is called "field capacity" – the

ability of the soil to hold on to the moisture," says Cameron.

"By doing this we reduced the amount of drainage and amount of nitrogen leaching.

"The other thing we did was improve the irrigation efficiency. We moved the center pivot 80 meters north, we took the swing arm off the end of it and replaced it with two slower part pivots. We also introduced solar set pivots in the corners which moved away from the long line laterals. What this did was reduce the amount of excess water applied which meant that an average amount of water was reduced down to 200mm.

"For options to reduce nitrogen leaching I suggest farmers start reducing actively managed irrigation- look at moisture management and look at the infrastructure to improve irrigation efficiency and improve water application.

When cows go to the winter grazing block they are feeding on fodderbeet or kale and we know that those systems can be leaking because urine is deposited onto the bare ground over the winter time, Cameron says.

A thirty per cent reduction in nitrogen leaching can be achieved by sowing a catch crop of oats after the cows have grazed the break of fodderbeet or kale.

Continued on P16



Professor Keith Cameron of Lincoln University: We all know that we have to reduce nitrate leaching into rivers, lakes, and groundwater.



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From P15

"The challenge is getting the catch crop in the ground when it's wet. Oats grow faster in the wintertime than ryegrass or most other plants," Cameron says.

Another option to reduce leaching loss is to build some standoff pads. Either a wood chip base or a synthetic carpet base – but the important thing is the animals are tipped off the winter grazing block once they have had their full ration of feed. Then there are 16-18 hours on the feed pads and the drainage from these pads is collected in the effluent pond. Expensive, but for some farmers, it helps to reduce the pugging damage to the farm as well.

How does the nitrogen system cycle around a pasture grazed system? The nitrogen from the cow, or from the clover all ends up in the soil in the form of ammonium, says Cameron.

Ammonium can be held in the soil. There are a group of microbes that like to use the ammonium as a source of energy and these change the ammonium into nitrate which isn't able to be held in the soil. That is why it leaches out in the drainage water. There has been a lot of research done to inhibit the microbes that convert ammonium into nitrate – this is called nitrification inhibiting.

"On LUDF we have installed a Cleartech effluent cooling system," says Cameron. "One of the benefits of this is that it reduces the amount of effluent requiring either storage in the pond or application to the land."

"When the cows come to the yard the effluent would normally go into the effluent storage pond but we have intersected that, put it in a clarifying

tank which treats the effluent and the top part of the tank is sent to a recycle tank to wash the yard. This means we are sending less effluent to the pond so it doesn't fill so quickly and we don't have to apply the effluent when the soils are wet."

So as a summary, here we go!

The current options for reducing nitrogen leaching on the farm to help achieve the targets that have been set are...

- The use of cool season active plants like Italian ryegrass.
- Reducing the urinary nitrogen concentration coming out the rear end of the cow by having plantain in the pasture, or other feed options like high carbohydrate maize or fodderbeet.
- Using a lower input system – you can reduce the inputs and still make as good a profit that reduces the leaching loss process.
- Reducing the stocking rate in the autumn also helps reduce leaching. It is urine deposited from March to May that is most susceptible to leaching.
- Improve the irrigation efficiency by soil moisture managing.
- Use catch crops e.g. oats, for winter forage grazing.
- Use standoff pads in the winter.
- Using nitrification inhibiting technology such as Cleartech as well as efficient recycling.



We moved the center pivot 80 meters north, we took the swing arm off the end of it and replaced it with two slower part pivots.



So what did LUDF do? It reduced the stocking rate from four cows per hectare down to 3.4 cows per hectare.

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Japanese Encephalitis: How much of a threat?

Japanese Encephalitis (JE) is endemic throughout South East Asia but in Australia is usually only found in northern Queensland. But due to wet summer conditions, it has been detected in piggeries in New South Wales, southern Queensland, and northern Victoria.

JE is transmissible to horses and humans, via a certain genus of mosquito. While chronic illness from infection is rare, the disease is potentially fatal and is, therefore, a concern.

Australia's southern shift of detected JE has introduced the disease as a risk to the horse breeding and racing industry. Where endemic, the disease can be managed by vaccination (horse or human), and this measure is being undertaken in more widespread areas of Australia in response to the threat.

For New Zealand, concerning the trade and transport of horses, the NZ Equine Health Association (NZEHA) and MPI (under their Government Industry Agreement for biosecurity) are considering the risks and response measures.

MPI considers that the likelihood of the disease entering New Zealand from an infected horse remains negligible because:

- 1) Horses (and humans) are a 'dead-end' host meaning mosquitos cannot acquire the virus from them.
- 2) There are no known confirmed mosquito species in New Zealand that are competent vectors of JE however we do have mosquitos of the same genus.

However, were JE to be detected in NZ, there are potential negative trade implications, as under the World Organisation for Animal Health. New Zealand could lose its Country Freedom Status for the virus for a period. This would add pre-export vaccination or other pre-export costs for horse exporters until the Country Freedom Status was reconfirmed.

New Zealand could choose to put a hold on the importing of horses from Australia to avoid this risk, but MPI and NZEHA recognise that valuable export trade would be vastly curtailed.

Another point worth considering is that New Zealand racehorses traveling to Sydney



MPI considers that the likelihood of the disease entering New Zealand from an infected horse remains negligible. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

or Queensland carnivals would be restricted to a one-way ticket.

On a measured and practical basis, MPI and NZEHA have jointly considered that the economic consequences of clinical cases of JE in horses in New Zealand would be low,

compared to the high economic consequences of stopping trade with Australia even for a short period.

Therefore, the agreed management option is that horse imports from Australia will continue and that persons in

charge of imported horses must observe them for clinical signs of JE for at least 21 days post-import. This requirement would be notified to vets via the equine branch of the NZ Veterinary Association and to consignees via the transport company.

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Dairy Focus

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COW LAMENESS – NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

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Young Maori leader shines bright in dairy industry



Pat Deavoll **RURAL REPORTER**

Three years ago, young Maori Quinn Morgan was a self-described city slicker, working as a personal trainer in Perth and spending hours sitting in traffic. But then, after a wedding in New Zealand, Covid's arrival, and some encouragement from farming family members, he ended up reluctantly taking a job in dairy farming back in New Zealand. Fast forward to 2022, and he's now leading a team of eight on a Pamu dairy farm in the Taupo area, raising his young family with a rural lifestyle and progressing quickly with his new career.

Morgan, recognised as the Ahuwhenua Young Maori Farmer of the Year in 2021, lept forward with another win

in his field with the emerging leader award at the annual Primary Industries New Zealand Awards.

He has been inspiring others to look at a career in the primary industries, as well as giving back to the sector.

Morgan now talks about how he can encourage others, in particular, young Maori into the dairy sector. He reckons dairy farmers need to be looking in other places for future dairy staff. He wants those from a similar background to him- that's urban, non-farming, and Maori- to discover what he did about the dairy sector.

"In 2019 I was living in Australia working in a gym. My wife and I had come back to NZ to get married. As soon as we got back to OZ we said to each other, let's move back to NZ for good and by January 2020 I was on a plane with some big dreams. My first goal was the police force but they weren't recruiting during Covid. My family were still in Perth - I didn't get to see them for six months. Pretty hard.



