



MAY 2016

PhaSedN



Ballance

More days in milk

**P8** 



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Ballance Agri-Nutrients is one of New Zealand's leading fertiliser manufacturers. A 100 percent farmer-owned co-operative, the company has over 19,000 shareholders and sells around 1.7 million tonnes of product each year, representing a turnover close to \$900 million. Its products include imported and locally manufactured fertilisers, many of which attract a rebate for shareholders.

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ballance.co.nz • 0800 222 090

### Super Air

Since its inception in the 1980s, Super Air has evolved into one of New Zealand's leading agricultural aviation companies. In addition to aerial fertiliser application, Super Air has developed a world-class reputation for aircraft engineering and innovation. Wholly owned by Ballance, Super Air services most of the North Island.

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superair.co.nz • 0800 787 372

### SealesWinslow

SealesWinslow is a recognised leader in the production of high-performance compound feeds and feed additives. A fully owned subsidiary of Ballance, SealesWinslow has manufacturing sites located in Morrinsville, Ashburton and Wanganui, and supplies custom-blended pelletised feed to farmers throughout New Zealand. It also provides molasses feed blocks, feed supplements and additives.

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sealeswinslow.co.nz • 0800 287 325

## **B**Ag Hub

Ag Hub is an online tool that enables farmers to capture, store and analyse information across a range of farm management systems. Based on high-quality GPS farm maps, Ag Hub allows farmers to see what's happening on their farm from any location that has a suitable internet connection. The modular system allows farmers to buy just what they need for their specific farming operation.

aghub.co.nz • 06 323 9059 or 0800 MY AGHUB

### **OVER THE FENCE**

## **SPECIALISTS AND SMARTS**

It was a pleasure to attend the Auckland and Waikato regional Ballance Farm Environment Awards celebrations recently.

With financial pressure on the dairy sector at present and the world market in a highly volatile state these awards, what they celebrate and the best practice they showcase are even more important. Doing what's right can result in a win for the environment, a social licence to operate, and more money in the back pocket if you're smart about the way you go about it.

It's no coincidence that the high performing environmental farmers tend to be the higher performing profit farmers. Why? Because of attention to detail. They constantly monitor, check and adjust to optimise their performance.

And when times are tough, they seek out innovation, get some fresh perspective on their farming systems, and find new and innovative ways to do more with less. They learn from others and make the most of support from experts.

Our philosophy has always been to provide our customers with the farm

nutrients they need, at the right price, in the right place, at the right time.

We exist to help drive value on your farm and help you meet your goals. It's no different when budgets are tight. Our nutrient specialists around the country are here to help with expert advice tailored for your farm, traditional tools like soil and herbage tests, smart products like SustaiN and PhaSedN, and new technology like NGuru, MitAgator and Spreadsmart. You can read more about these and how we can help you throughout this newsletter.

Specialists and smarts is what you'll get if you ask for support from our team.

We've also been supporting our shareholders with cash when it counts throughout the year – paying out rebates early, holding urea prices through spring, and dropping prices in December.

Taking some of the pressure off pricing for shareholders throughout

the year will likely flow through to a lower rebate payment than the high levels enjoyed by shareholders in recent years. However, we're confident we've done the right thing.

We're a co-op. We exist for you.



DAVID PEACOCKE Chairman



# IT'S A WRAP

### Fifty-nine days, 1967 safety observations and \$21.5 million later, the team working on the Kapuni maintenance shut down have called it a wrap.

Every few years we shut down the plant to inspect it - the entire plant is either taken apart or opened up so every inch can be inspected for damage, faults or simply to be cleaned out.

It takes a week to shut the plant down and a week to start it back up. The weeks in between see about 500 people toiling away making sure everything is as it should be. The workers include 90 Ballance employees and about 400 contractors from all over New Zealand.

