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AUGUST 2022

Animal Monitoring:
**TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS ARE
OBVIOUS FOR ANIMAL HEALTH**

GET TO KNOW
ANIMAL PROGRAMME
LEAD PAULA TWINING

MILK COOLING
LIVE Q&A WITH
COOLSENSE

A TASTE OF
TECHNOLOGY



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GET TO KNOW

Paula Twining

Animal Programme Lead

Geared with a passion to help farmers continue to farm into the future, Paula Twining has recently moved into the On-Farm Excellence Animals team. Coming from a farming background and with 10 years of experience within Fonterra, she has seen first-hand the challenges farmers face and wants to help make it easier to navigate them.

“There are so many changes coming at farmers, from regulations to customer and consumer pressures,” explains Paula. “My passion is about putting it in a way that makes it easier for them to work with.”

Paula grew up on a dairy farm in North Waikato before moving to Cambridge, to study at the University of Waikato while rowing – she rowed for the New Zealand team for many years. She studied science, majoring in zoology, and completed her postgraduate study in marine and freshwater ecology alongside business studies.

Following her rowing career she joined Fonterra as a Sustainable Dairy Advisor, looking after various aspects of the environmental side of dairy farming and helping farmers to find the right solutions for their farms. For the past two years she has managed the Waikato Sustainable Dairy Advisor team.

“Most of my career at Fonterra has been finding solutions for farmers in the environment space. Moving across

to the Animals team is a great opportunity to continue to help find solutions for farmers in a different area of the farming business,” Paula says.

The focus of the Animals team is to support the adoption of good farming practices while keeping a practical lens and trying to balance the speed of change. Some changes are influenced by the customer and consumer expectations, while the majority are based on improving the standard of care for animals.

“Animals are the centre of our work. We keep across what is happening in the sector, for example monitoring disease risk, changing regulations and new farming practices such as Animal Monitoring Technology. This tech puts the data in the hands of the farmer and has potential for a massive impact on animal well-being now and in the future. Our job is to ensure farmers have the right info about changing practices so they can decide what’s right for their farm, and keep up with requirements.”

The animals team is also in charge of updating Fonterra’s animal care and biosecurity standards to meet government regulations and customer expectations. “We ensure our internal teams are up to date on these as well as our suppliers” Paula adds.

Support for farmers is the core, however, with ongoing work to develop and support services like the Farm Insights Report, and coordinating support for farmers experiencing milk quality issues.

Within the team there are a number of veterinarians who ensure there is a connection between animal health, wellbeing and the practicalities of on-farm management. The variety of the work and the impact they can have is what attracted Paula to the role.

“There is always so much going on out on farm and a big part of our work is supporting our teams to help farmers with what’s top of mind throughout the season.”

“At the moment, it’s about the transition, keeping cows well-fed and setting them up for mating, as well as calf management, making sure the outside calves have good shelter available and any inside have their bedding topped up and kept clean.”

Their seasonal messaging is heavily focused on reducing the risk of calf disease, promoting things such as having good colostrum and calf feeding practices in place and monitoring the effectiveness by checking for any failure of passive transfer. Even if colostrum quality has been checked earlier, it’s a good idea to reassess.



“We’re encouraging farmers to consciously plan and consider all their calf management steps in advance, and to always be thinking about how things could be done better, for the cows, the calves and the team on farm,” says Paula Twining.



“Most of my career at Fonterra has been finding solutions for farmers in the environment space. Moving across to the Animals team is a great opportunity to continue to help find solutions for farmers in a different area of the farming business,” Paula says.

“We’re encouraging farmers to consciously plan and consider all their calf management steps in advance, and to always be thinking about how things could be done better, for the cows, the calves and the team on farm.”

“They should be thinking and planning through full processes, not just about what needs to happen but who will do it and when. And for anyone buying calves it’s important they understand how they have been reared and practice good biosecurity.”

Some of the work Paula is involved with includes how we are approaching non-replacement calves, which ties into calf well-being and ensuring all dairy calves enter a value stream. She is gathering insights and exploring any unique regional challenges farmers could be faced with next season when all calves will be required to enter a value stream. She is also looking for good stories to share.

“We know farmers are continually working to increase their animals well-being, and there are a range of ways they are doing this. We’d love to share more stories of the options available to farmers.”

The next few months is the time to review any changes you’ll need to make next season Paula adds, saying “Our teams are talking to farmers now, checking in to see how things are going and if they need any specific help – and sharing stories from other farmers.

“We do want to hear from farmers and we encourage them to talk to their regional Fonterra and Farm Source teams about the challenges. If we’re aware we can help.”



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Effluent system change the key to continued farming

A new effluent management system has guaranteed Greenwell Farms another 20 years of farming in coastal Waiōtahe.

Paul Looney, who runs Greenwell Farms Ltd with his parents, Anne and Alan, has installed Kliptank storage for his farm effluent. Greenwell Farms is a 280ha property, split into two adjacent 140ha dairy farms. Each milks 300 Friesian cows (the Looney's are one of New Zealand's top breeders) and all replacement stock are bred and carried on farm year-round, with the help of a 22ha run-off that provides maize silage and grass silage. This is transported on farm. Both farms produce about 120,000 kg/ms per/year.

"Each farm is a mix of drained flats and hill country in coastal Waiōtahe. The flats are in a sensitive area close to Waiōtahe Estuary," Paul says. "This land lies in a 50-year flood zone. Therefore we haven't got a lot of land suitable for effluent storage outside the flood prone area of the flats and the hills from where the two cowsheds lie."

"We decided the Kliptank storage option would best suit our situation, as they can be built above the ground" explains Paul. This also means they don't take up as much space as other effluent management options, and that's another benefit for Greenwell Farms.

"They have a diameter of 25m and 27m, and need a solid foundation, made of rock, on which the Kliptank sits," Paul says. The rock for this foundation was sourced locally and brought to the farm by a local contractor. It was mainly rotten rock, Paul says, with a decent layer of dust.

"We did a test to make sure the rock could handle the weight of the Kliptank."

Each Kliptank can hold 1.2 million litres. One of the benefits, Paul says, is their 47-day storage capacity. "This means we can irrigate when the weather is fine and the flats are dry, to reduce leaching and improve on-farm grass growth. We use torpedo low-application traveling irrigators that reduce ponding when applied, plus the new silt trap system helps remove the solid waste from entering the Kliptank."

In the Bay of Plenty, farmers need resource consent to discharge dairy effluent. Greenwell Farms' proximity to the Waiōtahe Estuary and pipi beds meant Bay of Plenty Regional Council staff worked closely with Paul during the Kliptanks' installation, ensuring he met consent requirements.

Catchment areas near sensitive water bodies are governed by stricter effluent discharge guidelines than less sensitive areas. However the effort to meet these stricter requirements was worth it: Greenwell Farms has been in the same family since 1905 and the Kliptank system allowed Paul, Anne and Alan to extend their current consent to continue dairy farming there for another 20 years.

For more information about Kliptank effluent management systems visit [Kliptank.com](https://www.kliptank.com)

"We decided the Kliptank storage option would best suit our situation, as they can be built above the ground" explains Paul.





Animal Monitoring:

Technology benefits are obvious

for animal health

Chris Poole, who recently came runner-up in the FMG Young Farmer of the Year competition, is seeing results and saving time on-farm thanks to Ida, the intelligent dairy assistant.

Chris and wife Emma began trialling Ida on their on their 720-cow Waikato farm in autumn 2019. After the 12-month trial was finished, Ida's capabilities were obvious. She has since made a huge difference to Chris on-farm – and to his cows.

"I am saving a lot of time in the mating period, when we don't have to be picking cows to be put up for AB each day. Thanks to Ida, I'm gaining an extra 2-3 hours every day for each of the two

nine-week mating periods each year," says Chris.

They do half their calving in autumn and the rest in spring, and have seen a 5% improvement in their six-week in-calf rate since adopting Ida. They have also found more flexibility around culling to improve herd quality.

"At calving time, Ida helps us by identifying cows that may need a hand," explains Chris. "She sends me a notification if a cow has been sitting or not ruminating for a prolonged period of time. In these cases, that cow will need a hand getting her calf out, or she might have milk fever. With this information, we are able to treat cows early, and prevent avoidable deaths."

Ida also supports cows' health by automatically drafting those with identified health issues during afternoon milking.

"We check the drafted cows at the end of milking and normally they are lame or have mastitis that hasn't been found by the milkers at that milking. If a cow has no visible symptoms, she'll still spend a few days getting milked once a day with the sick mob until she looks well and her eating and rumination times have come back to normal."

Ida was developed by Amsterdam-based artificial intelligence company Connecterra, who wanted to give farmers more insight into their herds and help them identify issues on-farm, find solutions and transition to sustainable farming.



“We are finding issues faster than we normally would, and because of this we can treat fewer cows, as a lot of the time they just need time out of the herd to recover,” says Chris Poole.

The technology collects behavioural data from cows using collar-mounted sensors and combines this with data from internet-connected systems and equipment on-farm. She then translates the data into real-time, easy-to-understand insights. The technology is available at Farm Source stores; we recognise the benefits of animal monitoring to support your animal health and wellbeing and strive to bring farmers the best deals, products and expertise.

Canterbur-based Farm Source TSR Cristian Zavala-Ruiz has been working with Connecterra’s business development manager to introduce Ida and says there are already a few farmers using it. “One of the main concerns many farmers have is not always knowing about calving issues and when a cow is in trouble. Ida helps with that,” he says.

“All this comes down to the immediate care a cow may need after or during calving. Close to calving, cows must be inspected frequently, especially in poor weather. Ida can help if for instance, something is wrong in the middle of the night; it will send an alert to the farmer so they’ll know what’s happening,” says Cristian.

Chris has found this a huge benefit too, which is one of the reasons he recommends other farmers embrace

Ida – so that they can keep an eye on their cows round the clock. “This provides peace of mind so when you’re away from the farm, or even sleeping, any animals needing attention will get it.”

