

RURAL GUARDIAN

South Island
wide 

JULY 2023

TO EVERY FARM IN THE SOUTH ISLAND



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THE UTE CHALLENGE P32



THINKING BIG PICTURE

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WITH Claire Inkson – OPINION

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Continuing success

In putting together this issue of The Rural Guardian, it brought home to me how much innovation and research is happening in New Zealand agriculture, when it comes to sustainable farming.

And we are already ahead of the game in this space; we have a much shorter runway than our international competitors.

A recent study commissioned by Beef + Lamb and the Meat Industry Association and conducted by AgResearch, shows that New Zealand sheep meat has a carbon footprint of just under 15 kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent per kilogram, less than half the international average.

The carbon footprint of New Zealand beef is just under 22 kilograms, which places it at around 30 per cent lower than the international average.

AgResearch analysis commissioned by DairyNZ shows New Zealand's dairy industry produces less than half of the average emissions of international producers studied.

This shows New Zealand farmers are already some of the world's most efficient food and fibre producers.

We need to be proud of this and celebrate it.

And when it comes to remaining internationally competitive on the world stage, it matters.

Studies have shown that 63 per cent of consumers are concerned about the environment, and 45 per cent of consumers have changed their diet in the

past two years to lead a healthier lifestyle.

So while we should be proud of our achievements, we must continue leading the world in sustainable farming.

The good news is that there is continuing research and development across all agriculture sectors that is innovative and exciting, and that will allow us to keep going on that trajectory.

In this issue, you can read about a couple of them: EcoPond and Ecotain, which are set to be industry game changers.

And then we have farmers all over the country making small but significant changes on their own farms. Scott Hassall, who you can read about in this issue, is a prime example.

Let's hope that when election time rolls around, whatever the colour the winning party is, they will look at enabling farmers to continue to build on the excellent work



in this space.

We know the agriculture industry will be crucial to getting this country's economy back on track.

Winter has arrived with all her frosty trimmings, and it's been a spectacularly beautiful time of the year to be heading out to farms, meeting farmers and having the privilege to tell their stories.

In this issue, we chat with the ever-inspiring Deer Industry NZ chair Mandy Bell, follow all the excitement of moving day and pay a visit to Lake Heron Station.

The Rakaia Gorge, always stunning at this time of the year, was the perfect backdrop for the test drive for our ute challenge.

We head back to the Rakaia Gorge for the excitement of Cleardale's second annual bull sale and check out what Scott Hassall has been up to at Ifley in the Waikari Valley.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you.

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RURAL RECHARGE

Take a smoko break for mental health

Ride Along NZ – truckies' answer to Uber rides

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

A truckie is taking matters into his own hands to tackle a growing mental health crisis in the industry.

Ashburton's Stephen Clemons, who owns Clemons Cartage, is planning to launch an Uber-like app for truck drivers called Ride Along NZ.

The app would benefit both passengers looking to connect and enjoy the journey of travelling in a big rig, and truck drivers who are feeling disconnected in their work.

"I know there are hundreds of drivers who have left the industry even though they are getting paid \$47 an hour," Clemons said.

Part of the problem is isolation, with drivers being alone in the cab for days on end.

It's a situation exacerbated by health and safety requirements by some transport companies forbidding passengers to join drivers on their routes.

"I had a mate who had a mental breakdown because he was in the truck all day, every day, with absolutely no contact. So one of my goals is to challenge these companies that say passengers are dangerous, because I feel they are not."

Clemons began a Facebook page for the project, which is quickly gaining interest and engagement from both truck drivers and potential passengers.

The Facebook community has been quick to offer ideas and support.

"I think everyone has realised the Government is doing nothing. They are happy to say we are putting thousands away for mental health, but it's not leaving the Wellington offices."

Associate Minister of Health Willow-Jean Prime said supporting the mental wellbeing of rural communities and ensuring access to health and support services in rural areas remained a Government priority.



Stephen Clemons' idea for an app to connect isolated truckies with eager passengers is growing legs.

PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON

"As someone who lives rurally, I am acutely aware of the current challenges and the support the community needs to work through those issues."

Alongside broader Government health programmes and services, she welcomed and supported sector led initiatives, such as the app.

She pointed to the Government's Kia Manawanui Aotearoa: Long-term pathway to

mental wellbeing.

"The actions in Kia Manawanui will directly benefit rural communities as they have a focus on increasing the availability of local community-led supports and addressing barriers to support such as rural isolation and access to, and use of, digital technology."

First Union spokesperson Anita Rosentreter said part of the problem for truck drivers was that they were often contractors or self-employed, meaning they didn't always have access to things like sick leave or holiday pay.

That could create additional stress and uncertainty, she said.

Companies competing for tenders would also try to offer the lowest rate for an unsustainable amount of work, which put additional pressure on truck drivers to get it done, she said.

Clemons feels a truck cab is a great place for people to offload their struggles and talk about their problems in a safe, private space.

"In a lot of ways, it's like what a counsellor tries to recreate in their room."

"What is said in those four walls stays in those four walls."

Clemons began his career as a plumber and is relatively new to truck driving, having bought a truck three months ago after doing some driving for his brother-in-law.

The first thing he noticed about truck driving was how isolated the job is compared to being involved in the building industry.

"As a tradie, I'd be on-site, and even if I was knee-deep unblocking a drain, there would still be people around to yarn to."

Clemons is working with an app developer and looking at funding options to get the project off the ground.

The feedback on Clemons' idea so far has been positive.

"I started a Facebook page, and then woke up one Saturday morning, and it had just sort of exploded."

"It gives you the idea you are on the right track."

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A Woolly good business idea

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

A group of Christchurch Girls High School students have had unexpected success with their business studies class project making scented woollen car air fresheners.

The "Woolly Balls" venture was launched this month by classmates Poppy Manson, Rose Diederich, Olivia Frame, Meg McWhannel and Zoe Lee.

The Year 13 students, all boarders at the school hostel Acland House, have been amazed at the level of interest the project has received.

The first 200 balls sold in just four days, with the students promoting and selling the balls solely on social media.

"We started just using Instagram, and then went to Facebook because we thought that was what farmers and adults were more likely to be on," says Manson.

The move to Facebook has been a success, with most of their orders so far from the platform.

"Family members have reposted it so their friends can see and comment on it.

"We are trying to keep up with social media and post every now and then to keep people interested," Manson said.

The merino wool balls are



Woolly Balls founders (L-R) Poppy Manson, Rose Diederich, Olivia Frame, Meg McWhannel and Zoe Lee.

PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON

felted in a factory in Taranaki, and once shipped to Christchurch, the students dip the balls in scented oils before threading them by hand and packaging them for sale.

"We decided to make Woolly Balls because everybody likes a car air freshener that smells good, and we wanted to create something sustainable," Frame said.

Keeping up with orders and communicating with customers is time-consuming, but with five girls involved in the business, they share the load.

"I never thought I'd be so tired

typing messages and responding to so many people," Manson laughs.

"But we've been blown away by the response."

With all five Woolly Balls co-founders from a rural background, giving something back to the farming community was important.

"We donate 15 per cent of proceeds from the sale of Woolly Balls to the Rural Support Trust," Frame said.

"We wanted to do something that could help rural communities because we can all relate to that and wanted to give something back to them."

North Canterbury Rural Support Trust co-ordinator Arni Smit said the business was a great initiative, and the trust appreciated the support.

"We are extremely grateful to the Christchurch Girls High School students for choosing the Rural Support Trust to benefit from their business venture," Smit said.

Smit praised the students for their creative use of wool and entrepreneurial spirit.

"It never ceases to amaze me what creative ideas our rural young people come up with."

Woolly Balls sell for \$12 each, and customers can place orders through the Woolly Balls Facebook page.



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The legislative collision

By David Clark

We were always going to end up at a point where unimplementable rules collided with the normally acceptable activities of the community. Arguably that collision is now made worse by only one sector of our community being able to interpret part of those rules.

As you will be aware, there has been a fundamental change to the way we have set environmental limits by way of a National Policy Statement on Freshwater legislated in 2020, which determined that all waterways would have a Nitrate concentration of 2.4mgN/litre, a significant departure from the Canterbury Land and Water Regional Plan limits of 6.9mgN/litre which in itself was significantly below the World Health Organisation Drinking Water Standard of 11.3mgN/litre.

The target of 2.4mg/l is particularly hard to achieve in our coastal drains when we have examples of water flowing out of Department of Conservation land on the Western side of our Catchment at 3.2mgN/litre, unaffected by any human activity.

As a result, many, or most of our Canterbury catchments are now classified as non-compliant with the National Policy Statement for Freshwater.



Water – we have arrived at a collision point.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Within this Legislation has been a re-ordering of the priorities given to decisions on consenting. Previously, Drinking Water, Social and Economic factors were given equal consideration alongside a concept named “Te Mana o te Wai”, broadly translated as the health of the water or river.

Now, Te Mana o te Wai has been

elevated to the highest priority, with provision of drinking water second order priority and social and economic considerations given the lowest priority.

This is made arguably more difficult given that only one racial group of our society are able to make interpretations and statements on the meaning

of Te Mana o te Wai in each circumstance.

The practical end result of is that in a zone not meeting the targets of the National Policy Statement, any activity short of actually improving water quality is not likely to pass the test of Te Mana o te Wai, regardless of how strong the argument for, or

benefits of the activity on our drinking water, or social and economic aspirations are.

An outcome of “no impact”, or “minimal impact” would appear to be unable to gain consent until such time as the Regional Council and Iwi decide on what Te Mana o te Wai means for our catchments.

