

# Inside Dairy

May 2020

Your levy in action

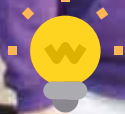
## COVID-19

Staying safe,  
supported,  
connected



## TICKING 'YES'

Why farmers think their  
levy's a smart investment



ARE HIGH-  
PRODUCING  
COWS LESS  
FERTILE?

2020 LEVY VOTE - VOTING IS NOW OPEN



YOUR LEVY  
VOTE

Dairynz

YOUR LEVY, YOUR FUTURE



## over the fence...

Farming in 2020 has taken a turn many of us didn't forecast, in the form of a Covid-19 lockdown.

Operating through a global pandemic isn't status quo for farmers (or anyone) but our team has been working quickly and collaboratively to ensure all dairy farms have had the intel needed.

The Covid-19 lockdown is having real implications for all businesses nationwide. These are exceptional times for New Zealand but we aren't alone, and our sector is making a positive difference at a time of great need.

Managing the flow-on effects of operating a farm during a national lockdown – significantly limiting your services and resources – has been the initial priority for us, along with helping support feed shortages, animal care, people and safety measures.

We've also been looking at the long-term opportunities, which particularly lie in recruiting skilled people to our sector. There is a likely increase in unemployment in New Zealand and dairy can be part of the solution – so we are working on a programme to support Kiwis to upskill and get a career in dairy.

### Milksolids levy vote

In the mix of it all, we have also been communicating with you on our milksolids levy vote. This is underway now and votes close May 30.

The opportunity for all dairy farmers to vote for the milksolids levy comes up only every six years and I encourage you to vote now. Packs were sent mid-April. The more farmers who vote and who vote 'yes', the more influence we have with other organisations as we work to get the best outcomes for farmers.

Our work is broad – from research and development, through to policy, education and careers programmes, regional support and more. Visit our website for all the info – [dairynz.co.nz](https://dairynz.co.nz)

Finally, as we get closer to the June 1 Moving Day, I encourage you to check out the guidance at [dairynz.co.nz/covid19](https://dairynz.co.nz/covid19) before shifting. And before you move, don't forget to vote for the milksolids levy!

Please get in touch if you have any feedback – [tim.mackle@ceo.dairynz.co.nz](mailto:tim.mackle@ceo.dairynz.co.nz)

**Tim Mackle**  
Chief executive  
DairyNZ



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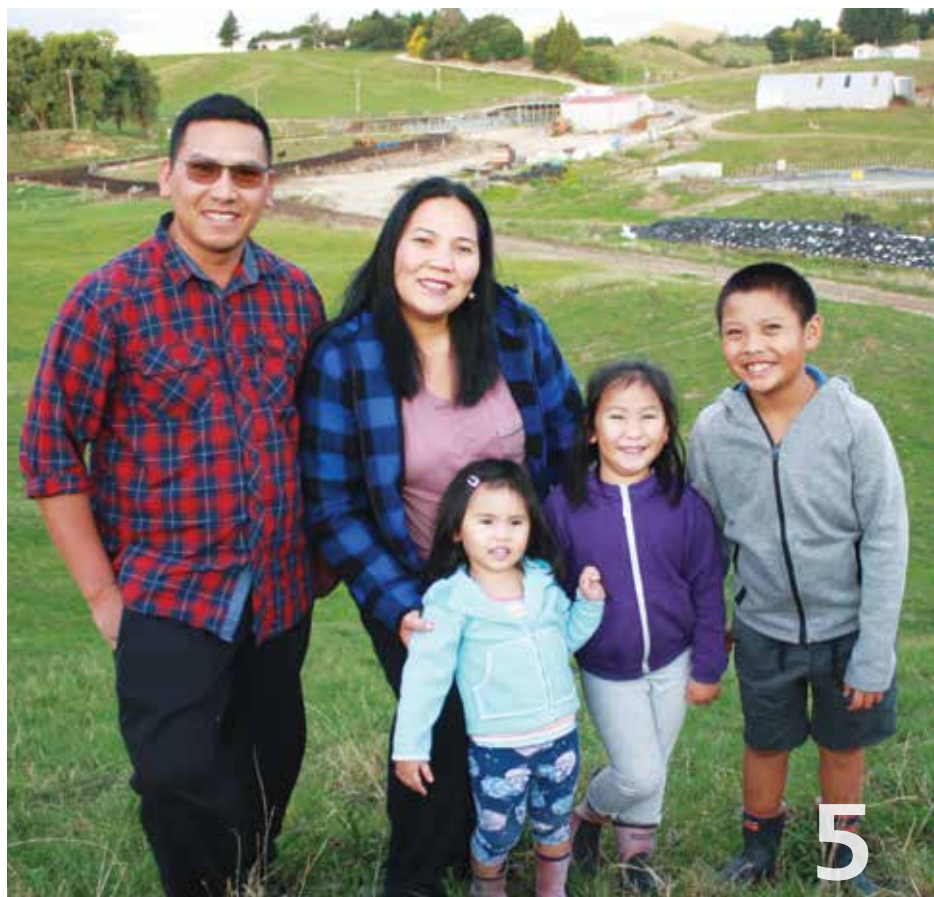
DairyNZ's Samantha Tennent looks at whether breeding cows for efficient milk production affects their reproductive performance.

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On the cover: Rotorua sharemilkers Carlos and Bernice Delos Santos (with their children Cara, Claire and Carl) share their thoughts on the milksolids levy in this month's lead story.

## TAKE 5... TIPS FOR FARMERS

### 1. Covid-19: milking hygiene



To stay safe from infection, keep two metres from other staff in the farm dairy and wear gloves. Remove your gloves once you've finished, and wash your hands thoroughly before leaving the dairy. For more milking hygiene tips, and specific info on herringbone and rotary sheds, see [dairynz.co.nz/covid-milking](https://dairynz.co.nz/covid-milking)

### 2. Covid-19: cleaning surfaces

Covid-19 survives on some surfaces for up to 72 hours, so it's crucial that consistent and effective cleaning is carried out in the dairy and other on-farm areas, especially 'touched-often' items like handles, rails and switches. For tips on cleaning surfaces and what products can be used, see [dairynz.co.nz/covid-cleaning](https://dairynz.co.nz/covid-cleaning)

### 3. Boost calcium for transport

Ca

Lactating cows can get milk fever during transport because they don't receive any calcium to replace the calcium they're putting into milk. So, while you're planning your calcium supplements for spring, order extra to boost the calcium of your lactating cows before transport. See [dairynz.co.nz/transporting-stock](https://dairynz.co.nz/transporting-stock)

### 4. Set for calving

Use the dry period to start preparing for calving. Get your calf sheds cleaned up and ready for those early calves, and put together your calving kit. Follow the handy pre-calving checklist at [dairynz.co.nz/calving-setup](https://dairynz.co.nz/calving-setup)

### 5. What's important to you?



Take a Farm Gauge and identify opportunities to lift performance in your business. Assess any one of eight categories, from feed to strategy. Give it a go now at [dairynz.co.nz/farm-gauge](https://dairynz.co.nz/farm-gauge)

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#### We appreciate your feedback

Email [insidedairy@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:insidedairy@dairynz.co.nz) or call us on 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969). Alternatively, post to: Inside Dairy, Private Bag 3221, Hamilton 3240. For information on DairyNZ visit [dairynz.co.nz](https://dairynz.co.nz).