The entire five week work process involves about 226,000 man hours (the same as one man working full time for 108 years) with reactor repairs and converter basket replacement work being carried out 24/7 to meet tight deadlines.

The plant has been operating for 34 years and was originally owned by Petrocorp and Petrochem, then by Fletcher Challenge and in 1992 Ballance took it on.

Ray Markham has been working at the plant since May 23, 1982 - the day the site opened - and says aside from name changes, the main difference he has noticed over the years is the emphasis on safety.

"Safety has improved for a lot of reasons," Ray says.

"You learn to respect things like pressures of the vessels

and that kind of thing. It's not until you see something go bang that it all sinks in."

Ballance General Manager Operations John Maxwell says every day the team is working on the plant, the plant itself is not working. To ensure everything has the best chance of running smoothly, planning for the shutdown begins about one year before any contractors walk through the gates.

"We have a team of people that spend months and months planning the logistics and the order to make sure the critical paths are correct and all the other bits fit in behind that.

"We have a planned start for the shut and a planned finish for the shut and we work very hard to make sure we stick to those dates," says John.

John says it's the "unknowns" that delay shutdown work. "This is a fairly old plant and once you start pulling it to pieces and opening it up and having a look, sometimes you get surprises as to what's on the inside."

This year there were a few surprises, with further work required on the ammonia plant delaying the completion of the shut by two weeks. The plant is now back up and running at full capacity.



Kapuni Shift Supervisor Ray Markham has noticed a huge shift in the emphasis on site safety over the years

### PARTNER Sought for Plant Revamp

#### Ballance will investigate a partnership arrangement for our proposed redevelopment of the Kapuni ammonia urea plant in Taranaki.

Ballance CEO, Mark Wynne, said the decision to invite partners into the project was the next step in a process which to date has included a year-long study, followed by an extensive tendering round.

We now have a potential price for a worldclass ammonia urea plant capable of meeting the highest safety, environment and production standards. As you can imagine, a project of this scale has lots of moving pieces. The costs are in the hundreds of millions and they have come in higher than expected. It makes good sense for us to be looking at inviting an appropriate partner on board who can share in the investment and add value to the wider business.

Mark said despite the revised costings, the project was still stacking up as a sound investment.

We are really excited about the possibilities this project provides to future-proof our production capacity and improve our global manufacturing competiveness.

The co-op will seek to engage with potential partners over the coming months before making any further decision on the project. Shareholders will be fully consulted over any final recommendations.



### BETTER DECISIONS, BETTER NITIGATION

With many regions beginning to set limits on nutrient losses from farms, Ballance is moving one step closer to bringing a new decision support tool to farmers to help them minimise nutrient, sediment and *E*. *Coli* losses.

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A testing programme is now underway piloting our MitAgator<sup>™</sup> tool with end-users and securing their feedback ahead of an ultimate rollout. MitAgator<sup>™</sup> has been developed by Ballance in conjunction to AgResearch as part of our Clearview Innovation Research, supported with funding from the Primary Growth Partnership programme.

The decision support tool is designed to combine a farm's Overseer<sup>®</sup> file with a geo-referenced farm map and digital soil and elevation maps. It can identify where nutrient, sediment and E.coli losses are most likely to occur on farm and enables farmers to model different mitigation options, ranking them in terms of loss reduction and cost effectiveness.

Ballance Nutrient Dynamics Specialist, Jim Risk says often a large proportion of total farm losses can come from a relatively small area, so identifying these is valuable for developing management strategies.

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MitAgator<sup>™</sup> generates risk maps showing loss areas for each element so you can identify high loss areas and target them as a starting point with the most effective and economic mitigations.

With farmers able to model and rank different mitigation techniques and apply them to hot spots on the farm, the decision support tool is designed to be as environmentally and economically effective as possible. Ballance will keep shareholders advised of progress as we finalise trials and add MitAgator<sup>M</sup> to the farmer's toolbox for better nutrient, sediment and *E.coli* loss management.

