

*A weekly  
summary of  
all that's news  
in the  
primary  
industries*

# AgBRIEF

© Copyright 2021 Inventas Media Ltd

ISSN No.2230-651X

Issue 21-09

## AGRIBUSINESS

### Fonterra Streamlines Chile

Fonterra continues to streamline its operations in Chile after merging Soprole and Prolesur into one entity. Fonterra's Kelvin Wickham said day-to-day operations and management of the two businesses remain unchanged. This change in corporate structure has not required new capital from Fonterra. The first consolidated report from the two companies is due in April – in 2019, Soprole reported a 30% drop in annual profit, while Prolesur also reported a loss. According to Chile's Ministry of Agriculture annual report, raw milk production for processors was up 6.1% in 2020 to 2.275 billion litres. Soprole's milk collection lifted 2.3% to 187.3 million litres, while Prolesur's collection lifted 31.6% to 293.8m litres. The fate of the Chilean investment has yet to be determined, given that Fonterra is now largely focused on NZ milk. (Farmers Weekly)

### NZRL Decides On First Farm

The NZ Rural Land Company has agreed to buy its first dairy farm. The company raised \$75 million in an initial public offering and listed on the sharemarket in December, which together with debt gave it about \$100m to buy rural land. At the time, the company said it was eyeing 21 dairy farms in the South Island, covering 9239 hectares. Its first planned purchase is a 456 hectare dairy farm in Mokoreta, Southland for \$10.4m. It has agreed to lease the farm to Southland dairy farmer Fortuna Group for 10 years for \$515,667 a year, representing a 4.97% lease yield after transaction costs. It is working on several

larger dairy farm purchases in the South Island and expects to complete talks in coming weeks, with settlement expected before June 1. (Stuff)

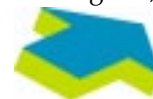
### ACC To Subsidise Roll Bars

ACC is to begin subsidising the cost of roll bars on quad bikes. The eligible businesses include drystock and dairy farms, and hunting-trapping operations. Despite much intensive work to publicise quad bike risks over the past decade, including making helmets compulsory, the bikes remain one of the main killers on NZ farms – of the 154 deaths on NZ farms between 2011 and 2018, quad bikes accounted for 25% of them. Last year, ACC received 822 claims for quad bike injuries, costing \$5.7 million. There were seven fatalities last year, the second worst year for workplace quad bike deaths on record since 2006. Side-by-side vehicles are not categorised separately by WorkSafe or ACC, and are included in the four-wheel classification. Roll bars are compulsory on all quad bikes sold in Australia and ACC has confirmed that, to date, no farmers have been killed in a quad bike accident here on a bike installed with the devices. (Farmers Weekly)

### Chronic Staff Shortage To Continue

Chronic farm staffing shortages could continue into the new season. According to Statistics NZ's latest data, Waikato has a farm unemployment rate of 4.8%, Manawatu 4.5%, Canterbury 4.3% and Southland 3.3%. Nationwide, it is 4.9%. Federated Farmers' Chris Lewis says the primary sector is competing in an increasingly tight labour market. "In rural towns, it's even tougher. The problem we have got is that all of the good,

[Next Page](#)



## Sections:

Click on one

[Agribusiness](#)

[Trade](#)

[Livestock](#)

[Horticulture](#)

[Soil, Land, Water, Arable](#)

[Industry](#)

[Forestry](#)

hardworking Kiwis in the areas where the supply of jobs are, have already got jobs." He says the industry had also been monitoring job placements on job sites such as FarmSource, TradeMe and Seek over the past 12 months. In a normal year, there are typically around 300-400 farm jobs advertised weekly. Last year, there were 800-1000. "That number has not shifted," he said. Farm assistant and herd manager jobs are the most sought-after. "If you have good staff on-farm, please do not let them go. Retention is going to be key to getting through the next 12 months," he said. (Farmers Weekly)

### Govt Ignores Consumer Stance

Bacon and ham made from imported pork can continue to be marketed as "Made in NZ" under a rule change set to come into effect later this year. NZ Pork chief executive David Baines said consumers are being let down after Minister of Consumer Affairs David Clark confirmed a loophole in the Consumers' Right to Know (Country of Origin of Food) Act will not be closed. Under the act, only fresh and cured pork must be labelled with its country of origin. All other imported pork which is further processed in NZ – including bacon, ham and sausages – must be labelled with the name and address of a NZ supplier. No details on the origins of the meat are required. "This is directly opposed to what research has shown consumers want, which is clear country-of-original labelling." (Stuff)