# Joining forces during Covid-19

DairyNZ and sector partners have been working hard to find solutions for farmers in the face of Covid-19 restrictions.

A strong dairy sector is likely to be even more important to New Zealand's future as we begin moving into the recovery phase of the Covid-19 response. DairyNZ has been working closely with the Government and our primary sector partners to assess Covid-19's impact across all aspects of dairying, and resolve key issues.

## Essential business

One of the first projects we worked on with our partners, as the country moved to Alert Level 4, was how farmers could continue to operate safely as an essential business. We quickly developed clear, consistent advice on changes needed to reduce risk and keep everyone safe on-farm. Practical templates to facilitate discussion with the farm team, as well as tips for managing contact and hygiene procedures, were shared widely on partner websites and through social media.

## Feed and stock management

Covid-19 restrictions and weather events around the country are likely to affect many farmers as they prepare for winter. With the need to find alternative channels to physical sale yards, and with processing companies running at reduced capacity, good feed planning by farmers is vital.

DairyNZ has collaborated with the Ministry for Primary Industries, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Federated Farmers and other sector partners to provide remote feed-planning support to farmers. We've been helping to determine how much feed is needed, and offering practical advice on what to do and how to go about it. This service is available now and will be reviewed at the end of June. Phone 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969) to find out more.

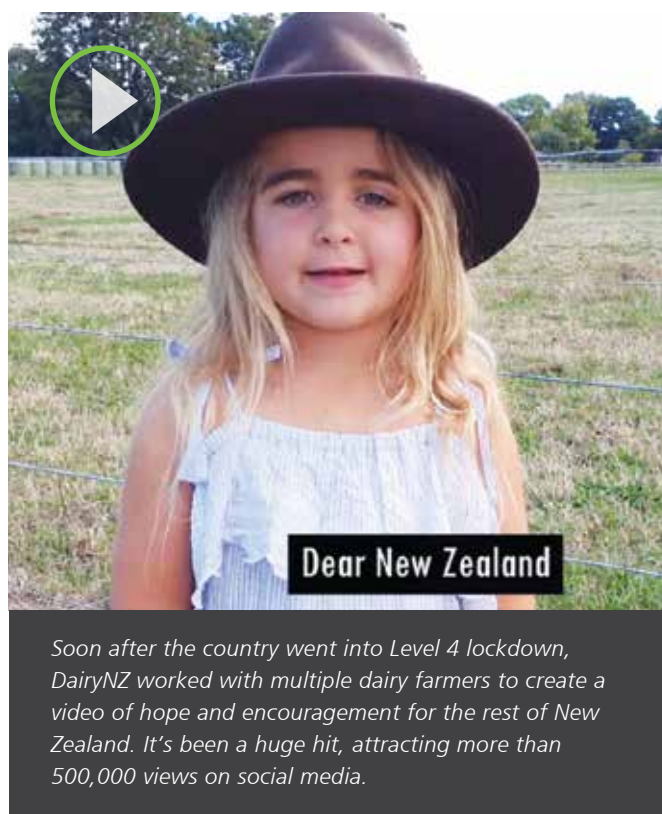
## Moving Day

Covid-19 has added complexity to an already major event for many in the dairy sector. In mid-April, we asked farmers to take part in an urgent Moving Day survey, and we appreciate that hundreds of you took part. This helped us and Federated Farmers understand the likely scale of business and people movements, before we submitted a plan to the Government on how our sector can manage this critical event.

For answers to frequently-asked questions, checklists and guidelines for Moving Day, visit [dairynz.co.nz/movingday](https://dairynz.co.nz/movingday)

## Immigration

DairyNZ and Federated Farmers have also submitted a proposal to the Government that seeks certainty for visa holders. Visas



that expired between April 2 and July 9 have automatically been extended until September 25, 2020. We'll update our website with more information as it becomes available.

For our latest advice, updates, tool and resources related to Covid-19, visit [dairynz.co.nz/covid19](https://dairynz.co.nz/covid19)

For everything else, visit [covid19.govt.nz](https://covid19.govt.nz)

If you have any questions, please:

- phone us on **0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969)**
- email us at [info@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:info@dairynz.co.nz)
- call your local consulting officer (contact details on page 21 of this issue).

If you need help urgently, phone Rural Support Trust on **0800 787 254**.





# Farmers use tech to connect

Dairy farmers in the Lower North Island are embracing new technology to stay in touch and support each other through a challenging time.



*Before lockdown: Lower North Island farmers meet up for an in-person discussion group.*



*During lockdown: DairyNZ consulting officer Kate Stewart chats to farmers during an online discussion group about the drought and Covid-19 restrictions.*

With New Zealand moving to a Level 4 Covid-19 alert in late March, it was no longer an option for DairyNZ to continue its on-farm discussion groups.

But like farmers nationwide, those in the Lower North Island still had plenty they needed to talk about. Drought conditions were affecting the area, and farmers were also making rapid changes to their systems to meet Covid-19 safety requirements.

DairyNZ consulting officer (CO) Kate Stewart helped organise a series of online discussion groups in March and April, so farmers could talk about their challenges and share ideas on how to adapt to changing circumstances.

"The sessions were a great opportunity to hear how farmers were taking precautions to keep their teams safe," says Kate.

"We heard that some farmers had assessed who in their teams have vulnerable family members and had made extra plans to keep them safe. Other farmers had split their teams into two shifts, with the same staff in each to minimise the risk of staff-to-staff transmission, as well as following social distancing and cleaning requirements."

Kate says farmers were also looking at options to fill a feed shortfall due to the drought, and the discussion groups talked through what farmers could do if imported palm kernel was unavailable.

One dairy farming couple who joined an online discussion group were Maegan and Terry Legg, from Shannon.

"Terry and I enjoyed how we could set time aside, make a coffee and still get that discussion group-feel in this current environment," says Maegan. "The online group made us feel connected, while being on our own farm."

Nationwide, DairyNZ's April discussion groups shifted to an online format using Zoom. Zoom is a video conferencing tool similar to Skype, and many new users find it easy to join online sessions.

In the Lower North Island, farmers have also been using traditional technology to keep in touch. Farmers set up a 'phone tree' – where each person is responsible for calling one other person – to check up on how they were coping with the drought and Covid-19 restrictions. DairyNZ's local COs have also been contacting farmers.