Quinn Morgan – a rising star in the dairy industry.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

"I was lucky enough to have a lot of family members that farmed and they suggested I try dairy farming. I said no way but then the stability hooked me in - the house was a big trigger.

"It was hard at the start and I got knocked back from quite a few dairy jobs. Understandably so- if you are a traditional spring calving farmer experience is the first thing that comes up. As an employer, you

are really looking for someone with experience.

"But I was mentored into changing my outlook on it and I decided to approach the job with a focus on motivation rather than experience.



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Quinn Morgan with wife Samantha at the 2021 Ahuwhenua Young Maori Farmer of the Year awards.

"I got my start in Edgecome and the first season was exciting. One of my first days on the farm I said to the boss do we just grab these cows and bring them in and milk them but he said nah! They have to have calves first.

"And also I saw my arch enemy too, on one of my first days- a trailer attached to the back of a ute and I had to reverse it. So that was a bit of a perspective on how green I was.

"What do I love about dairy farming after having been in

the industry for a few years? There were some tough times but I think the biggest thing now is that we (me and my wife) have some joint goals within the dairy industry. It's not just about me going to work, coming home, and not talking to my

wife about my day.

"Now we are both studying with an end goal of self-employment. And I have never been in a more family-friendly role- I have breakfast with the little ones before they go to school. I have lunch with my

wife. I used to sit in traffic and not get home till late and not even bother to have a chat with the wife, just go straight to sleep. But now I try and hone in on this with anyone who hasn't experienced it.

Continued on P22

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I was lucky to have a lot of family into farming.

From P21

"I'm in Taupo at the moment and I work for Pamu. There are 19 Pamu farms in this area. I manage eight people and we operate under an operations manager. Which is pretty cool because I get to pick his brain."

"If someone was just coming into the dairy sector I would

say keep an open mind. If you shut yourself off you could miss a lot of opportunities. I was forced into it because I had nothing, no house, no nothing and I was so lucky.

"I think my role is to tell all those close-minded individuals such as I was two years ago, to come and have a look and

see what we do. That's what I intend to do, just fly that flag and welcome some new people into the industry.

"I mainly connect with those looking to come into the industry through social media. Any young farmers coming through do reach out. Others look for jobs, I have been

lucky enough to get some new farmers onto farms.

"The biggest thing I am tackling at the moment is the stigma of not questioning the norm. In my second year, I was sole in charge of the farm – and people were telling me I couldn't do it. I think we are in a rut where we need to stay in

a role for ten years. I think all those farmers who have gone before us have done all the hard work and we just have to pick their brains. It's a big chain and I am just a link in that chain and the people before I have just reached back and grabbed me. And I will reach back and grab the next person.

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The industry has done so much for me...dairying had got me into rooms rugby would never have got.

"The main thing is building confidence- that is what helped me as a city slicker with very low confidence that I could milk cows. Not being afraid to fail with the team. Grab help if you need it. Don't be afraid to try things.

"I'm involved in the recruitment of staff. I'm looking for attitude. This is everything.

I will work with anyone any time of the day that has a good attitude- is a team player. I have played sport all my life, rugby, and team culture is embedded in me. The industry has done so much for me and everyone I have been involved with must have the same attitude. We are ambassadors, the face of dairy

and we look after our girls (they pay our bills) and our environment. It is attitude rather than experience- if you have this I'm willing to give you a go.

"To retain staff, we expose them to anything the industry has to offer. This moved the goal posts and shows what there is on offer outside the

farm gate. I have been lucky enough to take the farm up to Dairy NZ head office and research farms to see the hard work that goes into what we do. It was cool to see the front runners in what we do.

"Growing up my only goal was rugby and being an All Black. I didn't end up doing

those things – but it's dairying that got me into rooms rugby would never have got me.

"I think the main thing is recognising that dairying is an awesome opportunity. I am really enjoying what I am doing- obviously still a baby but I see myself and my family in it for the long haul."

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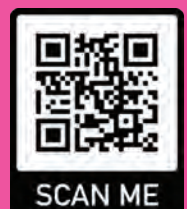
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SCAN ME

View from the paddock...



Chris Murdoch
PROPERTY BROKERS

Spring has sprung, well I don't think so and certainly as I write this the mud is still knee deep in some places! When the heat finally arrives we will see a good spring flush of grass. The aquifers around Canterbury should all be full and it will be interesting to see just what will happen with the nitrates in the well levels in the coming weeks. Will more have washed down into the water ways or will all this water have washed them all out to sea, watch this space. A lot of unknowns as to just how so much rains affect water nitrate levels. The scary thing is I am sure the environmental amongst us will have some great photos of cows trying to walk around in mud and calves being born into mud puddles. Once again watch this space for how farmers are at looking or not looking after their animals.



I guess it's the arable farmer's time in the sun as they have struggled over the recent years.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The whole commodity market seems to still be on steroids at the moment which is good for some and not for others. I heard today of someone being offered free feed

barely at \$650/tonne, great if you have spare grain and are an arable farmer not so good if you are feeding pigs, hens or dairy cows. I guess it's the arable farmers time in the sun

as they have struggled over the recent years. And I guess if you look at their cost structure going forward its not all roses, with diesel prices still very high, fertilizer and chemicals

high and replacement equipment etc is going through the roof. To top this off they are a full season away from securing higher commodity prices but have to face the cost increases today.

The environmental side of things is still dominating the real estate world. No longer can you say because the farm over the fence sold for such then your farm is worth the same. Just so many things now come into play that have never been there before. Like how intensively has it been farmed, has it had dairy support animals grazing etc all these things come into play and are far more important than the quality of the home and improvements. Irrigation water is still a major driver but the cost of water is taken into account as well. Once again I cannot emphasize enough if you are considering marketing your property you need to give yourself plenty of run in time to get your house in order for sale as gone are the days of putting up for sale today and selling tomorrow.

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



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Annalize and Stefan du Plessis with their farm team family: Back from left Stefan Burger, Arun Aravind, Zander Ferreira, Kara Toimata, Armand Fourie, Stefan du Plessis, Carlo School. Front from left - Zackery Ferreira, Lee Louw, Annalize du Plessis.

Making your staff feel appreciated every day

An award-winning Southland dairy farming couple says prioritising communication, time off, and supporting their team are key to retaining staff.

With Farm Worker Appreciation Day celebrated globally on Saturday, August 6, Dipton farmers Annalize and Stefan du Plessis agree on the importance of making dairy farm staff feel valued.

It's a challenging time for many dairy teams right now, as a staff shortage sees some farm teams under pressure. In this environment, supporting staff is key to retaining them.

The du Plessis' recently won the Small Business Recognition Award at the 2022 Primary Industries Good Employer Awards. They employ eight of the 37,000 people who work on New Zealand dairy farms.

The couple agree that looking after and upskilling teams is particularly critical right now, with the challenges of finding and keeping talented people. "I think our biggest job is to train people and to look after them," says Annalize. "If we train them well and have good systems and equipment to make everything run smoothly, it's easy for them to do their jobs."