## OUR FUTURE'S IN GOOD HANDS

Our 2016 scholarship round has seen us award a total of \$48,000 in tertiary study scholarships to six talented students who are aiming to make a positive difference in the primary industries sector.

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These students are set to bring new skills, direction and innovation to this sector, ensuring that New Zealand's agricultural future is in good hands.

This year's scholarships, each valued at \$4,000 for up to three years, bring the total awarded by the co-operative since 2002 to 77.

#### Three year scholarships



Lachlan McKinnon from Matamata is studying a Bachelor of Management Studies at the University of Waikato, majoring in International Business and Agribusiness. The former Cambridge High School Deputy Head Boy aims to provide consultancy support to New Zealand's agribusiness interests, both locally and overseas, with a long term goal of taking over his family's dairy farm.



Lauren Woolerton from Taupiri is studying a Bachelor of AgriCommerce at Massey University, majoring in Rural Valuation with a minor in Public Relations. In pursuing a career in the primary industries sector Lauren also aims

to become part of the Ballance cadet programme, recognising that the skills, access to networks and opportunities that the co-op provides will better enable her to assist farmers in meeting their daily goals and improve the industry as a whole.



Rhys Fitzgerald from Methven is studying a Bachelor of Engineering with Honours, majoring in Mechatronics Engineering. A high achieving sportsperson and former Mt Hutt College Head Boy, Rhys aims to combine his knowledge of farm processes with robotic solutions to help innovate the industry.

#### **One year scholarships**



Louise Ford from Rotorua is studying a Bachelor of Law with Honours and a Bachelor of Science at Waikato University. She is actively involved in the agricultural community as an executive member of the Hamilton City Young Farmers Club and has already gained significant agricultural research experience, through work for AgKnowledge and Avocado New Zealand. She hopes to use her conjoint degree to improve the environment from the farmer's perspective.



Alex Menzies from Omakau is studying a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Land, Water and Environment at Lincoln University. After completing her undergraduate degree Alex intends to further her education through a postgraduate degree in agribusiness and either marketing or supply chain management.



**Steven Upton** from Te Aroha is studying a Bachelor of Business Analysis, majoring in Agribusiness and Economics at the University of Waikato. In completing his undergraduate degree and progressing onto a Masters degree in agribusiness, Steven aims to work with the agricultural industry to build a network of farmers and transform their farming businesses into world leading operations.

### **CONSIDERING MORE DAYS IN MILK?**

After a tough season many dairy farmers may be considering extending the milking period of their cows to create more cashflow.

For farmers in a position to do so, keeping cows in milk for an extended period can make strong commercial sense. A dry cow by contrast still incurs feed and grazing costs but without a corresponding milk income.

SealesWinslow Consultant Animal Nutrition Specialist, Paul Sharp, says that farmers weighing the costs and benefits of extending the milking period have several things to consider.

As the season draws to a close there are conflicting challenges of building up vital feed reserves for the winter ahead, increasing cow condition to target 5.0 condition scores at calving, while also feeding to keep the milk flowing and optimise days in milk.

Paul acknowledges that optimising a farmer's return on investment through extended lactation requires a thoughtful farming strategy, and providing the right balance of nutrients can be the key to success.

He points out that a late lactation pregnant cow, whose stomach capacity is severely reduced, can struggle with bulky silages and straws that are high in fibre but take up valuable rumen volume. The same cow will respond better to an energy-dense feed which occupies less stomach room while supplying her and the growing calf with the nutrients they need.

A cost-effective option is SealesWinslow's Home Run. It provides optimal nutrition with less wastage, making more energy available for milk production.

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#### **Balanced nutrition is key**

Alternatively, pasture still remains the most convenient and economical feed option. With a focus on grazing management, use of irrigation and regular nitrogen application, it will generally be of high quality affording excellent protein and fibre levels throughout autumn.