"From these phone calls, requests were passed back to DairyNZ's local team for advice and support. We have been working on providing farmers with the support they need," says Kate.

Feeding stock has been a particular concern for many farmers, and COs have been developing feed budgets with farmers over the phone.



To see what discussion groups and events are taking place in your region this month, visit [dairynz.co.nz/events](https://dairynz.co.nz/events)

# HOW WE TURN YOUR \$1 INTO \$15

Recent analysis shows the significant bang for buck you're getting from your levy investment. DairyNZ chair Jim van der Poel breaks down the numbers.



This month, DairyNZ is asking all levy-paying dairy farmers to cast their vote on the levy that funds sector-wide initiatives through DairyNZ, an independent body that represents you, New Zealand's dairy farmers. There's a lot happening at the moment, as we work through Covid-19, but I encourage you to take a few minutes to vote.

DairyNZ exists to deliver value for you. With that in mind, we've done an analysis on the levy investment and what it delivers. The independent analysis found the return is \$15 for every \$1 paid by a dairy farmer through the levy. This shows significant, tangible value to farmers. That value is derived partly from costs spared as a result of DairyNZ's advocacy work.

DairyNZ investments are aligned to the Dairy Tomorrow strategy, so the analysis was broken down into themes: environment, genetic gain, plants, systems, biosecurity, animal care, workforce and communities.

## Where the levy delivers most

Our analysis shows that, in every priority area, the levy is delivering benefits well above the money invested.

For example, between 2015 and 2019, we invested \$35.9m into dairy projects to protect and nurture the environment. The strongest results have come from our advocacy work to ensure environmental policies – such as in the Rotorua and Selwyn-Waihora districts, and with the Zero Carbon Bill – are fair for farmers. The \$35m investment has delivered a net present value (NPV) of \$9.9b, resulting in hugely reduced costs for our dairy sector.

Another example is in our work to increase genetic gain in the national dairy herd. DairyNZ invested \$43.1m into animal projects between 2015 and 2019. The analysis – which looked specifically at \$17.5m invested into NZAEL, and genomics and genetics – showed that the \$43m investment delivered an NPV of \$445m for the dairy sector. That's a whopping 22 times more than the levy investment.

NZAEL's work to improve the overall genetics of dairy cows has boosted the average cow's productivity by \$9.70 – or \$4015/ year for the average 414-cow herd.

A third example is DairyNZ's \$26.5m investment into improving forages. The analysis shows an NPV of \$33.8m for our sector, which is 2.5 times more than the levy investment.

## You're our sole focus

DairyNZ represents dairy farmers across many platforms, from research, development and the teams that work directly with you, to advocacy and helping grow vibrant communities.

As we face increased uncertainty, along with public scrutiny and ongoing political pressures, I believe having a sector body focused solely on working for dairy farmers will continue to pay dividends.

The DairyNZ extension teams, scientists, subject matter experts and sector leaders believe deeply in the vision to help our farmers farm better.

This month, I encourage you to vote. The voting form requires just one tick – a simple 'yes' or 'no'. Voting closes May 30.

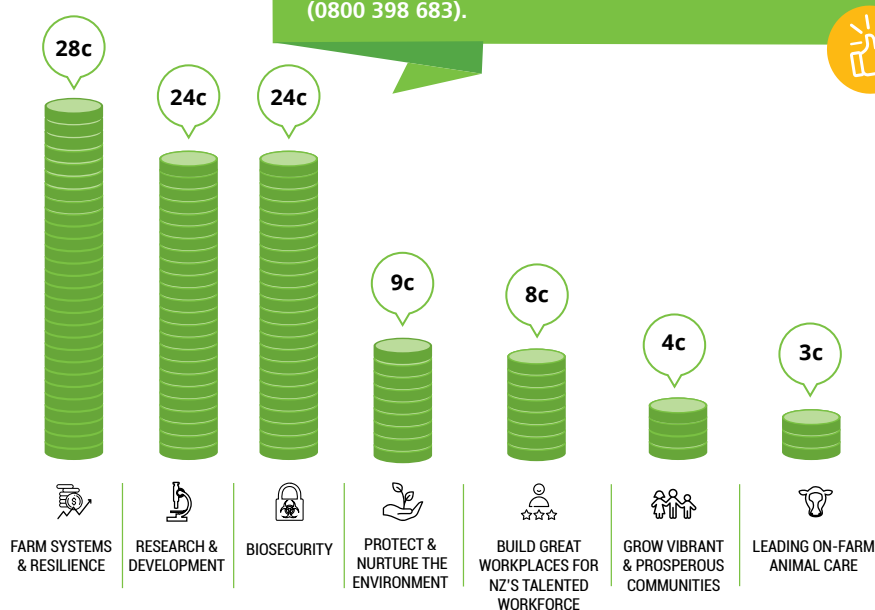
If you haven't received your vote pack or you have any questions, contact [Electionz.com](https://electionz.com) on 0800 EZ VOTE (0800 398 683).



## WHERE IS THE LEVY SPENT?

Your investment through the levy has delivered a wide range of benefits that far outweigh the costs.

**For every dollar of levy investment:**







# What's the levy difference?



With dairy farmers voting this month on whether to continue the milksolids levy, *Inside Dairy* asked a group of farmers how they're getting value from their levy dollar.





*Marvin, originally from Oregon, USA, and his Kiwi wife Jane, have been farming in Central Canterbury for 32 years.*

## Marvin and Jane Pangborn

### Farm owners in Rakaia, Canterbury

"For me, DairyNZ provides research and extension that's not commercially influenced, so I trust the information that I get," says Marvin. "If DairyNZ says something is good to do economically, biologically and environmentally, then I'm likely to adopt it."

"I think we don't always give credit to DairyNZ for raising awareness. Even things like making staff housing repairs and maintenance an annual priority – we think it was our idea, but DairyNZ probably helped sensitise us to the need."

"Advocating for the industry is an important area for DairyNZ. A good example was last year's Essential Freshwater package. The way DairyNZ itemised and looked at the issues – then summarised the 'agree/disagree' aspect into a four-to-five-page document – was brilliant."

"They also made a big effort to help us with the Selwyn-Waihora District consultation for Environment Canterbury's Regional Plan. That was very important. It helped give us an outcome that we can live with."

"Coming from an American background, I am impressed with the New Zealand system, where research and extension is combined into one industry-good organisation like DairyNZ. The quality of information that's given out and their ability to determine what's really important is, in my view, far superior to other systems around the world."

**"If DairyNZ says something is good to do ... then I'm likely to adopt it."**







Mental health advocates and dairy farmers Wayne and Tyler (with children Lewis, Gordie, and Alfie). As great believers in the saying 'You Only Live Once' (YOLO), they run Facebook.com/YOLOFarmerNZ and @YOLOFarmerGlobal (with 100,00 followers worldwide).