"Flexibility with taking time off" is also important. Our team can decide which days they take on the roster, and we try and ensure they have plenty of time off

during quieter times," says Stefan.

The du Plessis' farm team are a melting-pot of cultures from South Africa, India and New Zealand, and the couple encourage them to take longer breaks to visit family overseas.

Annalize says they have an open-door policy and encourage their staff to talk to them if they have any issues to discuss.

"We also encourage them to join a local sports club or get involved in community activities like Young Farmers. If they're new to the area we take them along to community activities to meet other people."

The couple recognise staff birthdays with a day off, a present and a cake, and Annalize often provides staff with warm meals – especially over the busy calving period.

Annalize and Stefan are 50:50 sharemilkers on a property milking 700 cows, and contract milk 630 cows on another local farm.

DairyNZ head of the South Island, Tony Finch, says farm worker appreciation day is a great opportunity for employers to acknowledge the work farm teams undertake.

"We know many farm teams are understaffed, and with the busy calving period underway, it's a chance to thank staff," says Finch.

"As Annalize and Stefan exemplify, having good working conditions and

team culture across the year is also key to make employees feel appreciated and valued.

"In the current tight labour market, we're seeing farmers focus even more on how they can retain farm staff and use a range of ways to improve working conditions for farm teams."

Tips to help farm staff feel appreciated

DairyNZ research shows that farm staff value:

- regular one-on-one catch ups and team meetings

- being able to share their views and ideas and have them considered
- ensuring rosters provide enough time off to avoid burnout especially at busy times
- health, safety and wellbeing being a priority
- being told they are doing a good job regularly
- having warm and comfortable accommodation
- having a clear set of expectations
- competitive pay
- opportunities for up-skilling or training

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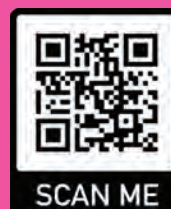
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SCAN ME

Mohi Beckham: Embracing traditional Maori farming



Pat Deavoll **RURAL REPORTER**

Mohi Beckham is going back to his roots using the maramataka, the Maori lunar calendar, to make positive changes to the way he farms.

For Beckham, matariki signals the beginnings of the Maori New Year which provides environmental, social, spiritual, and cultural annual guidelines.

It is the beginning of maramataka, the Maori lunar-stella calendar which has become an important part of Beckham's life on the farm.

Following the traditions of the maramataka is a natural continuation of Beckham's dedication to regenerative farming and the use of sustainable farming practices on his farm near Pukehina in

the Bay of Plenty.

"Since we took on the farm, we've been focused on regen farming, using more sustainable practices to improve the overall health of the farm. We started aligning our farming methods to the maramataka around eight months ago and although it's early days we've seen some really positive changes," says Beckham.

Beckham's interest in the maramataka really began when he started riparian planting on the property, and it's something he's keen to continue.

Periods of low, waning or unpredictable energy have been designated as appropriate periods for rest, planning, and monitoring. Periods of moderate energy have been designated as appropriate periods for site preparation and monitoring. Periods of high energy have been designated as appropriate periods for planting and pest plant control.

"So far we've followed it for cropping and planting, and that's brought a lot of life back to the farm."



Mohi Beckham: If you find something you love, then you know you're going to give it 110 percent...

Although Beckham is only at the beginning of his maramataka journey, he's excited about what is to come, and being able to gather some meaningful data.

But following the practices of the maramataka has not only been good for the farm, but for Beckham himself.

"I've found this style of farming really therapeutic for

my mental health.

"If you find something you love, then you know you're going to give it 110 percent and you're just going to get better and better at it."

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Animal Welfare Act lays it out



Pat Deavoll
RURAL REPORTER

The Animal Welfare Act 1999 sets out how people should take care of and act towards animals, and is jointly enforced by SPCA, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), and the police.

The Act is a clear statement to New Zealanders – and to the rest of the world – that animals are sentient and that in New Zealand they have a right to proper and sufficient care.

It sets out the obligations of animal owners or people in charge of animals. They have to meet an animal's physical, health, and behavioural needs, and must alleviate pain or distress.

The Act defines 'physical, health, and behavioural needs' as:

- Proper and sufficient food
- Proper and sufficient water;



Animals have a right to proper and sufficient care. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

adequate shelter; the opportunity to display normal patterns of behaviour

- appropriate physical handling
- and protection from, and rapid diagnosis of, injury and disease.

The Animal Welfare Act does not provide detailed requirements – instead, these are contained in regulations and Codes of Welfare. Codes are issued under the Act and contain minimum standards and recommended best practice.

Codes are issued by the Minister for Primary Industries and have important roles in helping to set best practices and high standards of animal care.



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Cow lameness: The problem isn't all it seems

Our contract milking system is contributing to the number of lame cows in New Zealand. This may seem like a strange thing to say but from a lameness perspective, the contract milking system has one major issue that could be easily fixed if people recognized the problem and changed the contract accordingly.

For years we have been blaming the stones on the tracks and the pushing, twisting and turning of cows on the concrete for the cause of lame cows. There is no evidence to back up these claims but that is where we believe the problem stems from.

So, to solve the problem we just need to handle our cows with patience, and we will not have a problem, right? If you are a farm owner who has a contract milker, or sharemilker for that matter, managing your farm and lameness, it is very frustrating at times to see so many lame cows when you believe all you need to do is to take it easier on the animal handling front.

Unfortunately, it is not that

easy. Sure, if you push cows and are impatient with them you will have more lameness to deal with but that is not because of stones or the pressure on the hooves. Physical force is only secondary to hoof health as a risk factor. The primary problem is stress-related rather than physical force related and the main issue that we have on our pasture-based farms is the time budget.

The problem is that when cows are not spending enough time in the paddock, they lack resting time and eating time. These are basic needs that the cow has and if they are not met properly, a cow can't function properly. That is why 16-hour milking or smaller herds are effective in minimising lameness as cows get more time in the paddock where they can take on normal cow behaviour (grazing, laying down, drinking and socializing).

What has this got to do with our contract milking system? Well, if the problem is not the stones but a time budget issue then we need to manage our cows differently in how we run the farm. One solution could be



Lameness: The primary problem is stress-related rather than physical force related.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

to split the cows into smaller herds. The benefit is that the last cow will be out of the paddock for a shorter time. The challenge is that it takes more man-hours to walk the cows to the cowshed because there are more herds and it is usually the contract milker or sharemilker who pays for the staff.

Why would they spend more money on labour if the benefits

go primarily to the farm owner? So, who should pay for the extra labour unit? If farm owners understand the benefits of having smaller herds then it would make a lot of sense to pay for one labour unit or change the contract to allow for an extra labour unit.

If you have 300 lame cows in a year and each lame cow costs you \$500, then you have a

\$150 000 loss in profit. If you could halve that cost by having smaller herds, would it not make sense to pay for an extra labour unit?

It is not always as easy as that when you have the bank breathing down your neck, but this is a very real issue we need to be aware of so we can make well-informed business decisions.

