

# Inside Dairy

March 2018

Your levy in action



## COMPETITIVENESS, RESILIENCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

What do our dairy  
customers value?

NZ/overseas consumer trends

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Protecting your farm  
from *Mycoplasma bovis*  
Tips, checklist and resources

DairyNZ 



## over the fence...

This issue of *Inside Dairy* focuses on the heart of the matter for many farmers – how to be resilient, both financially, competitively and sustainably, in a volatile climate.

And this doesn't only refer to how we manage changing weather patterns, like the drought and flood of the last few months. It also refers to public/consumer support for the way we farm, disease incursion, increasing regulation and the important focus on environment and animal welfare.

I've been immersed during the last few months in our *Dairy Tomorrow* strategy, working with many different people and organisations on what the future of the sector might look like.

And it comes down to how we farm. More specifically, how we choose to farm in the future. This is where the outlook really does appear positive. We have big challenges, but we also have great opportunities.

You'll read more about those opportunities in this edition, where we hear from Mark Townshend and how he and his team have built their New Zealand farming business over the years into a multinational operation. Although his operations are on a big scale, his great advice on focusing on net outputs, benchmarking, getting fresh ideas and keeping environmental sustainability as a priority is relevant to every farm business owner, never mind the size.

We also hear from the Ervins about their award-winning farm and how they adapt when the weather doesn't play ball. Something many of you have dealt with over the last 12 months!

Lastly, see our reminder on page 9 to register to vote in the upcoming Beef + Lamb election. Dairy farmers contribute between \$4-5m annually – you should have a say.

Thanks for taking the time to read this edition.

**Tim Mackle**  
Chief executive  
DairyNZ



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On the cover: Hauraki farmer Mark Townshend talks about how he ensures continuous improvement is a key focus for his family's farms here and overseas.

# TAKE 5... TIPS FOR FARMERS

## 1. New InCalf Book

Order your new edition of our InCalf Book for New Zealand dairy farmers. It sets out the steps for making herd reproductive management decisions. Download a free online copy at [dairynz.co.nz/incalf](http://dairynz.co.nz/incalf) or order a printed copy at [dairynz.co.nz/publication-order](http://dairynz.co.nz/publication-order)

## 2. Shade trees for the future



Some of you have been asking for advice on planting trees for shade. While this is very top-of-mind right now, it's also something to be considered as part of your long-term planning on-farm. See our tree planting guides online at [dairynz.co.nz/trees](http://dairynz.co.nz/trees)

## 3. More farmers weighing their heifers

The number of heifers weighed by farmers each year has increased 25 percent over the last five years, according to data from the Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC). Achieving heifer liveweight targets has been shown to improve milk production and increase lifetime productivity. For more information about weighing heifers visit [dairynz.co.nz/heifers](http://dairynz.co.nz/heifers)

## 4. Looking to renovate?

The updated Forage Value Index (FVI) lists for perennial, 12 month and winter feed ryegrass cultivars uses the latest results from the National Forage Variety Trial. Renovating your pasture? The FVI shows how cultivars of ryegrass have performed in your region. See [dairynz.co.nz/fvi](http://dairynz.co.nz/fvi)



## 5. More than 8000 kids visit a dairy farm

As part of DairyNZ's education programme, 8176 children (plus parents and teachers) visited farms in 2017, thanks to our volunteer host farmers! If you would like to become a host farmer, register at [dairynz.co.nz/find-a-farmer](http://dairynz.co.nz/find-a-farmer)

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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](http://dairynz.co.nz).

# COMPETITIVENESS, RESILIENCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



*Mark Townshend says NZ's most efficient farmers are not satisfied with just doing well: they still seek continuous improvement on top of their successes.*

## Hauraki farmer Mark Townshend reckons long-term planning is the key to the ongoing success of New Zealand's dairy sector. He talks about some other important factors he sees as driving our competitive edge, including DairyNZ's role in assisting farmers to shine on the world stage.



The Townshend family has been farming on the Hauraki Plains since 1924. Mark's father Gray started with 20 hectares (ha) and 45 cows in 1952 and now Mark and his wife Diane have multi-farm business operations. The Townshends have learned what it takes to be competitive in the global dairy sector. At age four, Mark Townshend knew the name of every cow in his parent's small herd. With over 40 years' experience, he's also had plenty of involvement during that time with dairy sector governance (NZ Dairy Group, the NZ Dairy Board and he was a founding director of Fonterra). In 1997, he and Diane won the inaugural A.C. Cameron National Award for Excellence in Farming in New Zealand.

From 2005 onwards, the Townshends joined forces with like-minded people and began acquiring farms in Southern Chile, and Missouri, USA, and for a brief period, a cropping farm in Eastern Russia. Today Mark's farm life rotates around Hauraki, Canterbury, Southland, Chile and Missouri. Some of their farming businesses are owned by family, some are owned by family and friends and some are equity partnerships between themselves and close friends, old footy mates or ex-employees. Other operations are larger scale corporate farming entities – Manuka in Chile and Canterbury Grasslands (Canterbury, Southland and Missouri USA).

Mark and his wife Diane acknowledge their parents' and grandparents' emphasis on the importance of growing their original farm and their additional farming businesses as a key influence on their getting to where they are today. It's why they are so focused on continuous improvement, growing their competitiveness globally and ensuring their operations and their people have the resilience to keep up with local and international change.

"It wasn't about being given money, it was about being given a vision for the future. We are indebted to our families for this," says Mark. "We thought this was normal for all young farmers. As time went on, we realised that many young farmers had their ambition unintentionally killed off by parents who said, 'our



*Mark Townshend with his dad Gray: Mark and Diane credit their parents for giving them a vision for the future.*

**"DOING BETTER ENVIRONMENTALLY IS ANOTHER ASPECT THAT CAN'T BE IGNORED. ANY GROWTH NEEDS TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE."**

farm is big enough' or 'you don't want to take on any more bank debt'. They didn't see that in the 1930s a 20-cow farm was an economic unit; by the 1950s a 50-cow herd was economic; and by 1980 a herd of at least 100 cows was needed to still be fully viable." He's also very aware that any growth needs to be



*Jersey cows on the Townshend's home farm at Ngatea.*

environmentally sustainable.

Overnight success in farming takes about 15 years, says Mark. His farming life has had four distinctive phases and because these have been wrapped up in one career, at 62 he's still extremely happy to go to work each day.

### **Gaining the edge**

Two approaches by the Townshends help them keep their businesses competitive locally and globally. First, they concentrate on net outputs, not gross outputs. For example, they believe that farmers should aim to achieve a profitable farm operation at a \$5 milk price while keeping their focus on investing and growing their farm business based on a long-term \$6.25 milk price. "This ensures survivability, but captures both growth and profits," says Mark.

Benchmarking is another useful tool. "Multi-farm operations have the downside of diluting the time of key personnel,

but they provide the ability to benchmark – it's what I call a 'nowhere to hide' tool." Mark says doing better environmentally is another aspect that can't be ignored. "Today I believe most farmers are doing much better than their city counterparts with urban sewerage, chemicals and road runoff," he says.

However, he emphasises that farmers' improved environmental efforts so far are "absolutely no reason for farmers not to try and do better". He's adamant that continuous improvement in this area and across many other factors contributing to global competitiveness and resilience should remain at the front and centre of dairy farmers' long-term planning.

Mark has several views on what's contributing to New Zealand's competitive edge on the global dairy stage – and how we can improve on that. It's tempting to focus first on the impact of New Zealand's temperate climate, but while this is very important, Mark says there are other more significant factors. "New Zealand farmers freely share information; few other New



Mark Townshend: making a 'reel' difference while remaining competitive.

**“NEW ZEALAND FARMERS FREELY SHARE INFORMATION; FEW OTHER NEW ZEALAND OR GLOBAL INDUSTRIES SHARE BETTER AND MORE SUCCESSFUL TECHNIQUES WITH THEIR COMPETITORS.”**

### Focusing on what's important

Mark says DairyNZ's focus on the 'license to operate' space is very important. "Without it, the New Zealand public will be further influenced by those who don't appreciate the positive impacts of dairy on the New Zealand economy and to society in general." He agrees that that focus sits alongside DairyNZ's other core priorities on research and improving farm profitability. However, he notes that while his own approach of focusing on net output rather than gross output helps to create a more sustainable sector, it also delivers less levy income for DairyNZ to work with. According to Mark, this dilemma is further complicated, because "they also need to keep the dairy populous happy to ensure levy approval every six years".

He's also keen to see a wider range of people getting into dairy sector governance, including at DairyNZ. "Through the ballot box, there's a danger of electing only nice and compliant people. At management level, DairyNZ has many good people, but to be really effective and to complement the good compliant people, DairyNZ needs its share of visionaries who vigorously and relentlessly push boundaries."