**"We think the levy is a no-brainer."**



# Wayne and Tyler Langford

## Farm owners in Takaka, Top of South Island

"DairyNZ resources have become so embedded in our dairy farming systems; I don't think we realise how much and how often we use them," says Wayne.

Tyler provides a few examples. "Their once-a-day milking regime, numerous dairy-related conferences, discussion groups, the Spring Rotation Planner, Envirowalk app, budgeting tools and their HR website resources."

"Their *Facts & Figures* book is like a 'farming bible' for us," adds Wayne. "As for Dairybase – we just used it 10 minutes ago for the bank!"

"We both still love getting out to local discussion groups, which we'll do again once the lockdown ends," says Tyler. "It's really important with our wider industry roles. They're an opportunity for younger and older farmers to learn, share ideas and look after each other's mental wellbeing. I don't think these groups would happen as often and at such a high level if it wasn't for DairyNZ."

"With our roles in Federated Farmers, we were able to utilise DairyNZ during the 2018 Hearings on the Golden Bay Water Conservation Order. There are 14 dairy farms above the area's main water aquifer. A lot of the research and science came out of DairyNZ, which helped support our submissions."

Wayne says he's constantly meeting, whether it's about the Dairy Tomorrow strategy or with other groups to improve the sector as a whole (with meetings going online during the lockdown).

"DairyNZ provides information for and often facilitates those meetings. This actually allows for more farmer engagement, diverse opinions and lets farmers spend more time doing what they love doing, which is farming."

"We think the levy is a 'no-brainer'," says Tyler. "Its investment is absolutely imperative to the way we run our farm at both the on-farm and industry level."



*The sky's the limit for Wayne when it comes to balancing farming, family and wellbeing.*



*The Ridds receiving their regional 2018 NZDIA Share Farmers of the Year award (Manawatu).*

**“We really value the work around breeding values.”**



## Wendy and Richard Ridd

### 50:50 sharemilkers in Ashhurst, Manawatu-Wanganui

“DairyNZ provides a platform for farmers to share knowledge and learn from one another, learn new on-farm efficiencies, and create opportunities to connect with each other – all invaluable,” says Wendy. “To us, DairyNZ is a group of dedicated people driven to improve and help our industry move forward through these ever-changing times.

“They provide so many resources covering all areas of farming, it’s hugely beneficial. Their research and science reassure us about what we’re doing on-farm while improving our business’s efficiency.”

Richard says DairyNZ’s pooling of farmer data for the New Zealand Animal Evaluation (NZAE) genetic database is hugely beneficial for the national dairy herd. “It’s enabled us to increase our genetic gain. We really value the work around breeding values. It gives us the ability to breed the best animals we can.”

On-farm, the couple always refers to DairyNZ’s website for tools and resources, says Wendy.

“We’ve used their riparian planner guide a lot, as well as their

human resources and feed budgeting tools, to name a few. It makes it so easy and efficient for us to produce quick on-farm decisions.”

Richard adds, “DairyBase is a great tool to benchmark our business. We find this really valuable as we can see where we sit and compare year to year. We really enjoy *Inside Dairy* magazine too – it’s always a good read.”

“Our industry is world leading. There are so many people in many organisations that help get our product to market in a profitable and sustainable way. DairyNZ is a big part of that.”



*Richard and Wendy with son George.*



# Lisa and Paul Charmley

## Farm owners in Dannevirke, Manawatu-Wanganui

"DairyNZ's budgeting and cashflow workshop seven years ago helped us take control of our budgeting and buy some land," says Lisa.

"Paul was in partnership with his parents at that stage. We'd been operating in a vacuum – we'd go into an accountant's meeting once a year and be told all this stuff that just went over our heads! We started looking into our financials and we got a bit lost. We didn't know where to start or what to ask. We were worried we'd look silly if we did speak up.

"We ended up going to a DairyNZ budgeting and cashflow workshop. It just absolutely enlightened us. It helped us lay out



Lisa and Paul with their children Reuben and Pippa.

**"... that workshop taught us to work ON our business, not just IN our business."**



*The Charmleys have been Dairy Environment Leaders since 2016. Here, Paul talks about riparian planting at a field day on their farm.*

everything that was in front of us and make sense of what our accounts actually meant. We could start budgeting and take control.

"As a result, we found out that we had quite a bit of equity, so that enabled us, with the help of Paul's parents, to purchase a fair chunk of the land. So, it was about decoding information in a way that we could understand things in our own terms, which was really important.

"So that was one big way in which DairyNZ has enabled us to farm more successfully – that workshop taught us to work ON our business, not just IN our business.

"It's essential that we have DairyNZ behind us. If we were out there by ourselves without DairyNZ, I'd hate to think what dairy farming would be like, to be honest."

# Carlos and Bernice Delos Santos

## 50:50 sharemilkers in Rerewhakaaitu, Rotorua



*New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards executive Carlos and his wife Bernice, with children Carl, Cara and Claire (and a fourth child due in July).*

"I hadn't seen a farm or cows until 2001, when I came to New Zealand to join my mother and stepfather who were living in Mangakino," says Carlos. "The only job I could get was in dairying, so that's what I did to earn my first \$500.

"For many years I've been using DairyNZ's website and printed materials to get information about various aspects of farming, like feed budgeting. We also use DairyBase to benchmark our business.

"We've been using DairyNZ's annual cash budget template for a long time. We like it so much because it's farmer-friendly and easy to use. We've made good use of it, from doing monthly cashflow budgets to sending proposals to the bank and farm owners. It's made monitoring our financial position a lot easier.

"Something I've found particularly useful is the DairyNZ Body Condition Score (BCS) Tracker app. In the beginning we used

the BCS booklet, and doing everything manually took time. With the app you can walk through the herd or look at them in the yard, enter the score and within a few minutes you've got a BCS average, so it makes the job much easier. If you're doing it manually, you can get lazy about it.

"If we stopped paying the levy, there'd be no apps, no research and no discussion groups. If I'm stuck on-farm thinking I'm the worst farmer around, it's good to get another perspective. At discussion groups you see what other farmers are doing and it's helpful to get advice from older, more experienced farmers.

"And while I concentrate on running the farm, those brainy DairyNZ scientists are working on their research. All I have to do is get the information from them and apply it to my farm practices."



**"If we stopped paying the levy, there'd be no apps, no research and no discussion groups."**







*As well as running a 58ha dairy farm with wife Bev, Noldy Rust is chairman of SMASH (Smaller Milk and Supply Herds) and a local real estate agent.*

## Noldy and Bev Rust

### Farm owners in Te Pahu, Waikato

"In the early '80s when I left school, I worked in dairying while I decided what to do with my life," says Noldy. "I'm still deciding. I've seen some changes in those 40 years but of course life changed dramatically for everyone in March.

"For me, one of the best things about the levy is the discussion groups facilitated by DairyNZ. They bring farmers together and we learn from each other as well as the experts.