"However, to maximise milk production, you need to ensure the pasture has a proper balance of nutrients," advises Paul who strongly recommends carrying out a herbage test.

"The test will determine the precise level of nutrients your animals are getting. Importantly, it will also allow you to formulate a balanced diet for your cows. And that's an important step for achieving better productivity."

The right nutrients fed strategically late in lactation will be key – particularly this season, for dairy farmers choosing to keep cows in milk and extend their cash flow.

"Ultimately it's about increasing the efficiency of your herd and maintaining an income, by employing smart strategies to improve the cost-effectiveness of keeping cows in milk."

Farmers interested in running through the numbers to see if extending milking could work for their farming situation can be put in touch with a SealesWinslow Specialist by calling 0800 287 325.

### THOUSANDS OF FARMERS MAKING THE SWITCH TO SUSTAIN

Thousands of New Zealand farmers are swapping out their standard urea for urea treated with AGROTAIN<sup>®</sup> nitrogen stabiliser in a bid to ease the pressure on the environment and their pockets.

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We credit 20 years of international research and more than 1000 field trials, combined with proven performance here in New Zealand for SustaiN's success.

"We've run some numbers and about half of all of our urea sales in recent months have been SustaiN," explains General Manager Sales Campbell Parker.

"Word is finally getting out there that this product can result in thousands of dollars more returns from growing more grass, while also having some really positive environmental outcomes."

While farmers try to avoid ammonia losses from standard urea by applying it when wet weather is forecast, research by Landcare Research has shown a good 5 to 10 mm of rain is needed within eight hours of application to reduce ammonia loss – a finding consistent with research in New Zealand in the 1980s.

Science Manager Aaron Stafford, says nitrogen loss through volatilisation is well-known, but the economic cost is not.

Around 500,000 tonnes of urea is sold in New Zealand each year and if you use the rule of thumb that 10 percent of available nitrogen will be lost from volatilisation, that's the equivalent of 23,000 tonnes of nitrogen which is not doing its job in the soil and generating a return for farmers. Urea fertiliser contains 46 percent nitrogen, so at an average of \$500 a tonne for urea, this means \$25 million of nitrogen is lost on average each year as ammonia.

Aaron says there's an environmental cost of those losses too. The volatilised nitrogen is redeposited elsewhere in non-target environments such as waterways and bushland, which is not desirable.



#### Have you checked your SustaiN Gain?

For an individual farmer savings from using SustaiN can equate to thousands of dollars each year. Recently available from Ballance is www.sustaingain.co.nz - an interactive site designed for farmers who want to calculate the financial gains of using the product which is proven to reduce the volatilisation which leads to nitrogen losses.

Farmers wanting to check if applying SustaiN provides a net benefit over urea can use the calculator but also hear from dairy farmers across the country sharing their experiences using SustaiN.



This season South Canterbury dairy farmer Nigel Rathgen's net benefit from using SustaiN instead of urea is expected to be \$2,813

# NEW BLOCK FILLING NUTRITIONAL GAPS

There's been strong interest in the new SealesWinslow Cattle Fodder Beet Block, available throughout New Zealand for the first time this year.

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The new block helps to overcome phosphorus deficiency and balance other minerals like magnesium and essential trace elements that are lacking in cows and heifers on a fodder beet diet.

A diet deficient in these minerals, particularly phosphorus, can lead to 'creeper cows' in the short term, and longerterm difficulties including poor milk production, reduced appetite, weight loss and poor reproductive performance.

Helping to fill the nutritional gaps of fodder beet was a challenge that was taken on by SealesWinslow Product Development Manager Jackie Aveling and Ballance Product Formulation Specialist Angela Newton.

Jackie explains that traditionally farmers have reduced the chance of phosphate deficiencies developing in stock grazed on fodder beet by dusting the crop with dicalcium phosphate (DCP) or using a slurry of the compound on silage or straw. However these practices can be dusty, time-consuming, wasteful and the intake is variable.