### Insect Input Increasing

Insect protein, as an ingredient in the animal feed and pet food sectors, is expected to reach half a million metric tonnes by 2030 – significantly up on today's estimated market of 10,000 metric tonnes, according to Rabobank. It has recently reported that a high protein content (from 50 to 80% dry matter basis) ensures the health benefits of insect protein as a feed ingredient to animals. While the benefits created by insects building circular food systems – because of their ability to upcycle low value agri-food material (such as food waste and residues) into high-value proteins and oils – are also being recognised. (Agbrief Staff Report)

## TRADE

### Making The Most Of A Carcase

Greenlea hopes to mimic the success of the lucrative US bone broth tonic market in NZ after constructing its own broth extraction plant in Morrinsville. The potential for this market is huge – in the US, bone broth tonic is a \$600 million industry. Greenlea's Julie McDade said the company is in early test trials of broth products ahead of its official launch on May 17. It is also looking at ways of extracting more value from the carcase and broth products are a way of doing that. She says NZ's cattle numbers have peaked and are likely to trend downwards as farmers look to comply with tighter environmental regulations and NZ as a country is losing a lot of value from its beef products. She says Greenlea is looking at the entire beef carcase and thinking what could be made from products that have historically been wasted and that were rendered down for a low-value product. Rather than starting from scratch, Greenlea purchased the intellectual property and branding off Tauranga-based Rebecca Harrison, who had been making bone

broth out of her home under the name Restore and selling it to customers. (Farmers Weekly)

### STOP PRESS

#### GDT Price Index Turns Down

After eight weeks of rises, the latest GDT auction price, March 16, turned down -3.8% . The average price was US\$4089 per MT. The wholemilk Powder price was down -6.25% to US\$4083 per MT. (GDT Insight, RNZ)

## LIVESTOCK

### High Court Rules Crates Unlawful

A High Court ruling that the regulations and minimum standards regarding the use of pig mating stalls and farrowing crates are unlawful and invalid, has left pig farmers facing an uncertain future. The Court also directed Animal Welfare Minister Meka Whaitiri to consider recommending new regulations that provide a transition period to phase out the use of farrowing crates and mating stalls and to consider making such changes to the relevant minimum standards under the Welfare Code for pigs. The NAWAC pigs sub-committee is considering the regulatory reform process regarding the use of farrowing crates and mating stalls with the pork industry's animal welfare scientist advisor Kirsty Chidgey. The code working group is reviewing the remainder of the code. NZ Pork's David Baines says the industry is lobbying for several key changes, including an appropriate alternative to the current use of farrowing crates and mating stalls that must retain the benefits of the current systems, while still meeting health and safety obligations. To assess potential alternatives, NZ Pork will be submitting a major co-funded research proposal under the Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures programme. "Practicality and viability demonstrated in NZ commercial farming conditions are both critical if farmers are to consider changing," he said. As part of any regulatory changes, the Government must carry out a regulatory impact statement. (AgBrief Staff Report)

### M.Bovis Cluster Expands

MPI has confirmed a new farm had tested positive for Mycoplasma Bovis – it is linked to a cluster in Canterbury and brings the number of actively infected farms to 11. The latest infected farm is a grazing block connected to the existing Canterbury cluster through animal movements. (RNZ News)

### Live Cattle Ban Big Impact

A live cattle exporter is hitting back at calls for the trade to be banned, warning that the impact on the farming sector would be significant. Figures from StatsNZ show more than 100,000 breeding cattle were shipped to China last year, to the value of \$255.89 million. SAILS' Wayne Doran said customers in China pay a great deal of money for the livestock and have a vested interest in looking after them, he said. SAILS stands for South Australasian Livestock Services. The animals are bought at an inflated price in NZ and importers also have to cover the costs of



blood testing, shipping and quarantining in both NZ and China, Doran said. For some dairy farmers, live exports were an important income stream and if that was cut off, it would have a serious impact, Doran said. He hopes that when the Government announces its decision on the future of the trade, it would opt for a "continued improvement" approach. (RNZ News)

### Piglet Mortality Will Rise

According to a study of NZ pig farms commissioned for MPI, pre-weaning piglet mortality in NZ averages 12% on farms using conventional indoor farrowing systems, compared to outdoor-based farms where pre-weaning piglet mortality is more than 20%. In light of the recent High Court decision, the consequences of outlawing indoor farrowing systems are clear, according to NZ Pork's David Baines. "Firstly, half the industry will need to reconsider their future, and many will choose to exit pig farming. Secondly, a greater number of pigs will die." And he said more imported pork will come into NZ from countries that do not meet NZ animal welfare standards. (AgBrief Staff Report)

### Interest In Composting Barns

Composting barns for production livestock are being considered by more farmers. Typically, a barn system will comprise of an 800mm to one-metre deep bark-type material, which becomes self-composting as animal effluent, urine and air mix into a dry bedding material that farmers can get a season's use out of before scraping it off and applying it to the land to help lift soil organic matter over time. Nelson firm Wholesale Landscapes is also finding increasing interest from Kiwi dairy farmers who are grappling with the complexities of water quality management and greenhouse gas emissions, and looking to adjust their farming systems to better manage these. For some farmers, a more cost-effective compromise is an open-sided barn system allowing good air circulation, while also providing the compostable surface for cows to sit and lie on post-grazing. (Farmers Weekly)