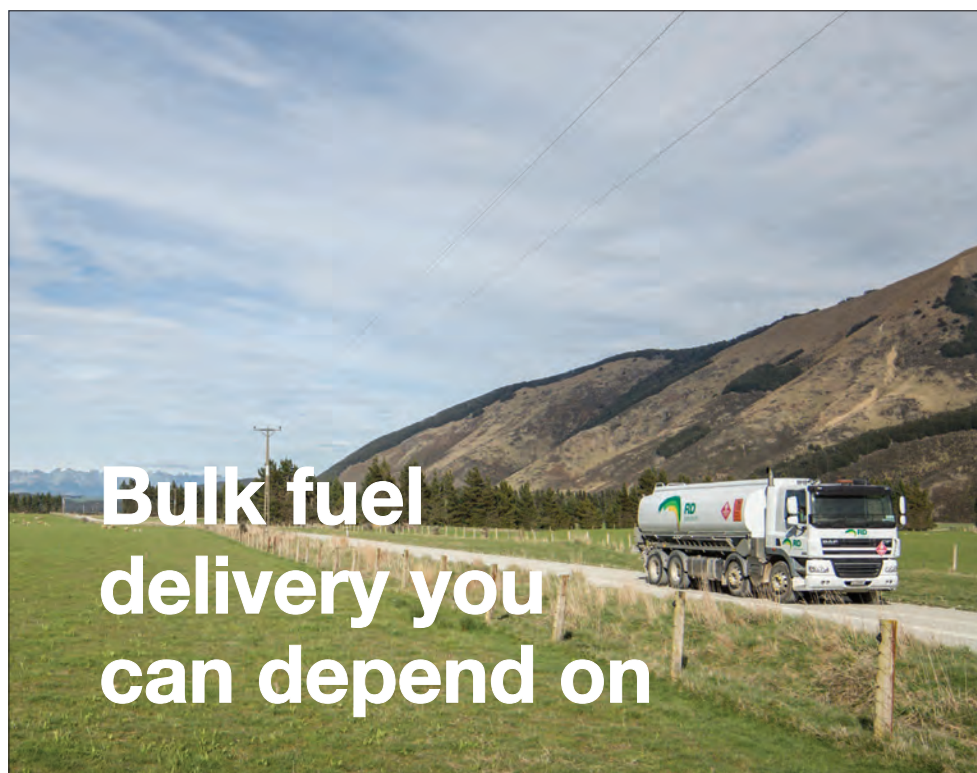
So, what’s the real-life example of how this impacts you and I?

Last Saturday in the Christchurch Press, an application for a Septic Tank outflow for a Two Bedroom Dwelling on a block of land in North Canterbury was publicly notified. So not only is a Notified Hearing a significantly expensive process, there is potentially limited chances of successfully gaining consent at this point in time.

I also understand there is a large number of water abstraction consents due for renewal in North Canterbury and that it is likely they will all be publicly notified, also.

Over the last four years, I and others have been warning of the impact of the Freshwater National Policy Statement and if I had suggested that a septic tank for a two-bedroom dwelling in a rural area would require a Publicly Notified Hearing, I would have been accused of scaremongering.

Well, here we are, we have arrived at the collision point.



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He Waka Eke Noa, every boat needs a bilge pump

After quite some time in the making, Goodness only knows how many hours of work by all involved and probably an eye watering amount of money, it would appear the Waka has been swamped by rough seas while at anchor.

It would be easy for us to begin to point fingers at those involved in its last and most current form, and consider the entire process as being a complete failure. While there is a strong case for that, and hopefully all concerned will have been reflecting on the part they played along the way. Now isn't the time.

Within the few days of the news that the Waka has sunk, a volley of ideas and thoughts have been put forward as an alternative. From a blunt instrument such as a fertiliser tax or going to a processor levy. But there still aren't many decent ideas of how a levy or tax can be placed in a fair and equitable way on farmers to achieve the desired outcome in terms of emission reductions without one or more farm types becoming the collateral damage in the process, with their communities that would also suffer as a result. What I have noticed is that there are some industry group leaders very quick to shut down different ideas due to their self-interest for their respective groups, while this is understandable it is also disappointing to see that put ahead of

the collective good.

It is encouraging to see grass roots industry groups emerging with more independent thought, free of the shackles of siloed thinking, egos or blurry vision from too much time in Wellington, or much like the HWEN process was with the Government effectively telling partners to pick winners and losers or they'll lump us all into the ETS anyway. Not a great foundation to build a mighty Waka from!

The Groundswell team will apparently have a 'no tax' scheme that encourages emissions efficiency via best practice management. There are some potentially good ideas too from the Future Farmers Group who are a bunch of young people with a farming background, they have put considerable time into a detailed manifesto of their vision for the future of agriculture in New Zealand.

Now definitely is the time for some good independent thought to rise, with some simple, practical ways of addressing this wicked problem in a way we get the best outcomes for the investment. I don't think we should be looking towards the leaders that have contributed to the journey so far for solutions. After all, we can't solve problems with the same thinking used to create them in the first place.



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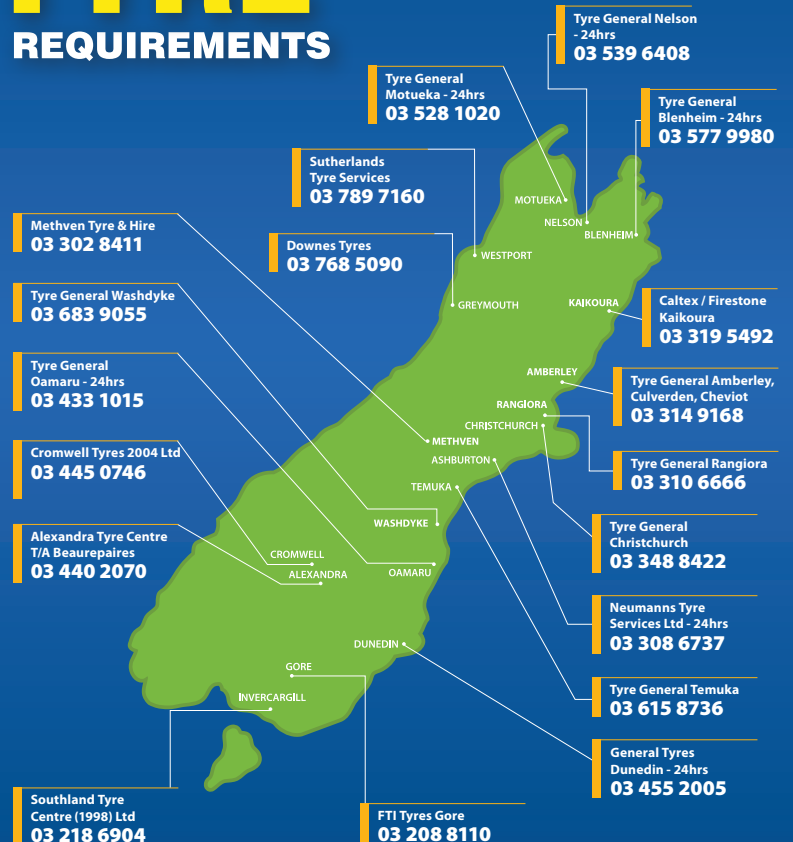
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Innovative approach to farming recognised

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

A majestic macrocarpa stag has appeared in the Scargill-Waikari Valley, delighting drivers on the peaceful North Canterbury country road.

The sculpture, carved by chainsaw by Blenheim-based artist Jakob Stadler, was commissioned by Iffley farm manager Scott Hassall.

"We had a tree that was causing problems with powerlines, so I thought we could do something with this instead of just chopping it down.

"I talked to the farm owner, and he agreed," Hassall said.

The stag represents the farm's deer operation and adds to the significant beautification of the property's road frontage, complemented by nearby native plantings.

Sheep and beef are also integrated into the farm system, with 2200 sheep and 180 cattle running on the 940-hectare property.

The farm carries around 1000 hinds, which go to Wapiti stags sourced from John Faulkners

Clachanburn stud.

Iffley runs Angus cattle and the family Charolais stud. Hassall took over and moved to the property in 2016 after his father passed away.

The composite ewe flock on the farm carry the Inverdale fertility gene, which raises scanning rates by 50 per cent.

Hassall has managed Iffley, along with his wife Jo, for John and Pauline McGrath for over twenty years and approaches farming much the same way he approached the problem tree – with innovative thinking that explores possibilities and solutions outside the box.

Hassall was recently recognised for his innovation on-farm, winning the Duncan New Zealand Ltd award at the Deer Industry New Zealand Conference.

The award is given to deer farmers for vision and innovation whilst mastering a demanding environment.

The judges commended Hassall on his focus on environmental projects and in-depth knowledge of the whole farming system.

When the area was struck with drought three years ago, Hassall



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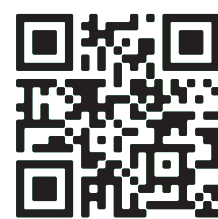


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looked for a solution for utilising the established kale crops on the property and reducing feed costs.

“We were buying in around 300 bales of baleage, over 200 tonnes of spuds and about 6000 tonnes of grain. “It was horrendous.”

He came up with a unique solution. Hassall fast-tracked the arrival of a new loading wagon designed for silage and set to work experimenting with the system with kale.

“I did a few rounds of kale with just my hay mower, then we went in with a load wagon and chopped a couple of wagons full.”

The experiment was a success. “What it meant was rather than just having one or two mobs behind break fences, I was able to chop that feed and take it all around the farm.

“I was able to feed every class of stock I have – cattle, deer, weaners, calves and sheep, so obviously, it was just awesome.

“Grass staggers stopped literally overnight because they just had some nice green feed all of a sudden.”

Hassall said while using the system in this way wasn't for everyone, there are benefits to carting fresh feed, over break feeding.

“It actually mitigates nutrient loss because there is no pugging and no breaks involved.

“The best part about the loader wagon is that it cuts big kale stalks into bite-size pieces, so there's no wastage.

“So when we are cutting and carrying, the paddock is just beautifully clean at the end of it.

“Stock love it.”

Hassall takes a pragmatic approach to water quality that works with the deer's natural tendency to wallow in waterways, but still ensures water exiting the property is clean.

“If you don't give deer somewhere to wallow, they'll just jump in a water trough and wreck that.

“Deer do well in their natural environment when they can do what they want to do.

“So, I've identified the exit points for water on the property and fenced those off.”

By fencing and planting out exit points instead of fencing internally, Hassall ensures water leaving his property is clean.

“It's a really good compromise,” Hassall said.



The macrocarpa stag carved by Jakob Stadler turns an unwanted tree stump into a work of art.



Scott Hassall has managed Iffley in the Scargill-Waikari Valley for over twenty years. PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON



The property carries around 1000 hinds.



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FARMINGFASTFIVE

We ask a farmer five quick questions about agriculture and what farming means to them

The big picture - animals, land health and business

We ask a farmer five quick questions about farming, and what agriculture means to them. Here is what Deer Industry NZ chairperson Mandy Bell had to say.

1. What did your journey into farming look like?

I grew up on a farm in Mid Canterbury at Lincoln Hills, Mount Somers. I come from a farming family, and, like so many farming kids, I worked where needed; I spent my time shearing, baling hay and carting, and pitch forking hay off fences after a Norwester. The farm ran beef and sheep, with top commercial Coopworth ewes and excellent farming practices. I learned a lot from my parents, Richard and Wendy Batchelor.