Mark recognises that DairyNZ has another challenge: having

Zealand or global industries share better and more successful techniques with their competitors." He believes this means that very few farmers need to invent anything, because "the most we do is take other farmers' good ideas and improve them a little".

He also thinks that because dairying has an important place in New Zealand's economy, the sector's and its farmers can attract attention at the top levels of government and with important stakeholders. "This has opened many doors for dairying. However, some of this influence is now at risk from anti-dairy campaigns. Some of the criticism is fair, but in my view, most is selective and unbalanced."

The New Zealand Dairy Board and Fonterra have also played a part in driving the sector's competitiveness and resilience, says Mark. "There has always been an open door for new entrants to enter the sector. This is a vital ingredient to introduce new blood, energy and ideas. The sector has always benefited from keen and hungry new entrants with no pre-conceived ideas. We see very successful closed co-ops like Tatua or NZ Dairy Goat Co-op that serve their shareholders well. But I believe that New Zealand dairy would never have created the scale, momentum and productive innovation without an open entry and exit policy."

Mark and Diane's efforts in this area include two other companies which they've set up in recent years, each with half a dozen young people. He says the companies' model is about opening the door to young people to invest in farms. "It gives them access to competitive banking packages, exposes them to good farming governance practices and provides good equity growth options. In some ways, this is the most satisfying model we have."

## FARM FACTS

### MARK AND DIANE TOWNSHEND

**LOCATION:**

Multi-farms (NZ) – Hauraki, Canterbury, Southland  
Overseas corporations – North and South America

**HERD NUMBERS:**

NZ Hauraki 5500 – Canterbury 8500 – Southland 8800  
Overseas North America 9000 – South America 35,000

to cater for all sections of the farming community. "If we break the farming community into areas of profitability and efficiency, DairyNZ has to cater for them all. The reality is that most concentration should go into the top performing areas. Looking through the telescope 10 years out, those at the bottom will be gone (this has happened for the past 100 years) and yesterday's top performers will have dropped to second place as new higher achievers come through."

### Maintaining the edge

Overall, Mark believes that what's been happening at every level in the sector – from on-farm to national and global developments – means that New Zealand dairy's competitiveness has lost some edge. "New Zealand is still a very good place to dairy farm though," says Mark, "although I think that the majority of kiwi farmers have become more interested in gross outputs rather than net outputs – and that worries me. I believe that being a

system one or two farmer with reasonable outputs, but very good net returns, has become unfashionable." He also says that that ignoring new technologies while other countries take them up will make us less competitive. "For example, I think that there will be some genetic modification (GM) techniques that are logical and safe that will also keep the price of food at a reasonable level."

**"THIS COUNTRY OF FIVE MILLION PRODUCES FOOD FOR 50 MILLION."**

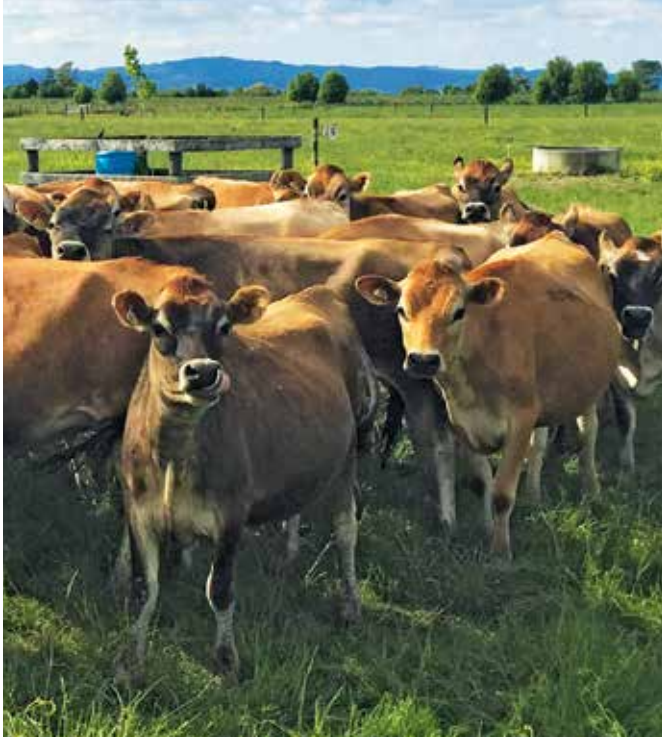
Mark is keen to see the dairy sector continue to try to take New Zealanders along with them and connect with the public in ways that make sense and are meaningful to them. "Today the tide is still going out for the dairy sector. Over centuries, populations connected with food producers through wars, climatic extremes and famines. Joe

Citizen now takes food for granted and doesn't make the link to how it's produced. Yes, producing food has some consequences, but a shortage of food or expensive food has much greater



*Diane and Mark enjoy a night out.*





The Townshends now own/operate multiple farms in NZ and overseas. Here's what they've learned about competitiveness and resilience along the way:



1. Focus on net outputs, not gross outputs.
2. Use benchmarking to stay on track.
3. Encourage young people and fresh ideas.
4. Good environmental sustainability can always get better.
5. Continuous improvement across all factors is the key.

consequences. It's worth remembering that New Zealand has high carbon emissions per capita, but low carbon emissions per unit of food produced. This country of five million produces food for 50 million. If NZ cuts back on dairy production, either people in the world will go hungry, or others in the world with less focus on environmental issues will replace what we were producing while creating a bigger global footprint."

### Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement is vital if New Zealand's dairy sector is to keep and increase its competitive edge and resilience locally and globally, says Mark. "New Zealand's 12,000 dairy farmers alone produce the annual calorie intake for 20 million global citizens. This means that a Joe-average 320-cow New Zealand farm feeds 2000 people each and every year on this planet. That is an amazing statistic and one that every New Zealand dairy farmer should be proud of. But is that enough? Could that average 320-cow New Zealand farm feed 2500 people with the same land and global footprint?"

"That is what our most efficient farmers do. And they are not satisfied with that – they are still seeking continuous improvement. What is good and competitive today will be less competitive in five years and uncompetitive in 10. The best form of resilience will be associating with the most successful farmers. They won't be a constant group. Keep looking for the next group of movers and shakers."





# Protecting your farm from *Mycoplasma bovis*

Last July, *Mycoplasma bovis* was discovered in a South Island herd. Since then 24 more positive\* results have been found.

Along with ongoing investigations, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the milk companies have begun a process to bulk milk test to discover if *M. bovis* has spread any further.

We've sent a range of useful information to you directly on how to protect your farm, included in your February edition of *Inside Dairy* and you can find more information online. It sounds simple, but basic biosecurity practices can protect your animals from *M. bovis*. The main way the disease spreads is by animal-to-animal contact and that is where we all need to focus our efforts.

Limiting contact between your animals and outside stock, and being careful about stock movements, should be a priority to keep your herd free from the disease.

## Four simple steps

We recommend four simple steps to protect your animals and other farms from *M. bovis*.

1. Check boundary fences are secure, to reduce the risk of stock getting between properties.
2. Put in double fencing at least two metres apart to stop nose-to-nose contact with the neighbour's stock. Permanent is best but, in the short term, put a temporary reel of tape up when stock will be in the paddock adjacent to the neighbour's property.
3. Always complete your NAIT records and make sure all movements in the last month are correctly recorded. Knowing where your cows have been is crucial to understanding and preventing the spread of disease.
4. Get your hands on some information. Visit [dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity](http://dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity) to complete our biosecurity checklist. The



checklist's simple actions will get you a long way towards protecting your farm. A Biosecurity WOF is also available, which DairyNZ developed with farmers and veterinarians.

For the best results, work through it with your veterinarian.