### Weaners Selling Well

During a week of weaner cattle fairs in Northland, a majority of calves sold in the range \$3-\$3.30/kg liveweight. Carrfields' Rueben Wright says his home sale at Peria in the Far North was notable for a yarding of 2364 steers, bulls and heifers. The top cut of autumn-born steers reached \$1140 and the top of the spring-born calves was \$1000. A big offering of 300 Simmental bull calves weighing up to 320kg sold in the range of \$950-\$1080 at \$3.20-\$3.50/kg. Kaikohe PGGWrightson's Vaughan Vujcich said 1580 calves were yarded and the top cut of traditional Simmental, Charolais and Angus steers, weighing 280-320kg, sold in the range of \$3.10-\$3.25/kg. The price range per head was \$880-\$1040. The medium weights made the same price per kg and were worth \$760-\$900. Lighter calves at 230-250kg were harder to sell and did not make any improvement on the liveweight price range of \$3-\$3.20/kg. Earlier in the week, autumn-born Charolais-cross steers topped the Kauri weaner steer fair when the second pen fetched \$1115 for 13 and the first pen \$1065 for seven. A third

### AVERAGE EXPORT MEAT SCHEDULE PRICES

This week, ending March 20, 2021 (last week's in brackets)

		North Is.	South Is.
<b>LAMB(\$/hd)</b>			
15.0kg YM	97.50	(97.50)	93.75 (93.00)
17.5kg YX	110.50	(110.50)	106.25 (105.40)
19.0kg YX	123.50	(123.50)	118.75 (117.80)
21.0kg YX	136.50	(136.50)	131.25 (130.20)
<b>MUTTON (\$/hd)</b>			
25kg MX2	127.50	(125.00)	125.00 (128.75)
<b>BEEF (\$/kg)</b>			
P2 Steer	5.00	(5.00)	4.50 (4.50)
M2 Bull	5.00	(5.00)	4.50 (4.50)
<b>VENISON (\$/kg)</b>			
AP Stag 60kg	5.20	(5.20)	5.35 (5.40)

Prices are gross operating prices and are exclusive of levies.

### AVERAGE EXPORT DAIRY PRODUCT PRICES

	Last week, ending March 13, 2021	4 weeks ago	3 months ago
Fonterra predicted payout			
\$/kg Milksolids	7.60	7.20	7.00
<b>Butter (NZ\$/Tonne)</b>	8160	7030	5650
<b>Skim milk Powder</b>	4730	4510	4000
<b>Wholemilk Powder</b>	6000	4710	4470
<b>Cheddar</b>	6180	5960	5460
<b>Casein</b>	12840	12620	11710

Prices above are indicative only. They are compiled from an assessment of sales made worldwide on a one-off basis in US\$. Quota market sales and contracts are excluded. The prices have been converted to NZ\$/tonne FOB at current exchange rates.

### MAIN O/S MARKETS, CURRENCY, INTEREST RATES, WOOL & WHEAT

	Last week, ending March 13, 2021	4 weeks ago	3 months ago
UK CKT Lamb Leg (£/kg)	5.50	5.20	4.75
US Bull Beef (US\$/lb)	2.44	2.49	2.27
US Dollar (for NZ\$1)	0.717	0.721	0.705
Aust Dollar (for NZ\$1)	0.931	0.929	0.946
UK Pound (for NZ\$1)	0.517	0.519	0.527
Euro (for NZ\$1)	0.602	0.596	0.582
<b>INTEREST</b>			
90 Day Bill Rate (%)	0.32	0.29	0.25
2 Year Swap Rate (%)	0.56	0.36	0.26
5 Year Swap Rate (%)	1.27	0.80	0.46
<b>NEW ZEALAND WOOL PRICES</b>			
<b>WOOL PRO Wool Prices</b>			
Fine (21 microns)	1066	1066	1066
Medium (29 microns)	372	372	372
Coarse (35 microns)	235	185	180
2nd Shear(37 microns)	195	170	170
Lamb (30 micron)	240	240	240
<b>W H E A T</b>			
ASW NZ\$/tonne	370	374	366

Presented in association with AgriHQ



pen of 14 made \$830. In the 500-cattle yarding, containing a majority of spring-born steers, the top price was \$940 for 14 whitefaces, followed by \$920 for 13 Angus. (Farmers Weekly)