I've always been interested in farming and thinking 'big-picture' when it comes to the connections between animals, land health and business. It inspired me to work as a vet in the city and country, before working in our family business with my husband, Jerry. We supplied processed vegetables to North Island corporates, such as Air NZ and hospitals.

My family is linked to the primary sector in several ways – on the land farming; in rural service with my grandfather, Jim Ritchie, who was involved in National Mortgage; uncles in Fed Farmers and Ministry of Ag; and country doctors several generations back. I'm inspired by my extended family, parents, and my children. I'm an avid proponent of leadership, and I follow the likes of Ray Dalio, who has some interesting business and life principles.

2. Tell us a little bit about your farming operation

The Bell family has owned Criffel since the 1960s, almost 60 years. Criffel Station was converted into one of New Zealand's largest deer and breeding stud farms in 1993. It



runs as a family business with a strong focus on sustainable profitability and looking after the land for future generations. Six thousand deer live at Criffel, along with 120 cattle and 2,000 lambs through the winter months.

Life at Criffel has changed significantly in the last 15 years and continues to evolve. Deer farming, and the production of venison and velvet, is our main farming operation. Recent projects include water quality research, One Health reviews and seed production. We also offer customised tours and experiences, glamping and cottage stays, and allow for venue hire.

Criffel runs 11,000 stock units on 2000ha near Wanaka. There is a balance of hill country and irrigated intensively farmed flats, developed to a high standard and

with a high health status and high production herd.

The total property: 2000ha, 315ha irrigated flats, 38ha of dryland flat, 800ha of oversown hill, 600ha of unimproved hill, 80 ha of cultivated hill, elevation 300m to 1200 above sea level, rainfall 682mm.

The property now carries 1800 MA & R2 hinds, Criffel-born and purchased R1 mixed-sex weaners, breeding stags, and velvet stags. Also, beef and lamb finishing as seasons allow. The hinds spend most of the year in the hill blocks, with weaning in late February. The young stock is grazed on the irrigated improved pastures with the first animals going to the slaughter plants from September to meet the chilled market. All finishers are off the property by March at 16 months of age.

Criffel has several types of

high-producing ryegrass cultivars on the flats under irrigation, plus kale, turnips and rape to provide finishing feed for weaner deer as a priority class. The main irrigation system is gravity K-line, plus a Southern Cross gun, and a diesel pump. Over 300ha of irrigated flats is used intensively all year round.

Hinds are mated to European and elk stags. All of these progenies come out of Eastern European hinds selected into mating mobs on age, conformation, early calving ability and temperament, with the best hinds going to the Red stags.

3. What challenges have you faced in your farming business, and how have you tackled those challenges?

As expected, there's been several challenges: farming in a

region that has a high number of visitors and associated visibility of farming business; TB in the Pisa range over many years; Johnes Disease, and unpredictable financial cycles.

To tackle these challenges, it's important to recognise they exist first. Then, you can work as a team to mitigate and manage the problem. Try to think ahead and anticipate what's coming instead of having an ad-hoc approach to problem-solving.

4. What has been a major highlight for you in your farming journey?

- Growing up as a child at Lincoln Hills and having our children grow up on the land
- Since my earlier years in the primary sector, I learned to take a holistic approach to farming and the land. We've seen this implemented through the framework One Health, and by integrating Nature-based Solutions into our practice.
- Being part of the deer industry for over 30 years; an innovative, agile industry.
- WAI Wanaka, leading proactive rural, tourism and urban community-led solutions in focusing on water quality.

5. What advice would you have for the next generation of farmers?

- Approach the future as landowners and guardians of the land, as our businesses will look very different from today.
- Keep learning and adapting. Many of the challenges have existing solutions.
- Use planning and experts/ diversity of thought in creating business direction.
- Embrace radical transparency, i.e. sharing knowledge and info.
- Embrace technology.
- Work collaboratively; solutions are easier, and more cost-effective when shared.
- Do what you love with people that you enjoy being with.

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Big birthday adds to Ruralco's instore days

There is even more cause for celebration at this year's Ruralco instore days as the farming co-operative gears up for its 60th anniversary.

Farmers are invited to meet the Ruralco team and other industry players during the annual instore days on July 6 and 7.

Ruralco chief executive Robert Sharkie said instore days were part of a long-held tradition and remained a great opportunity for the farming community to come together.

The instore days allowed farmers to hear first-hand about products, services, new initiatives and technologies to assist their farming operations.

Suppliers will be in the Ashburton store to discuss individual farming needs, from farm supplies, seed, fertiliser, fuel, energy and agricultural services.

There will also be food vendors onsite at the Ashburton store between

10am and 3pm.

In recent years more than 2000 Ruralco members have attended the two-day event, Sharkie said.

Ruralco has great prizes up for grabs, including three House of Travel vouchers valued at \$15,000, \$10,000 and \$5000. Members get one entry in the prize draw for every \$250 spent between June 1 and July 9, at Ruralco suppliers participating in the instore days.

About 100 suppliers participate in store and online, while the extensive network of card merchants participate through their own stores.

"We look forward to seeing everyone, either at our marquee at Ruralco Ashburton or at our Methven or Rakaia stores.

"We'll have plenty of refreshments available at all three locations so come on in, have a chat and access the great deals on offer in-store," said Sharkie.



Ruralco board chair Sir David Carter and long-serving staff member Trish Burrowes will take part in Ruralco instore days as the co-operative celebrates its 60th anniversary. Trish started work for the co-operative in 1982 and continues to work for Ruralco on a casual basis. PHOTO: RURALCO

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Ruralco marks six decades

Ruralco is celebrating six decades of helping farmers grow a brighter farming future. Ruralco group chief executive Robert Sharkie said a lot had changed in the past 60 years, but the original intent to support farmers remained unchanged. "We've had farmers' backs for 60 years and we will continue to do so for another 60." Ruralco started back in 1963 when a group of Mid Canterbury farmers decided to work together to lower the cost of farm supplies,

such as fertiliser, seed, fodder and fuel. On March 13 that year Jack Brand, Gilbert Blair, Phil Curd, Alan Franks, Brian Lill, Eric Pilbrow and George Scarth met at Brand's home to set up a co-operative in the Ashburton district. They dived in with little experience, but with help and inspiration from the South Canterbury co-operative, they formed the Ashburton Trading Society on August 21, 1963.

By September, they had their first supplier, RG Woodham and Co, offering a discount to members. Sixty years later, the simple Producers store in Ashburton has changed alongside advances in agricultural industry. The group now has three successful Mid Canterbury stores with branches in Methven and Rakaia, as well as an online store. The reach of the co-operative has grown beyond the Ashburton district thanks to its online

presence and card network. Ruralco has 20,000 cardholders who benefit from competitive prices, and more than 3000 card merchants across New Zealand. The group employs just shy of 100 employees. Sharkie said Ruralco had come from humble beginnings in Jack Brand's living room to celebrating 60 years in business. "The farmers and people of Mid Canterbury have been an integral part of making up who we are today," he said



The late Jack Brand, one of Ruralco's founding fathers and the first chair of the board. PHOTO: RURALCO

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Ruralco's first home - the old Producers Limited store on Havelock Street in Ashburton. PHOTO: RURALCO

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Ashburton Trading Society started instore days

This year's instore days will be the 29th year Ruralco has hosted the annual event – although, during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was reduced to an online event for one year. Instore days started in 1994 when Ruralco was still the

Ashburton Trading Society. Since then it has become a must-attend event on the Canterbury farming calendar. Farming folk flock to the event to benefit from the exclusive deals, competitive prices and awesome prize draws.

While saving money is part of the attraction, instore days also provide a place where farmers can gather and connect to shared successes or ask for advice. This year's instore days will be held on July 6 and 7 at the Ashburton store.

Children's competition

Ruralco is also running a kid's competition over the instore days this year. Children can enter drawings,

photos, videos, paintings or other crafty creations of future farms or farmyard friends. There is also a colouring competition with entry forms available from the Ruralco website.



Ruralco's Methven store on Main Street in Methven.

Ruralco celebrates 20 years in Methven

Ruralco celebrated the 20th anniversary of its Methven store earlier this month. The store opened its doors to the public for the very first time on June 13, 2003.



Ruralco's Rakaia store on Elizabeth Avenue.

Ruralco Rakaia serving farmers for 22 years

Ruralco Rakaia will celebrate 22 years of serving farmers this year. The store opened on July 22, 2001.



Ruralco's Ashburton store on Burnett Street.



The first instore day was held in 1994 when Ruralco was still the Ashburton Trading Society. PHOTOS: RURALCO

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Can farm plans work?

Under new legislation being drafted, all livestock and arable farmers over 20 hectares and horticulture over five hectares would require a government prescribed freshwater farm plan; although calling this a farm plan is a bit of a euphemism. What these are is a government-imposed farming directive that undermines the value of farm plans. How would this directive change the way we farm, and is it workable legislation?

The first step is a freshwater farm plan prepared in line with the government's legislation. Each individual property will need to identify their impacts on freshwater, how those impacts will be managed and how regulatory requirements relating to freshwater will be met. The second step is the plan will need to be certified by a suitably qualified person appointed by regional councils. The role of the certifier is to ensure the plan meets all the legal requirements. The third step is ongoing audits – again by someone suitably qualified and appointed by regional councils. The auditor must be a different person to the certifier. The role of the auditor is to determine a pass or fail in terms of whether your actions on farm meet the requirements in your certified farm plan and in regulations.

There are fundamental failures

with what the Government has proposed.

The prescriptive, one-size-fits-all approach fails to account for the huge variation between farms and the constantly changeable nature of farming, particularly in relation to climatic and natural events. This creates an impossible task for a certifier to create a flexible, workable farm plan and explains why there is a reluctance amongst the consultancy sector to take on certifier and auditor roles.

Another failure of the Government's policy is that it assumes all existing regulations are workable and able to be implemented. Farm plans will be audited against regulations like low slope and stock exclusion. In Canterbury because it is impossible for hill and high-country farmers to physically comply with the unworkable stock exclusion rules, it will mean all these farmers are destined to fail their audits.