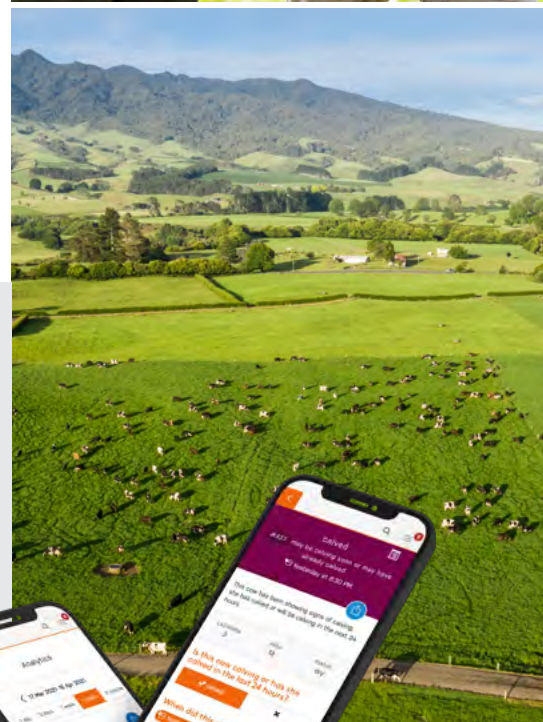
With this kind of technology, Cristian says, farmers save time, expenses or labour costs when using Ida’s insights to make decisions around reproduction and health. “Ida gets results and leaves you more time with the family.”

“Ida provides a lot of data, which farmers should be prepared for,” says Chris. “However, thanks to a great user interface, it’s easy to understand it. Ida also has a fantastic customer success team to help, and they’re a message or phone call away. The care from the team is really outstanding”.

For more information about Ida and Connecterra’s partnership with Fonterra, visit nzfarmsource.co.nz/animalmonitoring or contact your local Farm Source store.



▲ Chris and Emma.



SPECIAL OFFER

Until 1st September 2022 Fonterra Suppliers receive 30% off all Ida animal monitoring subscriptions plans and a \$250 store credit.*



Rumensin™ combats

high feed ingredient prices

International and local commodity prices, including grain (wheat/barley/maize), oil by-products (PKE), proteins (soya/DDGS/canola) and fertilisers (urea), have increased to unprecedented levels in New Zealand. This has had a significant impact on feed input costs into the New Zealand dairy sector, with the cost of growing pasture and non-pasture feeds (crops, harvested supplements – maize silage) and imported supplements causing an increase in the feed cost of milk production per kg of milk solids.

In this environment of high feed-input costs, it is critical to focus on minimising waste and ensure efficient conversion of the feed offered to cows into body condition and milk production to maximise the economic return over feed costs.

In 2016, MPI provided some data¹ for Feed Conversion Efficiency (FCE) in New Zealand. One way to calculate FCE (often known as feed conversion ratio or FCR in other animal production systems) is $FCE \text{ (or FCR)} = \text{kgs dry matter} / \text{kgs milk solids}$. The report forecasts this number to be less than 13kg dry matter per kg of milk solids in 2022/23. This can be achieved by:

- Increasing dry matter intake that results in a larger proportional increase in milk production
- Increasing milk solid production at the same level of dry matter intake
- Reducing dry matter intake and maintaining milk production.

One of the simplest and most cost-effective tools is a well-researched feed additive. Rumensin™ is the only feed additive with an FDA-approved label claim for FCE. While Rumensin™ has no feed value, it works by promoting a more efficient ruminal fermentation.

A meta-analysis² using data from 36 papers and over 9600 cows showed Rumensin™ worked by improving FCE. On average, trials showed cows produced 2.1% more milk from 2.3% less feed. They concluded the improvement in efficiency is through a combination of factors, such as increasing the digestible energy of the diet by 2%, increasing propionate production and reducing methane. Its positive environmental credentials have renewed interest in Rumensin™ as a methane-reducing feed additive.

The estimated return on investment (ROI) for Rumensin™ Trough Treatment is 6:1, while Rumensin™ 20% Mill Mix is over 17:1³. This is because the ROI

considers the broad spectrum of benefits that come from using Rumensin™, including decreased sub-clinical ketosis (18-25% reduction)⁴, live weight gain increase (+0.06kg LWG / day)², mastitis and lameness reduction⁵ (both a 0.91 relative risk ratio).

If you're looking at ways to counteract feed price increases and boost FCE while improving animal health and reducing environmental credentials, Rumensin™ is a tried-and-trusted tool. Call the Farm Source team or talk to your TSR for more information on how Rumensin™ can fit into your system.

¹ Feed use in the NZ Dairy Industry, MPI Technical Paper 2017/53.

² Duffield (2008b). A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Monensin in Lactating Dairy Cattle. Part 2. Production Effects. *Journal of Dairy Science* 91 1347–1360.

³ Based on a \$9.50/kg milk solid pay-out.

⁴ Compton et al., (2015). Efficacy of controlled-release capsules containing monensin for the prevention of subclinical ketosis in pasture-fed dairy cows. *New Zealand Veterinary Journal* 63:5 249–253 and Duffield et al., (2008c). A Meta-Analysis of the Impact of Monensin in Lactating Dairy Cattle Part 3. Health and Reproduction. *Journal of Dairy Science* 91 2328–2341.

⁵ Westwood, C.T., Bramley, E., & Lean, I.J., (2003). Review of the relationship between nutrition and lameness in pasture-fed dairy cattle, *New Zealand Veterinary Journal*, 51:5, 208-218.

Heat up submission and conception rates

Poor submission and conception rates are driving double-figure empty rates. To reverse this trend, a year-round focus on reproduction is required. This ensures metabolic issues are under control at calving, body condition score targets are reached before mating, trace element reserves are achieved during the season, and pre-mating preparation happens well before the first day of mating.

There is a short period between calving and the planned start of mating, so cows need to be supported to encourage heat strength and length. Herbage/plant test results from summer and autumn pastures have shown many are low in micro-nutrients. Animals also fed bulb crops such as turnips, brassicas or kale will lack iodine if not supplemented. These scenarios must be considered when designing a trace element and mineral programme:

- Focusing on providing iodine early in the season, well before the start of mating, not just days out. Nutrimol 4n1 provides essential compounds such as iodine to encourage hormone production.
- Starting a Nutrimol 4n1 Turn up the Heat dosing programme from calving for best results. Give cows and heifers a daily dose at least 30 days before mating.

Under a Nutrimol 4n1 programme, heats become stronger, easier to detect and helps drive submission rates to allow 90% of the herd to be submitted by the end of the first three weeks of AB. By achieving 4.3% of the herd 'put up' every day, the likelihood of securing a respectable six-week in-calf rate is dramatically increased. For a 400-cow herd, the expectation is that 17-18 cows will be submitted for insemination every day during the first 21 days of mating.

Good reproductive performance is a crucial driver of on-farm profitability. For every 1% improvement in the six-week in-calf rate, a farmer can expect at least a \$4/cow increase in operating profit, based on the DairyNZ Gap Calculator. For every 1% decrease in the empty rate, there is an additional profit of \$10/cow.

For more information on Nutrimol 4n1 talk to your local TSR or visit your Farm Source store.



Best practices to support reproduction outcomes

Drive heat strength

For best results, start dosing Nutrimol 4n1 from calving at five milliliters (mL) per cow per day (mL/cow/day). Increase the dose rate to seven mL/cow/day at least 30 days before mating and continue until 60 days after the end of it. The average mating lasts 10.5 - 11 weeks. You can then reduce the rate to five mL/cow/day from late January or cease daily dosing.

Support late calving cows and non-cyclers

To assist late calving and non-cycling cows, give one or two shock doses of 50mL/cow Nutrimol 4n1 to encourage hormone production. Continue dosing seven mL/cow/day during the mating period.

Economics

Starting from \$7.90 +gst/cow/programme, the cost of an empty cow outweighs the investment in a Nutrimol 4n1 Turn Up the Heat programme.

Gain calves that are faster to pasture

Fastlane them on Fiber Gain®

Scientific research and trials¹ have proven Fiber Fresh Gain calf feed to be a calf superfood.

Fiber Fresh Gain is rich in highly digestible, natural forage fibre and rumen degradable protein. This makes it a superfood that helps fibre-degrading rumen micro-organisms to quickly flourish, setting up the rumen for its future pasture diet.

Fibre lengths, texture and bulk boost early muscular development, capacity and strength of the rumen to handle bulky pasture.

Rumen fermentation of this unique forage fibre releases energy in the form of high concentrations of volatile fatty acids, particularly butyrate, which drives rumen papillae development, rumen wall metabolism and whole-body metabolism. Calves fed Fiber Fresh establish adult-like rumen fermentation patterns sooner.¹

Rumen comparison

Research trials on two calves showed Fiber Fresh-reared calves developed rumens that were 18% heavier than the control-reared calves. Both calves were seven weeks old and weighed 78kg, so while the rumen was larger in the Fibre Fresh-reared calves, their bodies were not.

Soft, moist, palatable fibre encourages early effective chewing and ruminating behaviour.¹

Together, these factors ensure calves fed Fiber Fresh are grass-ready in seven weeks. Fiber Fresh calf superfoods are a natural source of highly available minerals (especially calcium) and vitamins, essential amino acids for growth and development; Fiber Gain especially provides uniquely processed barley grain for added energy and phosphorous. These minerals and vitamins support all body processes, bone and tissue growth. The rapid digestibility of starch in Fiber Gain complements slower release energy from forage fibre, providing sustained high levels of energy for rumen microbes and calf body processes.

Calves given Fiber Gain alongside milk have a smooth and steady growth curve to reach weaning targets. They then continue to grow throughout their transition to pasture and beyond¹.

Fiber Fresh Gain provides a crucial buffer to optimise the rumen pH and fermentation to prevent acidosis of the rumen and hind gut¹. Sub-clinical acidosis occurs as a result of high grain feeding and is key in limiting appetite and growth of calves¹. It can cause scouring and contribute to poor immunity.

Forage fibres prevent damage or ulceration to the calf's mouth, oesophagus and stomach caused by dry, sharp grains, chaffs and hay. Effective immunity requires vitamins, which act as antioxidants and protect against disease.