### Double-checking M.bovis

The Mycoplasma bovis eradication programme has a new project to double-check that all risk of infection has been found. Programme director Stuart Anderson says it is timely to do this work now as planning moves fully to long-term surveillance. The double-checking project will take a fresh look at some of the formerly infected properties, applying new tracing tools and greater knowledge of the disease. Anderson says, in essence, it is doing a last sweep over the work that has been done in the past few years. It will not go back to all 262 infected properties, instead targeting just 132 of the total infected properties recorded in the programme. The farms being considered are based on farm type, the original lab testing data and how infectious they were particularly in terms of how many properties they went on to infect. The project has in part been developed because of poor NAIT compliance and animal movement recording. "It will enable us to check gaps in animal movement records, closing potential risks and making our biosecurity system stronger. We owe it to the 262 farmers who have sacrificed a lot for the M bovis eradication effort, to ensure we have looked for every risk of infection and addressed it." (Farmers Weekly)

### Southern Lamb Bucking Trend

Anxiety over weather conditions, slaughter price trajectories and overseas markets has been palpable throughout most NZ store markets. This has kept demand subdued and, in some instances, vendors have not been willing to meet the market. The South Island lamb market is bucking this trend, as prices have been consistent over the past four weeks. Throughout February and into March, South Island store lambs have been trading for \$2.90-\$3.05/kg in the paddock, despite farm gate prices reducing by 20c/kg in those five weeks. This can be attributed to cropping farmers' buying patterns for later-born store lambs to control ryegrass, which could be offloaded as late as November, when historically higher farm gate prices allow for stronger margins. North Island store lamb prices have been varying by comparison to the South Island. Over the past five weeks, 32-35kg males have sold for \$2.70-\$3.10/kg. The top-end price has often dipped to \$3/kg, and North Island buyers have started to favour lighter options as farm gate prices weaken and short-term buys become less attractive. (Farmers Weekly)

## HORTICULTURE

### T&G Office Staff In Packhouses

T&G Global is asking its office-based staff to help out in apple packhouses, due to labour shortages. Operations director Craig Betty said the firm is under real pressure to meet export schedules and needs 70 more people right now, so salaried staff and family members are being asked to help out. The firm will be flexible with work hours if people are helping out during their normal day job and if they work on Saturday, will get time

off in lieu, he said. The bosses will be turning on morning and afternoon teas. (RNZ News)

### Greece Growing Kiwifruit

Greece is proving to be a surprising contributor to Zespri's off-season efforts to grow more fruit in the Northern Hemisphere to ensure valuable produce shelf space is maintained in key markets year-round. Zespri's Alastair Hulbert says SunGold-planted area in Europe has expanded to 4000ha, compared to the 6700ha planted in NZ. The bulk of the SunGold crop in the Northern Hemisphere is grown in Italy. The company's Green Northern Hemisphere crop includes about 10 million trays, and Greece now accounts for about 35% of that production. Other Northern Hemisphere growing regions include France, South Korea and Japan. Typically fruit from Greece will be yielding about 70% of what crops do here, with slightly smaller size, but demonstrate a good level of crop quality. Some Italian vines are also suffering from 'kiwifruit vines decline' syndrome that is affecting 27% of Green crops. (Farmers Weekly)

### Feijoas Are Here

Feijoas are expected to hit the shelves this week as good growing conditions have seen harvesting of this season's crop kick off a month earlier than usual. Grower David Hansen said volumes are down a little, so size is up. (RNZ News)

### Vote On China Trial

Zespri's plan for dealing with Chinese growers who are illegally growing its NZ-bred fruit will be put to a vote. A solution to the problem has caused dissent in the industry. Zespri says that while there certainly are risks with the trial, there are considerable risks if it does nothing. If growers choose not to support the trial, Zespri will continue with avenues to work to protect its market position as much as possible, in terms of legal remedies, political conversations in China and NZ and also commercial avenues with retailers and distributors. The vote will likely be held in June and if 75% of growers approve the plan, that will give Zespri the legal right to continue with a trial. (RNZ News)

### Light-hearted Tomato War

A light-hearted war has erupted over the country's cheapest tomatoes with supermarkets vying for the title. In one day, a Hastings supermarket sold two tonnes of tomatoes at just nine cents a kg. The next day, an Auckland branch bettered their colleagues by offering shoppers tomatoes for a cent per kg less. Tomatoes NZ's Helen Barnes said that generally supermarket tomato prices only occasionally went below \$2kg. "I think the last time we heard of anything like that was about 10 years ago when we couldn't export to Australia because of a pest in the growing industry. They wouldn't be making any money at that price." She said prices had been good but there is an oversupply of stock towards the end of the season because of the lack of exports, due to the pandemic. (The Country)