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Getting the right daily dose into stock meant coming up with a unique product formulation, and the finished product blends a number of sources of phosphorus to strike the balance between intake and taste.

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Angela says that the cows liked the taste of some of the early batches a bit too much, so the team made some adjustments so that the block was palatable enough for cows to get the right intake, but not so tasty that they over-indulged.

An average intake of 100-200 g/day, which provides 5-10 g of phosphorus/day, is ideal and cost effective and that's what we're achieving. This helps to meet the requirements of both pre-lactating cows and other cattle.

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The new Cattle Fodder Beet Blocks come in 25 kg tubs which are simply placed at the crop face under the fence in front of the cows. Available from merchant retail stores, the block pays its way in terms of convenience, labour time saved, a reduction in downer costs and potential longer-term stock problems. It also compares favourably with the price of a single intravenous downer cow treatment. The recommended block to cow ratio is 1:25.



Jackie Aveling and Angela Newton testing the formula for the new Cattle Fodder Beet Block

SealesWinslow

## SHOWING OFF SPREADSMART

We recently showed off our new variable and differential rate fertiliser application technology, Spreadsmart, to farm business groups in the Wairarapa, and it's been greeted with a tonne of enthusiasm and interest.

SpreadSmart<sup>™</sup> is precision technology developed for fixed-wing aerial topdressing. It combines GPS guidance and tracking systems with computerised farm mapping to automate the opening and closing of an aircraft's fertiliser hopper at the right time, in the right place.

Where older technology relied on manual controls for fertiliser hoppers, this system is fully automated making it safer for the pilot and the environment.

"For the first time we now have the technology to more accurately apply more than one rate of a fertiliser to better match the fertiliser rate with potential productivity, such as flat areas for finishing versus steep slopes," explains Spreadsmart Project Lead, Matt Ward.

The newly developed technology has been fitted into our Super Air topdressing division's aircraft in Wairarapa and King Country and launched in these areas for wider commercial application.

Matt says there has been a huge expression of interest from farmers looking to meet environmental compliance needs.

"With healthy rivers and farming within limits top of mind, our new technology gives farmers a chance to jump ahead of the curve and get on top of compliance with automatic proof of placement maps."

He said early adopters of Spreadsmart have also received an added bonus – finding an additional 7% of land when their farm is mapped using our Spreadsmart's mapping capability to produce a 3D map of their farm.

"Most farmers think and view the things in 3D, so this technology helps us be more accurate with what we do on farm for our customers."

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Generation SpreadSmart<sup>™</sup> delivers precision with multiple benefits. It helps keep fertiliser out of waterways, gullies, forestry blocks, tracks and other no-go zones and allows for different fertiliser products to be specifically targeted to different areas of the farm, improving overall production. It also combines variable rate application, so different parts of the farm get exactly the volumes of fertiliser they need. With fertiliser one of the largest on-farm costs, precision applications also mean budgets go further, improving farm margins.

Spreadmsart is one of the outcomes of Ballance's \$19.5 million Clearview Innovations Primary Growth Partnership programme with the Ministry for Primary Industries, designed to improve nitrogen and phosphate management systems.



### NEW EXPERTS ON BOARD

Aimee Robinson has joined us as our upper South Island science extension team member while Josh Verhoek is putting his experience to good use in the Lower North Island.

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#### Aimee's passion for soil helps South Island farmers

Growing up in urban South Auckland seems a world apart from working with South Island farmers, but for Aimee Robinson she's exactly where she wants to be.

Aimee is the upper South Island representative for

our Science Extension Team, working with farmers from Canterbury, Marlborough and the West Coast. She advises them in ways to achieve increased on-farm productivity, through more efficient and effective nutrient management. For Rolleston-based Aimee, the role is a perfect fit.