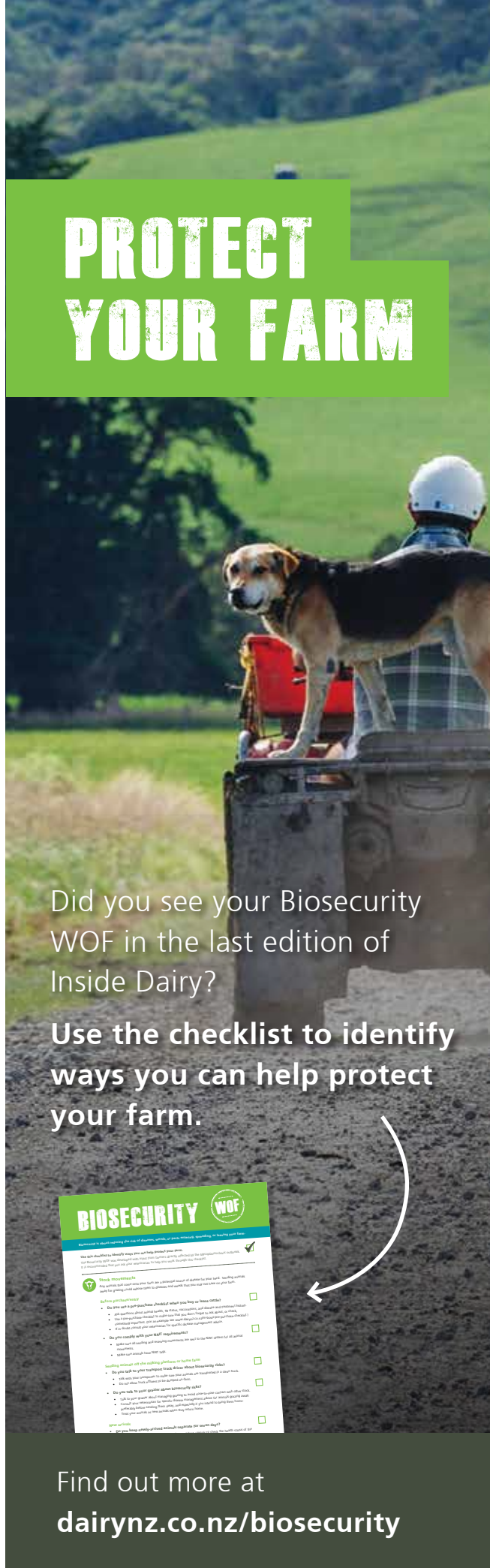
Go online to [dairynz.co.nz/mbovis](http://dairynz.co.nz/mbovis) for more *M. Bovis* and biosecurity resources which we've created which will help us to support you through this.

DairyNZ has teams on the ground, is holding discussion groups and our staff are available to talk to you anytime and, if you're worried, we can put you in touch with the right people to help.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with your local DairyNZ team or call **0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969)** if you need help or support.

\*total reported positive results as at the publication date of this edition of *Inside Dairy*.

# PROTECT YOUR FARM



Did you see your Biosecurity WOF in the last edition of Inside Dairy?

Use the checklist to identify ways you can help protect your farm.



Find out more at [dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity](http://dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity)

## Dairy votes in Beef + Lamb New Zealand's AGM and director election

As many of you will know, the 2018 Beef + Lamb New Zealand annual general meeting is on in Gisborne on Thursday, March 22 and director election voting is now open. Here's what you need to know to make sure you have your say.

Technically every dairy farmer is a member and collectively, dairy contributes around \$4-5 million each year to Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B + L NZ). Needless to say, that makes it important that dairy farmers play an active role in B + L NZ 'S agenda and decision-making.

This is an opportunity for farmers registered in the Northern North Island Electorate to vote for the Northern North Island director on the B + L NZ Board, where two dairy farmers are running for the Board. There are two annual meeting resolutions to vote on as well.

If you're a farmer registered on B + L NZ 'S electoral roll, you should have received your B + L NZ voting pack by now. If you haven't received your pack and want to confirm you're registered, call 0800 233 352 or visit [beeflambnz.com](http://beeflambnz.com). To be eligible to vote, a livestock farmer must have owned at least 250 sheep, or 50 beef cattle, or 100 dairy cattle, on 30 June 2017.

Your voting pack needs to be completed and returned by **2pm, Friday March 16**, and you can pop online to internet vote instead if you wish. Beef + Lamb New Zealand's annual general meeting will be held on Thursday March 22 in Gisborne.



# How New Zealand's dairy sector stays globally competitive

DairyNZ dairy systems specialist Mark Neal outlines what we are doing to ensure we maintain and continually improve the dairy sector's competitiveness in a global market.



Mark says historically New Zealand's production has doubled in the last two decades, while in some other countries, production growth has been slow or even declined (e.g. in Australia and Argentina).

"Production had seen some limited growth in Europe with the lifting of quotas, but some of this production went

straight to an intervention stockpile. While dairy production in the USA has been lifting slowly, many farmers are on tight margins."

**"It's the value chain for the sector which needs to be competitive, so farming and processing both need to be considered."**

"We need to be asking ourselves, is this enough information to conclude that the New Zealand dairy sector has been internationally competitive, and will we continue to be competitive in the future? What does competitiveness mean? How do we measure it? Have we got the right (and robust) data for comparison?"

In an effort to address these questions, Mark says a small team from DairyNZ, with the help of Waikato University, has been examining and reporting on competitiveness to understand how it might be maintained and improved. "In my view, international competitiveness is the ability of the sector to be successful, generating sustainable profits, in the face of competition from other countries. Importantly, it is the value chain for the sector that needs to be competitive, so farming and processing both need to be considered. We should also factor in contributions from the wider New Zealand economy – such as infrastructure, financial markets, government policy, trade rules and innovation. These are enablers for our sector to perform."

Mark says there is not just one single measure of competitiveness and the determinants are often complex and varied. This tends to lead to an index to measure different components of competitiveness, which are then weighted together to form an overall score which can be compared to others. Competitiveness is a medium-/long-term view and it should indicate the strengths and weaknesses of a country or industry.

As far as measurement activities go, Mark says that at a national level, the World Economic Forum annually reports on competitiveness, with New Zealand currently ranked 13th out of the 137 countries measured. "They base the rankings on a range of indicators from government statistics and industry surveys. For the dairy sector, a specific set of indicators needs to be determined, and then collected and analysed for a group of significant dairy export and producing nations."

Mark says that alongside this work, future competitive challenges are also being assessed, for example, dairy alternatives. "When combined, this work will identify opportunities and threats which will be used to help inform good strategic decisions for the dairy sector moving forward."



**THE DAIRY EXPORT CHAIN**

# What do our dairy customers value?

New Zealand dairy companies are constantly looking at what our customers want from New Zealand dairy. They're keeping a close eye on international consumer trends. Consumers consider a wide range of issues – from the price they pay for goods to environmental and animal welfare considerations. Consumers are increasingly aware of how and where their products are sourced, however, food safety and quality remain paramount to all.

Focusing on consumer trends is crucial if our dairy sector is to remain competitive locally and globally. Jo Finer, Fonterra's general manager industry and business affairs for New Zealand, says we need to be aware that international consumer trends are constantly changing consumers in different countries have different priorities.

"International consumers value New Zealand's pasture-fed cows and our high standards of animal welfare. Consumers want to know that the animals that produce their food are well-cared for and this is a great story we have to tell."

New Zealand's reputation is also underpinned by high food safety standards, which are monitored by the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI). MPI plays a key role in meeting customer needs by leading New Zealand's world-class food safety system, which sets and monitors food standards in order to protect our international reputation.

Fonterra monitors consumer behaviour in multiple countries to gain an understanding of their purchasing preferences. In future, innovations in artificial intelligence and big data will be used to monitor consumer purchases so that Fonterra can react to emerging trends more quickly.

In some parts of the world, retailers are already implementing strategies to more effectively monitor consumer trends. Retail innovations like portable eye-tracking glasses and gaze trackers on shelving capture demographic profiles, levels of attention, facial expressions, and how long it takes to make purchasing



*International consumer trends are constantly changing and consumers in different countries have different priorities.*

decisions. This data is the key to unlocking the emotional processes that underpin encounters with a brand – information which is important knowledge for manufacturers and will enable faster responses to new trends.

"Adding value to our dairy products to maximise returns for milk can only be achieved when we can fully understand consumer information. As we learn more about consumer preferences, it will help drive innovation and ensure we deliver value-added products to market," says Jo.



Check out where NZ's dairy exports go worldwide, using DairyNZ's interactive 3D dairy world globe – at [3ddairy.co.nz](http://3ddairy.co.nz)

# Herd resilience: know the score

Ensuring your cows are in great condition pre-calving can make all the difference to herd resilience, early season production and the ability of a cow to get in-calf.

Ensuring your cows attain the required pre-calving body condition score (BCS) is an important aspect of building resilience in your herd. Knowing how to assess, identify and improve your cows' BCS will ensure that the benefits of feed grown and herd condition gained up until now are not lost.

In the last several months of gestation, a cow should be fed to maintain her condition as well as to provide for her growing calf. Good planning around drying off and culling is essential, as is regularly checking on feeding levels and BCS – which you can do using the DairyNZ BCS app.