To be successful, this policy requires a huge bureaucracy. Hundreds of consultants to write 35,000 farm plans; hundreds of qualified certifiers and auditors; and more regional council staff to oversee certifiers and auditors, monitor the audit process, and ensure farmer compliance with the requirements. On top of this, Ministry for the Environment have recently advertised multiple farm plan supervisor and



Farm plans will be audited against regulations like low slope and stock exclusion.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

manager positions throughout the country with healthy \$200,000 pay packets to boot. With existing widespread labour shortages there are not the people available to fill all these roles.

Because of the failure of the government's approach to farm

plans, Groundswell NZ supports the calls from our farming advocacy groups and regional councils for an industry led approach that has farm advisors working in partnership with farmers to identify and implement the environmental priority actions

relevant to each individual farm and catchment. A simple, effective system that has a proven track record through the successful catchment board farm plans.

– By Jamie McFadden

Groundswell NZ environmental spokesperson

Farmers welcome National's latest climate policy



The carbon footprint of New Zealand sheep production is among the lowest in the world.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Federated Farmers is among several farming groups encouraged by the National Party latest climate policy.

President Wayne Langford said Federated Farmers was "really pleased" to see National pick up on issues such as emission trading scheme (ETS) rules and methane targets.

Farmers would be particularly pleased with a review of the current unscientific and unrealistic methane reduction targets, he said.

"Putting a price on emissions to drive blindly towards those targets would be absolutely devastating for farmers, rural communities, and the New Zealand economy.

"We can't just reduce emissions by farming less and planting productive farmland in pine trees - we need to be looking to new technologies, whether that be methane inhibitors, vaccines, or gene-editing."

New Zealand farmers were committed to doing their bit to stop additional warming. However, the policies needed to be pragmatic, sensible and fair, Langford said.

Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) chair Kate Acland said B+LNZ supported the fundamental direction of the National Party policy, but noted some areas needed more detail.

"We need to slow down the unbridled conversion of whole farms into carbon farms in the short-term while we work on how to amend the ETS."

She said B+LNZ was not anti-forestry or against carbon offsetting given there were significant opportunities for farmers to integrate trees within their farms.

"But our view is that fossil fuel emitters should not be able to offset 100% of their pollution by planting trees on food-producing land.

"There has been a significant increase

in sheep and beef farms being sold for conversion into forestry as a result of the rising carbon price," she said.

B+LNZ also supported a review of the methane targets based on the latest science and the warming impact of methane on the planet.

"Our vision for the future is one where we're demonstrating that New Zealand farmers are world leading through measuring and reporting emissions at farm level, where we're hitting science-based targets, investing in the research and development of mitigation technologies. These are widely available and the market is incentivising farmers to use them."

Acland said the carbon footprint of sheep and beef production was among the lowest in the world.

The dairy sector had reduced its emissions by more than 30% since 1990.

"Though we don't agree with the current target set by the Government, the sector is likely to hit the 2030 targets and therefore there's just no justification for a price," she said.

DairyNZ said the National Party's plan to delay agriculture emissions pricing until technology was in place and targets reviewed was a step in the right direction.

Chair Jim van der Poel said DairyNZ would work with any government that focused on fair ways to reduce on-farm emissions.

"Before any emissions pricing system is introduced, there must be clarity about emissions targets and how any pricing mechanism will work, along with how all these factors work together. We must get the details right," he said.

Agriculture minister Damien O'Connor had three words to describe National's policy when asked for comment: "Unsurprising. Uninspiring. Unwise."

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Changes needed to keep staff down on the farm

Improving workplace productivity and attractiveness in dairy for the whole farm team

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

The Great Futures in Dairying Plan, developed in collaboration with farmers, sector stakeholders and DairyNZ, aims to help mitigate the labour shortage in the dairy sector.

The plan looks at ways to make the industry a more attractive career choice and sets out how the industry can attract, retain and grow the workforce on farm.

While the plan looks at making it easier to attract people to a career in dairy, staff retention is one of the industry's biggest opportunities, says DairyNZ senior scientist Dr Callum Eastwood.

"The more we can improve the workplace and make it more rewarding and enjoyable, the more likely we are to hold onto the people we have," Eastwood says.

Change the Job is one of the three main areas in the plan, and it looks at identifying and addressing the major challenges facing the dairy industry and what features make up an attractive and productive workplace.

Sleep deprivation, hours on the farm, farm safety and start times have been identified as key challenges, and DairyNZ scientists have been researching how to address those challenges.

"The challenges are quite contextual because it depends on the farm and the person, but the major challenge is the early start to the workday.

"This is what we call 'unsociable hours'."

While most people don't mind working long days, the early start can be unappealing, as could the workday encroaching on evening family time, Eastwood said.

"We also include in unsociable hours the hours that run later in the day when you really just want to get home, have dinner with your family and wind down before bed."

The physicality of the work and managing the expectations of the next generations also need to be considered.

"The new generations coming into the dairy workplace expect to have more autonomy in their job and flexibility of hours,"

Eastwood said.

The obvious barrier to overcoming unsociable hours on dairy farms is the milking schedule, but adjusting milking times even slightly can make a huge difference to the well-being of workers.

"There are opportunities to shorten the time between morning and afternoon milking so you can start a little later in the morning.

"There are also other options around milking once a day, and that fits some farms, but it's not an option for all."

Research has also looked at the benefits of flexible milking, such as three times in two days or ten times in seven days, an option becoming more common on farms.

Ten-in-seven milkings usually mean only milking once a day at the weekends, creating a more flexible roster and allowing staff to have at least some of the weekend off, Eastwood said.

Farm technology, such as wearables, are another way to reduce farm hours or free up time for higher-value farm work.

A recent survey conducted by DairyNZ showed that 16 per cent of farms are using animal wearables, compared to 5 per cent in 2018, which Eastwood describes as a massive jump.

"I think farmers have been more prepared to invest with the higher milk prices over the last couple of years.

Animal wearables, when used for heat detection, for example, can save time and help with taking one job away from a particular person, which helps the team.

Automated technologies are gaining in popularity and can free up staff time, such as automatic cup removers, automatic teat sprays and automatic drafting, particularly in rotary sheds.

"A lot of the technology is relatively simple and can be retrofitted; you don't have to build a new shed.

"Farmers can see quite easily what the benefit of those technologies is to their business," Eastwood said.

DairyNZ has been working with dairy farmers over the past

three years to understand better how farm systems and milking schedules impact the sleep patterns of farmers.

A study conducted last year showed that farmers averaged seven hours of sleep per night one week before calving, but this dropped by half an hour per night by the end of the season.

"That's an average, so that half an hour is quite a lot when taken into the context of people only getting six and a half hours of sleep and going down to six.

"That 30 minutes is actually quite precious."

Lack of sleep has a flow-on effect on most aspects of the farm and workplace productivity.

Sleep and fatigue are significant risk factors for on-farm injuries, team culture, and decision-making.

Eastwood said farmers may struggle to make good decisions if fatigued.

"Our key takeaway from these studies so far is that whatever farms can do to start milking a bit later or give their team the occasional sleep-in is really valuable," Eastwood said.

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Growing the value of precision dairy farming

Bull sales in full swing



Cleardale Station owner Ben Todhunter shows his Angus bulls in the auction ring on his Rakaia Gorge property.



Callum Dunnett, George Mannering and Ed Marfell from Hazlett Rural Livestock have a busy bull sale season, with around 30 sales in the wider Canterbury region

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Bull sale season has kicked off, with around 30 sales over the wider Canterbury region this month.

The second on-farm bull sale for Cleardale Genetics saw 27 of the 29 R2 Angus bulls sell for an average price of \$7195. The top seller was lot 27, going for \$14500.

The auction was held on the Todhunter family's Rakaia Gorge property on June 12.

Cleardale Station owner and breeder Ben Todhunter said he was happy with the auction results.

"It's been a good turnout, and I'm happy with the clearance," Todhunter said.

"And we have some new buyers here, which is good.

"There's been good bidding on some of the bulls."

Todhunter said they had learned from Cleardale's previous auction and made a few changes that had contributed to the success of the 2023 sale.

"We have done a lot more publicity.

"The genetics is probably better, and we've run them through an auction ring instead

of just off the book.

"We have had a different agency coming in.

"It's a combination of things."

Hazlett Livestock agent Callum Dunnett said bull sales had been going well across the board, despite the rate of on-farm inflation, although some sales were not getting full clearances.

"People are prepared to buy the one they require, but due to farm

expenditure, probably not two.

"They are just going to buy the bull they are really happy with."

Dunnett said farmers would still need to purchase and are prepared to buy quality.

With some sales offering up to 70-80 bulls, there was plenty for farmers to choose from.

"There's a lot of quality on offer. "Farmers are spoilt for choice," Dunnett said.

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This year's bull sale at Cleardale saw good clearance, with 27 out of 29 bulls sold.



It was a busy day for Cleardale Station farm manager Ryan Esler. PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON

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Tākina, Wellington.

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JULY 5
Rural Support Trust Time Out Tour with Matt Chisholm

Darfield High School, Darfield, Canterbury.

For more info visit: <https://www.rural-support.org.nz/Time-Out-Tour>

JULY 6
The Cockies Classic Golf Tournament

Hawarden Golf Course, Hawarden.

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Michelle Fletcher 027 222 2598

JULY 6-7
Ruralco Instore days

Ruralco Ashburton.

For more information, see the Ruralco Facebook page.

JULY 8
FMG Young Farmers Grand Final

The Southern Trust Events Centre, Timaru.