— by Veehof



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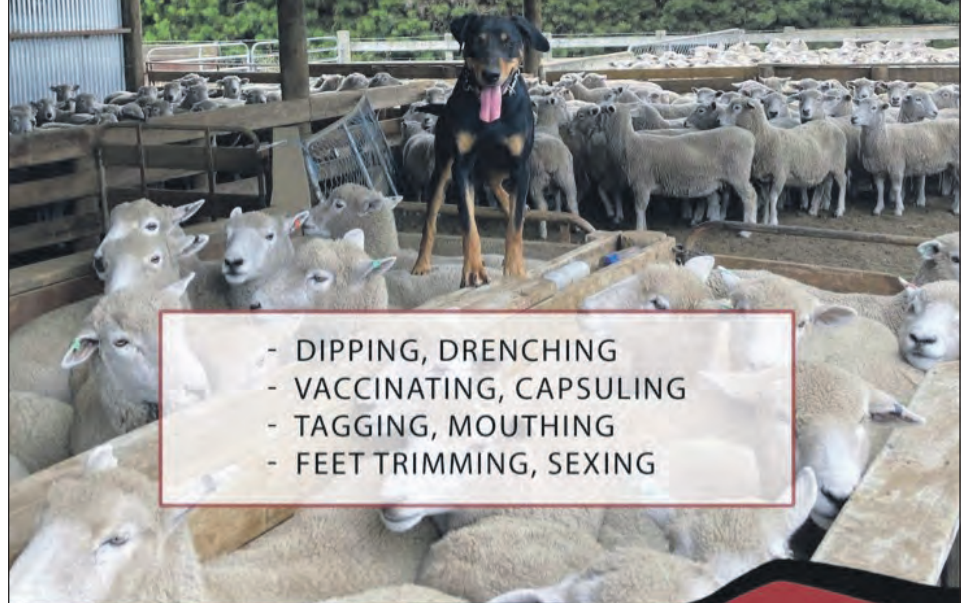
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Animal welfare vital for markets



Pat Deavoll
RURAL REPORTER

Animal welfare in New Zealand agriculture is a vital part of our “brand” as an exporting country.

Both nationally and globally, consumers are expecting more and more transparency throughout the food supply chain.

With society’s collective conscience adapting an increased focus on the ethical treatment of animals, we as members of the agricultural community have more and more reason to ensure that our whole industry is aiming to be above reproach on this matter.

The problem the primary sector faces is: how can we collectively improve animal welfare in a practical, collaborative and sustainable way?

With access to information at an all-time high, any abusive or negligent behaviour leaves the whole of New Zealand’s agriculture vulnerable.

Similarly, poor communication from our sector or an inability to

give scientific evidence to consumers on why we continue with certain farming practices could lead to their distrust for our brand.

Farmers recognise the need in the sector for increased education on animal welfare, and a desire for urban consumers to not judge their farming practices so harshly without first understanding the reasoning behind it.

There is the need to

promote open dialogue around animal welfare, in a “farmer to farmer” format. This would improve the exposure that young people and new entrants of the industry have to topics and resources around animal husbandry practices. Increased knowledge of best practice animal care could also be improved by better marketing by some of the key industry players in the animal welfare space.

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Rural property supply set for sellers' market



David Henderson PGG Wrightson Real Estate

This spring is shaping as a good time to sell rural property. Demand remains firm for most land use types in most districts, while farms, orchards and vineyards available for sale are relatively scarce.

In the dairy sector some larger corporate buyers are still active in the market, looking for suitable property. Interest from farming families generally comes from those motivated to extend their land holdings: typically, they seek a return to greater control of their farming system, achieved by buying run off and support blocks.

Good cash flows over the last two years have instilled confidence to rebuild asset bases, and with the costs associated with wintering stock, farmers realise they will be

better off to own rather than lease such land.

Good scale sheep and beef properties are in demand, particularly in Southland, while in Marlborough ongoing viticulture development continues this year with between 2000 and 3000 hectares of new plantings in prospect, and where they sit on suitable soils, whenever the region's few remaining traditional farms come available for sale, they are invariably taken up for vineyard development at a generous premium.

Underlying any purchase decision in any land use class will be an understanding of a new property's present cost base, coupled with an assessment of how that can be mitigated under alternative stewardship.

With any farm offered for sale, where required all documentation should be ready for inspection by prospective purchasers seeking to undertake due diligence, this to include farm environment plans and nutrient budgets: your purchaser will need to know what he or she can do with



In Marlborough ongoing viticulture development continues this year with between 2000 and 3000 hectares of new plantings in prospect. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

the farm, and whether any significant change will require a resource consent.

Prospective purchasers who talk to the bank before or while perusing the property market are more likely to achieve a positive result. Those who first ascertain what level of support their banker is likely to

offer before going out to look at property are more likely to achieve a successful outcome.

Ensure that you have taken advice from your banker. Ask him or her: "If I were to do something here, what support would you give me?"

Holding that discussion as close as possible to the

conversation you will have with a trusted rural property salesperson is the smart way to go.

David Henderson is Southland Sales Manager for PGG Wrightson Real Estate Limited, and has an overview role for the South Island.

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Rabbits, rabbits everywhere - what is the solution?



Pat Deavoll
RURAL REPORTER

In 2018 the rabbit hemorrhagic disease (RHD) was re-released into the countryside to curb an ever-burgeoning wild rabbit population.

The previous release in 1997 was the stuff of movies - a bunch of renegade farmers desperately taking the law into their own hands and using cloak-and-dagger measures to spread the virus throughout the high country.

But although the release was successful to start with and millions of rabbits died, 20 years on its effect was waning.

It was understandable that the 2018 release was welcomed with relief primarily by those in the rabbit-vulnerable areas of Otago, North Canterbury, the Mackenzie, the Canterbury high country, Marlborough, and

Hawke's Bay.

The new variant, known as RHDV1 K5, had already been approved in Australia, and release there was underway.

RHDV1 K5 was expected to boost the effects of the existing RHDV1 strain and help slow the increase in wild rabbit numbers.

"While exact figures were unknown, we expected improved knockdown in areas where the current strain was less effective," said Graham Sullivan, who was at the time Environment Canterbury's regional leader of biosecurity.

Landowners were told to prepare to be patient if they were to benefit from the release. And that the greatest likelihood of success would come from the collaborative efforts of the RRG, regional councils, and landowners.

"A controlled release would also ensure that a high-quality commercially prepared product be made available in order to improve effectiveness," Sullivan said.

An illegal or unmanaged release would significantly



Farmers and councils needed to continue with the other forms of rabbit control that they'd employed for years. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

compromise the benefits. A substantial risk of any unmanaged release was the likelihood of bringing the rogue RHDV2 virus into New Zealand. RHDV2 was present in Australia and its potential impacts on non-target species was unknown, so it presented a significant biosecurity risk.

To maximise the effectiveness of the new variant, regional councils and researchers proposed a nationally consistent

release process with appropriate monitoring. "These actions would help safeguard the potential introduction of further biological control agents in the future," Sullivan said.

In 2017 there were some "desperate" farmers out there, according to Mackenzie Country runholder Andrew Simpson, who represented Federated Farmers on the cross-sector group coordinating the Rabbit Coordination Group (RCG).

"The timing of the [RHD release] was critical in some areas. If another year had gone by without the release of the virus the ecological damage to some properties would have been a catastrophe."