"Then there's DairyBase and all the resources on the website. They're gold and they're paid for by the levy whether we use them or not, so why wouldn't you use something you've paid for? It makes so much sense.

"If anyone's thinking of not voting, I would suggest they should find out just how much expertise is available and utilise it. Then there's the advocacy work that goes on in the background. For example, regional council plan changes, the work around greenhouse gases and Essential Freshwater. In many respects, the DairyNZ team are the unsung heroes.

"Without the levy, we'd be stuffed. Personally, Bev and I would have been unable to make informed decisions without the information we've received from DairyNZ. The more you get involved the more you get out of it."

**"Without the levy,  
we'd be stuffed."**

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# DAIRY'S RISE FROM GOOD TO GREAT

Wondering where DairyNZ and your levy came from, and how we invest your money? Here's a quick journey through our sector's evolution.

## PRE-2001

Industry-good activities – those that benefit the whole sector and that wouldn't otherwise be provided – have a long history in New Zealand. In early days, research and development was carried out on behalf of dairy farmers by the New Zealand Dairy Board (formed in 1923), the statutory board in control of exporting all New Zealand dairy products.



## 2001



The Dairy Board was merged with the two largest New Zealand dairy cooperatives to form Fonterra, and the Dairy Board's activities were disestablished. It was agreed that these industry activities should continue for all dairy farmers, resulting in the creation of two independent organisations, Dairy InSight and Dexcel. These acted as funder and provider of industry-good activities. Since 2001, the dairy sector has continued to grow, with new export dairy companies being formed.

## 2003

The milksolids levy was introduced in June 2003, following a dairy farmer vote in May 2002. Since then, the levy has been collected under the terms of the Commodity Levies Act 1990. Through this levy, farmers invest in much of the work carried out through DairyNZ.



## 2007

DairyNZ was formed through the merger of Dairy InSight and Dexcel.

## 2008 AND 2014

The DairyNZ milksolids levy vote was strongly supported by dairy farmers. The levy rate was set at 3.6c/kgMS in 2008, which hasn't changed.

## 2020

Dairy farmers again have the opportunity to have their say during April and May.

LEVY VOTE YEAR	MILKSOLIDS		NUMBER	
	Yes vote (milksolids weighted)	Overall voter turnout (milksolids weighted)	Yes vote (by number of eligible voters)	Overall voter turnout (by number of eligible voters)
2002	67%	62%	63%	59%
2008	75%	61%	69%	52%
2014	82%	68%	78%	60%





## DAIRYNZ'S INVESTMENT HISTORY

DairyNZ and its predecessors Dairy InSight and Dexcel have a strong history of serving dairy farmers. Since 2003, when the milksolids levy was introduced, DairyNZ's investment has grown into new areas and a few key highlights have emerged (shown below).

### GROWTH IN INVESTMENT

Total investment by DairyNZ through the first 10 years (2007 to 2017) almost doubled, peaking at \$80m in the 2016/17 fiscal year. This increase is in part due to increased non-levy funding secured through government and research and development contracts. Total investment in 2018/19 was around \$68m.

### SOME THINGS REMAIN THE SAME ...

DairyNZ has a number of ongoing, long-term investments, including:

- research and development
- funding the control and eradication of bovine tuberculosis (TB)
- our consulting officer (CO) service to farmers
- helping to grow the dairy sector's pool of talent
- advocating on behalf of dairy farmers (e.g. on the Essential Freshwater package).

### ...AND OTHERS CHANGE...

DairyNZ has shifted investment into new areas – our scope has grown far beyond just 'cows and grass'.

Our business reflects the same changes farmers face, encompassing:

- environment, including farming within nutrient limits
- economic analysis, interpretation and commentary
- supporting farmer-led initiatives such as Dairy Women's Network
- representing farmers' interests at a national and regional government level.

These are just a few examples. For a timeline of DairyNZ's work over the last 10 years, visit [dairynz.co.nz/timeline](https://dairynz.co.nz/timeline)



✓  
**YOUR LEVY  
VOTE**

YOUR LEVY. YOUR FUTURE

# Fresh eyes on farming support

Two dairy farmers – one from Ireland and farming here for two decades; and a sheep and beef farmer new to dairying – explain how they're getting their money's worth from DairyNZ's levy.

## Enda and Sarah Hawe

### "DairyNZ is my 'phone a friend'!"

That's how Irish-born New Zealander and Mid-Canterbury dairy farmer Enda Hawe describes DairyNZ and its support for farmers.

"The levy's value kicked in right from the start," says Enda. "When I came here to live nearly 20 years ago, I had an Irish agricultural degree majoring in dairying, but I had to learn a lot about the New Zealand system. I became a very frequent user of the DairyNZ website – Sarah and I still are, daily. It's the encyclopedia of dairy for us.

"It's good too to see that 'TEAGASC' – the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority – is catching up now to what DairyNZ's been offering New Zealand dairy farmers over many years."

Enda's been involved in the NZ Dairy Awards (NZDIA) for over 10 years and in March this year he was a Canterbury/North Otago regional judge for the Share Farmer of the Year category. Enda also mentors other farmers through Dairy Connect, he was a member of the organising committee of SIDE (South Island Dairy Event) from 2015 to 2018, and he's involved in DairyNZ's Selwyn and Hinds project. He and Sarah have also hosted events on their farm, including discussion groups, an annual field day and a recent Milksmart workshop.

### FARM FACTS

**FARM OWNERS:** Enda and Sarah Hawe (equity partnership)

**LOCATION:** Rakaia, Mid-Canterbury

**FARM SIZE:** 186ha (effective): total 202ha

**HERD SIZE:** 700 Kiwi-Cross

**SYSTEM:** 4

**PRODUCTION:** 340,000kg MS/year

He says DairyNZ resources and tools help the couple keep on track environmentally as well.

"We have DairyNZ's Farm Environment Plan (FEP) poster checklist on our dairy shed wall and by using their riparian planting guide, we've carried out double what's needed for riparian planting on-farm. We build on that every year.

"As for DairyNZ's brochures and booklets, we love them – our dairy shed is our library. It was very heartening to see so many farms had DairyNZ booklets and resources on hand when I was judging for the NZDIA recently. We use them as a training resource for ourselves and our staff too.

"DairyNZ has also had some outstanding consulting officers over the years. They've greatly enhanced our business and we're very grateful for that.


"We'd be lost without DairyNZ. Think about Zero Carbon, *Mycoplasma bovis* and the Essential Freshwater package – Tim Mackle (DairyNZ CEO) and DairyNZ went in and batted for us on all of those.

"If people ask me about the levy, I'd say to other farmers, 'you need to get amongst it, or you'll fall behind'. Farming can be a difficult challenge – but the support from DairyNZ is always there."