For more info, visit www.youngfarmers.co.nz

JULY 15
Southern Ball

Southern Rugby, Southern Netball and Hinds Young Farmers Ball. Held at Hinds Hall. Visit Hinds Young Farmers on Facebook for more information

JULY 18-20
Silver Fern Farms Plate to Pasture conference

TePae Convention Centre, Christchurch

For more information, visit:

<https://silverfernfarms.com/nz/en/our-company/plate-to-pasture-farmer-conference-2023>

JULY 20
Rural Women New Zealand Canterbury regional conference

For more information, visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/rwnzcanterbury/>

JULY 29
South Canterbury Hunt Ball

Caroline Bay Hall, Timaru

For more information, visit:

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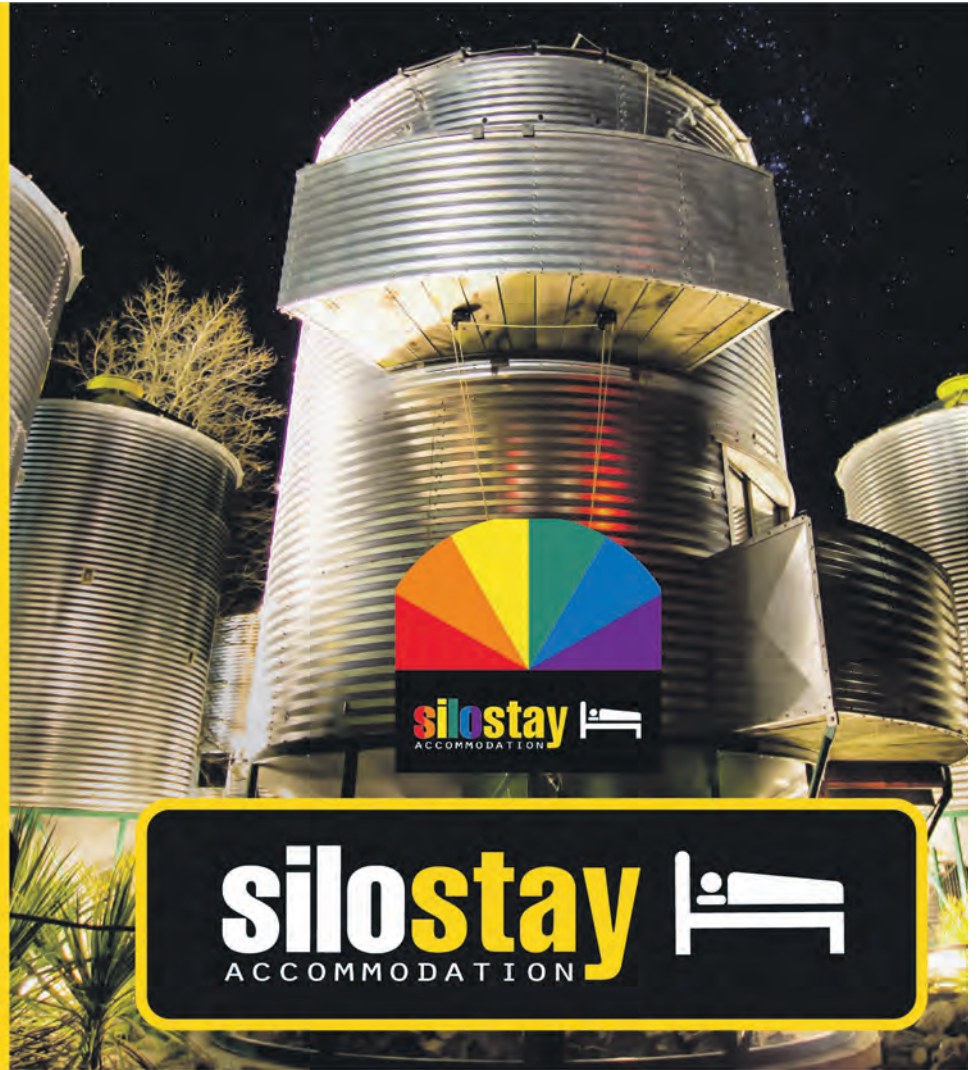
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Moving day a hectic time



Jonathan Power at his first day on the job as contract milker on Andrew Carr's lease block near Mayfield.

Mid-Canterbury roads were busy on June 1st, dairy farmer and Mayfield Transport managing director Andrew Carr said farmers now move stock over a fortnight, depending on when cows are dried off.

While moving day is traditionally June 1st, dairy farmer and Mayfield Transport managing director Andrew Carr said farmers now move stock over a fortnight, depending on when cows are dried off.

"We take our cows off the farm over a week.

"We do that because it's easier on the animals and easier on the staff.

"We do sacrifice a little bit of milk production at the end but we do everything a little bit earlier just to give staff a couple of days at the end to pack up and clean their houses."

Carr's trucking company has shifted 14,000 cows over the past fortnight, which has stretched the company's resources.

An additional five stock trucks needed to be subcontracted to add to the five stock trucks in the Mayfield Transport fleet, to meet demand.

"We've trained some of our existing drivers to deal with stock. We've got some retired drivers around the area we can call on if needs be, too.

"It's a busy time of the year. But everyone just gets through it."

The weather has been good for moving compared to the wet conditions of the previous two years, he said.

"We had torrential rains and flooding. It's hard on the staff and the animals. And obviously, road conditions were terrible.

"This year has been awesome because it's so dry and mild."

Carr owns a 283-hectare dairy farm near Mayfield, milking 1000 cows. He

also leases an additional 410 hectares nearby as run-off blocks.

Jonathan Power, a 50-50 share milker of 500 cows nearby, has recently become a contract milker for Carr.

Moving is nothing new, but it's a challenging time, Power says.

"Stock have to go away for grazing, and there's a lot of staff changes."

Power had six new staff this season, which has its challenges.

"Staff are getting to know new farms and have to understand how that farm operates."

Trust is a factor when recruiting staff, especially when Power oversees two properties.

"I'm not on my 50-50 share milking farm one hundred per cent of the time, so I needed someone I can trust to run that farm for me."

Apart from one employee from Waimate, most staff Power has employed are local, which he says makes things easier, as they are already integrated into the community.

Tom Chapman, who manages his family's dairy farm nearby, had two staff moving on this year and so far has managed to replace one.

"One of my staff is moving up north, and another is going to teach students about dairy farming.

"I haven't replaced them both yet, but I have a new guy coming on board from Sri Lanka."

Chapman, who moved his cows on foot, said the move this year had gone smoothly, and drivers had been understanding.

"The weather has been good, and everyone has slowed down and been courteous of cows on the road."



Mayfield Transport moved 14,000 cows in a fortnight.

PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON



Tom Chapman moves cows on foot between his family's two Mayfield properties.

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Dairy industry's brightest youth bound for Belgium

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Vet South retail manager and stud owner Kate Cummings is one of five young people about to embark on the trip of a lifetime representing New Zealand in Belgium for the 2023 European Young Breeders School (EYBS) this August.

"I'm really looking forward to this as a learning experience," Cummings says. "We are entering another country and learning about their industry and the place they hold in the world dairy market."

"With the knowledge and passion I have for the industry, I'm looking forward to furthering my skills showing cattle, whether that be analytically judging them or prepping them for shows."

The EYBS is the international reference point for training and show preparation, with almost 200 competitors from around the world expected to take part.

The event includes workshops, skills demonstrations, talks and showmanship training and will enable participants to develop their leadership skills.

Cummings, who began her cattle stud when she was just nine years old, says she looks at the trip as a way to improve her skill set and pass on what she has learned to other people in the industry when she returns home.

"So many people put a lot of time into helping me develop my skillset, and I want to give back to the next generation the same way those people gave to me."

Cummings, who is from Wyndham in Southland, is the only South Island member attending the trip.

She will be joined by Zoe Botha from Bay of Plenty, Annie Gill and Brad Seagar from Waikato and Holly Powell from Manawatu.

The team will be the first from New Zealand to attend the event.

"It's fantastic to go with like-minded



Kate Cummings is one of five young people from the Dairy Industry representing New Zealand at the European Young Breeders School. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

people that have the same ambition and want to get the most out of it, both individually and as a team.

"We are really proud to be the first New Zealand team to go over."

"It's pretty humbling," Cummings said.

Organised by Holstein Friesian New Zealand, applications for the trip were open to all young people involved in showing all cattle breeds and was initially planned for 2019 before being postponed due to Covid restrictions.

"The team are people in the industry who have excelled in the industry and cattle showing," Holstein Friesian New Zealand communications manager Anne Boswell said.

"It's a good cross-section of people who will be the ones to watch going forward."

Boswell said the team would be billeted with Belgian dairy farmers during the ten-day trip and have several days of competition.

"The trip will have a massive positive impact on our industry, the way they show and how the young people going will be leaders in the industry in the future."



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Linking the farming sector with agricultural events

Mid Canterbury dairy farmer Rebecca Miller is on a mission to connect the agriculture sector with a new online platform set to launch to connect farmers with primary industry events. "Landeve is an online platform to bridge connections and unify the primary industry. "It is about communication,

connection, collaboration and community," Miller says. Miller, a Dairy Woman of the Year finalist, saw the platform as a solution to the disconnection often felt by farmers in the agriculture sector.

With the often transient nature of dairy farming, it is often difficult for people to integrate into new

communities. Miller sees events as a way for people to feel included. "I feel a lot of people feel lonely, and that stems from disconnection. "Rural communities can be quite cliquey, and I just want inclusion. "That's a massive driver for me." While events are often listed on industry websites and social media platforms, the primary

industry lacks a single platform where all related events can be listed in one place. Because of this, sometimes farmers miss events simply because they don't know they are on, Miller says. The website will allow farmers to search events by area, industry, and date. Basic membership will be

free, or members can upgrade to access a mentorship portal and their own dashboard. Miller plans to add a forum to the website as a place for farmers to chat about the industry and the challenges they face, safely and privately. The Landeve website is set to launch later this month.



Rebecca Miller

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Headlines, soundbites, memes and context

A headline, a soundbite, even a snappy meme can have a huge impact on public perception. They can encapsulate an idea that is simple to understand without digging any deeper into the subject.

Christopher Luxon found this out earlier this month, much to his chagrin, when he was asked whether the National Party would reinstate the \$5 co-payment charge for women's contraceptives if they gained power at the next election.

The Government feasted out on his reply, that National would indeed do this, with dire images of the Handmaid's Tale and overall repression of women's reproductive rights. Of course, all this was nonsense when you stepped back and look at National's actual stance; that co-payments would be removed for lower income earners and reinstated for those earning more, but the damage was done.

The headline, the soundbite was damning, and people had to be willing to dig much deeper for context to see the bigger picture.

I was interested, then, when I saw Federated Farmers sharing a

meme on social media. One side of the panel read "Paris 2015, we will aim to reduce emissions in a manner that does not threaten food production", the opposing panel sombrely declared "New Zealand 2023, government releases emissions proposal that would drive 5% reduction in dairy production".

The message obviously being that the New Zealand government, a signatory to the Paris Agreement, was proposing policy that contravened the very agreement they had signed.

It was a sentiment I had seen expressed before, but never by a serious organisation like Federated Farmers. It seemed pretty unlikely to me the government hadn't spotted, or were wilfully ignoring, this loophole in the Paris Agreement, so more digging was definitely needed.

Much like Luxon and his women's contraception gaffe, it was time to zoom out and see the bigger picture.

That is not as easy as it might sound, as international treaties tend to be written by international lawyers, and making things simple for your average



Christopher Luxon - explaining is losing.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

dairy farmer to understand is not their highest priority.