It had been 25 years since RHD was first discovered on a Central Otago farm in August 1997.

Known as New Zealand's most significant intentional biosecurity breach, it was a huge slap in the face for New Zealand's border officials.

Not only had a highly infectious agent been smuggled into the country, but it also appeared the crime had been committed by a group of New Zealand farmers.

Most pleaded ignorance but a few admitted to manufacturing and liberating the virus on their farms. They posed for the media alongside kitchen whizzes in which they'd mixed their viral cocktail. They felt their livelihood was threatened by the rabbit plague, and the government had let them down by failing to recognise their plight.

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The covert undertaking had been in effect for several weeks before the outbreak was officially recognised. In late August 1997 dead rabbits were found on a farm in Otago, and post-mortem showed they had died of RHD. An emergency disease response was put in place by the then-Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), and the farm was put under quarantine.

Several months before the release, in June 1996, a group of farmers applied to import the RHD virus from Australia as a biocontrol agent. But after a protracted and often fractious period of public debate, MAF rejected the application, reasoning that too little was known about the virus's performance in the New Zealand farmland.

The rejection was received acrimoniously in farming circles. Anecdotal evidence suggested that the decision was anticipated and plans for the illegal release were already in place at this stage. MAF initiated an emergency disease response, but it was too late. By then, the virus was spreading like wildfire.

In 2018 biosecurity team leader at Environment Canterbury Brent Glentworth said that since its release in 1997, RHD had become less effective.

There were three lines of evidence from study sites in the Mackenzie Basin that supported this claim, he said.

First, the proportion of rabbits of all ages with antibodies to RHD had increased each year since 1997.

Second, the proportion of young rabbits that had antibodies to RHD had also increased. This was strong evidence that something had changed in the rabbit-virus interaction.

"The cause of this remains unknown but is reflected in the third line of evidence, that the abundance of rabbits (surveyed by spotlight counts) had increased since 1997," Glentworth said.

"The rate of increase had, however, been much slower than that seen in the same populations as they recovered from conventional control before the arrival of RHD."

He concluded that RHD still had an effective biocontrol, but its efficacy was waning.

Simpson said that no one was under the illusion the 2018 release would be the silver bullet to deal with wild rabbit populations once and for all. Farmers and councils needed to continue with the other forms of rabbit control that they'd employed for years, he said.

And Simpson was right - as it turned out the release wasn't as effective as the original and farmers were more than disappointed.

Acting manager of environmental implementation for the Otago Regional Council (ORC) Libby Caldwell, says that based on night count monitoring over the past 20 years, there is a weak downward trend in the median rabbit densities across the Otago region.

"From the data we collect, we know rabbits are still a problem in Otago, although this is very much tied to specific locations. For example, some

larger commercial landholders are very much on top of their rabbit control. Night count monitoring of rabbit densities in 2021 had values ranging from 0 rabbits per km to 16 rabbits per km. This shows the high variance in rabbit densities across Otago."

In 2021, ORC initiated community-led rabbit management initiatives to support landowners in implementing a strategic long-term approach to rabbit management on their properties, Caldwell says.

"The rabbit incentive funding was introduced to the 2022 ECO Fund round to support coordinated community-led rabbit management throughout Otago. From the additional incentive funds supplied this year, some were ring-fenced to be used for rabbit management, with \$85,933 of the total \$100,000 [ring-

fenced] going to three organisations across Wanaka, Queenstown, and Gibbston."

Land occupiers are responsible for controlling feral rabbit populations on land that they occupy at or below Level 3 on the Modified McLean Scale. This is a scale used by councils to determine rabbit levels. It helps with regulation to make sure landowners are managing rabbit numbers to a level set in the Pest Plan.

So...whether there have been any gains made in the fight against rabbits, at least in Otago, is largely unknown. So what next? Farmers and high country runholders soldier on in the hope that at some stage, this war, which has been going on for nigh on 150 years, will be won. In the meantime, their pasture and profitability erodes. It's just a matter of when it will be too late?

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Take one prolific, persistent diploid ryegrass. Mix it with a succulent, high energy tetraploid. Add clover. Stand back and wait for your cows and your staff to say thank you very much.

If you want future-friendly grazing that takes farm grown feed to the next level, sow Maxsyn and 4front perennial ryegrasses together this spring. The result is denser and more robust than a straight tetraploid, tastier and easier to eat than a straight diploid.

It's a small change that can have surprising results. Better utilisation. Easier grazing management. More efficient use of the grass you're already growing, helping dial back the need for imported supplement.

What's the secret?

It all comes down to your cows, and what they like to eat. Ultimately, they'd be happiest if you gave them 4front, because it's a tetraploid and cows love tetraploids. But straight tetraploid pastures don't suit all farm systems.

When you mix 4front with Maxsyn, it's like convincing a fussy child they're eating their favourite treat, when in fact they are eating their treat mixed with something not quite as tempting.

Cows graze 4front and Maxsyn together almost as if they were eating 4front alone. For you and your team, that means nice, even post-grazing residuals, every time, with all the benefits these bring to on-going feed quality and management.

For your cows, that means more energy per mouthful, because 4front has high feed value; and more mouthfuls every grazing, because the combination tastes better than a

straight diploid ryegrass pasture.

Made for each other

Maxsyn's job in this mix is to protect 4front from being over-grazed, and to grow more feed than any other diploid perennial ryegrass we've ever bred. It's the backbone of the partnership – densely tillered for persistence, with superior summer and autumn growth for those warm South Island days.

4front's job is to make the daily job of grazing a piece of cake for your cows, and encourage them to eat all the crumbs every time they come into the paddock. It peps them up with extra carbohydrates for higher milk production, and is our highest-yielding tetraploid ever.

Both lead the Dairy New Zealand Forage Value Index, Maxsyn as the unbeaten diploid perennial in the 2022 ratings, and 4front as the only 5-star perennial ryegrass across all four regions of NZ.

Proof of concept

You don't have to look far to see the results of this concept in action. Lincoln University Dairy Farm has combined diploid and tetraploid perennial ryegrasses for years.

It credits the mix as an important part of successfully lightening its farm footprint, including a 40% drop in nitrogen leaching, and a 22% drop in greenhouse gas emissions.

If that sounds like something that would benefit you and your farm this season, give your seed merchant a call today, and order Maxsyn and 4front for spring sowing.

– Mark Shand, Barenbrug

What is soil? Take a read

Soil is the loose surface material that covers most land. It consists of inorganic particles and organic matter. Soil provides the structural support to plants used in agriculture and is also their source of water and nutrients.

Soils vary greatly in their chemical and physical properties. Processes such as leaching, weathering and microbial activity combine to make a whole range of different soil types. Each type has particular strengths and weaknesses for agricultural production.

Physical characteristics of soil

The physical characteristics of soils include all the aspects that you can see and touch.

Good soil structure contributes to soil and plant health allowing water and air movement into and through the soil profile. Soil stores water for plant growth and supports machine and animal traffic.

While some soils are naturally better structured than others, some physical characteristics of soils can be changed with good management.

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*Unbeaten diploid perennial ryegrass in 2021 NFT all New Zealand trials

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It is important to monitor the physical characteristics of soil to understand soil condition.