Without continuous access to nutritious forage fibre, a calf's behaviour and wellbeing can be compromised, leading to unhappiness and unwanted behaviours such as consumption of bedding, wood or chewing tails.

Fiber Fresh Gain should be fed every day from the start of the rearing process, because it takes six weeks of high-quality, digestible forage consumption to develop the rumen for pasture. A calf's solid feed intake is an exponential curve, regardless of type of solid feed. Calves eat little in the first two weeks, so every mouthful counts. Calves need to eat enough highly-digestible forage fibre before they get put out to pasture. If they don't it will be another six weeks before they can digest pasture effectively.

For more information or to use Fiber Fresh Gain this season, talk to your TSR or visit your Farm Source store.

¹ Milk Production from Pasture, Holmes et al 2nd Edition and McCoard et al 2019 from the Journal of Dairy Science.



Highly innovative and

scientifically formulated

- All-in-one combo. Fibre and grain
- Fast (starch) and slow (forage) release energy and protein to max microbial growth, rumen growth, liveweight gain
- Moist feed for enhanced microbial digestion.

Finding	Advantage
Rumen is 18% heavier	Larger capacity at weaning. No weaning check
Greater papillae growth	Formed only in the first 10 weeks. The greater development of the papillae, the better the rumen efficiency
Better rumen wall development	Nutrients are absorbed more efficiently through the wall of the rumen
Better rumen metabolic function	The animal absorbs and uses more of the feed
Earlier indication of rumen development	Adult-like rumen activity and early metabolic signs of rumination. Grass ready in seven weeks
Adult rumen - VFA (volatile fatty acid). better microflora	Microflora population is crucial to the animal getting the best utilisation of pasture

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EARN BONUS FS3 on every 500mL bag of Elanco Injectable Metabolics.

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Protect your herd and business

A 2021 Cinta Research survey of 200 dairy farmers nationwide uncovered some disturbing parasite management and drenching trends¹. The problem is not the drenching, but how it is done.

Drench resistance is widespread and is a known threat on sheep farms. A 2006 survey² also diagnosed drench failure on 94% of 62 beef farms in the North Island. Many sheep and beef farms graze young stock that then go back to the dairy platform, taking parasites from the grazing farm with them. If parasites are resistant to the actives in the drench you use, you could be wasting money. Furthermore, research has found milk production of dairy heifers can be negatively impacted for several lactations if they were affected by parasites as young animals³.

The dairy survey showed many farmers are still drenching their whole herd at dry-off or around calving and are not using or don't know about other parasite

management tools for young stock. If our drenching methods don't change we could see a decline in animal health and productivity.

A starting point is to stop routinely drenching all cows in the herd. Adults are immune to parasites, but this comes at a cost. The 'cost' is less if they are in better body condition, are older and aren't stressed due to weather, feed shortage, disease or other reasons.

Not all animals in the herd will be in the same situation. Cows in good condition can handle stress and a parasite incursion better, so these animals should be left untreated. The larger this untreated (refugia) mob is, the greater the protective effect for slowing drench resistance will be.

If an animal needs to be treated, a short-acting clean-out drench may make you feel better but not really benefit the cow. Yes, it can eliminate parasites in the animal, but when grazing grass, cows are ingesting thousands of parasite larvae daily, especially if feed is short.

So when animals are under pressure and facing a larger challenge, use the longer-acting treatments that can keep killing incoming larvae, giving at-risk cows more protection. Cydectin® Pour-On is one of the few products with a broad spectrum of persistent activity against many worms. It has ongoing activity against the most production-limiting worm (*Ostertagia ostertagi*) for 35 days, and 28 days for *Trichostrongylus axei* and several other parasites. It has no withholding periods so can be used on cows before or after calving, with no bobby calf or milk withhold. It is also effective against biting and sucking lice for cows needing a worm and lice treatment.

Using more of the tools to manage parasites is increasingly important, so speak with your local Farm Source TSR, vet or visit wormwise.co.nz for advice on how best to reduce the effects of parasites on your stock and slow the threat of drench resistance on-farm.

¹ 2021 Cinta-Zoetis Agribusiness farmer survey.

² Waghorn T. et al. Prevalence of anthelmintic resistance on 62 beef cattle farms in the North Island of New Zealand. NZVJ 2006.

³ Ploeger H.W. Effect of Naturally Occurring Nematode Infections in the First and Second Grazing Season on the Growth Performance of Second-Year Cattle. Veterinary Parasitology, 1990.

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CERTAINTY
GUARANTEE

REAR THEM WITH CERTAINTY

With all of the complexities and busyness that come with calving, you want to be as prepared as you can, as soon as you can.

Your local Technical Sales Rep and store team are there for you to bounce ideas off and to provide seasonal tips, calf rearing insights and to make sure you've got the right mix of products in time for the months ahead.

We've also locked in pricing between now and the end of October on a wide range of products, from metabolics to feeding supplies.



Visit nzfarmsource.co.nz/calving
for more info or to shop online.

WE KNOW WHAT IT TAKES



**FONTERRA SUPPLIER
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Better nutrition to drive peak milk

In the weeks following calving, the cow's ability to produce milk increases as intakes and udder capacity grow. This peaks 8-10 weeks after calving, setting the bar for milk production through the remaining lactation. A cow's ability to reach a high peak milk flow is linked to its diet, so the right nutritional support in early lactation is crucial for season-long success.

Once calving is over and the early season metabolic and feed supply wobbles subside, the farming focus turns towards driving production. Peak milk levels are a reliable indicator for the entire season's production; every additional litre produced during peak milk can represent up to a further 200L for the remaining season. A sound nutrition strategy can make a big difference in such scenarios.

"It is all about ensuring quantity and quality of feed with a focus on balancing energy, protein and mineral requirements," says SealesWinslow Consultant Nutritionist Paul Sharp.

"Getting it right means you can effectively drive production and intakes."

Herd feed intakes are a focus at this time, with a high genetic drive to produce milk leading to elevated dietary requirements. These are generally well

ahead of the cow's ability to consume pasture and supplements in the earliest stages of lactation. This leads to negative energy balance in the cows. Returning cows to a positive energy balance as quickly as possible will help minimise body condition score losses and improve reproductive performance and fertility.

For optimum animal performance, a high-quality diet has several key characteristics:

- Provides a high yield of nutrients per kg of dry matter (DM) to the animal
- Provides a mix of nutrients best suited to specific production requirements, including energy, protein, fibre, carbohydrates, macro-minerals (e.g., Ca, P, Na) and trace elements
- Enables high voluntary intake.

Maximising intakes

A pasture-based system is the cheapest source of nutrients such as energy, protein, fibre and minerals. Herd intakes of well-managed pasture should be maximised through this period.

Other considerations

In spring, NZ pasture systems are usually low in soluble carbohydrates and limited by energy levels in the diet (megajoules of metabolisable energy).

It is also common to have insufficient levels of macro-minerals such as calcium, magnesium and phosphate, and of trace elements such as copper, cobalt, iodine and zinc. These insufficient levels can preclude cows from reaching their peak milk potential, while magnesium and calcium impact animal health, production and reproduction.

Supplementation with a soluble carbohydrate source can lift spring diet quality and drive production levels. This can help by mopping up some of the surplus protein typical of NZ spring pasture, helping reduce nitrogen loss in urine.

Quality pelleted products such as SealesWinslow's Hi Starch contain high-quality ingredients that give herds a carbohydrate boost and help them achieve and maintain peak milk production levels – the added benefit being the high palatability – dessert for the herd after the pasture main.

Identifying deficiencies

Herbage tests can identify whether your herd's mineral demands are being met, and find any diet deficiencies.

To discuss your herd's specific peak milk requirements, visit www.sealeswinslow.co.nz or talk to your local Farm Source TSR.



A taste of technology

Trials across New Zealand are looking at two exciting pieces of technology that provide clearer communication, easier referencing and seamless transitions for the farmer around crop management. Canterbury-based Technical Ag Specialist Russell Hamilton explains how it works and highlights some seasonal tips for on-farm feed.

New technology Farm Source has been trialling across the country is helping Technical Sales Reps (TSRs) and farmers move away from scruffy bits of paper and communication breakdowns and supporting effective crop management. Russell is excited with what they're seeing so far.

"It's a programme from Trimble Ag Software, which is an agricultural company based in America and it uses a map of the farm to collect information and build a history of the paddocks," Russell says.

"The phone app can be accessed by the TSR as well as the farm team, and it keeps everything in one place and drives efficiencies."

The TSR enters details and the farmers have access to view the information which may have recommendations they need to act on. It gets saved together in one place that can be accessed easily at any time because it has offline capability.

"Whenever a TSR visits a crop, they log the visit in the app which notifies the farmer," Russell says.

"It takes away the uncertainty, sometimes farmers aren't sure how active their TSR is but the app reassures them about what is happening and that their rep is right alongside them to ensure they get the best productivity from their crops."

Keeping all the information in one place also provides continuity if different TSRs visit or take over the farm relationship, as the log has all the information everyone needs to gauge where things are up to.

"The traditional way means a lot of information is stored in the TSR's head or gets lost in mountains of paperwork, which can easily be lost if the TSR moves on," Russell says.

"But having a digital log keeps it simple and easy and allows greater improvements into the future, plus

the information is at the farmer's fingertips to meet any audit requirements.

The process is seamless for the farmer and more efficient for the TSR team.

"We've also discovered farmers are enjoying being able to put a farm map in the pocket of any new team members while they are learning their way around the farm."

The app also has an inventory function and when the farmer makes any purchases through the store they are added to the farm's database. So everyone knows what stock is on the farm and when they might need replenishing to avoid running out or overstocking.

The trial is in its third season and 28 reps across the country are now equipped with the software. If the promising results continue it will be rolled out to all TSRs. But in the meantime, if a TSR doesn't have the software, farmers can inquire and it'll be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Drones are another innovation that is proving successful internationally for crop scouting and monitoring. Farm Source has begun trialling some in Canterbury and Waikato with a busy spring ahead.



“At this time of the season farmers need to be eating paddocks out well, hitting residual targets, and if the grass gets to a certain level, taking that paddock out for silage. Grazing management is critical because it determines production till Christmas,” Russell says.