*Originally from Ireland, Enda believes New Zealand's dairy sector approach contributes significantly to its farmers' successes.*





**“We’ve thoroughly enjoyed learning a new way of farming.”**

*Hannah and Richard have their hands full raising three children (Rosa, Patch and Eva – with a fourth on the way) and running both a dairy farm and sheep and beef farm.*

## Richard and Hannah Coop

Dairying ‘newbies’ Richard and Hannah Coop bought their dairy farm at Kotemāori in June 2019. Ten months later, the couple say they have no regrets.

“We’ve thoroughly enjoyed learning a new way of farming,” says Hannah. “It’s certainly been made a lot easier given the vast resources and support available through DairyNZ.”

Life is busy, balancing two farms and family life with kids Eva (4), Patch (2) and Rosa (1). The Coops also have a sheep and beef farm, Okepuha Station on the Mahia Peninsula, run with the help of a good team.

“We were well aware of DairyNZ,” says Richard, “as Hannah

had worked for them as a consulting officer in the past. However, it’s always a different story when you’re trying to actually run a dairy farm for the first time!”

The couple has a strong focus on environmental management – Okepuha was an overall regional finalist in the East Coast Ballance Farm Environment Awards in 2018, after winning livestock, agri-science and future farming categories at the event. Richard says they’ll continue that approach on their dairy farm too. “We’ll be using DairyNZ’s Envirowalk app to help with that.”

Since taking over Kotemāori, Richard and Hannah have also relied heavily on DairyNZ’s website for information, tools and resources while finding their feet. Like Enda and Sarah Hawe, the Coops say they use it daily.

“We’re consistently impressed by the website’s depth and level of detail on such a wide range of topics – all readily accessible online in one place,” says Hannah. “To a certain degree, we’re running our dairy farm based on these DairyNZ resources.

“We use a range of DairyNZ’s other resources. At our team meetings, we try and watch videos related to what is happening on-farm at the time, such as the heat detection video over mating. The other week we condition-scored our whole herd, so we had a good look at the online resources related to that. We’re keen to try their training and courses too, once we’re more settled into the farm.

“I’m possibly a bit biased, being new to dairy,” says Richard, “but we’ve certainly had our money’s worth from the DairyNZ levy. I have no issues about paying it – and I’d recommend it to new farmers coming in, it’s really a credit to DairyNZ.”

## FARM FACTS

**FARM OWNERS:** Richard and Hannah Coop (along with equity partners)

**LOCATION:** Kotemāori, near Wairoa, Hawke’s Bay

**FARM SIZE:** 500ha (180ha effective)

**HERD SIZE:** 500 Kiwi-Cross

**SYSTEM:** 1-2

**PRODUCTION:** 150,000kg MS/year (first year with new cows)

# Levy 2020 questions answered



## Why doesn't DairyNZ defer this vote, given Covid-19?

We are unable to postpone the vote because it is required by Government legislation and is collected under terms set out in the Commodity Levies Act 1990. Our current levy order expires in November 2020 and we need to make an application to the Ministry for Primary Industries in the next few months, which would need to include a clear indication of farmer support. While we understand this isn't at the top of farmers' minds right now, we've been working hard to ensure you have all the information needed to make an informed decision.

## As a sharemilker, do I get to vote?

Yes, all dairy farmers who produce milk from cows and supplied a dairy processor in the 2019/20 season are eligible to vote. This includes sharemilkers and dairy farm leaseholders.

## What would happen if I ticked 'no'?







Ticking 'no' in the levy vote is effectively voting for an end to DairyNZ. That means you'll lose your independent and transparent sector body that:

- brings together funding from all farmers (no matter what company they supply) to provide a united voice
- collects the money needed to fund sector-wide initiatives and leverage further Government funding to support these activities.

## What guides DairyNZ's investment?

DairyNZ's investment of your levy is guided by Dairy Tomorrow, our sector's strategy and roadmap to the future. This was developed by partners representing the dairy sector: DairyNZ, Dairy Women's Network, Federated Farmers and Dairy Companies Association of New Zealand (DCANZ).

## ► Dairy Tomorrow Partnership

Commitment	Lead	Supporting partners
 <b>Protect and nurture the environment</b>	<b>DairyNZ</b>	Dairy companies
 <b>Build competitive and resilient farm businesses</b>	<b>DairyNZ</b>	Federated Farmers, Dairy Women's Network
 <b>Produce the highest quality and most valued dairy nutrition</b>	<b>DCANZ</b>	
 <b>Be world leading in on-farm animal care</b>	<b>DairyNZ</b>	Dairy companies, Federated Farmers and Dairy Women's Network
 <b>Build great workplaces for New Zealand's most talented workforce</b>	<b>DairyNZ</b>	Dairy Women's Network, Federated Farmers and New Zealand Young Farmers
 <b>Grow vibrant and prosperous communities</b>	<b>Federated Farmers</b>	Dairy Women's Network, dairy companies, DairyNZ (external engagement)



For more information, visit [dairynz.co.nz/vote](https://dairynz.co.nz/vote)



# Taking a stake in the future

DairyNZ's levy vote is open to sharemilkers, and among those having their say this month are Taranaki couple Matt Thomas and Sophie Parker.

Matt and Sophie are at the end of their third season 50:50 sharemilking on Matt's grandparents' farm at Oakura, south-west of New Plymouth. The couple, Matt a former large animal vet and Sophie a former dairy consulting officer, have been farming for just five years.

In 2019, as first-time entrants, they were runners up in the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards' (NZDIA) Taranaki Share Farmer of the Year category.

Matt says they probably had a romantic notion as to what farming life was like but thought doing their own thing would be fun and a bit of an adventure. Entering the NZDIA was a way to analyse their business and take stock.

"When you're a vet or a consulting officer, you're often giving advice to people on your area of expertise, and this is just one area of their business. Sometimes it's implemented and sometimes it's not. Once we started farming, we realised how complex and time-constrained farming is and how challenging it is to get all areas of your farming business firing on all cylinders.

**"We also find the encyclopaedia that is the DairyNZ website invaluable."**

"Sophie and I had this passion for farming and we wanted to put everything we knew into practice. We've enjoyed the challenge of bringing all parts of a farming operation together to achieve a good result and see our animals healthy and performing well."

While Matt and Sophie regularly tapped into DairyNZ resources in their former careers, they rely on them even more so now.

They've done a Biz Grow course, which helped them to hone their financial management skills. They are both InCalf-trained, belong to the Dairy Environment Leaders network and are regulars at local DairyNZ discussion groups.

The couple recently employed farm assistant Logan Stevenson, and Sophie says the DairyNZ Human Resources (HR) toolkit was invaluable in helping them with their decision-making process.

"We went to the DairyNZ website to find out where to start. The HR information covers everything from your legal responsibilities and the questions to ask applicants, to how to



check references, employment protocols and the orientation process. We found it really useful.

"We've also referred Logan to resources like the *Facts & Figures* booklet and body condition score information, which have been helpful for him too," says Sophie.