It is also important to ensure that management practices are not contributing to the decline of the soil. An example of this is excessive traffic causing compaction and reducing the amount of macropores, or spaces between the aggregates, therefore reducing the amount of air and water into and through the soil.

Soil texture, structure, drainage characteristics

The combination of mineral fractions (gravel, sand, silt and clay particles) and organic matter fraction give soil its texture. Texture grades depend upon the amount of clay, sand, silt and organic matter present.

The solid part of the soil is made up of particles such as organic matter, silt, sand and clay which form aggregates. Aggregates are held together by clay particles and organic matter. Organic matter is one of the major cementing agents for soil aggregates. The size and shape of aggregates give soil a characteristic called soil structure.

Sandy soil

Soil structure influences plant growth by affecting the movement of water, air and nutrients to plants.

Sandy soils have little or no structure but are often free draining.



Clay: When high amounts of sodium are present (>6% exchangeable sodium percentage) clay particles separate and move freely about in wet soil.

With higher clay contents the soil structural strength increases, but its drainage ability often decreases.

Heavy clays can hold large amounts of water and as infiltration rates are slow, they tend not to be well-drained, unlike sand or loam soils with no or a lower clay content.

Clay soils

The chemical make-up of soils also determines structure. When high amounts of sodium are present (>6% exchangeable sodium percentage) clay particles separate and move freely about in wet soil. These soils are known as sodic soils. When

sodic soils come in contact with water, the water turns milky as the clay disperses and when the soil dries out a crust is formed on the surface. Sodicity can be overcome by applying gypsum.

Slaking is the breakdown of aggregates on wetting, into smaller particles. Slaking generally occurs when intense rainfall hits dry soil, the aggregates collapse as a result of the pressure created by the clay swelling and the trapped air expanding and escaping. This process can block up pore spaces and when the soil dries a crust is formed causing infiltration and seedling emergence problems.

Soil colour

Soil colour can indicate the organic matter content of soil, the parent material soil is formed from, the degree of weathering the soil has undergone and the drainage characteristics of the soil.

The colour of the soil is the main indicator of how soils drain.

Lighter coloured soils can generally indicate low fertility for example white sands. While darker soils (like black clays) are quite fertile. There is a large range in between.

Determine soil drainage

The drainage of a soil is an important characteristic to assess, as many plants prefer well-drained soils.

If soil is poorly drained, sufficient oxygen cannot get to the plant roots which can stunt or kill the plant.

Soils that are very well drained can limit plant capture of water in drier environments or in dry years due to insufficient water holding capacity.

Other important indicators are:

- texture of the soil
- presence of buckshot and stones
- dispersibility and friability of the soil.

Inorganic component of soils

Inorganic material is the major component of most soils.

It consists largely of mineral particles with specific physical and chemical properties which vary depending on the parent material and conditions under which the soil was formed.

It is the inorganic fraction of soils which determines soil physical properties such as texture. This has a large effect on structure, density and water retention.

Soil texture

The texture of soil is a property which is determined largely by the relative proportions of inorganic particles of different sizes.

The following sizes are used to describe the inorganic fraction of soils:

- Gravel – particles greater than 2mm in diameter
- Coarse sand – particles less than 2mm and greater than 0.2mm in diameter
- Fine sand – particles between 0.2mm and 0.02mm in diameter
- Silt – particles between 0.02mm and 0.002mm in diameter
- Clay – particles less than 0.002mm in diameter.

Sand

Quartz is the predominant mineral in the sand fraction of most soils. Sand particles have:

- a relatively small surface area per unit weight
- low water retention
- little chemical activity compared with silt and clay.

Silt

Silt has a relatively limited surface area with little chemical activity. Soils high in silt may compact under heavy traffic. This affects the movement of air and water in the soil.

Continued on P36



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From P35

Clay

Clays have very large surface areas compared with the other inorganic fractions. As a result, clays are chemically very active and able to hold nutrients on their surfaces. These nutrients can be released into soil water to be used by plants. Like nutrients, water also attaches to the surfaces of clays but this water can be hard for plants to use.

There are many different types of clays. Clays are distinguished from sand and silt by their ability to swell and retain a shape they have been formed into — as well as by their sticky nature.

Soil textural class

The relative proportion of sand, silt and clay particles determines the physical properties of soil including the texture. The

surface area of a given amount of soil increases significantly as the particle size decreases. Consequently, the soil textural class also gives an indication of soil chemical properties.

The exact proportions of sand, silt and clay in a soil can only be determined in a laboratory. However, a naming system has been developed to approximately describe the relative proportions. This classification of soil can be undertaken in the field where particular properties indicate possible textural classes.

To estimate texture in the field, crush a small sample of soil (10 to 20g) in one hand. After removing any gravel or root matter, work the soil in the fingers to break down any aggregates. With the sample moist but not sticky, the textural class can be estimated by

the feel of the sample between the fingers.

Textural class descriptions for soil

A simple way to determine a soil texture and its characteristics is by hand texturing. When texturing soil it is important to understand the behaviour feel, colour, sound and cohesiveness of the soil, which is achieved by making a bolus (wetting the soil and forming a ball). For example, a sandy loam will only just stick together (slightly coherent) and there will be noticeable sand grains which can be seen and felt and heard if you place the bolus close to your ear and squeeze it.

It is then important to form a ribbon from the bolus to determine the clay content of the soil. The longer the ribbon



While some soils are naturally better structured than others, some physical characteristics of soils can be changed with good management

the higher the clay content. The length of the ribbon is measured against a ruler and along with the behaviour of the soil can be compared with the descriptions on the soil texture table.

It should always be

remembered that soil texture often varies with depth and that the properties of the topsoil are affected by the properties of the subsoil.

Structure

The structure is the arrangement of soil particles and pore spaces between them. Soil with a structure beneficial to plant growth has stable aggregates between 0.5 and 2mm in diameter. Such soils have good aeration and drainage.

Chemical properties

The inorganic minerals of soils consist primarily of silicon, iron and aluminium which do not contribute greatly to the nutritional needs of plants. Those in the clay fraction have the capacity to retain nutrients in forms which are potentially available for plants to use.

Resilience programme for soil

Over the last decade, information and science has been developed around biological agriculture with new thinking around management processes and farming practises emphasizing nutrient uptake from soils through natural soil biological cycles.

The new discoveries are showing how plants and

microbes interact in order to provide the plant with nutrients complementing those applied as fertiliser.

In a well-balanced mineral and biologically active soil, the soil can produce some of the nutrients required for yield and quality.

So, what's a Top Soils, programme for Soil Fertility,

look like ?

First, we suggest a comprehensive soil audit to determine any mineral deficiencies or surpluses.

Then let's start with the mineral's plants need. Plants need more than just N, P, K

There are at least twenty elements we know so far.

We know they need N P

K but what about Calcium, sulphur, magnesium, zinc, copper, manganese, boron, these are all required in the proper amounts.

We also feed the soil with biological stimulants and products to support the biology, Liquid Seaweed, fish, amino acid nitrogen, molasses, humates, these can replace a

synthetic nitrogen application.