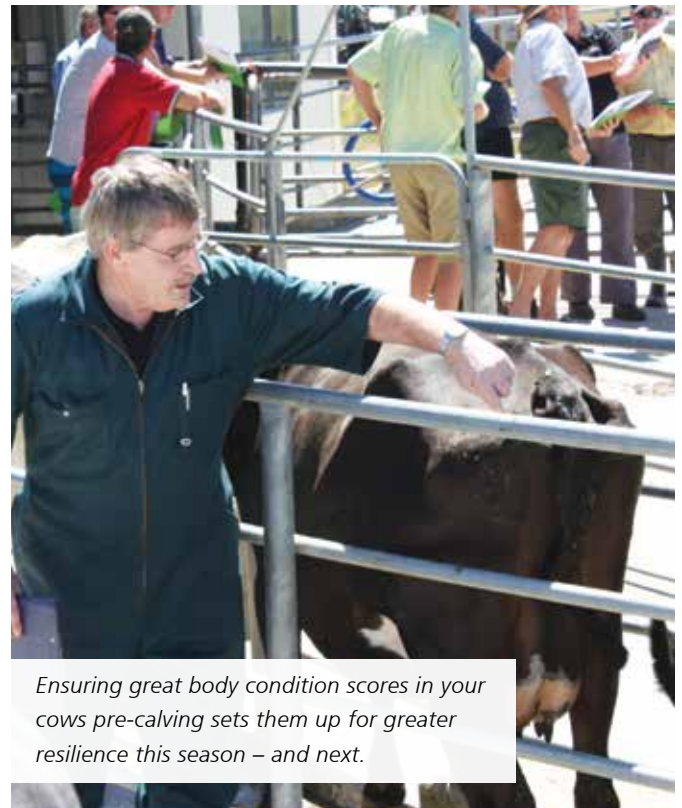
Your main priority is to look after the cows that will be in milk next season. Don't be tempted to milk the cows that are not pregnant for longer, because you believe they'll produce more than their pregnant herd mates. In a six-year study of pregnant and non-pregnant identical twin cows, DairyNZ's principal scientist, John Roche, identified that prior to day 230 of lactation, pregnancy did not affect milk production. In total, pregnant cows only produced 2-3kg milksolids less than non-pregnant cows.

Calving BCS targets are a body condition score of 5.5 for two-year-olds and rising three-year-olds and 5.0 for mature cows. You can use a variety of strategies to achieve these targets, such as:

- early removal of culls
- early drying off thin cows and low producers
- split herds on age, BCS and 'time until calving'
- stagger drying off based on age, BCS, and 'time until calving'. Remember, rising three-year-olds may still be growing, so some of the feed is going into growth and not into gaining condition
- milking once a day (OAD): approximately 0.25 BCS units' gain over 100 days on OAD milking
- feeding to gain BCS. This may involve purchasing feed.

From March, most cows are 120 to 150 days (North Island) or 150 to 180 days (South Island) away from the planned start of calving. Generally, cows lose some BCS during the two weeks following drying off and cows don't gain BCS in the month before calving. Therefore, early-calving cows only have a period of 75 to 100 days in which they can gain condition.

Autumn stresses could see your cows exposed to health issues that may not occur at other times, (e.g. facial eczema), so ensure they have adequate minerals, e.g. magnesium – and if they're feeding on fodder beet, phosphorous. Consider having a health plan for your herd.



Ensuring great body condition scores in your cows pre-calving sets them up for greater resilience this season – and next.

## Get the app

DairyNZ's information and our free BCS app make assessing and identifying body condition scores for your cows much easier. Check them out (and download the app) at [dairynz.co.nz/bcs](http://dairynz.co.nz/bcs)



## Key points



1. Your priority should be to look after the cows that will be in the herd next season.
2. Put in place a drying off plan to ensure body condition score (BCS) targets are achieved.
3. Target a calving BCS of 5.5 for first and second calvers and 5.0 for mature cows.



# Understanding and improving water quality

Dairy NZ’s environment manager David Burger outlines current and planned research helping dairy farmers reach water quality expectations.



As part of our ongoing work to enhance and protect water quality, DairyNZ’s team of environmental scientists, policy advisors and sustainability specialists is taking a solutions-focused approach to help farmers and the sector meet environmental limits and improve water quality. Robust science is at the core of this

Environmental Stewardship programme to help ensure solutions are evidence-based, practical and will achieve and exceed the required catchment limits set by local government.

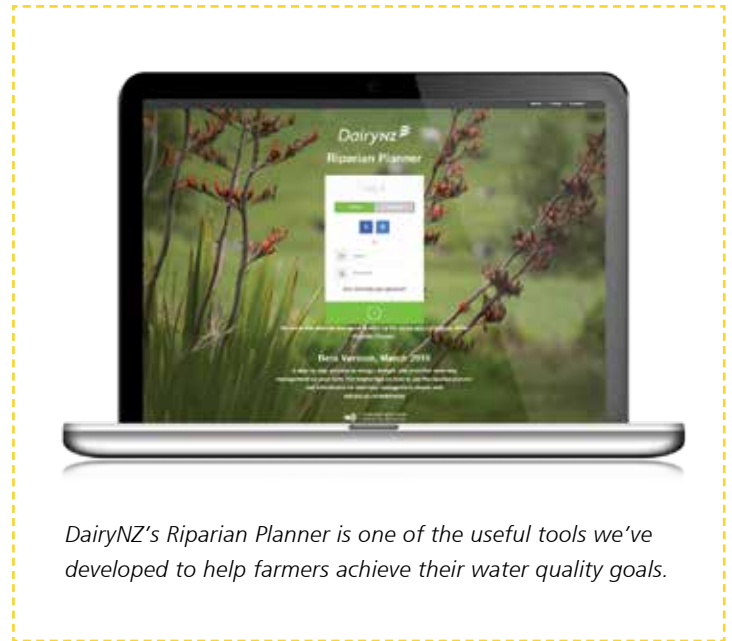
That means using your levy to ensure that we deliver science and tools that give confidence that any required changes and investment on-farm are sound, tried and tested. To achieve this, DairyNZ is working in partnership with regional councils, crown research institutes, universities and other industry science providers, to provide the best peer-reviewed science in a transparent way.

Underpinning our approach is the need to understand what drives water quality and what makes it change. For example, if we want to reduce nuisance slimes or algae, should we target nutrients, flow, or shade? If we focus on nutrients as a solution, which ones should they be and what is required to achieve desired outcomes across the whole catchment?

We also want to understand which on-farm solutions will best meet specific water quality targets and how these differ across landscapes, soil types, climates and farm systems. For example, current projects underway are testing the performance of constructed and seepage wetlands, wood chip bioreactors at the end of tile drains, and riparian buffer effectiveness on critical source areas.

These tools can help in reducing farm nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and faecal bacteria losses, and improving biodiversity. Detainment bunds, small, grassed mounds (one to two metres high) that intercept and collect overland runoff during storms, are one of these tools. The bunds store water for three days or less. This ensures pasture growth is not reduced but allows

**“Underpinning our approach is the need to understand what drives water quality and what makes it change.”**



*DairyNZ’s Riparian Planner is one of the useful tools we’ve developed to help farmers achieve their water quality goals.*

sediment and phosphorus to settle out from runoff.

Field-trialling in the Bay of Plenty suggests these bunds can reduce phosphorus and sediment losses by more than half, with a single bund retaining three tonnes of sediment collected during just one storm. DairyNZ scientists are working on refining that estimate, optimising designs and modelling where best to place bunds. We should know more by mid year.

By sharing world-leading and evidence-based research and guidance with our farmers, we hope they’ll be able to achieve and exceed water quality goals and regional council compliance requirements with the least impact on farm businesses. This will not only support environmental sustainability, it will also help make dairy more competitive and resilient.

Find out about how you can improve your waterways – see [dairynz.co.nz/waterways](http://dairynz.co.nz/waterways) and [dairynz.co.nz/riparian-planner](http://dairynz.co.nz/riparian-planner)

# Adapting to changing conditions

Award-winning Manawatu dairy farmers, Robert and Colleen Ervine, milk 380 cows on 140 hectares (ha) (effective) at Rangiotu, west of Palmerston North. Pasture management is their number one priority, but their resilience through recent challenging weather conditions has seen them adapting what they do and how they do it. It's also provided them with opportunities for continuous improvement.

Robert Ervine grew up on a beef and sheep farm in County Down, Northern Ireland, and he's always wanted to own a dairy farm. During his student days in Ireland, he relief-milked on neighbouring dairy farms while completing a Diploma in Agriculture at Greenmount Agriculture College in Antrim.

He came to New Zealand on holiday in 1990 and fell in love with the countryside. He was struck by the way farmers here shared information and the number of opportunities there were to progress to farm ownership. In just over 10 years, hard work and determination have enabled Robert to turn his farm-owning dream into a reality.