# SOIL, WATER, LAND, ARABLE

## Nelson Asked to Double Contribution

The Nelson City Council has been asked to more than double its contribution to the Waimea Community Dam project – from \$5 million to almost \$10.5m. The \$5m that the city council already agreed to provide was set before the dam project costs blew out. Its latest forecast completion cost estimate is \$158.4m. The new forecast is \$29m more than an earlier projection of \$129.4m, which was already \$53.5m above an estimate of \$75.9m that went out for public consultation in October 2017 and \$25m more than a \$104.5m estimate at the time the decision to proceed was finalised in 2018. (Stuff)

## Dam Regulations Scary

Proposed safety regulations for dams are scary, according to Otago Water Resource Users Group chairman Ken Gillespie. He said the new regulations, which are expected to be introduced later this year, will bring more stress and expense to farmers. MBIE said Cabinet had approved policy decisions for the development of new safety regulations for dams last week. Springvale sheep and deer farmer Gary Kelliher said central Government's track record with water had so far meant unrealistic regulations, and he wanted to see practical and sensible rules. The regulations will apply to any dam that is a minimum of 4m in height and holding a minimum of 20,000 cubic metres of stored water; or a minimum of 1m in height and holding a minimum of 40,000 cubic metres of stored water. Low-risk structures such as stock drinking ponds, weirs and small, low dams will be exempt from the regulations. (Otago Daily Times)

## Access To Matawai Dam Begins

Construction of an access road to the site of the Matawai water storage dam, has begun. The dam, to be built on farmland at Ngawha, will cover 18ha and supply water for horticulture and the nearby Ngawha Innovation and Enterprise Park. It could also serve as a backup water supply for Kaikohe, although extra infrastructure will be required. The Te Tai Tokerau Water Trust, which plans a number of reservoirs and water schemes around the drought-prone Mid North and Kaipara, hopes Matawai will be operational by summer 2021-22. The 750,000 cubic metre reservoir will be filled by pumping water from nearby streams in times of high flow. Reservoirs planned by the trust will allow a combined 7000ha of land to be converted to high-value horticulture. The trust has also asked the Minister for the Environment for permission to apply for fast-tracked consent for two more reservoirs in the Mid North, at Otawere, near Waimate North, and Te Ruaotehauhau, near Ohaeawai. A decision is expected this month. (The Country)

## Fertiliser Prices Rising

The price of urea, di-ammonium phosphate and sulphur has risen in the past few months. Ravensdown's Mike Whitty says northern hemisphere and Brazilian growers' seasonal demand for the products is strong at present, which was compounded by a reduction in supply of DAP from China. The story is similar for urea, where demand from American and Brazilian corn growers also

affects the global price. On top of that, there is a shortage of shipping containers, which is increasing freight prices. However, about 95% of Ravensdown's product comes in on bulk vessels, so the co-operative has not been affected as much by the container issue. He said that over recent months, urea had increased by \$US100 a tonne, plus freight, which translated into a 40% increase. DAP had increased from \$US310 to \$US460 a tonne, (plus freight), which was an increase of 50%. The price of Ravensdown's urea increased by \$20 a tonne to \$NZ639 and DAP rose to \$NZ849 a tonne. Ballance Agri-Nutrients' Jason Minkhorst said the prices of DAP and urea had been steadily increasing during the past few months and continued to do so. He said although Ballance had been absorbing cost increases, it had increased its DAP price by \$NZ50 a tonne, and urea increased by \$NZ15 per tonne earlier this month. (Otago Daily Times)

## Warning Over Stubble Burns

Landowners are being warned to obey fire rules as the crop residue burning season begins. Environment Canterbury, along with Fire and Emergency NZ, Federated Farmers, Timaru and Waimate district councils and FAR are continuing their inter-agency approach to the crop-burning season, providing information to both those who undertake crop residue burning and those impacted by it. Currently, there are two designated crop residue burning buffer zones in ECan's regional air plan – around Ashburton and Timaru. Inside these Ashburton and Timaru buffer zones, anyone wanting to carry out crop residue burning must have a resource consent. Outside of the buffer zones, including in Waimate, crop residue burning may be carried out, provided a smoke management plan is completed. (Stuff)

## 2000 Submissions On Bill

The Environment Select Committee has almost 2000 public submissions to wade through, on the Crown Pastoral Land Reform Bill. "Nearly all of these submissions opposed it, highlighting why the controversial Bill should be turfed," said National's Jacqui Dean. High country farmers are outraged over the proposed Bill that would see an end to tenure review and significantly alter regulations on Crown pastoral land. "It is unnecessary, counter-productive, and potentially unlawful," Federated Farmers' Kim Reilly told the Select Committee. "It reduces the certainty of leases and the incentivisation to continue to invest in enhanced environmental outcomes, given no accompanying or reciprocal ability to address changing pastoral needs is provided for." The Bill adds nothing except unnecessary costs, delays, complexity and red tape. Rather than duplicating existing district and regional council consent requirements and restrictions, it would be more sensible to continue to improve resourcing, funding and capability processes for Land Information NZ. Reilly says with reform of the RMA on the immediate horizon, it makes sense to wait and see what changes are ushered in. South Island farmer Jim Greenslade says a flaw of the Bill is that it is a one-size-fits-all approach. He says it would be far better to have contractually binding and bespoke farm environment plans that



take account of local conditions and particular priorities, while avoiding the need for recurring, complex and costly consent applications. (Farmers Weekly)