“The drones fly paddocks and take photos, build 3D models and analyse plant health to detect deficiencies earlier and estimate yields,” Russell says.

“They allow the TSR to check the whole paddock and although they don’t reduce the time our team is on farm, we are seeing better returns from that time they are there. And having more information means the team is able to provide the best on-farm advice possible.”

“Drones are used a lot in the US. There are considerations with battery life the smaller, more condensed paddocks in New Zealand should work in our favour.”

Before investing further, they want to be sure there is value in the technology and that it will make the job easier and more accurate for the team and farmers.

Driving efficiency is at the heart of both of the technology trials and they’re all tools that will increase productivity and help farmers meet their Co-operative Difference requirements. The ultimate goal is to support farms to convert feed into milk efficiently.

“At this time of the season farmers need to be eating paddocks out well, hitting residual targets and if the grass gets to a certain level, taking that paddock out for silage. Grazing management is critical because it determines production till Christmas,” Russell says.

“Farmers should be monitoring and adjusting their plans according to the weather and getting ready for the second round, making sure there is enough feed when the cows are getting ready for peak production.

“But it’s important they don’t go too hard on them, they need to keep an eye on what feed is in front of them, benchmark within the farm and make decisions for the lowest-performing paddocks.”

Russell is an advocate for monitoring and recording paddock performance. He recommends starting to look at which paddocks could be used for cropping, and which ideally will be the lower-performing ones that could also be earmarked as sacrifice paddocks if they are going to be needed.

“Farmers should know what their paddocks are doing and keep track of it, that benchmarking will help paint a clear picture and help reduce how much things such as palm kernel and nitrogen are needed, which is important under The Co-operative Difference.”

The framework requires at least 80% of the feed used across the season to be farm-grown feed. The purchased nitrogen surplus must be monitored.

“Feed doesn’t necessarily have to come from the milking platform, but it does need to be pasture, forage or fodder crop that has been grown in New Zealand for the purpose of feeding stock,” Russell explains.

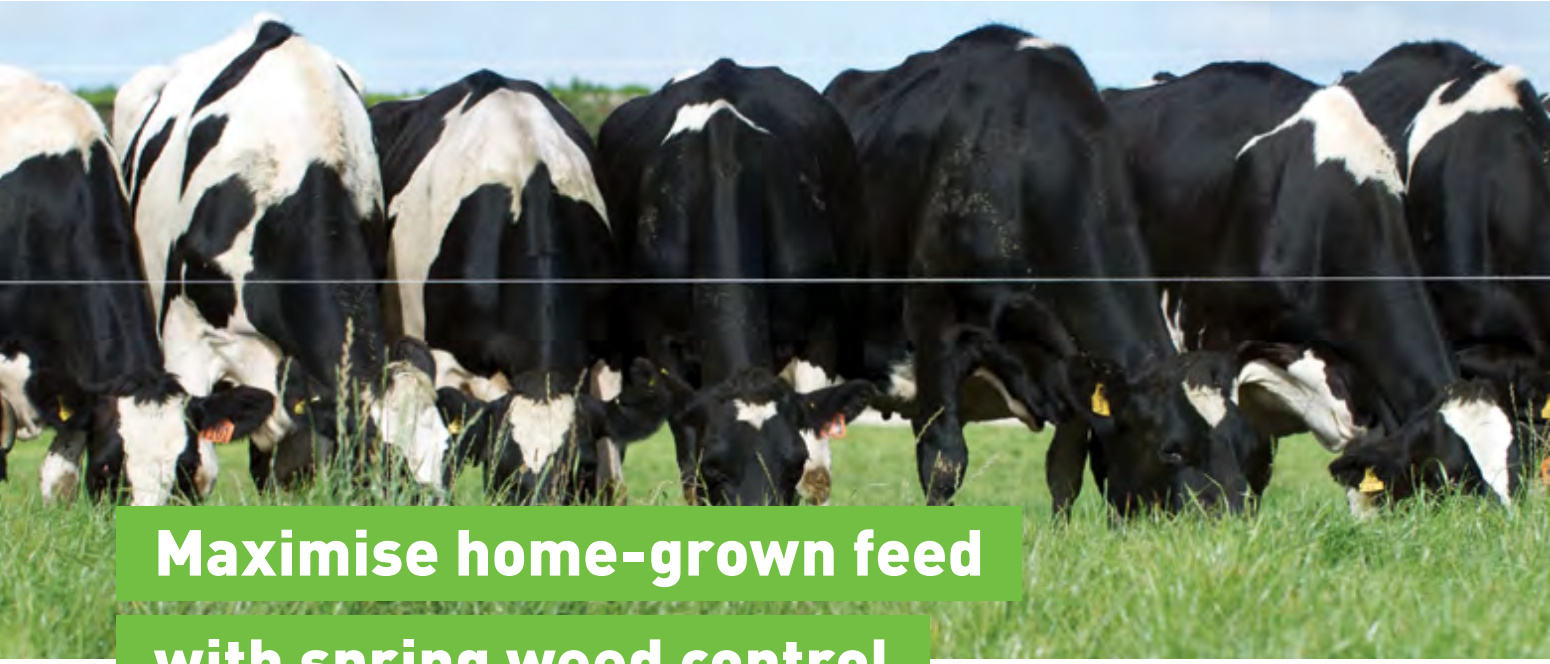
“So it can’t be things such as palm kernel, fruit or vegetable waste or gains and cereals making up more than 20% of the diet.”

The purchased nitrogen surplus is another figure to monitor. If farms are getting too close to or over the target number, they will need to consider what they could do to reduce it which might be by reducing inputs or improving the efficiency that they are converted into milk. If there are any concerns, be sure to ask for help.

“Our team at Farm Source is always there for any farms who need any help, whether it’s to look at your planning, support with your decisions or just a quick conversation, just give the team a call.”

▼ *Russell Hamilton examines pasture.*





Maximise home-grown feed with spring weed control

Your early spring pasture production may not be up to speed yet. But as the days get longer, and soil temperatures warm up, daily grass growth rates will hit their peak.

Production-limiting broadleaf weeds like these conditions too, however, as Farm Source Edgcombe Technical Sales Representative Derek Gibson points out.

“As soon as grass growth takes off, we get all the weeds as well. Add a bit of spring fertiliser for pasture, and that encourages them even more. They often grow faster than pasture anyway, so you’ve got to get on top of them early.”

Derek says conditions were tough for many pastures this past season, and that makes it even more important to check high-value grass and clover has not been invaded by weeds.

He’s not just talking about existing pastures, either: “Many new pastures sown in autumn were slow to establish because of the weather, and that means they could be more vulnerable to weed ingress as well. Even if they had a weed spray early on, it would be worth checking to see if they need another one. Home-grown pasture is by far the cheapest form of feed, so it pays to maximise what you’ve got.”

With good grazing management, he says, clover suppression can be minimised, and spring-germinating weeds that aren’t killed early become difficult – if not impossible – to kill once they mature and flower.

Proven herbicide options for spring weed control include Baton® 800WSG, Sprinter® 700DS and Valdo® 800WG. They are specifically designed to kill broadleaf weeds while the plants are still small. Both are selective phenoxy herbicides that control many broadleaf weeds, including ragwort, thistles, pennyroyal and wild carrot in pasture, without major damage to clover.

weeds along with docks, in which case another solution is available. This is a tank mix using a lower rate of Dockstar® (2 litres/ha) with Baton at 2kg/ha. The combination will subdue dock and other broadleaf weeds with less pasture suppression than Dockstar® alone, at the full label rate.

For best results with the Dockstar/ Baton® tank mix, leave pasture for 2-3 weeks after grazing before spraying. Apply in early spring before dock seed heads start to form, don’t add any adjuvants or other products, and leave the pasture for at least 1-2 weeks after spraying before grazing.



“Many new pastures sown in autumn were slow to establish because of the weather, and that means they could be more vulnerable to weed ingress as well.”

Depending on the weed species present, Baton® or Sprinter® can be tank-mixed with Valdo®. This clover-friendly flumetsulam herbicide is particularly useful for improving control of buttercups and brassica weeds such as creeping yellow cress, hedge mustard and wild turnip.

Dockstar® is another useful option in established pastures where docks are the main challenge. However, many farmers want to control other broadleaf

For more information about broadleaf weed control in your pastures this spring, or for help identifying what weed species are present in your paddocks, contact your Farm Source TSR today.

®Dockstar, Sprinter and Valdo are registered trademarks of Nufarm Limited.

®Baton is a registered trademark of Nufarm Australia Limited.

Plantain power

Plantain cultivars pack a powerful punch.

Its potential environmental benefits and high nutritional value make it an increasingly appealing crop.

“Plantain is useful for supporting milk production or for finishing sheep and beef, and could reduce nitrogen leaching,” says Ballance Forage Specialist Murray Lane.

Research into plantain’s ability to reduce nitrogen leaching has found it has “the potential to reduce N leaching from the urine patch by up to 89% in combination with other forage strategies”.¹

AgResearch scientists have also found plantain can help reduce nitrous oxide emissions. These emissions were 39-74% less in autumn and winter where plantain was planted, compared to perennial ryegrass².

“Plantain suffers in summer drought, but its coarse, fibrous root system helps it last and respond quickly after summer-dry conditions. This is assuming it hasn’t been overgrazed, which affects its crop vigour and longevity,” says Murray.

Plantain grows throughout New Zealand, but doesn’t thrive in heavy clay soils or

those prone to waterlogging. In warm, moist regions it can provide valuable summer feed when pasture quality is poor. It can be grown as part of a mixed pasture, or as a stand-alone break crop in a pasture renewal programme.

Harness the power

“Even though plantain can tolerate a wide range of soil types, pH and fertility, treating it as you would high-value pasture, gets the best from it,” he says.

“Test soil to a depth of 15cm, six months before establishing plantain in spring. If sowing plantain as part of a pasture renewal programme, fertility and pH issues should be addressed well before the pasture goes in. Early weed control is difficult if establishing a crop of plantain and clover, as sprays designed for plantain will kill the clover.”