Starting as a farm assistant in 1991, Robert moved through the ranks to become a 150-cow, 50:50 sharemilker, before he progressed to an 800-cow sharemilking operation in the Manawatu. In 2002, he bought Westmere dairy farm, a 20ha property which also came with a 70ha leasehold block at Rangiotu. A lower-order sharemilker managed the Rangiotu farm while Robert continued sharemilking his 800-cow herd. In 2006, Robert got divorced, sold his 800 cows and started again as an owner/operator with a lot less equity. In 2009 he remarried, and Colleen and Robert purchased a neighbouring block, adding 50ha to their Rangiotu farm.

**A simple \$500 soil test led to a \$6000 saving on fertiliser: "We can't control the weather or the milk price, but we can control what we spend."**

## River flats prone to flooding

The farm is not without its challenges. A large part of it is inside a loop of the Manawatu river. The 70ha leasehold block on the farm can be flooded within hours of receiving a warning, which happens almost every year. The rest of the farm on the 'right' side of the stop bank can also be submerged in major floods. Floods in 2004 and 2015 saw almost all of the farm go underwater. The feed pad is used regularly during these events as is a strategy for keeping grass silage for feed at these times.

"In both floods, water receded within 36 hours, but during these events it's a stressful time for farmer and livestock. Making small decisions like culling some cows, drying some off and grazing out heifers is the trick to resilience," says Robert.

The farm is a system two, and they've taken the option

of once-a-day milking in the short term, to take pressure off the herd and off paddocks more likely to be damaged by herd movement during this period. "Half the Manawatu has been on once-a-day milking since December and most people are feeding supplements."

We've had terrible weather, so this year is looking grim. The puzzle we have, is how to build a system that copes with the very wet and the very dry. We can't control the weather or the milk price, but we can control what we spend. We have relatively-low stock numbers, and we aim for 450 kilograms of milk solids (kg/MS) per cow to achieve a reasonable per-hectare production level. The 'P' word we are interested in is profit, but to achieve this at a reasonable level we need to control costs and consider the benefits of any spending."

In the past, the Ervines have grown chicory on 10 to 12 percent of the farm, as well as turnips and three to four ha of maize silage. In mid-July, floodwaters were at the top of the fence posts and pasture was damaged. Then the wet spring continued right up to late October, so Robert and Colleen

made the decision to double the maize crop to eight ha and not grow the other crops. "It's a decision we have been very happy with. Most chicory and turnip crops have struggled in the very dry conditions."

## Keeping an eye on the bottom line

Robert and Colleen were case study farmers for the DairyNZ Tactics campaign. Robert says this made them look at the budget line-by-line to identify where they could make efficiencies. Because of the bad weather, strategic purchases and farm maintenance were postponed. Race maintenance is being kept to a minimum, but it is still prioritised, as lame cows are no fun to deal with. Soil testing once a year on five areas of the farm has identified a drop in soil fertility in some parts, but no problems in others, so fertiliser application has been adjusted accordingly. The simple expedient of a \$500 soil test has led to a \$6000 saving on fertiliser.

## Farm team

Robert and Colleen employ a herd manager, Jacqui Denton, who has been at the farm for six years; a recently-recruited farm





*Robert and Colleen Ervine: achieving profit at a reasonable level means controlling costs and considering the benefits of any spending.*

assistant, Kaylaan McGuckin; and a part-time farm assistant, Robert Allardice. They are encouraged to set goals and take up learning opportunities, which Colleen and Robert help to fund.

### Taking advice

Robert and Colleen use a team of advisors including an accountant, bank manager and consultant who all gather around the table to get a rounded-out group of opinions. This enables informed, timely decision-making when it matters. The couple agree that the sector in New Zealand is unique for the support that is out there and the willingness of other farmers to share advice.

### Challenges and future plans

The Ervines are very aware of sustainability and they say the biggest challenge this season has been the necessary use of palm kernel expeller (PKE) to combat the wet – then dry – weather. “Even with a lower stocking rate, we have not been growing enough grass to feed the herd. But who has?” says Robert.

Looking at farm efficiencies, automatic cup removers will be installed for next season to prevent over-milking and improve staff productivity.

### Environmental responsibility

Robert and Colleen have met all requirements under the Water Accord and they are keen to do more. They recently sat down with their Fonterra Sustainable Dairy Advisor and Horizons Regional Council and drew up plans for several native planting areas on the farm.

“We’re not allowed to plant on the flood-prone leased area as this would impact on flood conveyance. However, we intend to plant on other parts of the farm at the end of next season, put a new line in the budget and make a start on the project.”

## The Ervine’s top tips for adapting to changing conditions



- Aim for a realistic production level.
- Look for simple ways to save money. For example, use a soil test to target your fertiliser use.
- Postpone non-essential strategic purchases and farm maintenance where you can.
- Look for extra farm efficiencies. For example, installing automatic cup removers to prevent over-milking and improve staff productivity.
- Get and share advice with your business advisors and other farmers.
- Support your staff to set up shared goals and take up learning opportunities.
- Take up similar learning opportunities yourself. For example, DairyNZ’s Tactics or sector learning events and field days.
- Manage cow numbers: do some cow-culling, dry off some cows and/or graze out heifers.
- Make good use of a feed pad if you have one.
- Consider your feed crops and adapt them to your farm’s changing needs. Include your dairy advisor and regional council in your farm and environmental sustainability planning.

Get more tips on managing your farm during wet and dry weather at [dairynz.co.nz/wet](http://dairynz.co.nz/wet) and [dairynz.co.nz/summer](http://dairynz.co.nz/summer) and find out about DairyNZ’s Tactics programme at [dairynz.co.nz/tactics](http://dairynz.co.nz/tactics)

# Coping through tough seasons: don't lose sight of long-term goals

Environmental, animal welfare and business considerations are all important factors considered by DairyNZ's farmers. However, identifying long-term goals as part of farm management plans is also vitally important, according to DairyNZ's 10 economic attributes of top dairy farmers.

DairyNZ's Budget Case Study farmers are top performers – and that's helping them respond to a season impacted by a wet spring and an extraordinarily hot, dry summer. Our Budget Case Study farmers have shared their budgets and business management decisions with DairyNZ since 2016. DairyNZ's Paul Bird, senior project manager, research and development, says like everyone else, some of the case study farmers are finding it tough but are set up to respond to challenges.

"All the farmers understand their numbers, they know about changing income or expenses, and the impact different decisions will have on their bottom line. These farmers don't look at any one season in isolation – they understand that in farming, what you do this year affects the next. That is what resilience is about."

"They also all understand the science and underlying principles behind good farm management which again helps them make decisions when faced with challenges."

Rachel Short, a Budget Case Study Farmer in Opunake, has faced her toughest season yet due to the weather. She and husband Kenneth run a very low-input system in coastal Taranaki that is into year two of a three-year conversion process to be certified organic. Their organic status means they can't easily import feed, although they've been lucky enough to import silage and lucerne from the Manawatu.



"This is a hundred times worse than anything we have ever faced before. We had the wettest spring, so we went to once-a-day in October and then it didn't rain until just after New Years' when we had 60 millimetres of rain, and very little since."

Rachel and Kenneth have had to make some very hard decisions including going once-a-day in early October, reducing herd numbers earlier and finally making the

## 10 ATTRIBUTES OF A TOP DAIRY FARMER

1. Longer term goals are essential.
2. Farm systems are profitable, replicable and simple.
3. Very strong on financial management.
4. Pasture management is a top priority.
5. Cow condition at calving is critical.
6. The farm team is valued, recognised and included.
7. Soil fertility is monitored closely.
8. If buying in feed, price is the main factor in making a decision.
9. Around 4 to 10 percent of the farm is grown in a variety of crops.
10. Expenses are kept to a minimum.

Note: The '10 attributes' have been collated from information provided by DairyNZ's budget case study farmers.

*The 10 best business management practices common to most of DairyNZ's 14 Budget Case Study farmers.*

decision to dry off completely on Christmas day.

"The December decision to dry off was not an easy one to make and while the impact on the budget is huge, it was the effect of the dry weather on the animals, pasture and people that led to us making the call," says Rachel.

"We worked backwards from next season. We need to put condition on our cows, we need grass to feed them for the next few months and then on top of that we still need to make supplements to feed them through the winter."

"We've made extreme decisions this year and it's tough on all farm systems in the area."

"We want that feeling of going into next season in a good position, and that is what we are trying to set up for."

For more information on the decisions the Shorts and other Budget Case Study farmers have made visit [dairynz.co.nz/budgetcasestudies](http://dairynz.co.nz/budgetcasestudies)



This 500-cow test herd is helping DairyNZ and partners refine the fertility breeding value.