The relevant clause is in Article 2, section 1(b) and it reads "Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse

gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production; and"

The "and" at the end of that sentence is important because it leads us to section 1(c) which ties the whole thing into developing a low GHG pathway.

If we zoom out even further, we can see that Article 2 needs to be read "in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty."

The whole of Article 2 is there to protect developing countries, to provide a pathway for them to reduce emissions without increasing poverty or affecting their food security. While there is poverty in New Zealand, we can in no way claim to be a developing nation.

We didn't need to zoom out very far to see that Article 2 was never intended to be applied to countries like New Zealand, and pretending it does is disingenuous at best.

Unfortunately, in this day and age when the best way to communicate with your base is a simple meme, people don't want to zoom out and look for context. It's why the government has never engaged on this point, they know all too well, and you need look no further than Mr Luxon to see, that explaining is losing.



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Otago couple named as sustainable ambassadors

By Sharon Davis

Otago farmers Steven and Kellie Nichol have been named national ambassadors for sustainable farming. The pair won the Gordon Stevenson Trophy at the Ballance Farm Environment Awards held at Te Papa in Wellington on May 26.

They beat nine other regional winners to become this year's ambassadors for sustainable farming and growing.

The Nichols run 4,500 ewes, 1,500 hoggets and 80 rams, and graze an average of 290 mixed-age beef cows each year on the 1,498 hectare farm Auldamor.

The farm is managed by Grant Bezett and includes carbon and production forestry. The Nichols live off-farm but are close by and keep in constant contact with their farm manager.

The judging for the

trophy included on-farm judging as well as a panel interview on a wide range of topics from a financial, social and environmental perspective.

Chair of the national judging panel Dianne Kidd said the Nichols demonstrated they would be excellent ambassadors for the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust and were worthy recipients of the Gordon Stephenson Trophy.

"They articulated clear, intelligent and insightful responses to our questions demonstrating an ability to communicate often complex ideas and issues in an easy-to-understand manner. Combined with their on-farm judging experience we know they can and will 'walk the talk'."

The panel also commended the Nichols for their "passion for farming with a holistic approach, bringing off-farm skills into the business."



Steven and Kellie Nichol.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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Renovating back country huts and flying high

By Sharon Davis

When Philip and Anne Todhunter came to Lake Heron Station 27 years ago, it seemed natural to build up the tourism potential of the remote high country farm that stretches from 700m at the picturesque shores of Lake Heron to 2700m at the top of Jagged Peak in the remote Arrowsmith Range.

While the 19,600 hectare high country station has been in Philip's family since 1917, Phillip has worked as a helicopter pilot in New Zealand and overseas and Anne was a mountain climbing instructor and guide in the Mt Cook area, leading climbers across icy landscapes to hard-to-reach summits.

The couple now run 11,000 merino sheep and about 400 breeding cows and have slowly grown the tourism offerings from an existing heli-skiing joint venture.

Phillip, with more than 30 years' experience as a back country pilot in helicopters and fixed-wing craft, offers "flight-seeing tours" of the station and surrounding mountains



Phillip and Anne Todhunter.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



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The station also offers more conventional farm tours, as well as accommodation in farm cottages and more remote back country hut-style accommodation along with suggestions for walking and biking trails.

"We saw the potential to use our skills and grow something out of it," Anne said.

The tourism side of the business grew organically in a low-key way, renovating old buildings. This included doing up the farm cottages and three dilapidated back country huts.

One hut had to be totally rebuilt.

Anne said this allowed the station to offer a taste of the outdoors and New Zealand's biodiversity along with an appreciation of old buildings and the

history of why they were there.

The station caters to a range of visitors from individuals through to commercial 4WD trips and farm talks for groups interested in home and garden type tours.

Methven Heliski has operated on the station for 38 years. They take skiers in small, guided groups for an exhilarating ski off-piste on the station's high mountains. Skiers often stay at the station and board their flight from the farm.

Philip is the main helicopter pilot and there is a helicopter based at the station over the winter months, Anne said.

Lake Heron Station caters for the more discerning tourist who wants to do something off the typical tourist circuit, said Anne.

Continued on P26



Philip offers "flight-seeing tours" of the station and surrounding mountains or personalised flights to just about anywhere in Lake Heron's Cessna 185.



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From P25

Prior to Covid-19, most of the visitors to Lake Heron Station were international tourists. With Covid, this changed to 100% local tourists and is now about half international and half local.

Anne said the station was only two hours from Christchurch which made it attractive to locals who wanted to get away from town.

The Todhunters have a lot of plans and ideas, many of which have been suggested by visitors. This includes setting up to become a wedding location and expanding to offer food and related services.

These would require a lot of research and investment, said Anne.

"Perhaps our children will take it to the next level."

However, one new venture is set to take off next year. A local biking touring company plans to trial trips on the station to one of the 12-sleeper huts this coming summer.

Helpful Tips

Philip and Anne Todhunter have the following tips for farmers considering agri-tourism.

Understand what your market wants. Do the research and then just do it. "Be bold and just leap in," said Anne.

Starting off can be daunting. It's okay to start slowly.

Sometimes you need to have a few iterations before you get it right. A guided walk to backcountry huts that Lake Heron Station trialed turned out to be harder than most people wanted, Anne said.

Be authentic. Be yourself and exude the typical Kiwi natural friendliness.

You've got to enjoy what you do. There is no point being the front face of a tourism business if you don't like people.

Overseas tourists expect a totally different level of service. They enjoy a personal welcome, regular interaction and farm tours.



Lake Heron Station appeals to the more discerning tourist, and offers accommodation in a series of rebuilt or refurbished huts offering guests a taste of New Zealand farming history.

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Mayfield farmer wins inaugural Mid Canterbury wheat award

By Sharon Davis

Mayfield farmer David Clark won the supreme award at the first ever Mid Canterbury A&P Wheat Competition.

Competition organiser and Methven A&P farm produce convenor Nicola Pace said the Methven A&P Association had held a wheat competition for local farmers since 1995.

However, this year they decided to open the competition to the other Mid Canterbury A&P associations with sponsorship support from Bayer Crop Science.

"In the last 10 years the competition has become more scientific," Pace said.

An awards evening was held at the Hotel Ashburton on Thursday.

This year the Methven, Mayfield and Ashburton A&P Associations each held a local wheat competition, attracting a total of 46 entries from Mid Canterbury farmers. The top five from each area were selected and their points were collated to find the top wheat grower in Mid Canterbury.

The awards are based on a scientific calculation of yield, Pace said.

David Clark from Valetta



Chris Miln, head of Bayer Crop Science NZ presents the supreme award to Mayfield farmer David Clark from Valetta Farms at the inaugural Mid Canterbury A&P Wheat Competition on Thursday. PHOTOS: JULIE MOFFETT

Farm won the supreme award. Tied in second place were the Henderson's from Limewood farm in Methven and Mayfield's

Gregory Partnership. Fourth place went to Methven's Pam and Dave Grant, while Mayfield farmer Gary Wilson came in fifth.

Pace said the Mid Canterbury wheat competition would definitely be an annual event. It attracted a lot of interest

from farmers, both in terms of entries and in farm visits to see how other farms are run and managed, she said.

Grand final winter feed winners

By Sharon Davis

Local farmers from the top of the Rakaia Gorge down to Pendarves took part in the annual Ashburton district winterfeed competition.

The winners in each of the Ashburton, Mayfield and Methven sections went forward to the grand final organised by the Ashburton A&P Association on May 25.

The winners were announced at a gala function at Hotel Ashburton on May 25.

Mayfield farmer Andrew Mackenzie won first prize in the fodder beet category with Andrew Barlass and Michael Copland taking second and third spots.

First prize in the brassica feed section went to Mayfield's Daniel Stack. Second and third places went to Mark Ensor and Ross Duncan.

Methven farmer Alistair Clemens won the cereal and rape feed category, with Peter Lowe and Andrew Spencer in second and third spots.

The judge's choice went to Methven's Hamish Marr, with Bill Davey second and Andrew Mackenzie taking home the third prize.

Competition convenor Ben Stock said the winterfeed competition was a good opportunity for farmers to see what other farms were doing – from sow rates to management practices.

"It gives farmers a good idea of what is working and not working," he said.

The grand final is organised in rotation by the Ashburton, Methven and Mayfield sections. Next year, Methven will run the competition.



Methven farmer Alistair Clemens won first prize in the cereal and rape feed category in the annual Ashburton District winterfeed competition. From left on the Clemens' farm: Scott Clemens, Victor Schikker (judge), Alistair Clemens, Ben Morrow (judge) and Ben McIntosh (judge). PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

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Women in Seed Forum builds on past success

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

The fourth annual Women in Seed Forum, hosted by the New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association, was attended by 140 delegates from across the arable sector at the Commodore Hotel in Christchurch on the 23rd of May.

"The success of the forum just continues to grow," says Association vice president Charlotte Connoley.

"It is challenging times for the primary sector at the moment as a result of the earlier weather events and ongoing legislative processes.

"Now more than ever, it's crucial our delegates are given opportunities to expand their technical and industry knowledge to support growers and farmers with the challenges ahead."

The forum, which had a higher attendance than the organisation's annual conference, began with a networking breakfast aimed at promoting collaboration within the industry and gave attendees a chance to connect.



Athlete and keynote speaker Gemma McCaw speaks to delegates about wellbeing.

PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON

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Foundation for Arable Research chief executive Alison Stewart and New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association vice president Charlotte Connoley.

“We were absolutely delighted with the turn-out and support from our many industry members, ranging from administrators, plant breeders, plant researchers, agronomists, and traders, to lab and technical experts,” Connoley said.

An impressive line-up of speakers on seed trade, business and well-being followed the breakfast.

Foundation for Arable Research chief executive Alison Stewart was the first to address the forum.

Stewart said the arable sector should be pleased with its achievements, stop hiding, and put its head up.

“The industry has to stop being under the radar. It’s worked really well for the last twenty years, but those days are gone,” Stewart said.



Rural Women New Zealand chief executive Gabrielle O'Brien.

“If arable wants to succeed, and it wants a future, it has to stand up and be counted.”

Stewart said having a framework to verify the work growers were doing around sustainability was important.

“Nobody owes you anything. Nobody owes a farmer a living.

“If you want to be recognised for what you are doing, you

have to be able to illustrate what you are doing has benefit to somebody else, whether that is the government, the consumer or environmental agencies.