She says farmers often utilise local discussion groups, but some don't realise that DairyNZ's breadth of work extends far greater than these groups.

"When you dig a bit deeper, there are many resources, courses and events that cater for areas of your business where you need more information, but also the areas of your business that you're most interested in. We also find the encyclopaedia that is the DairyNZ website invaluable."



# Good bosses ease the pressure

Good bosses are always important, but especially so in times like these, writes DairyNZ's people team leader Jane Muir.



In the face of Covid-19, we're fortunate that farming communities have largely been able to carry on with the essential job of feeding our country (and the economy), with only a few changes in how we operate.

But while we're all acutely aware of hygiene and distancing protocols on-farm, we must have the same awareness for our team members' wellbeing – even when Covid-19 alert levels drop back.

## What makes a good boss?

This year, DairyNZ (working with Federated Farmers, Dairy Women's Network and NZ Young Farmers) has asked people in our dairy farming communities what makes a good boss on-farm. Overwhelmingly, you've told us that good bosses are good communicators who listen to their team members and provide feedback. They take notice of their staff, and are mindful and accommodating of personal circumstances.

These traits of a good boss have possibly never been so important on-farm.

## People under pressure

While the cows are still being fed and milked, our team members have faced and/or are facing change and uncertainty personally. For some, it's uncertainty around immigration, financial impact or having family at home during the day. For others, forced isolation from their families, or anxiety about their own and their family's health, is extremely hard.

## Looking after our teams

So, what can you do, as a good boss, to ensure you and your team are looking out for one another?

- **Ask your team how they're coping – and really ask**  
How's their family doing? Has anything changed? Are they

worried about any friends or family, here or overseas? Is there anything they need? You may need to provide more flexible working arrangements for them.

- **Help out migrant workers**

Temporary work visas that expire before July 9, 2020, will be automatically extended until September 25, 2020. If you have a temporary worker whose visa expired before April 1, they should have applied online by now. Find out more at [immigration.govt.nz/covid-19](https://immigration.govt.nz/covid-19)

- **Maintain contact**

Catching up face-to-face may be more challenging, so you may want to phone or video-call your team several times daily. We all need human interaction, especially right now. Talking is best – a text or WhatsApp message won't cut it!

- **Check internet speed and phone plans**

Ensure your team members have adequate broadband and mobile plans to stay in touch with their friends and family. Good telecommunications is particularly important during this lockdown.

- **Keep morale up**

If alert levels mean we're still practicing physical distancing, then have some fun along the way. Organise virtual beersies/cuppas/quizzes with your mates on Facetime, WhatsApp, Messenger etc.

Get more practical tools and advice for attracting great people to your farm team – and keeping them – at [dairynz.co.nz/goodboss](https://dairynz.co.nz/goodboss)



## Are efficient producers less fertile?

It's a known fact that cows bred for very high milk yields are less fertile – but is this a problem in New Zealand? DairyNZ's Samantha Tennent finds out what you need to know.



The dairy sector can be quick to blame increasing production levels for poor reproductive performance. When talking to farmers, we regularly hear them say that cows are 'milking off their back' and it causes the animals' reproductive performance to suffer. Let's explore how the modern cow performs.

### Measuring production levels

We do know that if cows have been bred for high milk yields – for example, with North American or Dutch genetics – they struggle to get in calf. But in our New Zealand systems, we have different breeding objectives. We want cows that are efficient at converting feed into milk and are sustainable in the herd.

Milksolids production alone doesn't consider how much volume a cow produces, the quality of her milk and what her maintenance requirements are, which all lead to how profitable she is. Therefore, we use production worth (PW) to indicate which are the most efficient, or best producers, in our herds.

PW is calculated from these traits: fat, protein, volume, somatic cell count (SCC), and liveweight. PW is a prediction of a cow's lifetime performance and is comparable across all herds, ages and breeds.

With PW, we can compare how a cow performs with her peers managed under the same conditions and same feeding system, then rank them on their efficiency at converting feed into milk.

When we are measuring production, we also have the lactation worth (LW). It can show us how profitable and efficient a cow will be within the current season.

### Comparing performance

If we break down dairy statistics data into quartiles based on PW (see table below) and compare the reproductive performance, we see no major differences. This indicates that production doesn't impact reproduction.

Usually, our early calvers have the best reproductive performance, as they have the most time to recover before getting back in calf. These cows also commonly have the highest milksolids production, as they have more days in milk. This counters the production argument if measuring on yield, and is shown in the LW (as it is the current season's performance).

A good cow is a good cow across all areas. She can breed profitable youngstock, produce well within the current season and through her lifetime, and get in calf and back in calf reliably – as long as her other management needs are being met.

Quartile	PW		LW	
	6-week in-calf rate	Not-in-calf rate	6-week in-calf rate	Not-in-calf rate
Top	64.9%	17.2%	65.0%	16.0%
Upper middle	65.4%	17.2%	65.5%	16.4%
Lower middle	65.2%	17.7%	64.1%	18.9%
Bottom	64.5%	18.7%	62.5%	21.1%



**Myth** Efficient producing cows are less fertile



**BUSTED**

Reproductive performance is not affected by efficient production



# Winter crop transition puzzle

To successfully transition cows to winter crops, all the jigsaw pieces need to be considered. DairyNZ's Maitland Manning explains.



Farmer experience, backed up by Pastoral 21\* research, shows that efficiently transitioning cows on to crop is critical in achieving profitable winter grazing, strong animal health and a targeted body condition score (BCS).

Cows must be transitioned onto winter crops to allow their gut bacteria to adjust to a new feed source. Transitioning onto brassicas (kale, swedes, turnips and rape) can be completed over a shorter timeframe than fodder beet. However, a poorly managed transition can result in sick or dead cows.

Acidosis, for example, can cause lowered intakes, damage to the rumen and livers, and even death.

When transitioning, consider the following puzzle pieces.

### 1. Have different plans for different crops

Fodder beet has a higher risk of acidosis, so we recommend a transition period of 14 to 21 days. Kale can have increased concentrations of nitrates at the start of winter, so transition over seven to 10 days.

For more information, go to the *Transitioning on to winter crops* fact sheet at [dairynz.co.nz/p21](https://dairynz.co.nz/p21) and/or talk to your seed representative or consultant for advice on managing these risks.

### 2. Use accurate crop yields

Accurately measure and round up crops' dry matter (DM) yield values for the transition area. Even a small miscalculation in allocation can result in acidosis (especially with fodder beet).

### 3. Adjust crop-to-supplement ratios

To allow cows' gut bacteria to adjust gradually, decrease their supplement and pasture intake, and increase their crop allocation over the transition period.

For fodder beet, increase by 0.5kg DM/cow/day. For kale, increase by 1kg DM/cow/day, with the rest being pasture and supplement. Make sure you offer enough crop and supplement and/or pasture to avoid BCS loss and health risks during the transitioning.