# DairyNZ research aims for high fertility

Well-managed, fertile cows are a cornerstone of resilience in seasonal dairying. That’s why DairyNZ is researching solutions to help farmers improve in-calf rates, explains senior scientist Chris Burke.



Reproductive performance of the herd is a critical driver for optimising the efficiency and resilience of a seasonal grazing system. Cows that fail to get back in-calf within the first six weeks of mating will have a reduced lifetime in the herd, with farmers having to make decisions around that issue at the end of each season.

Latest sector statistics report an average six-week in-calf rate of 65 percent, whereas top farmers get at least three-quarters of their herd back in-calf within this time.

To help farmers improve their in-calf rates, DairyNZ is currently leading a research project called ‘Pillars of a new dairy system’. Important discoveries to date are that:

- success in artificial breeding (i.e. conception rate) depends mostly on whether the embryo can survive the first seven days
- it’s important to keep an eye out for any uterine problems that might occur in your herd
- there are stronger signals of genetic fertility than currently being used, even in heifers.

With these discoveries in hand, the multi-party research team is now focusing on finding new management and genetic solutions that farmers can use to achieve better herd fertility.

## Improving egg quality

The inability for a third of inseminations to succeed within the first seven days indicates solutions for improving the quality of the egg before ovulation is one option for lifting conception rates from the normal 52 percent to the targeted 60 percent.

Our team is getting close to identifying the specific nutrient requirements of the egg. This will enable us to explore ways in which these deficiencies can be overcome in the cow during mating.

## Better transitioning

Failure of the uterus to fully recover within six weeks after calving in 25 percent of cows indicates there are opportunities for improving transition cow management. Studies are underway to test ways in which cow health and function can be improved through this period.

## Refining the fertility breeding value

While there are opportunities to better manage fertility, ‘Pillars of a new dairy system’ recognises the importance of genetic fertility. We’ve created a 500-cow herd with differences in genetic fertility, which is now in first lactation. A notable finding to date is that high-fertility breeding value (BV) heifers attain puberty 25kg lighter than low-fertility BV heifers, despite identical growth rates.

Accordingly, we are planning to ‘scale-up’ the measure of this trait using larger numbers of animals across commercial herds, and to perform a more robust genetic evaluation.

‘Pillars of a new dairy system’ is a seven-year partnership programme funded by DairyNZ, with matched co-funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, and aligned core funding for fertility from AgResearch. Learn more at [dairynz.co.nz/pillars](http://dairynz.co.nz/pillars)



# Future focus for Farmers' Forum

DairyNZ is pleased to announce the date of this year's Farmers' Forum, looking at a changing global environment and its effects on our place within international markets.

One of the biggest events on the dairy sector's calendar gets underway on May 8 and 9 at Mystery Creek in Hamilton. It's a valuable opportunity to hear the latest insights and opinions into current global trends from some of the sector's influential leaders and commentators.

The forum will explore how collectively, we're going to achieve the new dairy sector strategic vision "Dairy Tomorrow", launched in November last year. It will also look at what is driving global changes and how they will shape the future of milk production – from our farms to markets here and overseas.

DairyNZ's chief executive Tim Mackle says the Farmers' Forum brings together in one place a range of experts, opinions, discussion opportunities and workshops which are not available anywhere else.

"This is about helping farmers understand what is driving changes in our dairy markets at home and across the world, what the sector's vision for dairying is and what farmers can do to position themselves to adapt and take advantage of these changes."

"Innovation and the ability to change has long been at the heart of dairying's success story and they will continue to be," says Tim.

"Adapting to the changing environment is now more important than ever – having a conversation about what our future farm and food systems could look like (and how best to respond in these challenging times) will be an important outcome of the event."

"Our farmers ask us how we're investing their levy and this is important to us. We want to make sure they get the best benefit possible from that investment. The forum provides a great



DairyNZ's annual Farmers' Forum attracts hundreds of farmers to Hamilton's Mystery Creek Events Centre.

opportunity to come and focus on the important things affecting the sector and how we can work together to achieve the dairy sector's strategic vision," he says.

## DairyNZ Farmers' Forum programme

### Day one:

What is driving change in the global markets, the changing political environment, the implications for New Zealand dairying and how we can adapt. We'll hear a range of perspectives including economics experts, government and policy specialists, farmers and industry leaders.

### Day two:

The focus shifts to the farm, looking at new technologies and techniques to help farmers respond to the challenges and opportunities highlighted on Day One, along with tips, tools and advice for boosting farm businesses. This is a good opportunity to find out more about some of the new research in the pipeline and other projects funded by the levy and discuss directly with the researchers and project leaders.

### Format

The Forum will be a mix of plenary keynote presentations, seminars and workshops, with time built in for discussion and networking. As speakers are confirmed over the next few weeks, we'll be posting updated programme details at [dairynz.co.nz/farmersforum](http://dairynz.co.nz/farmersforum)

### DairyNZ Farmers' Forum, May 8 and 9

Mystery Creek, Hamilton

The forum is free to levy-paying dairy farmers and their staff. For all others, registration for both days is \$175, or \$100 for one day.

Morning and afternoon teas, lunches and the networking function at the end of the first day are provided.

You must register online for this event at [dairynz.co.nz/farmersforum](http://dairynz.co.nz/farmersforum)



Shifting to a new farm? Our education tips will help you ensure your child hits the ground running at school.

## Keeping the move smooth for children

**Moving to your new farm or farm job? If you've got kids, that adds another important ball to juggle with the shift. Early contact with the new school is key to keeping the transition smooth for children.**

When children are involved in the move to a new farm, there's even more to consider and prepare for," says Jenny Smith, a Southland-based resource teacher for learning and behaviour.

"There are a few actions parents can take to help ensure a smooth transition for both their child and the new school. It's really important that the current and new schools are notified of the move. It helps them to manage class sizes, alter the curriculum and topics to cater for new students, and allows them to help children settle into the school socially."

Jenny and Dr Pauline Stewart, an educational psychologist and dairy farm owner, have put together some helpful advice for parents. It can be used as a reminder of things to do, before and during the transition, to help both children and schools with the change.

Check out how DairyNZ's education programme is helping children learn about dairy in the classroom at [ourfarmvisit.co.nz](http://ourfarmvisit.co.nz)

### Advice for parents this moving day

#### Preparing for a new school

- Notify the current school so academic records can be sent to the new school ahead of time. Do this about a month out from school starting.
- Enrol at the new school early to help them prepare. Again, doing this a month ahead of school starting will be a great help.
- Visit the new school with your child before they start, or visit the school's website.
- Sign up to school newsletters to learn about the school and stay informed.
- Provide the new school with any information you have about your child's academic levels, strengths, or special needs that will help them settle in better.

#### Starting at a new school

- Go to school with your child on the first day and meet the teacher.
- Tell the school what your child enjoys and what they're good at.
- Find out key dates and information.
- Let your child's new teacher know how and when it's best to contact you and provide emergency contact details.
- Find out how the school involves parents with education.
- Find out when school social events are on, as this will help you meet members of the community.
- Accompany your child to the first bus pick-up, if possible.
- Remind your child it's ok to be nervous and talk to them about how they are feeling.
- Check in with the new school after a couple of weeks.

WORKING  
TOGETHER  
TO PROTECT  
OUR

FUTURE.

# What you told us about GIA and biosecurity

DairyNZ went to farmers in November and December last year to get feedback on the proposal to sign the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) for biosecurity Readiness and Response.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to read the consultation material, contact us with questions and comments, participate in the phone conferences and make formal submissions. Your input was very much appreciated.

By becoming a signatory, we believe dairy farmers will have more influence and certainty, and more say in biosecurity decision-making. Working with other GIA signatories, we'll be able to influence biosecurity priorities and improve preparations for, and responses to, incursions of exotic pests and diseases. We'll also have up-front conversations with government and other GIA signatories about cost-sharing.

Thirty-five formal submissions were received, and while that doesn't sound like a big number, we had almost 10,000 GIA video views and 10,000 farmers opened – and we hope read – the GIA emails.

## The results

- 91 percent of submitters said they support or strongly support DairyNZ becoming a GIA signatory.
- 83 percent said they were satisfied or very satisfied with how DairyNZ proposes to represent dairy farmers' views in the GIA decision-making process.
- 83 percent said they support or strongly support DairyNZ's proposed funding approach.

Submitters had the opportunity to include comments in relation to their responses, which many did.

## Next steps

We delayed submitting our application to the Minister at the end of last year so we could properly consider the feedback received. The application was submitted at the end of February.