That's why so much emphasis is placed on achieving the exact level for each nutrient, based on the specific requirement of every different soil. The more the chemistry, physics and biology are corrected, the better the yield and quality from those soils, that can be expected.

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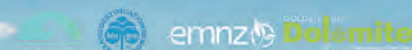
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Top Soils soil fertility programs are providing balanced soil nutrient mixes for maximum production and to stimulate the soil biology, enabling the release of soil nutrients in the soil the farmers already have.



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Give turnips a try

Turnips are a brassica root crop commonly used as a fast-maturing single-graze crop to bridge a summer feed gap and maintain milk production.

Turnips can be sown from spring through to late summer, autumn or winter depending on the cultivar.

There are two varieties of bulb turnips: the soft white-fleshed bulbs referred to as soft turnips or summer turnips, and the hard, yellow-fleshed bulbs referred to as hard turnips or sometimes described as winter turnips.

Turnips need a minimum of 60-70 days and have no ripening requirements. The proportion of leaf to bulb varies with individual cultivar.

The harder types have better bulb-keeping ability but produce lower yields (t DM/ha) than soft turnips.

If turnips are required over an extended period (e.g. mid-January to March) sometimes the first two-thirds of the crop is soft turnip, and the final third a better-keeping hard turnip.

Most animal health issues occur in the first day or two of feeding, as animals adjust to the crop. Ideally cows should be fed alternative feeds (e.g. pasture or silage) before accessing the crop



Make breaks long and narrow, to minimise wastage by cows treading on the turnips.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

to minimise the risks.

Bloating has been reported in cows grazing turnip crops. Drenching, or grazing cows on turnips after they have eaten some grass are ways to overcome this.

Rumen acidosis can occur if turnips are introduced too rapidly. Introduce them slowly over 5-7 days to allow rumen microbe populations to adjust.

Make breaks long and narrow, to minimise wastage by cows

treading on the turnips. Fencing down the length of a paddock, rather than across the width, is the best. Grazing a long thin face gives less wastage than a square block.

Introduce cows gradually

to your turnip crop. Offer a maximum of 2kg DM/cow/day, or 1-hour grazing, in the first five days. Increase feeding level gradually over the next five days, up to 5kg DM/cow/day.

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Flowfert N

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Trees and power lines

Trees and overhead power lines are a dangerous mix – keep trees well away from power lines to maintain safety and your electricity supply.

Trees close to power lines can be dangerous and damage the electricity network causing outages.

Owners are legally required to trim their trees so they are well clear of the Notice Zone.

If we spot a hazardous tree within the Growth Limit Zone we'll get in touch to discuss this with you.

Trees that grow too close to overhead power lines are a serious hazard to public safety and may cause power outages which could impact not only you, but the wider community. EA Networks needs your help to ensure that potentially dangerous trees are kept clear of overhead power lines. By working together, we can keep our community safe, and the lights on!

Tree owner responsibilities

If you have trees growing near power lines you have a responsibility to act and ensure that the minimum required distances are maintained. Trimming trees when they are close to power lines is dangerous. If you are aware of trees that are close to power lines, it's often best to call a qualified professional for help.

How can EA Networks help?

EA Networks can help tree owners by providing:

- expert advice on how to manage your trees
- tree cutting services
- free disconnection of power lines, with notice, so your chosen contractor can safely attend to your trees.

What happens if I do nothing with my tree?

If EA Networks sends a written notification about a tree hazard and no action is taken, you may be fined up to \$10,000 for committing an offence, plus up to \$500 per day for continuing an offence.

To find out more about EA Networks' policy on managing potentially hazardous trees, including information about the Electricity (Hazards from Trees) Regulations, visit www.eanetworks.co.nz/safety/tree-near-power-lines/

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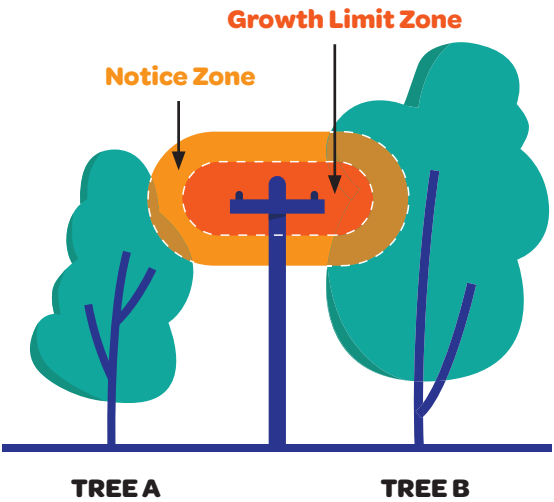
Notice Zone & Growth Limit Zone

Overhead Line Type	Notice Zone	Growth Limit Zone
66kV (high voltage)	5.0 metres	4.0 metres
33kV (high voltage)	3.5 metres	2.5 metres
22kV (high voltage)	3.0 metres	2.0 metres
11kV (high voltage)	2.6 metres	1.6 metres
400V/230V (low voltage)	1.5 metres	0.5 metres

NOTE:
1. These distances are from the power line, not the power pole.
2. These distances are a minimum and apply to all conditions including high wind or snow.
3. If unsure about the voltage of lines near your trees, call us for advice.

Notice Zone means a distance of one metre beyond the **Growth Limit Zone** (Refer Tree "A" in diagram).

Growth Limit Zone is the space around the power line where trees must not encroach even in windy or snow conditions (Refer Tree "B" in diagram).



'EBVs' for better-balanced beef

EBVs are published for a range of traits covering fertility, calving ease, maternal performance, growth and carcase merit. When using EBVs to assist in selection decisions it is important to

achieve a balance between the different groups of traits and to place emphasis on those traits that are important to your herd, your markets, and your environment.



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EBVs

Calving Ease EBVs (%) are based on calving difficulty scores, birth weights and gestation length information. More positive EBVs are favourable and indicate easier calving.

CE % Daughters = Daughters' Calving Ease – The EBV for daughters' calving ease indicates how easily that sire's daughters will calve at two years of age.

Gestation Length EBV (days) is an estimate of the time from conception to the birth of the calf and is based on AI and hand mating records. Lower (negative) GL EBVs indicate shorter gestation length and therefore easier calving and increased growth after birth.

Birth Weight EBV (kg) is based on the measured birth weight of progeny, adjusted for dam age. The lower the value, the lighter the calf at birth and the lower the likelihood of a difficult birth. This is particularly important when selecting sires for use over heifers.

200-Day Growth EBV (kg) is calculated from the weight of progeny taken between 80 and 300 days of age. Values are adjusted to 200 days and for age of dam. This EBV is the best single estimate of an animal's genetic merit for growth to early ages.

400-Day Weight EBV (kg) is calculated from the weight of progeny taken between 301 and 500 days of age, adjusted to 400 days and for age of dam. This EBV is the best single estimate of an animal's genetic merit for yearling weight.

600-Day Weight EBV (kg) is calculated from the weight of progeny taken between 501 and 900 days of age, adjusted to 600 days and for the age of dam. This EBV is the best single estimate of an animal's genetic merit for growth beyond yearling age.