### Maize Harvest Underway

The annual maize harvest is now in full swing with harvesters from all the major companies now busy. More than 30,000 tonnes of grain maize will be harvested by Glencore and Corsons between now and early June. Pioneer's seed maize harvest will run until late next month. (Gisborne Herald)

### Mapping Out Pastures Future

Farmers, scientists and rural industry leaders will start mapping out a secure future for NZ pastures when The Resilient Pastures Symposium (RPS) is held in May. With agriculture currently earning more than 40c in every NZ export dollar, those behind the event say pasture and innovative thinking about its prospects in coming years has never been more relevant. "The uniqueness of NZ's high-value animal protein exports – their embedded naturalness and low per unit emissions compared with competitor countries – rests on our pasture base," said DairyNZ principal scientist David Chapman. The RPS will highlight current soil, plant genetics and management solutions, and look towards future opportunities, giving those who attend a chance to contribute to charting future priorities. A key goal for the event is to achieve broad-based primary sector collaboration and direction for more pasture development. (Farmers Weekly)

### \$48k Effluent Fine

Maxwell Farms has been fined \$48,700 for illegally discharging 80,000 litres of effluent into Mangatutu Stream (a tributary of the Tutaekuri River) which turned it green. The stream was not swimmable for a week after the effluent was discharged. (RNZ News)

### 12.5 Tonnes Plastic Recycled

Hawke's Bay farmers and growers have surrendered massive quantities of plastic for recycling through Agrecovery this summer. Since mid-December, the programme collected 12.5 tonnes of plastic from the region in just two and a half months. The plastic went to the Bin Hire Hub in Hastings for processing, and then to Auckland for recycling. Agrecovery collected 48.5 tonnes of plastic from the Hawke's Bay last year, so this is already a quarter of that volume in just 11 weeks. (AgBrief Staff Report)

## INDUSTRY

### Expectations Exceeded

More than 400 livestock farmers have been engaged in Northland's Extension 350 programme, which is about one-quarter of the dairy, sheep and beef farms in the province. The five-year, \$4 million to \$5m project has 18 months to run and planners are turning to analysis of results and pondering what might follow. Farmer-led and farmer-focused, the design of the project is 10 clusters running for three financial years in an overlapping timeline through the five years. One rural professional in each cluster works with five target farmers, helped by mentor farmers, and as many associate farmers as can be attracted in

the district. Target farmers, mentor farmers and consultants meet about 20 to 25 times during the three-and-a-half years, and target farmers are required to adopt plans, implement improvements and make regular written reports. (Farmers Weekly)

### Fagan Defends Title

Jack Fagan has defended his NZ Rural Games Speed Shear titles. Overall it was the 42nd speed shear win for Fagan, who is the son of inaugural 2015 Rural Games Speed Shear winner Sir David Fagan. (The Country)

### Liaison Lacking

Teething problems marked the arrival of more than 80 Cook Islanders set to work at Alliance plants for the season. Members of Invercargill's Pasifika community were asked to provide beds and food when the accommodation arranged by Alliance for its workers was not ready on time. However, an Alliance spokesperson said the temporary arrangement lasted four days, and families who agreed to host the workers at short notice were provided with Alliance meat packs as a gesture of goodwill. Some had been accommodated in homes at the cooperative's Lorneville plant, while others were staying with friends and family in the community. Alliance donated meat for a formal celebration to welcome the workers to the community, held at the trust building in Invercargill, that was attended by plant managers. (Stuff)

### Rich Employment Environment

The Milk Harvesting Level 3 students at AGC Training in Whanganui are pretty pumped by the latest employment statistics in the industry. Last month alone a rough, unscientific count on just two social network sites related to dairying, including Fonterra's, revealed around 450 jobs were advertised, and that could just be the tip of the iceberg. Many placements within the agricultural industry, including dairying, come through word of mouth rather than applicants responding to published advertisements. That would suggest a far larger number of jobs are going begging out in the country's dairying communities. The current group of 14 students three weeks into the 22-week Milk Harvesting L3 course at AGC Training are eagerly awaiting graduation with such a bright employment outlook. (Whanganui Chronicle)