Although the official consultation period closed in early December, farmers can still register their comments by emailing us at [info@dairynz.co.nz](mailto:info@dairynz.co.nz)

Thanks again for your input – we'll let you know once the Minister has made a decision on our application. In the meantime, you can access the consultation documents and see a summary of the results at [dairynz.co.nz/GIA](http://dairynz.co.nz/GIA)



## Biosecurity checklist and WOF

Biosecurity continues to be top-of-mind right now with the current *Mycoplasma bovis* outbreak. Simple biosecurity changes on your farm can make all the difference in reducing the risk and protecting your animals from diseases and your farm from pests and weeds.

We've put together a one-page checklist to help make sure you have the biosecurity basics covered.

Working with farmers, we've also put together a more detailed Biosecurity WOF which we recommend you work through with your veterinarian.

To find these resources and to get more information on managing your farm's biosecurity and the GIA visit [dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity](http://dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity)

Find out what you need to know about *M. bovis* at [dairynz.co.nz/mbovis](http://dairynz.co.nz/mbovis)

## Weed 'em and reap

With many farmers facing paddocks full of weeds after summer, DairyNZ developer Sally Peel gives some advice for getting on top of the problem.



After a dry start to summer, it's common to face a weed outbreak in recovering pastures because emerging weed seedlings have more room to grow. For some farmers, the wetter spring has only made things worse as it led to an incursion of less familiar weed species. If that's you, it's important to plan a

weed control programme for your farm that will meet the needs of both your established pastures and your newly-sown pastures.

### Identifying weeds

Choosing which herbicide to use and when depends on the type of weeds on your farm. To get help correctly identifying weeds in their seedling stage, consult a specialist found through your local rural supplier. You can also use AgPest ([agpest.co.nz](http://agpest.co.nz)), a free online tool developed by DairyNZ.

### New pastures

For newly established pastures sown this autumn, it's better to control weeds early in the pasture's life while the weeds are small and easier to kill. Pastures will perform better if weeds are removed before they become established. You can spray seedling weeds before or after the first grazing.

Take care with clover, though. Delay spraying if more than 50 percent of the bare ground is exposed because excessive contact between clover roots and herbicide can result in damage to the clovers. It's often best to spray using products that are low-risk to clovers and to spray while the clovers are young.

Strategic use of nitrogen can also promote ryegrass to successfully compete against some weeds.

### Established pastures

In established pastures, seedling weeds left untreated over winter will grow into larger, hard-to-kill perennial weeds when spring arrives. So, control autumn germinating weeds by spraying targeted areas in July and August. It's ok to use less clover-friendly chemicals for spot-spraying.

### Weeds and plantain

Plantain is becoming more popular and can play an important role in some farm systems. It doesn't tolerate many herbicides

though, which is a problem when you're trying to control competitive weed species.

Consider herbicide choice carefully. It may be best to use herbicide control at the beginning of the cropping cycle. Another option is to sow the ryegrass component in autumn, then use winter herbicide control, and then sow plantain into the pasture in spring. Spring sowing after glyphosate with light cultivation and drilling can also be successful.

### What is AgPest?



Spotted something new on your farm?  
Report a pest at any time

If you need some help nailing weeds and pests on your farm, have a look at AgPest, a free online tool developed with funding from DairyNZ through our levy. It's designed to help kiwi farmers and agricultural professionals make decisions regarding weed and pest identification, biology, impact and management.

You can also sign up for AgPest Alerts, which provide regional and seasonally relevant notifications for weed and pest issues, and management suggestions.

Check it out today at [agpest.co.nz](http://agpest.co.nz)

## Quick info on *M. bovis*



Page 8 of this edition of Inside Dairy features a full update on *Mycoplasma bovis*. However, it's also worth checking out [dairynz.co.nz/mbovis](http://dairynz.co.nz/mbovis) for some quick tips and info on this disease. Use our biosecurity check list developed with farmers, for farmers and view two short videos which we've added recently. One is a situation update from DairyNZ chief executive, Tim Mackle and the other is an overview on *M. bovis* from our readiness and response manager, Chris Morley. Keep an eye on our events webpage at [dairynz.co.nz/events](http://dairynz.co.nz/events) for *M. bovis*-related events in your area.

## Milk Matters: Waikato Museum exhibition a hit

A total of 15,648 visitors saw the DairyNZ-sponsored exhibition, *Milk Matters: Towards a Sustainable Future*, in the six months from June 1 to November 30 last year at the Waikato Museum.



That's an increase of 38 percent more visitors in comparison with the museum's previous six-monthly period.

On display since the end of November in 2016, *Milk Matters* celebrates dairying in the Waikato. It highlights the people, science, innovation and technology that is making dairying more sustainable. If you haven't seen it yet, make sure you catch it before it ends on April 29.

Another dairying-related exhibition, inspired by *Milk Matters*, is *Our Milky Ways*, now open at Aotea Utanganui (the Museum of South Taranaki) in Pātea. On until June this year, it provides a glimpse into the history of dairying in South Taranaki, centred around 50 objects selected by museum staff and the community.

## SIDE 2018

The South Island Dairy Event (SIDE) celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and organisers are planning a big celebration to mark the event. SIDE will be held in Dunedin Town Hall on June 25 and 26. With a great line up of speakers and over 30 practical workshops to choose from, attendees can customise the conference to fit their interests.

Find out more at [side.org.nz](http://side.org.nz)

## DairyNZ sponsors award

DairyNZ is supporting the NZ Farm Environment Trust/Ballance Farm Environment Awards by sponsoring the Dairy Sustainability and Stewardship Award.

This award recognises innovative dairy farmers who demonstrate a strong commitment to managing, protecting and enhancing their environment. It focuses on positive, long-term, environmentally sustainable on-farm undertakings. Entrants will demonstrate high standards of environmental care and sustainable use of the land, stock, labour and capital resources.

Find more about the awards at [nzfeatrust.org.nz](http://nzfeatrust.org.nz) and check out DairyNZ's environmental information and tips for good management practices online at [dairynz.co.nz/environment](http://dairynz.co.nz/environment)

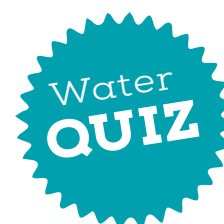


## Are you interested in monitoring the quality of your waterways?

Improvements relating to the work undertaken by dairy farmers to improve water quality are not always demonstrated as the condition of many streams and rivers are unknown.

We want to find out if there is a demand from farmers for a self-assessment service to be created.

Go to [dairynz.co.nz/waterquiz](http://dairynz.co.nz/waterquiz) to take this short survey to let us know what you think.







# Expo focuses on lifting performance through people

Common purpose and collaboration are key to the success of any business, according to Virginia Bas, the personal development manager for rugby's Canterbury Crusaders. She'll be expanding on that view when she speaks at DairyNZ's People Expo, coming up in Dunsandel on March 22.

Virginia and other speakers will share their people management experience at the expo, to help dairy farmers lift performance, attract and retain good people and support their teams to achieve shared on-farm goals.

She has a wealth of experience leading teams: before joining the Crusaders, she had a 26-year career with the New Zealand Police. During that time, she became the first female detective superintendent and the highest-ranking officer in the organisation's Criminal Investigation Branch.

Virginia says she has been fortunate throughout her life to experience both excellent and poor demonstrations of leadership, which has shaped her view on what works and what doesn't. She is focussed on continuous improvement through more targeted thinking. She hopes farmers at the expo will be able to glean something from her experiences to take something back to their own businesses.

"I believe together, in a team, everyone achieves more. Throughout my career, I have seen that no one ever achieves anything alone. "Great things are achieved with common purpose and collaboration," says Virginia, who adds that good leaders use a strength-based approach and look beyond the obvious.

"In your team or work group, it is often not about teaching people new or novel things, it's about getting them to do things that they already do well in a different way – a better way. This is a strength-based approach."

"When working with people the important question is always 'why'. What you see is not always what you get, so to grow your ability to see 'below the surface' is significant if you want to develop an effective team culture for you and your people."



## People Expo nationwide

The March 22 Canterbury Expo is one of six people expos nationwide. Other events in the series taking place after that will be held in Waikato on April 10, Stratford on April 11 and Bay of Plenty on May 1.

The expos are designed to help farmers find solutions and lift performance, with speakers from a variety of industries sharing their experiences and perspectives.

Farmers will have an opportunity to ask the experts questions and share their own ideas with other farmers around what works and what doesn't, along with any new and novel ideas and practical tips.