“That’s the harsh reality,” Stewart said.

Delegates heard from Mel Poulten, who was part of New Zealand’s Agriculture and Trade Envoy, athlete Gemma McCaw



Leaft co-founder Maury Leyland Penno.

and Rural Women New Zealand chief executive Gabrielle O’Brien.

Afternoon speakers included Leaft co-founder Maury Leyland Penno, primary sector thought leader Julia Jones and ANZ rural economist Susan Klisby.

The event concluded with keynote speaker Dr Lucy Hone providing tools for mental resilience.

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Ecotain plantain blend a good environmental choice

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Ecotain, a plantain blend of the Cultivar's Tonic and Agritonic, is becoming an attractive option for farmers looking to reduce their environmental impact without compromising on production or stumping the bill for new infrastructure.

Results from research and farm trials have shown that feeding cows Ecotain plantain can reduce nitrogen leaching from dairy farms by 20-60 per cent.

Ecotain works to reduce nitrogen leaching through urine dilution due to increased water consumption, with the herb containing around 30 per cent lower dry matter than perennial ryegrass. Depending on conditions and the proportion of Ecotain in the diet, animal experiments have shown that, on average, urinary nitrogen concentration decreases by 28 per cent.

Ecotain also affects animal partitioning.

Nitrogen consumed by ruminants is partitioned into different pools, including milk,

faeces and urine. The amount of nitrogen in each out changes depending on the animal's diet.

Compared to perennial ryegrass, when Ecotain is included in a cow's diet, the portion of nitrogen intake partitioned into urine decreases, and the amount portioned into faeces and milk increases.

Ecotain also has a part to play in soil nitrogen retention.

Ecotain can retain nitrogen in the soil, giving plants more time to use the excess nitrogen in the urine patch and reducing loss via leaching and nitrous oxide gas.

DairyNZ chief executive Dr Tim Mackle says the results are exciting and provide robust scientific evidence that Ecotain plantain is an effective solution to help dairy farmers further reduce their farm footprint and continue to play their part in improving water quality.

"Plantain can bring significant benefits to local waterways and communities – we all want healthy freshwater to swim and play in, and dairy farmers can confidently use Ecotain plantain on-farm to support that," Mackle



Results from research and farm trials have shown that feeding cows Ecotain plantain can reduce nitrogen leaching from dairy farms by 20-60 per cent. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

said.

The results are from the DairyNZ-led Plantain Potency and Practice (PPP) Programme and include Massey University and Lincoln University farm trials.

The PPP Programme is a \$22 million seven-year project funded by DairyNZ, the Ministry of Primary Industries through the Sustainable Food and Fibre

Futures Fund, PGG Wrightson's Seeds and Fonterra.

"These research findings are part of a broader programme of work to continue delivering on dairy's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint in our local communities while maintaining profitable businesses," Mackle said.

Farmers can use plantain as a component of their pasture

species mixture when sowing a new pasture or plant it alone as a special-purpose crop.

Flemington farmer Phill Everest started using Ecotain in pasture mixes on his 224-hectare dairy farm eight years ago and hasn't looked back.

While Everest's farm nitrogen loss figures are lower than the trials, he is still impressed with the results.

"From the trial work, our 15.6 per cent plantain will reduce our nitrogen loss by 10-15 per cent.

"It's a significant reduction in nitrogen for our catchment," Everest said.

Ecotain may also be another tool for farmers to reduce greenhouse gas emissions on-farm.

The herb has been shown to reduce nitrous oxide emissions from the urine patch by 53 per cent in pastures with 30 per cent plantain.

"The research showed that for the same 15 per cent plantain, we could probably reduce our greenhouse gas by another three to five per cent," Everest said.

"Given the original target was 10 per cent by 2030, that's half of it."

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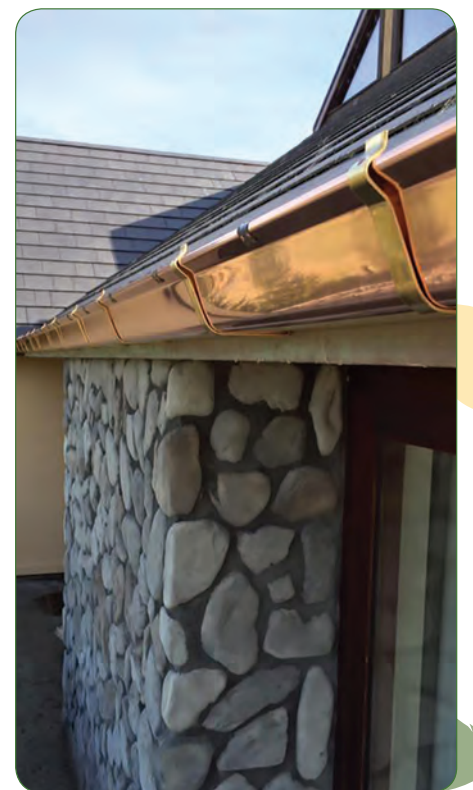
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EcoPond on trial in Oxford

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Craigmore Sustainables is trialling EcoPond, a technology that reduces methane from effluent ponds, developed by Ravensdown in collaboration with Lincoln University.

EcoPond became part of the newly established Ravensdown entity, Agnition, earlier this year.

In February, Craigmore implemented the technology on its 400-hectare dairy farm in Glen Eyre, Oxford.

Glen Eyre is one of 54 properties managed by Craigmore.

The New Zealand-owned company manages over 25,000 hectares of dairy, grazing, forestry and horticultural properties, managing over \$1 billion in assets and employing over 250 staff.

"EcoPond could play a key role in supporting farmers to reduce methane and help New Zealand meet its climate change targets," Craigmore general manager of farming Stuart Taylor says.

With nearly all dairy farms using effluent ponds, the second largest source of on-farm emissions, the technology is set to be a game changer.

EcoPond could enable farmers to continue to reduce their farm's environmental impact.

According to a study by AgResearch in 2020, New Zealand has the lowest carbon footprint for on-farm milk production globally, and New Zealand dairy farmers already produce 20 per cent fewer emissions per kilogram of milk solids than in 2020.

"EcoPond is an important trial for us because we are keen to apply innovative ways to the reduction of emissions and minimise environmental impacts," Taylor said.

"This technology is just another example of New Zealand's primary sector leading the world in reducing emissions and playing our part in reducing climate change."

The EcoPond system uses iron sulphate, an additive normally used in drinking water, to reduce methane emissions by up to 99%.

Iron sulphate restricts the growth of methane-producing microorganisms known as methanogens.

EcoPond is an inline mixing system that intercepts effluent from the dairy shed, feeding it through a stone trap and separating out solids.

Run-off is intercepted and passed through a mixing coil, where effluent is dosed with iron sulphate.

Sensors in the pond feed information back to a Programmable Logic

Controller (PLC), which automatically controls the system, ensuring the correct dosage of the additive according to the pond size or effluent volume.

"It's a fully automated plug-and-play unit," Ravensdown EcoPond product manager Carl Ahlfeld said.

"It's very easily installed into existing effluent systems."

Results at the Craigmore farm have been promising, with tests undertaken in May at Glen Eyre showing a 95% reduction in methane in effluent after being treated with iron sulphate through EcoPond.

Ahlfeld said initial test results have also shown added benefits of a significant reduction in E-coli and hydrogen sulphate gases, reducing odour.

"It's great to see Craigmore take a leadership role and demonstrate what can be achieved with EcoPond technology," Agnition chief executive Jasper van Halder said.

"Partnerships and innovation are required in the sector.

"It's hard to beat practical on-farm use to really demonstrate the EcoPond advantage, and partners like Craigmore show us the future of farming."



Craigmore Sustainables is trialling EcoPond at the company's 400-hectare dairy farm, Glen Eyre, in Oxford.

L-R: Steven Melville (Business Manager, Glen Eyre Farm, Craigmore), Nikki Cameron (Operations Manager, Craigmore), Stuart Taylor (General Manager Farming, Craigmore), Professor Hong Di (Lincoln University), Carl Ahlfeld (Product Manager ClearTech & EcoPond, Agnition), Emeritus Professor Keith Cameron (Lincoln University), Elliot Mercer (General Manager Innovation, Agnition)

PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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The Rakaia ute challenge

By Claire Inkson
 Claire.inkson@
 theguardian.co.nz

We put four of the best-selling utes on the market to the test through the back roads of the Rakaia Gorge to see if they hold up to their reputations and convince our drivers to switch their allegiances to another vehicle.

Meet the Drivers

Duncan Humm:
 Co-founder of NZ Farming, an Amarok owner himself and no stranger to a ute challenge.



Guyon Humm:
 Duncan's long-suffering twin brother, owner of Humm Engineering and staunch Hilux man.



Craig Elliott:
 A dairy farmer and part of the team that brings Mid Canterbury the Methven Ute Muster. Craig is well-versed in farm trucks and sits firmly in the Ranger camp.



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The Vehicles:

- Ford Ranger Wildtrak 3L V6.
- Volkswagen Amarok PanAmericana 3L V6
- Isuzu D-Max X-Terrain 3L Turbo
- Toyota Hilux SR5 Cruiser 2.8L Turbo

The Challenge:

We rated the utes 0-5 on performance, technology, comfort and off-roading ability. Here is how they came out on average across our three drivers.

| | Ford Ranger Wildtrak | Volkswagen Amarok PanAmericana | Isuzu D-Max X-Terrain | Toyota Hilux SR5 Cruiser |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Price point | \$83990 | \$88000 | \$75990 | \$63390 |
| Transmission | 10-speed auto | 10-speed auto | 6-speed auto | 6-speed auto |
| Engine | 3L V6 | 3L V6 | 3L Turbo | 2.8 L Turbo |
| Comfort | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4 | 3.6 |
| Technology | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 |
| Performance | 4.5 | 4.8 | 3.5 | 3.6 |
| Off Road | 4.3 | 4.6 | 3.6 | 4.3 |



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The Volkswagen Amarok PanAmericana, The Isuzu D-Max X-Terrain, the Ford Ranger Wildtrak and the Toyota Hilux SR5 Cruiser.

The Results:

The Ford Ranger Wildtrak

The Ford Ranger Wildtrak was comfortable to drive, had plenty of power, and the interior felt more like a car than a truck. The 12-inch touchscreen was great for navigation, and luxury features like the heated seats were well received. The Ranger performed exceptionally well off-road, with excellent control.

“Basically, it ticked all the boxes,” Craig Elliott says.