Using a starter fertiliser such as Ballance DAP at sowing supports early growth, providing phosphorus and nitrogen to

drive vigorous establishment. Drill around 150kg DAP/ha with the seed if the drill has a fertiliser box, or 250-300kg/ha if broadcasting.

If established as a 2-3-year crop, applying 25-30kg nitrogen (55-70kg SustaiN/ha) after each grazing will help maintain crop vigour. If it is sown in a mixed pasture sward, less nitrogen will be required because of the presence of clover. Plantain can be used to fill holes in pasture (the result of winter grazing damage), instead of allowing them fill up with annual weeds and summer grasses.

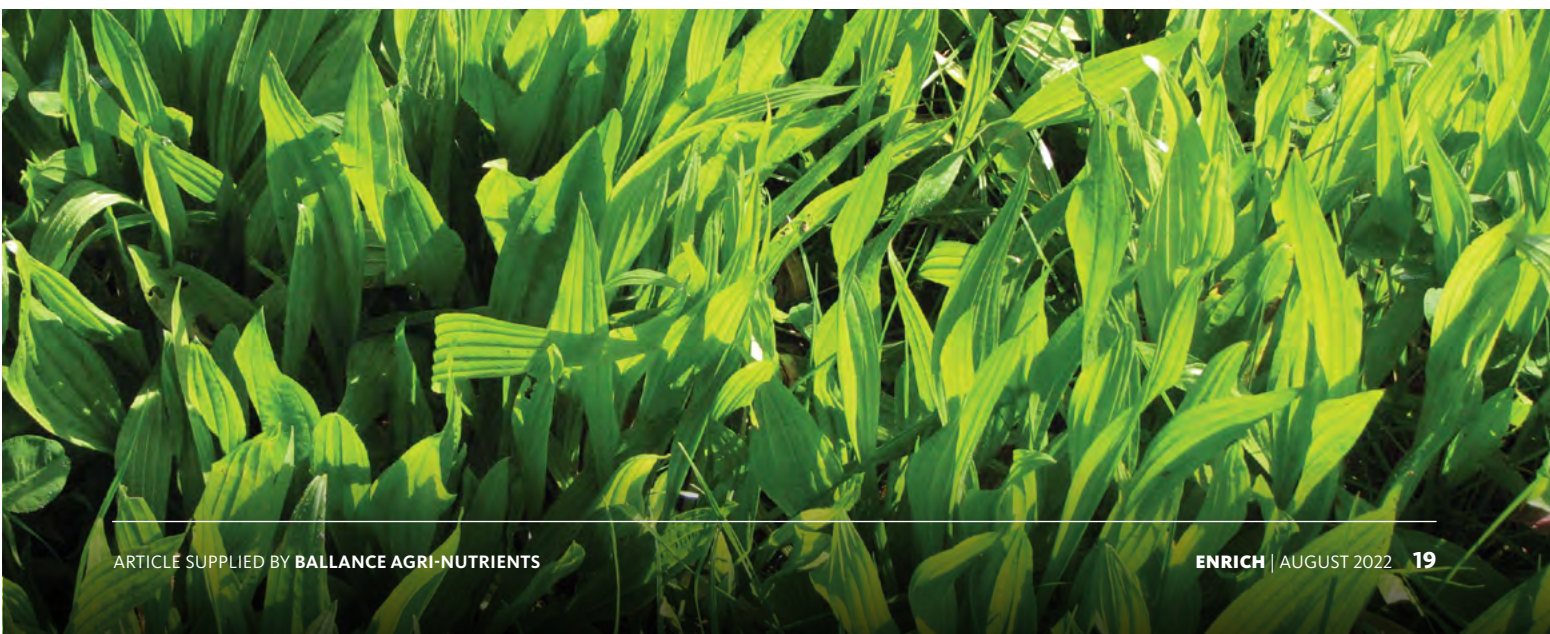
“Good fertility and early weed control is key, along with drilling with DAP at no more than 10-12mm deep. And don’t forget to apply SustaiN after grazing.”

For more information contact your local Farm Source TSR or Ballance Nutrient specialist.

¹ Woods, 2017 – *Ecotain environmental plantain booklet*, Agricom Seeds. <https://www.agricom.co.nz>



“Plantain is useful for supporting milk production or for finishing sheep and beef, and could reduce nitrogen leaching,” says Ballance Forage Specialist Murray Lane.



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*Average 1.2 million hits/page views per month over the past 12 months.

GYPSUM

A multi-tasker on the farm



Nutrients lost from agricultural systems can reduce waterway quality through eutrophication (an increase in the nutrients available in a body of water). As the main nutrients involved in eutrophication are nitrogen and phosphorus, there can also be an impact from organic carbon and sediment lost from agricultural soils.

Gypsum has long been used as a soil conditioner and fertiliser in agriculture and horticulture, supplying calcium and sulphur as soil-friendly nutrients. But research into its potential for reducing farm run-off has only been done in the past 10 years. Applied to pastures, this common sulfate mineral improves water infiltration rates and soil aggregate stability, which then reduces surface water run-off and phosphorus losses, due to the calcium ions in gypsum binding with phosphorus¹.

New Zealand soils are known to be sulphur-deficient. Plants need sulphur for protein synthesis, so superphosphate

has traditionally been applied to farmland to address this deficiency. However, superphosphate applications raise the concentration of phosphorus in soil, increasing the risk of run-off into nearby waterways. Gypsum is a good alternative source of sulphur. It comes in a form that's readily available to plants and allows the application of sulphur without the need for phosphorus additions.

Over the past 20 years in New Zealand, there has been a substantial reduction in livestock access and effluent discharges into waterways. However nutrient losses can still occur through surface water run-off and drainage loss of nutrients from within the soil. Drainage losses can include leaching and water flowing down a slope within the soil, which are affected by complex hydrological and chemical factors.

Having high sodium soils has a severely detrimental effect on soil structure. Sodium causes loss of aggregation, reduces pore spaces and may increase soil pH in severe situations. Gypsum, which is BioGro-certified, restores soil

particle aggregation and soil pore space by displacing sodium from the soil. It also promotes deeper-rooting plants by inhibiting aluminium uptake by plant roots at depth².

Gypsum is best used in targeted areas where there is surface water run-off risk. It can be most effective in wide strips around run-off prone and effluent-treated areas or in effluent-treated areas or pugging prone paddocks. Targeting high-risk sections of a farm will help the economic viability of gypsum application.

Talk to your local Farm Source TSR for guidance on gypsum applications based on a recent soil lab test.

¹ Use of gypsum to reduce effluent and fertiliser nutrient losses to waterways, T A Jenkins, V Jenkins, Fertiliser and Lime Research Centre, New Zealand. 27th Annual FLRC Workshop held at Massey University, February 2014.

² Gypsum as an Agricultural amendment, W A Dick, Ohio State University, USA, Bulletin 945.

Rich opportunities

in retail

Changing careers can be daunting. It can take a lot of courage to take the plunge and try something new, but sometimes the opportunities are worth the risk. Three passionate Farm Source team members explain the unexpected places their career in retail has taken them, and why they wouldn't look back.



Returning to the frantic Auckland metropolis lifestyle and the cut-throat world of banking wasn't appetising for Adam Borriello when he returned from his OE. He was keen to live in the Bay of Plenty and knew he wanted to work somewhere that would allow him to work with people, build relationships and provide solutions, but he wasn't sure what that looked like.

"I loved the relationship side of banking but I didn't want to live in Auckland anymore," Adam says.

"A family friend recommended the Farm Source Technical Sales Rep role but, not having a farming background, I was a little reluctant to look at it. A Retail Specialist role came up in the Te Puke store and I decided it would be worth a shot to get started."

He was successful in securing that role and used his time to learn about farming and the dairy sector with substantial support and training. It also proved handy to start in the store as he built relationships with many of the local farmers. After 18 months, when a new TSR role was created, Adam was a natural fit.

"Originally I thought I would need to move to find a TSR role as Te Puke didn't have one, but the new role was the perfect

chance for me. It definitely worked out well, taking that first step in the store to build my base knowledge."

He's found the training and support valuable, and it hasn't mattered that he didn't come from a farming background because he has been able to build his knowledge at an exponential rate.

"We get heaps of technical training and support and working with a range of farmers helps too. For instance, one farmer might grow one crop a couple of years in a row but we might have seen 50 crops across that same timeframe, so the experience builds really fast."

He loves working with farmers, especially comparing them to the clients he had in banking.

"Farmers are genuine, down-to-earth and I love working with them day to day," Adam says.

"Some of my favourite parts of the role are working alongside our farmers and helping them find solutions and come up with

solutions to any problems they may be having on-farm."

"Plus it's the variety that's great, because farming is seasonal so we're moving through the season with the farmer and not doing the same thing day in and day out."

Shaun Hughes is another Farm Source team member who has progressed from the role he started with. Starting in the store 11 years ago, he's now the Store Manager in Rotorua. He was a dairy farmer before starting at Farm Source. When he decided to hang up his overalls he wasn't sure where he would head, but he knew he wanted to stay involved in the sector.

"I wanted to keep using my farming knowledge and I've found transitioning to a place I can help other farmers has been the perfect fit," Shaun says.

His role covers a range of elements from stock management and sales orders, liaising with suppliers and the wider team, and looking after the team based in store. He also gets out on farm.

"Farm Source and Fonterra offer a lot in terms of advancement in many different areas within the business. If people have the right drive, they have the backing and opportunities available for them," says Toni Donald.

"From the outside, I don't think people realise how much goes on. There's so much variety and it's never boring."

He's seen many new people turn up with expectations of what their role entails.

"I was one of those people, but it didn't take me long to appreciate the breadth and depth of the work, as well as the career progression opportunities. The company puts a lot into us, especially with training, and if you want to grow within the business you have so many chances to do that."

The stores look after products on the shelf, but that goes beyond ordering and keeping stock available.

"We need to be able to talk to the information about products. We get a lot of training with vendors and go out on farm to learn how something actually works. It keeps it interesting. I really enjoy the work and can't promote it enough as a career option for other people."

He also loves getting to know the farmers and their businesses and families, and being able to help them. Just like another former farmer, Toni Donald, who was sharemilking and working on the farm with her husband but felt like she wanted something else. She first landed a three-month casual contract in Te Puke, but they didn't want her to go so offered her a permanent role.