### Taking On-farm Water Samples

If farmers can see for themselves how their farms affect their catchment, they are more likely to take steps to change that, according to KapAg's Terry Parminter. To that end, a catchment group project near Palmerston North encouraging farmers to take their own on-farm water samples is holding an open day next month. He said the water testing kits are not aimed at replacing more formal methods of stream health monitoring, they are instead an additional tool to empower farmers and communities to play their own role. Samples gathered can also be sent for laboratory testing, which enables the information to be included in cross-catchment NIWA data. Parminter says farmers can pool their resources within catchments to share ownership of the kits. (Farmers Weekly)



## \$30k For Employment Breaches

Greywacke Farms has been fined \$30,000 for failing to comply with employment law for 24 workers. The Employment Relations Authority has ordered it and its director Dietmar Kopetschny to pay the penalty after finding the business failed to keep correct wage, time, holiday and leave records. Greywacke runs two farms supplying milk to Fonterra. About half of the 24 affected workers are migrants on temporary work visas. Kopetschny was made personally liable for \$10,000 in penalties, \$7500 of which would be paid out to three former employees. (RNZ News)

## Covid Exposes Fractured Biosecurity

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed a fractured global biosecurity system and a new approach is needed, according to Professor Philip Hulme from the government-funded Bio-Protection Research Centre. Covid-19 had shown there needed to be an approach to biosecurity that integrated threats to human, animal, plant and environmental health, recognising that disease or invasions in one sector often spilled over into the others. He said the Covid Tracer app and NAIT system are two examples of where lessons can be learnt and shared among different industries. Hulme also said it was time for the global biosecurity system to shift away from protecting individual countries and towards preventing the deliberate or accidental export of emerging threats from their country of origin. He called for a stronger regulatory instrument to address biosecurity threats at a worldwide scale and the establishment of an overarching organisation responsible for international biosecurity governance. (RNZ News)

## MobileTECH Back

After a year's absence due to the covid lockdown, the MobileTECH conference is recommencing, with a focus upon the agri-tech sector. MobileTECH Ag will be held in Rotorua later this month, providing an opportunity for agri-tech innovators, industry leaders and early adopting farmers or growers to have an insight into trends in the sector. The conference's focus is on digital and automation technologies that will increase productivity of local operations and grow the sector's international capability. (Farmers Weekly)

## Works Clips In Fish

Oesophagus clips used at freezing works are showing up in fish stomachs and on beaches across the country. Silver Fern Farms' Finegand meatworks, which has resource consent to spew its wastewater directly into the Clutha's blue-green waters, is thought to be the culprit. (RNZ News)

## Govt Challenged On Worker Shortage

Agriculturalists are demanding assurances from the Government that the chronic labour shortage they are facing never happens again. HortNZ president Barry McNeil said horticultural work never stops and workers are needed in different sectors throughout the year. At a food and fibre sector meeting in Havelock North, Prime Minister Ardern said the Government has taken action. There has been a low turnout for some of the Government's initiatives, such as people relocating to another region for a short time. Ardern admitted it had not worked seamlessly. "We've been working together

on how we can better fit together those who are seeking work within the region where there is the shortage." Minister of Agriculture Damien O'Connor said small orchards should work together because they may not be picking on the same day, they are changing the picking programme, they're going through their crop not as often, pulling them down and grading them out, they're getting people who are doing admin work to get out and pick." Ardern said the Government is doing its best to encourage more workers into the industry. It is doing that through training and taster courses, as well as MSD schemes such as "\$5k to work". (RNZ News)

## Funding Review Needed

A revision of the current environmental research funding model is imperative to the future success of NZ's dairy industry, says distinguished professor Sir Peter Gluckman. "The system has evolved to focus on an economic perspective, but environmental research needs to have different dimensions of understanding. At the moment, we do not favour 'non-sex' research, but it is essential research the country needs. The comprehensive nature of the Upton report offers an opportunity for ongoing in-depth analysis and discussion about how to optimally use funds for environmental research and therefore, the public good," he says. (Farmers Weekly)

## New Dairy Award

Kiwi dairy farm owners, managers, employees and dairy farming groups are encouraged to reinforce their global reputation as leaders in innovation, sustainability and efficiency by taking part in the #WeAreDairy initiative. The inaugural #WeAreDairy award aims to showcase the incredible advancements being made on dairy farms and the positive impact they have on farm businesses, communities or the supply chain on a daily basis. The award, established by Diversey's Deosan Agriculture hygiene brand and dairy industry consultants Promar International, is open to dairy farmers across the globe. The overall winner will be announced in October and receive a \$10,000 prize. (Farmers Weekly)