Mature Cow Weight EBV (kg) is based on the cow weight when the calf is weighed for weaning, adjusted to five years of age. This EBV is an estimate of the genetic difference in cow weight at five years of age and is an indicator of growth at later ages and potential feed maintenance requirements of the females in the breeding herd. Steer breeders wishing to grow animals out to a larger weight may also use the Mature Cow Weight EBV.

Milk EBV (kg) is an estimate of an animal's milking ability. For sires, this EBV indicates the effect of the daughter's milking ability, inherited from the sire, on the 200-day weights of her calves. For dams, it indicates her milking ability.



200-Day Growth EBV (kg) is calculated from the weight of progeny taken between 80 and 300 days of age.

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Scrotal Size EBV (cm) is calculated from the circumference of the scrotum taken between 300 and 700 days of age and adjusted to 400 days of age. This EBV is an estimate of an animal's genetic merit for scrotal size. There is also a small negative correlation with age of puberty in female progeny and therefore selection for increased scrotal size will result in reduced age at calving of female progeny.

Days to Calving EBV (days) indicates the fertility of the daughters of the sire. It is the time interval between the day when the female is first exposed to a bull in a paddock mating to the day when she subsequently calves. A negative EBV for days to calving indicates a shorter interval from bull-in date to calving and therefore higher fertility.

Carcase Weight EBV (kg) is based on abattoir carcase records and is an indicator of the genetic differences in carcase weight at the standard age of 750 days.

Eye Muscle Area EBV (sq cm) is calculated from measurements from live animal ultrasound scans and from abattoir carcase data, adjusted to a standard 400 kg carcase. This EBV estimates genetic differences in eye muscle area at the 12/13th rib site of a 400 kg dressed carcase. More positive EBVs indicate better

muscling on animals. Sires with relatively higher EMA EBVs are expected to produce better-muscled and higher percentage yielding progeny at the same carcase weight than will sires with lower EMA EBVs.

Rib Fat and Rump Fat EBVs (mm) are calculated from measurements of subcutaneous fat depth at the 12/13-rib site and the P8 rump site (from live animal ultrasound scans and from abattoir carcasses) and are adjusted to a standard 400 kg carcase. These EBVs are indicators of the genetic differences in fat distribution on a standard 400 kg carcase. Sires with low, or negative, fat EBVs are expected to produce leaner progeny at any particular carcase weight than will sires with higher EBVs.

Retail Beef Yield EBV (%) indicates genetic differences between animals for retail yield percentage in a standard 400 kg carcase. Sires with larger EBVs are expected to produce progeny with higher yielding carcasses.

Intramuscular Fat EBV (%) is an estimate of the genetic difference in the percentage of intramuscular fat at the 12/13th rib site in a 400 kg carcase. Depending on market targets, larger more positive values are generally more favourable.

Docility EBV (%) is an estimate of the genetic



Carcase Weight EBV (kg) is based on abattoir carcase records.

differences between animals in temperament. Docility EBVs are expressed as differences in the percentage of progeny that will be scored with acceptable temperament (ie. either "docile" or "restless").

Selection Indexes

Index values are reported as EBVs, in units of relative earning capacity (\$) for a given market. They reflect both the short-term profit generated by a sire through the sale of his progeny, and the longer-term profit generated by his daughters in a self-replacing cow herd. The Index values

are derived using BreedObject technology

Self-Replacing Index (\$) – Estimates the genetic differences between animals in net profitability per cow joined in an example self-replacing commercial herd that targets the production of grass-finished steers. Steers are assumed marketed at approximately 480 kg live weight (265 kg carcase weight and 7 mm fat depth) at approximately 16 months of age. Selected heifers are retained for breeding and the balance marketed at

approximately 16 months weighing 415 kgs (230 kg carcase weight and 8 mm fat depth) As some daughters are retained, maternal traits are also of importance.

Heifer/Dairy Terminal Index (\$) – Estimates the genetic differences between animals in net profitability per female joined in an example herd where all progeny are marketed. All progeny are marketed at approximately 510 kg live weight (280 kg carcase weight and 7 mm fat depth) at approximately 24 months of age..

Accuracy (%) is based on the amount of performance information available on the animal and its close relatives – particularly the number of progeny analysed. Accuracy is also based on the heritability of the trait and the genetic correlations with other recorded traits. Hence accuracy indicates the "confidence level" of the EBV. The higher the accuracy value the lower the likelihood of change in the animal's EBV as more information is analysed for that animal or its relatives. Even though an EBV with a low accuracy may change in the future, it is still the best estimate of an animal's genetic merit for that trait. As more information becomes available, an EBV is just as likely to increase in value, as it is to decrease.

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Lot 1, 2022 supporting



McFadzean Cruizy Calve Angus bulls hit the market

This year's annual McFadzean Cattle Company yearling bull sale on September 8 will include the first offering of low-birthweight, short gestation, calving ease yearling bulls the McFadzean Cruizy Calve Angus from its recently acquired herd.

Stud master Johnie McFadzean manages the company's Meatmaker, Super Angus breeding program and now the new Cruizy Calve Angus herd on the family's property west of Carterton in Wairarapa. He says the 35 Cruizy Calve yearling bulls being offered at next month's sale will be ideal for mating heifers in either dairy or beef herds.

Their search last year for a source of genuine low birthweight Angus cows to establish a top breeding herd led them to buying females from the Davie-Martin family's Puketi Angus Stud in Waiotira, Northland.

"They have been producing one of New Zealand's leading low birthweight calving ease herds with good growth rates for a number of years so when



we heard they had some females for sale, we had to take a look," Johnie says.

"We were really impressed with the cows. Craig and Don let us go pick for pick through their herd, so we ended up with 100 females. We also bought another 20 top females from Meadowslea in the South Island."

The McFadzean Family calve

1500 beef cows, 450 heifers are bulled annually. They are recognized for breeding some of the best cattle in New Zealand.

We aim to produce low birth weight, short gestation bulls with high calving ease and good growth rates, many of the cows that we purchased are trait leaders for calving ease that produce gutsy calves that are easy to rear.

The McFadzean Family are third generation cattle farmers, initially dairy farming where they used Angus bulls over their yearlings and late cows.

Our view is that the only way to produce predictable bulls which will minimize calving issues is by having a specialist herd where the focus is on birth weight, days to calving with

calving ease, and still maintain constitution and growth rate.

"The Cruizy calve cows have been here on Glenbrae for the past 12 months, running on steep hills with the commercial cows and have done well and I'm really impressed with how docile and cruizy they are to manage and to calve."

"At calving they are behind a wire because I have to catch, tag and weigh each calf, but they have great temperament so that's an easy job. They calve within 30 minutes of starting and I haven't had to help any of them."

2022 calving has hit the ground running with calves being born between 5-23 days before their due date, weighing a healthy 25-32kg.

The sale venue is Glenbrae, 216 Wiltons Road, Carterton, and it starts with the Meat Maker and Super Angus yearling bulls followed by the low-birthweight Cruizy Calve Angus yearling bulls.

For more information, visit mcfadzeancattlecompany.co.nz or phone Johnie McFadzean, 06 379 7401 or Andrew Jennings 027 594 6820.

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A group of 2022 Cruizy Calves born 10-14 days before official due date weighing between 27-32kg



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MP for Waitaki

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