After 10 years she thought she would try her hand somewhere else but only lasted 10 months before jumping back into Farm Source.

"I thought the grass could be greener," Toni laughs.

"But it didn't take me long to realise how good I had it before and I knew I wanted to go back, so when a store manager role came up I jumped at it."

She is now the Store Manager in Reporoa with what feels like a never-ending list of responsibilities, but she loves the range.

"Customer service and people management are my main roles but

"Some of my favourite parts of the role are working alongside our farmers and helping them find and come up with solutions to any problems they may be having on-farm," says Adam Borriello.

the highlight is dealing with farmers. They really are good people and we have a great community here in Reporoa," Toni says.

"And Farm Source and Fonterra offer a lot in terms of advancement in many different areas within the business. If people have the right drive, they have the backing and opportunities available for them." This is something Nikita Patel, Farm Source Business Partner advocates for. She looks after recruitment for both sides of the business.

"We have such a high calibre of people who work within Farm Source and Fonterra. Due to being such a large company, there are always multiple opportunities coming up and we focus on supporting career progression for our people," Nikita says.

But she feels there are a lot of people who may not have considered a role in retail or customer service.

"We love to bring new, motivated people in and the extensive training and support will give them all the tools to help them be successful. We promote across the usual recruitment channels but I think we could be missing some great people within our Fonterra networks."

"Farmers could help us by sharing jobs with family and friends. As well as recruiting for current roles, we are open to connecting with talented and passionate individuals for upcoming positions. A great way to show your interest would be to drop into our local Farm Source stores to introduce yourself."

Just like Adam, Shaun and Toni have promoted, it's worth giving it a go because you never know where it could lead to.

To find available opportunities, head to nzfarmsource.co.nz/careers



Toni Donald, Store Manager Reporoa.



Adam Borriello, Technical Sales Rep.



Shaun Hughes, Store Manager Rotorua.

Fuel to feed



Food insecurity is a reality for many New Zealanders, but innovative thinking with a campaign through July and August has created another opportunity for farmers to offer their support. For every fuel transaction over \$50 using your Farm Source Rewards card, SuperCard or Employee Rewards card at Z or Caltex, Feed Out will receive \$1 on your behalf. Plus you'll receive the everyday discount of 12c off per litre.

There are staggering statistics of how many New Zealanders are living in food insecurity. A new charity, Feed Out, is striving to knock down those stats. The nationally based charity is designed to supply much-needed dairy products to city missions and food banks and connect generous farmer donations with people across the country.

"If every farm contributes just a little bit of what they produce, we can make a massive difference to New Zealanders doing it tough," says Wayne Langford, co-founder of Feed Out.

The new partnership with Fonterra will allow the milk donation programme to be rolled out nationwide, building on the existing milk donation programme with milk processor Miraka, which provides food banks with milk in Waikato and the Central Plateau.

Donated milk will be turned into milk powder for the NZ Food Network to distribute. The network supports over 60 food hubs and connects to more than 500 food banks.

"There have been processing challenges that have prevented milk from being distributed so widely in the past, but now we've got a way to support the community and make a difference for so many families," Wayne says.

When farmers donate milk, 100% of their donation is given to Feed Out for distribution. The model is the same as their sister charity Meat the Need, which takes livestock donations and turns them into mince for food banks with the support of Silver Fern farms. So far, over 793,000 mince meals have been donated nationwide.

"The aim is to deliver a million litres of milk to foodbanks nationwide in the next year, which would mean more than two litres in every food parcel. Combined with meat already donated by farmers, we're changing the landscape and helping to ensure all Kiwis have access to high-quality protein."

"Farmers supporting Feed Out will make a massive difference to those who need a hand, by simply doing what we do – growing food," Wayne says.

Supporting the charity has been made even easier with our promotion running across July and August. For every fuel transaction over \$50 at any Z or Caltex using your Farm Source Rewards card (or SuperCard), Feed Out will receive \$1: the goal is to reach \$50,000.

"With this promotion, or in general, you don't have to be a farmer to donate, and everyone can help. Kiwis supporting Kiwis is what it's all about," Wayne says. "We need everyone's help to reach our target."

Wayne also explains that the money raised through this campaign will go towards the delivery of a range of products, such as cheese, yoghurt and cream, to those in need. "Our partnership with Bellyful needs a whole lot of cheese so that they can provide protein-packed meals for the work that they do. Some food banks we work with also need dairy products like milk and cream – this support allows us to meet the need."

If you can donate, simply spend over \$50 on fuel at any Z or Caltex using your Farm Source Rewards Card, SuperCard or Employee Rewards Card before 30 August, or make a donation at feedout.org by filling in the online form. From there, Feed Out and Fonterra will look after the rest.

◀ Feed Out co-founder Wayne Langford donating dairy products to the Christchurch City Mission.



FUEL UP FOR NZ FAMILIES



We've partnered with NZ charity Feed Out, to help put good quality nutrition into the hands of those who need it most. Throughout July and August, when you use your Farm Source Rewards card to fuel up over \$50 at any Z or Caltex, Feed Out will receive \$1. Help us on our mission to reach \$50,000 and fuel up today.*

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Electric vehicle trial

Our people in the driver's seat

As part of our drive to reduce emissions, Farm Source is trialling the new Hyundai Kona (EV) and Mitsubishi Eclipse (PHEV).

Leaner, greener, and a whole lot cleaner – Farm Source's EV trial is another way we are gearing up for a more sustainable future for the New Zealand Dairy Industry. Over the next 6 months, this new generation of EVs are hitting the road and being put through their paces to see if they have what it takes to keep our Field Team safe while out in our rural communities.

While there are a few things our trialists thought could be improved, most feedback is positive and the verdict is that the EVs are good to drive and come with all the expected safety features.

Lisa Payne, Regional Head Bay of Plenty, has named her EV Eva and says she's had some great conversations with farmers about her. "I've been taking Eva out a bit and have had lots of funny comments. The other night it was raining and they said 'be careful she doesn't short out on the way home'. She didn't and we got home reliably."

"Why did I put my hand up for the trial? Mainly to learn and be part of the change we need to face. There are great benefits, like the technology in the car. I've certainly leap-frogged miles from what my other car was. That's pretty cool, and being able to provide some learning for the team on what this could look like for us going forward."



"I can get around quite easily, and I can get 440-470km out of a charge, so it's reassuring to know I can get out into the back blocks and won't get stuck," says Mark Douglas.

Corey Neilson, Retail Sales Manager in Hamilton, was initially nervous about volunteering for the trial, but he had lots of unanswered questions and wanted to find out first-hand how the vehicles would go. He found the Hyundai Kona surprising in some ways. "The instant power takes a little bit of getting used to, not having to put your foot down too far to get up to speed."

It is, he says, beautiful to drive. "It hugs the road. We had so much hot weather for so long and we finally got some rain, I was a bit concerned about how it would handle on the greasy roads. But it handles beautifully and has all the safety aspects one would expect from a Farm Source vehicle. It's an all-round great vehicle and I'm proud to be part of this trial."

Mark Douglas, Technical Sales Manager Northland, was surprised the Kona drives like a normal car. "I can get around quite easily, and I can get 440-470km out of a charge, so it's reassuring to know I can get out into the back blocks and won't get stuck."

The trial has taught him to be prepared. "Plan ahead," he says. "So if I know I've got a big week ahead, I make sure I'm starting the week with a full car. Planning ahead is the big thing."

Like Corey, Mark is enjoying testing the new technology.

"Otherwise I'm really enjoying the opportunity to drive an EV. It's great to have the opportunity to be involved in technology that will have a big impact on the way we work and the environment."

Having said that, he did feel guilty the other day when he went to a service station to put air in his tyres and didn't have to fill up. "It's really nice just to drive past and not think about it. Great stuff."

Nicola Heath, a Sustainable Dairying Advisor from Taranaki, was surprised



how quick the Kona is off the mark, too. "It has instant power, so you have to be careful. For an EV it doesn't have a whole lot of electrics; it's a very basic car but still very nice to drive."

"There were a few things I was nervous about," she says. "I'm new to electric vehicles and have never driven one before. I was nervous about coming home from work, putting it on the charger, then waking up in the morning and leaving for work and forgetting to unplug the cable. Being new to EVs, this was something I was concerned about, but it turns out the vehicle is highly intelligent and won't actually allow you to do that."

The Kona has regenerative power, which Nic found interesting. "You can return power to the battery with how you drive. Obviously, you have to drive economically, but it's a great feature."

One of her key learnings has been around the quirks of charging an EV. "Not all charging stations are fast chargers, and charging at home is dependent on your power supply. New Zealand's power infrastructure is going to have to play ball in the coming years to ensure infrastructure is there to encourage more people to go electric."

For more information or to submit comments about the trial, please email evfleet@fonterra.com. To learn more about our path to 2030 and our sustainability goals, visit fonterra.com/ourstrategy

E-bike winner puts prize to work on-farm

Farmers Jack and Melissa Shove won an electric farm bike late last year, thanks to Farm Source and UBCO.

They received their bike recently, and we caught up with them to see what they think of their prize after a few weeks of use.

"I haven't found anything I don't like about it yet," Jack says. "It works for our farm."

Jack and Melissa farm 120ha between Edgecumbe and Matata, about 20 minutes drive west of Whakatane. The bike, an UBCO 2x2 Work Bike valued at \$7,499, is designed for farm use. It doesn't generate the smoke, noise and carbon emissions of fuel-powered farm bikes and enables farmers to improve their environmental-protection practices. Jack and Melissa won their model in November as part of Farm Source's 2021 Spring promotion, anyone booking

a cropping or pasture planning session or spending over a set amount on seed or fertiliser was put into the draw.

This is the first time Jack and Melissa have had an e-bike on their farm and they've been impressed with how the UBCO model goes. One of the best things about it, Jack says, is that it's light.

He charges it every couple of nights or after he uses it, and says the battery lasts pretty well. "It's easy enough to take it out and plug it in," he says.

While he and Melissa haven't used it much yet, because they're getting into calving and things are pretty busy, they plan to put it to work when they can.