**66** Everything on earth relies on soil, it's the basis for agriculture and human society, **57** she says.

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A graduate of Lincoln University, Aimee has a Masters in Soil Science and a Bachelors degree in Environmental Science. Despite not coming from a farming background, Aimee loves working in the agricultural industry and has found the farming community to be very welcoming.

**1** If you're honest and willing to put in the time to understand their particular situations, goals and challenges, then they respect you for that. If they trust you, they'll trust your advice.

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Besides working with individual farmers, she also runs educational workshops for farmers, as well as people in urban areas. She notes how important it is to present an accurate view of the agricultural industry and especially to reverse the misconception that farmers don't care about the land and environment.

#### Time on the farm gives Josh new perspective

Fresh from two years out in the paddock as a dairy farm manager, Josh Verhoek is now back on the Science Extension Team.

Based in Feilding, he has taken on the role as Science Extension Officer for the Lower North Island, putting to use his experience and on-farm insights to help local farmers get the most out of their farm nutrients.

Working as a dairy manager was a hugely challenging and eye-opening experience," says Josh. "It really puts the demands of farming into reality.

Now back on the technical side, Josh enjoys working with a range of farmers to maximise the value of the products they use while also introducing the latest developments from Ballance. His key roles within the Science Extension Team are to lead farm systems knowledge and develop Ballance's involvement with the sheep and beef farming sector.

"My time as a farm manager has definitely helped me when advising farmers as they know I've 'been in the gumboots', having lived and breathed what they do, and that's invaluable perspective you can't buy."

A graduate of Lincoln University's Agricultural Science and Massey's Nutrient Management programmes, Josh recognises the challenges farmers face in balancing livelihood with looking after the environment.

For most farmers working on the land means balancing production and economic priorities with regulatory requirements and a desire to protect the environment. We want to give farmers every advantage we can, advising them in ways to increase production through more efficient resource management.





### **NEW PLAN FOR OVERSEER'S SUSTAINABILITY**

The place of OVERSEER® as a valuable tool for managing nutrient use and losses looks set to strengthen as a new not-for-profit company, OVERSEER Limited is taking on its management and implementing a business plan to enhance the technology.

OVERSEER is jointly owned by the Ministry for Primary Industries, The Fertiliser Association of New Zealand and AgResearch. Late last year the CEOs of the joint owners committed to the transition, a business plan to ensure the enhancements and a sustainable funding base. A transition phase will take three years during which funding for OVERSEER will increase substantially to at least \$2.25 million per year.

Users can expect improvements in customer services, including the help desk, as well as the model's maintenance and development. A formal quality assurance programme will be established and critical maintenance and testing work on the model accelerated.

OVERSEER has an important part in New Zealand agriculture, underlined in an independent assessment of its economic value by agricultural economist Phil Journeaux. In his report, available on the OVERSEER website, he says it has become a vital tool for managing nutrient use by providing a picture of nutrient movement on farm, including estimating nutrient leaching. He points out that securing similar information would involve significant costs to users, especially farmers and regional councils and may not be as accurate or effective.

The investment in developing OVERSEER over its 16 year history is calculated at \$12 million, but the Journeaux report calculates an average benefit of \$271 million a year across fertiliser application, nutrient management on-farm and research.

The report notes that without OVERSEER, nutrient budget assessments would be more manual, take more time and require more information and calculations. Soil testing requirements would significantly increase and would be a cost to farmers.

### NITROGEN LOSS MORE THAN JUST FERTILISER

With the dairy downturn putting pressure on many of our shareholders, we've partnered up once again with the Dairy Women's Network to run workshops designed to help dairy farmers hang on to every possible gram of nitrogen to get the grass growing and converted into milk.

The network hosted six Understanding Farm Nitrogen Reports workshops across the country in March and April, where our science extension team demonstrated how understanding farm nitrogen reports can be turned into profit.

ANIMALS

The five factors of nitrogen loss "The majority of dairy farmers are not able to interpret what farm nitrogen reports mean," said Science Extension Manager Ian Tarbotton.