To register for the expo and for more details visit [dairynz.co.nz/peopleexpo](http://dairynz.co.nz/peopleexpo)

For the full list of what's on near you, visit [dairynz.co.nz/events](http://dairynz.co.nz/events)

## March events

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			<b>1-3</b> <b>NORTHLAND FIELD DAYS</b> Whether it's tractors from the 1940s or the latest farming innovations and technology, Northland Field Days has it all. <a href="http://Northlandfielddays.co.nz">Northlandfielddays.co.nz</a>			<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <b>SOUTH WAIKATO TILLER TALK</b> Learn from DairyNZ's local Tiller Talk farmers and make your pasture management decisions with confidence.			<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>COASTAL TARANAKI BODY CONDITION SCORE WORKSHOP</b> Come along to learn how to score your cows and discuss strategy for achieving targets for next season.		<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>			<b>22</b> <b>CENTRAL CANTERBURY PEOPLE EXPO</b> Learn how to recruit and retain employees and get the farm team to work effectively.			<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>LOWER NORTH ISLAND EKETAHUNA DISCUSSION GROUP</b> Keep up to date with current research, share ideas and discuss different management options.			<b>31</b>	

[DAIRYNZ.CO.NZ/EVENTS](http://DAIRYNZ.CO.NZ/EVENTS)

### NORTHLAND

The Northland Field Days are back for 2018, in Dargaville on March 1 to 3.

Open to the public from 9am to 4.30pm daily with over 500 exhibitors, there is something for everyone at this event with plenty of live demonstrations, field days specials, new innovations in technology and equipment to be seen.

DairyNZ will once again be attending – our location this year will be at site 187C on Craigs Investment Partners Place. For more information or to purchase tickets, go to [northlandfielddays.co.nz](http://northlandfielddays.co.nz)

### NORTH WAIKATO

Morrinsville dairy farmer Aaron Price, as part of DairyNZ's Tiller Talk programme, is hosting a workshop on March 14 to share and discuss best practice pasture management principles.

The workshop will include pasture measuring, monitoring, grazing management and whole paddock performance, specific for our autumn after a dry summer. Tiller Talk continues to work with farmers around the country to increase their profit through better pasture management.

Go to [dairynz.co.nz/events](http://dairynz.co.nz/events) to find workshop details, or read more about Tiller Talk at [dairynz.co.nz/tillertalk](http://dairynz.co.nz/tillertalk)



Farmers have a field day at a DairyNZ Tiller Talk event.

### SOUTH WAIKATO

Three South Waikato farms have shared their half-yearly updates as part of DairyNZ's budget case study series.

Six months into the season, each farm has provided an update on how they are tracking, what major challenges to their budgets they are facing and plans for managing any variances for the rest of the season.

View them at [dairynz.co.nz/budget-case-studies](http://dairynz.co.nz/budget-case-studies)

## BAY OF PLENTY

Rotorua will host this year's Dairy Women's Network Conference (DWN) on March 22 and 23.

'DWN18: our land our people' will focus on informative practical learning in all aspects of dairy farming, celebrating two key themes at the heart of the sector's success.

Connect, network and gain new knowledge with three high-calibre keynote speakers, seven workshops offering a range of topics and 30 trade stands at the DWN exhibition hub. Register at [dwn.co.nz/dwn18-conference](http://dwn.co.nz/dwn18-conference)

## TARANAKI

Dairy farmers are invited to attend a field day hosted by Taranaki's Share Farmer of the Year winner.

The field day, on March 28, is a chance for farmers to share stories, accomplishments and knowledge.

The winner will be announced at Taranaki's regional New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards dinner on March 5 in Hawera with details to be posted at [dairyindustryawards.co.nz](http://dairyindustryawards.co.nz)

## LOWER NORTH ISLAND

Throughout March the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards will be celebrating the hard work and success of the region's dairy farmers with the winners to be announced at regional awards dinners for Hawke's Bay/Wairarapa (March 1) and Manawatu (March 3).

The Share Farmer of the Year winners will then host field days later in the month, in Hawke's Bay/Wairarapa on March 21 and Manawatu on March 22.

More details available at [dairyindustryawards.co.nz](http://dairyindustryawards.co.nz)

## TOP OF SOUTH ISLAND/WEST COAST

After a challenging couple of months with dry conditions affecting farmers on the West Coast, local consulting officer Angela Leslie is offering one-on-one visits to discuss your next steps as we head into autumn.

Go to [dairynz.co.nz/co](http://dairynz.co.nz/co) to contact Angela and arrange a visit.

## SOUTHLAND/SOUTH OTAGO

Streamline your milking process with Milksmart. Focused on practical ways to save time and money through efficient milking, Milksmart will benefit the whole farm team.

Presented by some of New Zealand's leading experts, this year's Southland Milksmart events will be hosted by Graeme and Amy Johnston (Makarewa, March 6) and Mark and Kylie Watt (Balclutha, March 7).

Register at [dairynz.co.nz/milksmart](http://dairynz.co.nz/milksmart)

## DAIRYNZ CONSULTING OFFICERS

### Northland

Regional Leader	Chris Neill	027 499 9021
Far North	Denise Knop	027 807 9686
Lower Northland	Mark Forsyth	021 242 5719
Whangarei West	Chris Neill	027 499 9021

### North Waikato

Regional Leader	Phil Irvine	027 483 9820
South Auckland	Jamie Haultain	027 486 4344
Hamilton North	Jaimee Morgan	021 245 8055
Matamata/Kereone	Frank Portegys	027 807 9685
Morrinsville/Paeroa	Euan Lock	027 293 4401
Hauraki Plains/Coromandel	Annabelle Smart	021 242 2127

### South Waikato

Regional Leader	Wade Bell	027 285 9273
Te Awamutu	Stephen Canton	027 475 0918
Otorohanga	Michael Booth	027 513 7201
South Waikato	Kirsty Dickins	027 483 2205

### Bay of Plenty

Regional Leader	Sharon Morrell	0274 922 907
Consulting Officer, Special Projects	Wilma Foster	021 246 2147
Central BOP (Te Puke, Rotorua)	Kevin McKinley	027 288 8238
Eastern BOP (Whakatane, Opotiki)	Ross Bishop	027 563 1785
Central Plateau (Reporoa, Taupo)	Colin Grainger-Allen	021 225 8345
Katikati, Galatea, Waikite/Ngakuru	Jordyn Crouch	021 619 071

### Taranaki

Acting Regional Leader	Simon Sankey	021 228 3446
South Taranaki	Ryan Orchard	021 246 5663
Central Taranaki	Sarah Payne	027 704 5562
Coastal Taranaki	Anna Arends	021 270 0074
North Taranaki	Lauren McEldowney	027 593 4122

### Lower North Island

Regional Leader	James Muwunganirwa	027 499 9020
Horowhenua/Wanganui/South Taranaki/Southern and Coastal Manawatu	Scott Cameron	027 702 3760
Wairarapa/Tararua	Abby Scott	021 244 3428
Hawke's Bay	Gray Beagley	021 286 4346
Central/Northern Manawatu/Rangitikei	Jo Back	021 222 9023

### Top of South Island/West Coast

Regional Leader	Wade Bell	027 285 9273
Nelson/Marlborough	Mark Shadwick	021 287 7057
West Coast	Angela Leslie	021 277 2894

### Canterbury/North Otago

Regional Leader	Virginia Serra	021 932 515
North Canterbury	Teaghan Lourie	021 246 2775
Central Canterbury	Natalia Benquet	021 287 7059
Mid Canterbury	Stuart Moorhouse	027 513 7200
South Canterbury	Virginia Serra	021 932 515
North Otago	Trevor Gee	021 227 6476

### Southland/South Otago

Regional Leader	Richard Kyte	021 246 3166
South Otago	Mark Olsen-Vetland	021 615 051
Central/North Western Southland	Nicole E Hammond	021 240 8529
West Otago/North Eastern Southland	Liam Carey	027 474 3258
Eastern Southland	Nathan Nelson	021 225 6931
Western Southland	Teresa Anderson	027 702 2219



# RETAIN GREAT PEOPLE

AND HAVE THE BEST PEOPLE WORKING FOR YOU

## PEOPLE EXPO

Find solutions for your business – discuss with the experts and share with like-minded and motivated dairy farming colleagues – what works and what doesn't, along with new and novel ideas, and practical tips and tricks.

**DUNSANDEL – THURSDAY 22 MARCH**

**WAIKATO – TUESDAY 10 APRIL**

**STRATFORD – WEDNESDAY 11 APRIL**

**BAY OF PLENTY – TUESDAY 1 MAY**

9:30am – 2pm, lunch provided

FOR DETAILS OF SPEAKERS AND  
TO REGISTER, VISIT

[DAIRYNZ.CO.NZ/PEOPLEEXPO](http://DAIRYNZ.CO.NZ/PEOPLEEXPO)

### CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE EVENT?

Visit [dairynz.co.nz/people](http://dairynz.co.nz/people) for practical tips, tools and templates for recruiting and retaining great people for your farm team

**DairyNZ**