"I haven't found anything I don't like about it yet. It works for our farm," says Jack Shove

"It's a lot lighter than our motorbikes, our petrol bikes, anyway."

"It's also a piece of cake to ride, real easy, no special license needed," he jokes.

Plus it copes with the farm conditions well, even mud. "Although everything is finding the mud pretty hard at the moment, even the motorbikes," Jack says.

He says they'd definitely buy e-bikes in future based on their experience so far, and would recommend the UBCO bike to other farmers.

"It's pretty good," Jack says.

For more information on UBCO bikes visit ubco.com.



Wintering well helps set you up for a smooth calving season



Keeping up good winter grazing standards can help reduce stress for animals and people on-farm, as many head into the midst of calving.

Greg Mitchell farms in Hawke's Bay and winters 1600 cows on his 520ha dairy farm. At this time of year, he and his team ensure they check the weather forecast and paddock and cow condition daily.

"Our team check the cows every day to make sure they are in good condition, and are eating well," he says.

Daily checks help identify any issues so they can be managed and corrected before calving.

In bad weather, the team can shift stock off crops to sheltered paddocks. Greg has also identified which paddocks have good shelter and are best for calving.

While winter has so far been mild, a wet autumn has meant grazing needs to be managed carefully to avoid mud becoming a problem. To reduce trampling, the team stands cows off crops after feeding for a couple of hours, and keeps mob sizes small. They graze sloped paddocks from the top downwards to reduce mud, and don't use steeper paddocks for winter cropping.

The cows graze on fodder beet, oats and grass. Greg and his team have planted oats as a catch crop after wintering to help use any available nitrogen for plant growth.

Winter grazing hasn't been a focus for some North Island farmers in previous years, but new wintering regulations will apply to all farmers across New Zealand in 2023. All farms need to have a wintering plan and will need to plan ahead to assess whether they will need to apply for a consent.

From the 1st of May 2023, updates to The Co-operative Difference Environment Achievement also apply, with the requirement of uploading an approved Winter Grazing Management Plan included.

Greg says the first step to setting yourself up for winter is to plan your approach well ahead of time.

"Look around your farm to figure out which paddocks would be best for winter crops and for calving on. Every farm is different, but you can often find practical solutions that work well for your team and animals."

Greg is already choosing his winter cropping paddocks for next winter and has started soil testing to assess nutrient levels in different paddocks.



Winter resources

DairyNZ has a range of wintering resources online, including:

- A Plan B template to help respond to adverse weather
- A gumboot test to assess if ground is suitable for cows to lie on
- A winter grazing checklist and a wintering plan template to help plan ahead for next winter.

To access wintering resources, visit www.dairynz.co.nz/wintering





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nzfarmsource.co.nz/milk-quality

WE KNOW WHAT IT TAKES





New milking system revolutionises farm

Robots have helped Rob and Moira Anstis make their cows happier and more independent.

Last year they installed a Lely robotic milking system on their Opotiki farm. They have three robots milking their 230 cows and say it's completely changed the way they farm.

"We've got so much information at our fingertips now," Moira says. "It tells you everything that's been going on with the cows, how active they are, when they're coming backwards and forwards from the shed."

The cows all have collars on that hold all their information, Moira explains. "You just have to enter into the computer when they've calved, and from then on the robot will milk that cow every time she comes in. It remembers those co-ordinates."

Installing the robotic system meant a bit of learning, Moira says, but the cows picked things up quickly. "The very first time we put all the cows through the robot we literally had to push every cow into the robotic stall. One of the biggest things for us is that our shed is on top of a hill, so one of the scariest things was whether they'd bring themselves to the shed, having to walk up the hill."

The cows did, though, and now they're a lot happier and quieter. "They're free to move around the farm," Rob says. "They're also free to come and get milked wherever they want. You're teaching them to be more independent."

They're also healthier. "It's now easy to pick up mastitis, which has been interesting," Rob says. "The cows are getting tested every quarter at every

milking. It gives you a handle on what's going on with them."

Generally, Rob and Moira say, the cows are not all in the shed at once. "You have your little mobs and they'll come up in their group. We can have cows in there at 2am, or two in the afternoon. The quietest time is between three in the morning and, say, six. The rest of the time it's pretty busy."

The Lely system is serviced every three months, with the service centre based in Hamilton. "If we have any little breakdowns, Robert can ring Lely and do it over the phone, they can generally guide him through fixing things. We haven't had too many of those, which is pretty good. It helps if you're a little bit tech-savvy - there are a lot of electronics. It would have to be pretty major for them to come and sort it out. Once in two years they've had to come.

"But you do need someone on hand," Moira adds. "The robot will ring you if there's an alarm. They will ring you whenever they like, 24/7. If there's something wrong and it's a critical alarm you do have to go and sort it out."

That happens rarely, Moira says, perhaps once or twice a month.

"Sometimes you can put it down to the meal being blocked up so the cows aren't getting their meal in the box. They get fed meals while they're being milked and they get quite used to that. So it's

like taking away their lollies and they'll be thumping around or kicking, or backing out of the robot."

Rob had been interested in the Lely system for some time before they installed it. "We looked at it years ago but the company really wasn't ready," Moira says. "There are new machines out now, what they call the A5, 5th generation, a lot more reliable compared to some of their earlier robotic milking machines. So when we approached them they were really keen to get us on board."

Rob and Moira's farm is the only one in the Bay of Plenty using this system. "There are a few in the Waikato, Taranaki, basically everywhere else almost," they say. "A couple in Manawatu, down in Southland, a few going in up north, there's another big one just gone in up there. It's becoming a lot more (common) but it's definitely not for everyone.

"Your whole mindset changes with robotics. It's hard to let go of controlling the animals."

But they have no regrets. The savings on labour have been quite big – Rob and Moira have gone from one full-time staff member to none – and they've saved themselves three or so hours a day. "We get to spend a lot more time on grass management and sorting out other stuff, now."

And they don't have to head out to milk at 4.30am anymore. That's a big plus.



"We've got so much information at our fingertips now. It tells you everything that's been going on with the cows, how active they are, when they're coming backwards and forwards from the shed," Moira says.

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Milk Chilling Live Q&A with Coolsense

In the final installment of our Farm Source Seasonal Focus Live Q&A series on milk quality, we talked to Farm Source Projects Manager Paul Mulligan and Allan Steele of Coolsense, a Hamilton-based company offering refrigeration and thermal energy storage systems. The session focused on the importance of milk chilling to retain product value, as well as recent and upcoming regulation changes in this space.

Recent changes in the milk cooling and refrigerant space

It has become clear, Paul Mulligan says, that a class of gases called HFCs (hydrofluorocarbon), which were designed to replace CFCs (chlorofluorocarbon), have very high global warming potentials (GWPs). Steps are being taken to phase down these gases.

“From a New Zealand farmer perspective, one of the most common gases, R404a, which is in use in 50-60% of on farm refrigeration systems, has a very high GWP and has been subject to phase down since 2020,” Paul says. “We’re expecting that gas will become increasingly expensive over the next five years and practically unavailable in that time frame. In the past five years, we’ve seen around

1000% increase in the cost at the farm gate for that gas, for the purposes of recharging farm refrigeration systems.”

“It’s also become apparent that farmers are largely unaware of the details around this. So we’re trying to highlight those issues,” Paul says.

Preparing your farm to prepare for gas changes

“The age of your system is an important parameter,” Paul says. “Some of the older systems are still using R22, which is a CFC (chlorofluorocarbon) and practically impossible to source. The maintenance of the system is another critical component. If you’re starting to see regular or emergency maintenance bills, it’s probably time

to consider changing or upgrading your refrigeration system. It’s really important not just to focus on the initial capital cost but also the full lifetime cost of the system.”

Paul and Allan are having many discussions with farmers to stress the importance of the gas changes.

“One way of highlighting how important these gases are is to give you an idea of the scale of the gas that’s used around the milk chilling vats in NZ,” Paul says. “There’s roughly 400 tonnes of the stuff. The Ministry for the Environment estimates roughly 15% of that leaks per year. The impact of that leakage on average is the same as every New Zealand dairy farmer driving seven Corollas for a year¹. That’s why there’s a focus on it at the moment.”

Gas types to consider

There have been four generations of refrigerant," Allan says. "We all remember the hairsprays having CFCs in them and being dreadful for the ozone layer. We've moved on since then. The second generation was better for the ozone, but had a high GWP. The third generation, which most farms are using now, have a high GWP, as much as 4000 times more than CO₂. They are being phased out from 2020, so we're two years into this. By 2025 the last of the gen-three refrigerants will be very expensive, if not unavailable.

"So really you should be looking for the fourth-generation," he says. "That's where the challenge occurs, because the industry has had to move to these fourth-generation gases, at more of a pace than we've been used to. There's very little out there that uses a fourth-generation gas. So you've got two options. You've got the natural, which is CO₂, and you've got fourth-generation gas under 500 GWP and they are things like R454b. They're the only two things we've seen in the marketplace at this stage. But everybody is scrambling to offer alternatives."

"The most important thing about a refrigeration system on farm is that it chills the milk," Allan says.

Key points for upgrading

technology

"The most important thing about a refrigeration system on farm is that it chills the milk," Allan says.

"Snap chilling is the best way to get the best quality milk into the vat. It also facilitates the heat recovery into the hot water and there are economic benefits that come with that."

Key things to look for when upgrading, Allan says, are machines that comply with the NZCP1 standard. "The best way to do that is to buy a machine that snap-chills the milk on the way into the tank, and to future-proof it, so make sure that you've got a fourth-generation gas and the refrigerant, and longevity. You really want a component built to a standard that will last 15-20 years.

"The fourth-generation refrigerants have energy efficiency ratings of up to four. What that means is one unit of electricity equals four units of cooling and heating, whereas the current technologies on the farm have energy efficiency ratings of about two and a half. With the modern system designs, you can have a very small refrigerant charge on your farm as well. Maybe less than 20% of what farms currently have."

The last key point, Allan says, is ensuring you have the right support.