"Often people hone in on the nitrogen fertiliser, but when we talk about nitrogen loss we are talking about the whole nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen fertiliser is just one part of it. A lot of what's lost is from urine patches and how much is lost is influenced by animal size, soil drainage, temperature, and pasture growth/root depth. Over application of effluent can also lead to unnecessary losses."

Farmers who didn't attend can access free resources on the subject at http://www.ballance.co.nz/Our-CoOp/ Sustainability/Farm-Nitrogen-Reports

Facebook users can 'like' the Ballance Facebook page for frequent tips, and Ballance Nutrient Specialists are available to offer expert advice on 0800 222 090.

### QUALITY STAMP GIVES ADDED FEED ASSURANCE

Shareholders can have even more confidence in SealesWinslow's range of feed, with our mills now all holding FeedSafeNZ accreditation.

FeedSafeNZ is a quality stamp from the New Zealand Feed Manufacturers Association (NZFMA) for manufacturers and blenders, designed to enhance the quality assurance of stockfeed.

SealesWinslow Nutrition and Quality Manager, Wendy Morgan, says FeedSafeNZ provides customers with the confidence that feed products are safe and have been produced in a manufacturing plant which is regularly audited.

"Farmers are increasingly becoming aware of the risks associated with poor feed quality. They appreciate the peace of mind that FeedSafeNZ affords," says Wendy.

Feed produced at all three SealesWinslow mills, in Wanganui, Morrinsville and Ashburton, is available from rural merchants including PGG Wrightson, Ashburton Trading Society, Farm Source and Farmlands.

Our team at SealesWinslow Ashburton are proud to stand behind their quality credentials

Males

### ARE YOU FARMING STRONG?

In a display of great commitment to the cause our Nutrient Specialist for Hauraki/Coromandel, Dusty Hulley, proudly flew the Ballance flag as part of the Farmstrong Challenge – encouraging farmers



to get more active, live well, and farm well. He recently joined at least 200 others including farmers, rural professionals and school kids on a ride from Ngatea to Kerepehi.

If you're after a bit of 'wellspiration' then check out the Farmstrong website http://farmstrong.co.nz

## GET YOUR REBATE FASTER

We have had a great response from shareholders that currently receive any payment from Ballance by cheque to advise their bank account details. If you overlooked the request, there's still time to update your details in time for this year's rebate payment.

Simply call our shareholder free phone number on 0800 267 266 or click on the 'Shareholders Update your Details' link on our website www. ballance.co.nz

In June 2016 we will advise all shareholders of the account details we hold to ensure we have the correct one loaded into our system.

# SOLD OUT ROCK TOUR

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Tauranga locals and visitors had the chance to meet a real rock star and donate to the Trustpower TECT Rescue Helicopter as part of local Port of Taurangas' summer tours in January, which saw us bring in a visit to our superphosphate plant as part of the trip.

"The reality is that we operate a superphosphate manufacturing plant in the middle of Tauranga city. We play a valuable role in this community through employment, we are caretakers of our local environment, and we want to be good neighbours," said Mount Maunganui Site Operations Manager Shaun Piper.

"Thousands of people drive past our Mount Maunganui site every day. We were delighted to invite them in and show them how a completely insoluble chunk of phosphate rock can turn into superphosphate which supports soil fertility on farms, orchards and market gardens around the country."

The rock tour proved popular, and all 25 tours over ten days were sold out.

PHOTO: Twelve people from the Mount site and corporate office, including Kurt and Terry, were trained up as tour guides, and came from all parts of the business, ranging from commercial accounting to mechanical team leaders to business support analysts



### DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT WITH NEW SAFETY LEGISLATION

With changes to health and safety legislation taking effect on April 4, it's important that shareholders brush up on the new requirements and what they mean for you.