## Banks Running From Rural Towns

Rural communities are desperately searching for ways to keep banks from shutting up shop in their towns. Kiwibank has flagged it may close seven branches including Matamata, Waihi, Balclutha, Gisborne and Waipukurau. The bank said it is responding to customer preference. Branch visitor numbers have not recovered since more customers began using online services during the 2020 lockdown. ASB plans to reduce hours at Matamata, Te Awamutu and Cambridge and close its Morrinsville branch in March. ANZ is reducing its Te Kuiti branch from a five-day operation to Tuesday-Thursday, from April 21. Federated Farmers' Jacqui Hahn, who farms near Te Kuiti, said it was a double blow for her rural community. Cheques had already been removed as a method for people to bank and poor internet service in rural areas made it difficult for people to connect with their banks online. "Overall, I am not impressed with the banking bodies and their shareholders' attitudes towards the communities they have greatly profited from." (Stuff)



## McNair Top Rural Sportsperson

Young Dannevirke shooter Stephanie McNair reigned supreme at the NZ Rural Sports Awards. The 17-year-old Palmerston North Girls' High School student was named the youth sportsperson of the year and also won the supreme award. Last year she won numerous competitions, including some against top shooters from around the country. She also had wins against teams from Great Britain and the US. King Country woolhandler Keryn Herbert was named the rural sports-woman of the year. Since 2005 she has won 48 open finals, represented NZ nine times in trans-Tasman tests, and won a world teams title in Wales. (Stuff)

## Staff Retention Not Great

When it comes to retaining staff, the NZ primary sector is not as good as many other parts of the economy, being below the average rate achieved by other industries. Based on the years 2016-2018, primary industries staff retention rate after one year was 48% after the first year, 35% after two years and just 29% after three years. That compares to national averages of 56%, 42% and 34% respectively. MPI's Cheyne Gillooly says those numbers are the most recent available, but MPI and industry are currently developing a pan-sector dataset and workforce supply and demand forecasting model. He says once it's completed, which is expected to be by mid-2022, the project will deepen available data on the food and fibre sector workforce. Horticulture has the lowest retention rates of 29%, 18% and 14% over the three years. The best of the bunch is the dairy sector, which runs close if not parallel to national averages at 55%, 42% and 33%. Forestry is 56%; 38% and 30%, other primary industries, including poultry and pig farming, are 54%, 38% and 29%; arable 53%, 36% and 27%; red meat and wool 50%, 35% and 26%. (Farmers Weekly)

## Fleece Title Defended

High country sheep farmers Will and Emily Murray have defended their title with a near perfect merino ram fleece at the Wanaka A&P Show. The fleece weighs 8.3kg greasy and won two other competition classes — champion stud merino ram and champion stud fleece. The couple run about 11,000 merino sheep on Glenmore Station. The wool from their flock is sold to Devold Wool Direct Ltd to make casual apparel in Norway. (Otago Daily Times)

## Little Uptake For Roll Bar Subsidy

Of the 35,000 farmers and businesses eligible to access a subsidy for crush protection devices for quad bikes, only 270 have taken it up. ACC's Virginia Burton-Konia says it's not just farmers, but sometimes farm workers, whanau or manuhiri who are on farms and getting hurt. "Last year ended up with \$80 million worth of cost to the scheme focusing on injuries on quad bikes." ACC introduced a subsidy to farmers to provide a small

financial incentive for them to put roll-over bars on their quad bikes in 2019. There have been 74 workplace quad bike deaths since 2006. (RNZ News)

# FORESTRY

## Real Mill Issues Five Years Away

Sequal's David Turner predicts more mills with specific business and product issues will close, but the real issues are going to start to emerge in another five years or so, he said, commenting on the ailing Whakatane Mill. Since 2008, log shipments to China have surged from one million tonnes a year to around 20 million this year, he said, while at the same time NZ's value-add wood exports have stagnated. Turner says the Government has a "delusional idea that we'll be able to attract foreign capital because the fundamental issue is lack of capital. There's no lack of capital, there's a lack of environment to make that capital efficient and successful". Unlike the Whakatane Mill, Turner's Sequal plant just 33 km away is definitely not in distress. As a primary producer, Sequal processes the timber in bulk for customers in 20 countries, which then turn it into the finished product such as furniture. Turner explains that most logs in NZ are utility grade, hence the need for a processing sector in NZ which has the ability to take the low-grade fibre of the utility grade log and turn it into a product. But the wood processing industry struggles because of the distorted log trade, he says. (RNZ News)

## Forestry Forecasts Begin

Margules Groome is currently undertaking the 2020 update to the NZ wood availability forecasts for MPI. The forecasts are carried out roughly once every five years. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of June. The NEFD (National Exotic Forest Description) areas statements and yield tables form the basis for the Remsoft Woodstock wood flow models. The models are designed to mimic generalised future forest management practices in each of the regions. These generalised practices include rotation ages and replanting rules. They are undertaking a survey of large forest owners to obtain an understanding of their harvesting intentions over the next 10-20 years. (Friday Offcuts)