"If you're going to buy a refrigeration system, it's got to be supported. You need to trust the dealership or the on farm refrigeration serviceman implicitly. And you've got to take their advice really, because otherwise you have to be a bit of a refrigeration expert. Doing your due diligence is really important.

"They're all rectangular boxes but they have very different items inside," Allan says. "We've seen some very disappointed farmers that put in a machine that only lasted five years. It's commonplace. Talk to your neighbours, see who's getting the best result. Having a support network means you're going to get looked after."

For more information about seasonal focus milk quality, talk to your local Farm Source TSR or reach out to the team at CoolSense.

The full session is available now at nzfarmsource.co.nz/milk-quality or by scanning the QR code below.



¹Hydrofluorocarbon Consumption in New Zealand, report prepared for the Government of New Zealand, Ministry for the Environment, October 2017.



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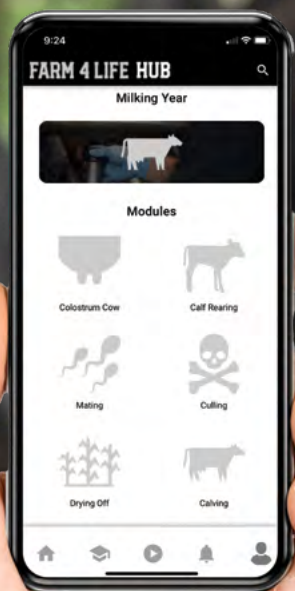
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SEASONAL FOCUS

Appetite for Education

Farm 4 Life Hub

On a mission to change the way people learn, Tangaroa Walker has developed a learning platform with a curated digital catalogue of videos that cover everything related to dairy farming. His entertaining methods make it easy to understand and he hopes to inspire people into farming and develop their skills further.





“We’ve also made the platform free so that more people can access it, there are a lot of whanau out there with a good attitude who haven’t had the tools there to help them,” Tangaroa says.

It started as a social media channel to inform the shareholders of the Southland farm that he contract milks on. Now Tangaroa Walker has evolved the Farm 4 Life Hub into an educational resource to support people entering the dairy sector.

“This is an exciting video learning platform that gives users NZQA qualifications,” Tangaroa says.

“We’ve also made the platform free so that more people can access it. There are a lot of whanau out there with a good attitude who haven’t had the tools there to help them.”

Tangaroa explains resources such as these are desperately needed for people like him, who struggle to read and write and don’t absorb anything in a traditional classroom environment. He has teamed up with Telford, the Southern Institute of Technology’s agricultural campus. Together, they are building the material that will help learners gain credits towards a Certificate in Farming Systems and Equipment (Level 3) Dairy strand.

Originally from Tauranga, he had some rough experiences early in life but was fortunate to be introduced to dairy farming

by his uncle. When he was 18 he set a goal to own his own farm and was told he better go to Southland where it’s cheap to grow grass, so he turned to Farm Source Jobs and made the big move.

He was nudged into social media after winning the Ahuwhenua Young Māori Farmer of the year, although he didn’t think people would find him interesting. Now it’s the engagement that really drives him. He loves the positive feedback, particularly when someone thanks him for teaching them or inspiring them to consider farming.

“That’s what it’s all about for me. I love this industry and I want to share the passion.

“The power of social media is unreal. Spreading knowledge can reach a million people so easily, but if I can help someone, teach him to do one thing with a video, it’s all worthwhile for me.”

He calls his methods edutainment. He uses light-hearted videos showcasing the 'how' and 'why' of all things dairy farming. His relaxed delivery and how he portrays the realities make it easy for people to understand and the option for

people to choose if they want NZQA qualifications will mean learners can verify their abilities and build their CV.

“If someone was delivering this kind of content when I was coming through the industry it would have fast-tracked my career by a couple of years.”

Being an app gives people the tools in their pocket to learn when it suits them, or to look something up when it becomes relevant. Tangaroa and the growing Farm 4 Life team are on a mission to change the way people learn and understand dairy farming.

“People think dairy farming is just about cupping cows, but there’s so much more to it than that. We are aiming to do it the best possible way we can and we need great, educated people.”



Download the app free and find out more at farm4life.co.nz



Farmer testing squad

key to product reliability

Reliable farm equipment and clothing start with a commitment to ongoing improvements based on real farmer feedback. We meet with Test Squad farmers Belinda Price of Taranaki, and Amy White from Marlborough, to hear about them putting products through their paces.

Like all farmers, Belinda and Amy know what they need when it comes to farm equipment and workwear – quality gear that will stand up to weather, hard work and tough, changeable conditions.

This is why their opinions, and those of other farmers around the country have been sought to bring genuine insight into the product development process for Farm Source's 360 and Country Mile brands.

"Behind 360 and Country Mile, there has been a fair amount of design innovation and testing before it even gets to our stores," says Terry Gardiner, the brand's Strategic Sourcing Manager. "Our team are involved in a rigorous quality assurance program involving factory and independent testing across all products," he says. "This ensures they deliver both quality and trusted value. We back this up with a store warranty to ensure our farmers are confident the product will do the job intended."

The 360 brand has been developed specifically to meet the daily demands of New Zealand farmers. Many garments within the current workwear range have been developed by extensive on-farm testing. The resulting individual farmer feedback has then been used to define the final features and construction. The Country Mile brand is well-established and known by farmers for its affordable range of animal health, agrichemical, dairy shed supplies and fencing products, and has been in market for more than a decade. New products in the Country Mile range are continually trialled with our test squad to ensure products deliver in terms of value and quality.

"Since the introduction of these brands, we're always looking to innovate and improve the product range" says Gardiner. "To that end, we created a testing squad of farmers from across New Zealand," he says.

"Belinda, Amy, and their fellow testers trial a range of products from both brands and provide honest and constructive feedback. This feedback influences future product development and plays a key role in providing our farmers with purpose-designed products when used regularly on farm, meet and hopefully sometimes, exceed their expectations," he says.

The squad is provided with various items and then asked for specific feedback, such as how durable and waterproof each item is. With the 360 clothing range, the team is also asked for feedback on colour, fit, durability, comfort, fabric drying time and seam strength.

Belinda has been in the squad for about a year. "My team and I have tested mostly the wet-weather gear at this stage, and some of the aprons," she says. "I was asked if I wanted to be part of it and I thought it was a great idea, to be part of making the products farmers use every day. So far I've been impressed with the gear we have received."

"Farmer feedback is important as we're wearing it day in and day out, so it needs to be worth the money you spend on it. We usually spend a lot on protective clothing and wet weather gear, and will only buy what is long-lasting and does what it needs to do."

Amy White joined the squad a year ago, too. Her first trial of gear turned up in July



Amy White testing out her 360 gear

last year. She tests them daily in real farming situations, such as working in the rain, wind, and whatever weather comes her way. She then reports back on her findings.

Her local Farm Source store manager nominated her for the testing squad and she says the experience has been great. "I enjoyed testing the wet weather gear in the rain since I stayed dry!" she jokes.

"But truly, it's great trying the latest products and providing feedback on anything that enables continual improvements season to season. Like Belinda, Amy sees her role as a key one. "Getting farmer feedback on the products is important. Farmers are the ones buying the products. We want quality and value with long-lasting products that are guaranteed to work as hard as we do."

"There's no point in spending money on products that break after a few weeks' hard use. I was given a pair of 360 gumboots, where I would normally buy a competitor offering, but I love milking in them due to their comfort and lightness."

The 360 and Country Mile team plan to continue the test squad as an ongoing commitment to building the brands to meet the needs of kiwi farmers.

To view or purchase 360 or Country Mile products, visit nzfarmsource.co.nz/360 or nzfarmsource.co.nz/countrymile





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On-farm trials help create solutions for New Zealand agriculture

The winners of the 2022 Fonterra Responsible Dairying Award are passionate about the New Zealand dairy industry.

The Craigmore Farming Group was humbled to win the award. Agri Relationship Partner Caroline Aymes says receiving the award at the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards national gala dinner was a great recognition of the awesome work their farming leaders and teams are doing every day. "It shows we are on the right track," she says.

"It's a reflection on the passion and skill of the farmers in our team, as well as the Craigmore farming group. Our goal is to help create solutions that will continue to set us up for a positive future."

Craigmore Farming Services comprises 22 dairy farms and one sheep and beef property, from Culverden down to Middlemarch, with a high-empowerment management model and employees that enjoy a high level of trust.

"We understand every farm has its own personality and system, made up of its topography, climate, infrastructure, soils and so on," Caroline says. "Each individual also has their own personality, interests and system, and where the two cross over is the sweet spot for performance."

Supported by a performance committee that provides coaching and support, each farming leader identifies their passions and interests, which are then used in controlled on-farm trials for new initiatives and technologies.

"Our size allows us to wear this risk," Caroline says. "Our aim is to share our learnings from each trial, helping to create solutions for NZ agriculture."

Current trials include off-crop winter grazing with deferred pasture, round bales and self-feeding stacks, Halter

cow management system, SmaxTec in rumen animal health monitoring bolus, biological stimulants for soil health, stream health assessments, biodiversity planting, people 360 review process, soil carbon monitoring and community planting projects.

To capture all the data in the trials and initiatives, Craigmore is developing a Social Licence to Farm programme, which focuses on seven pillars: Greenhouse gas emissions, water, soil, biodiversity, animals, people and community, and business.

"Under each pillar we have long-term goals and key objectives we are working towards, and each of these trials is helping us work towards achieving these long-term targets," Caroline says.

For Craigmore, responsible dairying means helping create solutions for the future of the NZ dairy industry through highly engaged and talented teams with the space and support to meet their personal, career and life goals.

"It means having thriving and stable communities, healthy eco-systems and positive environmental outcomes with happy and healthy cows, in financially viable and sustainable businesses that create a return for our investors and shareholders," Caroline says.

"The awards programme does an exceptional job of recognising and developing our future leaders. We'd also like to recognise the great work the other two finalists are doing. We are proud to be supporters of the Canterbury region and now winners of this award."

For more information on the Fonterra Responsible Dairying Award visit dairyindustryawards.co.nz

▼ 2022 Fonterra Responsible Dairying Award winners – Craigmore Farming Services represented by Stuart Taylor and Caroline Aymes.



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