“It was nice to drive, and stuck to the road, and plenty of power.”

“I’m a bit biased because I love Rangers, but I would rate the Ranger first, followed by the Amarok.

“It was very close; you could

chuck a blanket over those two.”

Guyon Humm also picked the Ranger as the winner, a huge call for a long-standing staunch Hilux man, although he still felt a Hilux would be a better choice for on-farm.

“I just feel like the Ranger around the farm would feel a bit big,” Guyon said.

As expected, the Ford Ranger performed well across the board, although we did note some understeer off-road. While the Wildtrak is quite expensive at \$83990, it’s worth noting that the lower-spec Ranger XLT is available at a lower price point in the range.

The Volkswagen Amarok PanAmericana

This vehicle surprised all of

us. While we expected a stellar performance by the Ranger, we did not expect the Amarok to give the Ranger a real run for its money. The Amarok, with built-in full diff lock, stuck well to the road, had fantastic suspension and less understeer than the Ranger. The interior was comfortable, and there was plenty of tech onboard.

“If money wasn’t an object, I’d definitely pick the Amarok,” said Duncan Humm.

“It’s above everything else and sufficiently ahead of the Ranger in terms of quality, feel, and handling. It’s the whole package.”

The Isuzu D-Max X-Terrain

A much more affordable option, the D-Max came at a cheaper

price point but still showed some of the newer tech of the more expensive Ranger and Amarok. Our drivers found it to be a confident ride with a powerful engine and responsive steering. The traction control was found to be restrictive at times, but overall it drove well and handled off-road without breaking a sweat. Although it lacked a little of the star quality of the Ranger and Amarok, our drivers thought it would be the best vehicle for commercial or farm use.

“If money is important, and for most of us it is, the D-Max is a good solid all-rounder that is evolved enough, and it’s tough,” said Duncan.

The Toyota Hilux SR5 Cruiser

With a new Hilux set to drop soon, this was the older model of the vehicles we tested, but still, the trusty Hilux held its own against its more expensive competitors. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Hilux handled more like a truck on-road than the Amarok and Ranger and lacked a little in power. Our drivers found the Hilux to be a slightly harder ride, but it had good steering and brakes and handled well off-road.

“It’s so well proven. It’s got a great strike record, and it’s probably the pick of the bunch for farmers,” Duncan said.

“It’s got a history of being reliable, and that’s a big box to tick,” Craig said.

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| <p>Lemken Karat 9</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$132,500*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">6.0m. The flexibility of primary tilage, seedbed preparation, deep mixing and ripping in one machine. Demo today.</p> | <p>Multidrive with Bredal Bin</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$69,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Multidrive MD4140 with Bredal K75 bin. 320/95R46 & 600/60R28 tyres. Spreadtested. Very tidy condition.</p> | <p>HE-VE Heavy Duty Tine Rejuvenator 6m</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$21,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">2015 model. Demo use only.</p> | <p>Bredal F2-3200</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$21,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Stainless bin. Very tidy. Spread test certificate.</p> | <p>Claydon V3.45 Drill</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$19,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Strip Tillage Drill. 2005 model. Very tidy condition.</p> | |
| <p>Househam Merlin Mk2</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$225,000*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">4000L tank, 24m boom. Auto steer, auto section control. 2018 model. Fully serviced. Very tidy.</p> | <p>Salford 450 Cultivator</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$29,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">19ft. crumblers and tyne harrows. Very tidy condition.</p> | <p>HE-VA Disc Roller Contour series</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$29,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">5.5M DISC ROLLER IN STOCK - POA</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">Multi-functional stubble cultivators, work effectively near the surface and at depth. Working widths from 2.5-8m.</p> | <p>Househam IMP</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$45,000*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">24m boom, 3000 ltr tank. Ag Leader computer. 1994 model. very tidy.</p> | <p>Bogballe M2W</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">16,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">4000 ltr. Loadcells & full electronic control. Spread test certificate. Very tidy.</p> | <p>HE-VA Disc Roller Contour 6.5m</p> <p style="text-align: right; background-color: #008000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">\$69,995*</p> <p style="font-size: 8px;">2016 model. Farmer owned. Workshop Serviced. New discs fitted.</p> |

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Two years on from flooding: Almost back to normal

By Sharon Davis

Two years after devastating floods killed or displaced hundreds of livestock and brought down tons of shingle and silt, wrecking paddocks, fences and roads, life for Mid Canterbury farmer Darryl Butterick and his wife Lyn has almost returned to normal.

Although normal includes working around several deep scours left behind after the May 2021 floodwaters ripped through their property. Some scours have been turned into unplanned water features because they were too expensive and time consuming to fill.

The Butterick's deer, beef and sheep farm straddles the Ashburton Staveley Road near Greenfields.

It is sandwiched between the north and south branches of the Ashburton River and was one of the Mid Canterbury farms to bear the brunt of the three-day flood.

The property was hit by a "double whammy from both rivers" when they breached their banks. "Everything got hammered," Butterick said.

While two neighbours and some stock were recused from the floodwaters, many animals were never seen again and presumed drowned. Paddocks and fences were decimated, and water troughs and water systems washed away.

The contents of sheds - both machinery and hay - were water damaged

Even a two-ton roller was



life for Mid Canterbury farmer Darryl Butterick and his wife Lyn has almost returned to normal. PHOTO: SHARON DAVIS

swept away and later found at the bottom of a pond.

Butterick said the floods had scoured out numerous holes "deep enough to cover a truck" on the property, and left fields covered in shingle and silt.

A contractor had worked "flat out" fencing for 12 to 18 months. The silt and shingle had to be

cleared before the pastures could be restored, and the scraped silt was used to fill some of the scours.

After two years of constant, non-stop work, and a lot of help and support from mates and suppliers, the farm is now "not far away" from being back to where it was before the floods.

"It's been a hell of a mission,

but we're coming to the end of it now. Everyone has pulled through and is sort of back to normal.

"But for a long time I never thought there would be a normal."

Managing the repairs and recovery while trying to run the farm had "been a fair old mission".

Butterick said the initial stages of the recovery had been disheartening. After weeks or months of constant hard work he'd look around and find all that work had not really made much of a difference.

In the first few months when the fences were down, stock would wander off overnight. Half a day would be wasted rounding them up again.

He's still focused on one day at a time to get through it.

Butterick said he had not tallied up all the repair costs, but it would be well into six figures.

However, it wasn't just the cost to clear and replant the fields, build new fences, and replace flood-damaged machinery and equipment. There were lost opportunities too.

While Butterick is thankful that sheep and beef prices were relatively high over the last two years, he wasn't able to capitalise on that as he might have if the farm had been fully operational.

All he could do was maximize the returns on the stock he had.

Butterick said his land was left very vulnerable for up to a year after the flood until the stopbanks were repaired.

"Every time it rained I was up checking the river."

Ashburton was still vulnerable to flooding and the river needed to be sorted out with a sense of urgency, he said.

The floods had been a huge wake up call, but the recent lack of heavy rain had allowed people to fall into thinking everything was okay.

Showing is in the blood

By Sharon Davis

Richard Lemon reckons Rshowing is in his blood.

It's what led him to once rub shoulders with King Charles, and now he's been awarded an honour by him.

The semi-retired Lauriston farmer, 72, has been awarded a Queen's Service Medal for his services to the agriculture and pastoral industry.

Lemon has been involved with the Ashburton A&P Association since 1975, and the Canterbury A&P Association since 1990, in various capacities including terms as president of both associations.

He is currently chairperson of the Ashburton A&P Association board and has been a director of the Canterbury A&P Association since 2000.

Lemon said he was very humbled and surprised to receive the honour.

"I'm just an ordinary guy who has worked with the A&Ps because I like doing it."

He said the team of volunteers behind each Canterbury A&P show put in more than 22,500

volunteer hours.

"I'm humbled by this honour when we've got that much volunteer work happening around us."

Lemon grew up attending the local A&P shows, either riding his pony or showing sheep from the farm that has been in the family since 1884.

With three generations of showing sheep, "showing got into my blood".

It was natural for Lemon to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather and father, who were both past presidents of the Ashburton association.

He served two years as president himself in 1994 and 1995.

In 2012, Lemon got to rub shoulders with the then Prince and Princess of Wales in his role as president of the Canterbury A&P Association.

Along with his wife, Barbara, Lemon spent a few hours hosting the royal couple when they attended the 150th Canterbury A&P show.

Lemon has played an active role in ensuring the annual two-day Canterbury show runs to the

expected standard, including nine years in a role coordinating the event management.

He was also part of the national Rural Agricultural Society for nine years and vice president for four years in the early 2000s.

He is still active in both A&P associations.

"The challenges that these organisations now face are how to keep pace with technology changes and the sustainability factors that the farming sector are addressing and to be able to showcase these to our urban cousins," he said.

In more recent years, Lemon took on the role of chair of the board of the Ashburton A&P Association and was part of a group to rewrite its constitution.

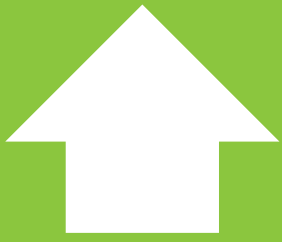
He plans to continue his work with both associations and pass on his extensive knowledge to the younger generations.

For Lemon, the joy is in seeing the enjoyment on the faces of children and families when they attended the shows.

He is also excited to be part of a planned revamp of the Ashburton showgrounds.



Richard Lemon has been awarded a Queen's Service Medal for his services to the agricultural and pastoral industry. PHOTO: SHARON DAVIS



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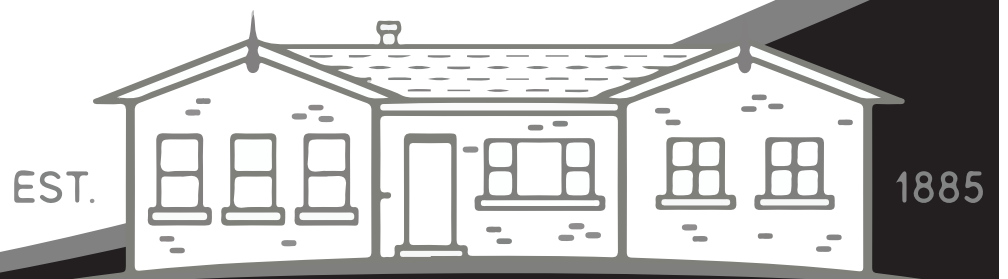
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