### 4. Improve crop utilisation

Reduce fodder beet animal health risks by making sure cows eat the leaf and roots together. Use long and narrow breaks, so all cows can access beet at the same time and dominant cows don't gorge themselves. Also, use back-fencing to stop cows from moving back across the paddock and causing damage.



### 5. Reduce cow stress during transitioning

If possible, dry off cows at least a week before transitioning. On their arrival, allocate pasture and supplement, then transition them to crop the next day.

### 6. Help naive animals

For fodder beet, encourage naive animals by kicking some of the plants out of the ground, then chopping or slicing the beet with a spade.

### 7. Manage the mob

Provide enough crop face so all cows have access, avoiding heifers being bullied off the crop.

### What you'll achieve

With a good transition plan, the majority (86 percent) of cows will either maintain or increase condition over the transition period.

For more information, visit [dairynz.co.nz/p21](https://dairynz.co.nz/p21)

\* a collaborative project managed by AgResearch, and involving DairyNZ, Fonterra, Dairy Companies Association of New Zealand, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, PG&G Wrightson and Blue Pacific Minerals.



## Drop in Biosecurity Response Levy

The Biosecurity Response Levy (*Mycoplasma bovis*) rate for the 2020/2021 season has been set at 2.4 cents per kilogram of milksolids, a reduction from the current 2.9 cents.

This levy, which is separate from the DairyNZ milksolids levy, came into effect in September 2019 to fund the *Mycoplasma bovis* Programme. DairyNZ collects it via the dairy companies, but we pass it directly to the Ministry for Primary Industries.

DairyNZ managing the Biosecurity Response Levy gives dairy farmers a voice, and DairyNZ a seat, at the decision-making table for biosecurity responses.

Learn more at [dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity-response-levy](https://dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity-response-levy)

**PROTECT  
OUR FUTURE.**

## Learning kits straight to the door

To help families continue learning about dairy farming during the Covid-19 lockdown, a boxed copy of DairyNZ's 'Farming Kit' resource has been sent directly to 3000 Decile 1 school students.

With the lockdown creating extra demand for learning material, the Ministry of Education has purchased the extra copies from SchoolKit, which develops DairyNZ's education resources.

"This is a fantastic move from the Ministry in what is a challenging time for everyone. Our education resources usually go to schools, so we're thrilled to see these kits being posted directly to students in lockdown," says Karen Sandoy, DairyNZ's education and community engagement manager.



The Farming Kit introduces primary students to the animals, ideas and language of the New Zealand dairy farm, using bright imagery, stories and interactive activities. Check out the kit at [dairynzschoools.co.nz](https://dairynzschoools.co.nz)

## He Waka Eke Noa progresses

A steering group established to lead the work under He Waka Eke Noa met in full for the first time (online) in April. This partnership between the Government and primary sector organisations, including DairyNZ, will build an enduring farm-level emission reduction framework.

Visit [dairynz.co.nz](https://dairynz.co.nz) to learn more.

## DairyNZ consulting officers

**Upper North Island – Head: Sharon Morrell 027 492 2907**

### Northland

Regional Leader	Tareen Ellis	027 499 9021
Far North	Amy Weston	027 807 9686
Lower Northland	Hamish Matthews	021 242 5719
Whangarei West	Ryan Baxter	021 809 569

### Waikato

Regional Leader	Wilma Foster	021 246 2147
South Auckland	Mike Bramley	027 486 4344
Hauraki Plains/Coromandel	Jaimee Morgan	021 245 8055
Te Aroha/Waihi	Euan Lock	027 293 4401
Cambridge	Lizzy Moore	021 242 2127
Hamilton	Ashley Smith	027 364 9296
Huntly/Tatuanui	Brigitte Ravera	027 288 1244
Matamata/Kereone	Frank Portegys	027 807 9685
Pirongia	Steve Canton	027 475 0918
Otorohanga/King Country	Denise Knop	027 513 7201
Arapuni	Kirsty Dickens	027 483 2205

### Bay of Plenty

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Central Plateau	Colin Grainger-Allen	021 225 8345
South Waikato/Rotorua South	Angela Clarke	027 276 2675
Eastern Bay of Plenty	Andrew Reid	027 292 3682
Central Bay of Plenty	Kevin McKinley	027 288 8238

**Lower North Island – Head: Rob Brazendale 021 683 139**

### Taranaki

Regional Leader	Mark Laurence	027 704 5562
South Taranaki	Nathan Clough	021 246 5663
Central Taranaki	Emma Hawley	021 276 5832
Coastal Taranaki	Caroline Benson	027 210 2137
North Taranaki	Ian Burmeister	027 593 4122

### Lower North Island

Horowhenua/Coastal and Southern Manawatu	Kate Stewart	027 702 3760
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Eketahuna	Andrew Hull	027 298 7260
Hawke's Bay	Gray Beagley	021 286 4346
Northern Manawatu/Wanganui/Woodville	Rob Brazendale	021 683 139
Central Manawatu/Rangitikei	Charlotte Grayling	027 355 3764

**South Island – Head: Tony Finch 027 706 6183**

### Top of South Island/West Coast

Nelson/Marlborough	Mark Shadwick	021 287 7057
West Coast	Angela Leslie	021 277 2894

### Canterbury/North Otago

Regional Leader	Ross Bishop	027 563 1785
North Canterbury	Amy Chamberlain	027 243 0943
Central Canterbury	Alice Reilly	027 3798 069
Mid Canterbury	Stuart Moorhouse	027 513 7200
South Canterbury	Heather Donaldson	027 593 4124
North Otago	Alana Hall	027 290 5988

### Southland/South Otago

Regional Leader	Ollie Knowles	027 226 4420
West Otago/Gore	Keely Sullivan	027 229 0246
South Otago	Guy Michaels	021 302 034
Central/Northern Southland	Nicole E Hammond	021 240 8529
Eastern Southland	Nathan Nelson	021 225 6931
Western/Central Southland	Leo Pekar	027 211 1389

## DairyNZ directors

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Tracy Brown	027 291 1716

# VOTE FOR YOUR FUTURE

All dairy farmers, including sharemilkers and dairy farm leaseholders, are urged to have their say in the milksolids levy vote now underway.

## DAIRYNZ: DELIVERING A BETTER FUTURE

1. DEVELOPING BETTER SOLUTIONS THROUGH SCIENCE
2. SHAPING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THE SECTOR
3. SUPPORTING BETTER FARMING LOCALLY



YOUR LEVY  
VOTE

YOUR LEVY, YOUR FUTURE



VOTE ONLINE OR BY  
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This is an important vote –  
and every vote counts



Keep an eye out  
for your voting  
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New Zealand  
Permit No. 174646

Permit

Sender: DairyNZ, Private Bag 3221, Hamilton 3240, NZ

For more information on where your levy goes, visit [dairynz.co.nz/vote](https://dairynz.co.nz/vote)

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