As you check through your systems under the new legislation, don't forget our product safety data sheets are readily available online at http://www.ballance. co.nz/Our-Products/Product-Certification-Policies-and-Safety/SDS. These provide all the detail you require on each of our products, including handling and storage protocols, appropriate first aid treatment and which personal protection gear should be worn when handling particular products.

Under the legislation, everyone is considered responsible for health and safety from farmers, to share-milkers, to seasonal workers. There is an emphasis on workers taking responsibility for themselves for acting in a safe way, including using the right gear, following the proper processes and taking time to plan how to do a job safely if the situations changes. But even though "everyone" is responsible, the main duty of care falls to what the law calls the Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (or PCBU). The PCBU will almost always be a business, and in the agriculture sector that will include farmers. What this comes down to is farmers being responsible for taking the lead on keeping people safe and healthy on your farm.

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To find out more about the Health and Safety at Work Act visit the WorkSafe New Zealand website at worksafe.govt.nz/hswa

For more ag-specific information, saferfarms. org.nz has useful information, including guides to update your farm safety plans

## FROM SOIL TO SALE

There are tens, even hundreds of thousands of dollars difference between profits of low and high performing sheep and beef farms around the country, and Ballance is committed to doing its part to help farmers close the gap.

We have signed up as a proud new sponsor of the New Zealand Ewe Hogget Competition to raise awareness of different farming systems and practices and how these impact profitability.

This competition recognises and celebrates on farm productivity in the sheep sector, along with the blood, sweat and hard yards that go into breeding and raising lambs, managing complex farms and stock performance. What's more, the competition gives farmers the opportunity to benchmark their flocks against others at both a local and national level and learn from other competitors as well as the judging panel. For the industry to succeed, farmers need to get the best out of their land. We know that maximising genetic potential early delivers better returns. Feed plays a big part of this, and high quality pasture starts with nutrient rich soil. We have a team of nearly 100 nutrient specialists around the country at the ready to work through a sustainable fertiliser plan to help our farmers with their stock performance goals. By optimising Olsen P levels, for example, farmers can support optimal pasture production which in turn supports their carrying capacity and their ability to meet live weight gain targets.

## SMILES IN THE SOUTH AS PHASEDN PLANT OPENS

South Island farmers now have direct access to one of Ballance Agri-Nutrient's most popular products, PhaSedN.

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Ballance, in partnership with Te Poi Manufacturing Limited, has developed a specialist manufacturing plant within its Timaru Hub operation. Investment in the manufacturing plant supports requests from South Island farmers who want local supply of the product.

"We're experiencing strong demand for PhaSedN throughout the country. The South Island has experienced significant growth in dairying in recent years, and it also has a deep sheep and beef heritage.

.....

We hear our customers like PhaSedN because the unique formulation provides a great option to boost pasture covers ahead of autumn with nitrogen, while also fulfilling a good part of annual sulphur requirements.

The co-operative has seen increased interest for the product more recently from farmers reviewing their annual fertiliser programme in light of budget constraints. This is because PhaSedN offers a combined nitrogen and sulphur application and the flexibility to adjust the timing of other base nutrient applications of phosphate and potash.

"The type of nitrogen and sulphur we've used in this product has also been chosen with the environment in mind, helping to support sustainable farming and clean water initiatives underway in the Canterbury region and throughout the country."

#### What is PhaSedN?

PhaSedN is a granulated combination of SustaiN, elemental sulphur and lime. Applied in autumn,

SustaiN promotes grass growth ahead of winter, while minimising nitrogen loss caused by volatilisation.

The fine elemental sulphur delivers a long-term supply of the vital nutrient for crops. It is an ideal combination where there is a high sulphur need as is the case with most South Island soils, or if there is high rainfall and a high risk of sulphur leaching.

On dairy farms PhaSedN is suitable where phosphate levels are high and no immediate applications are required, but sulphur availability needs to be maintained or increased. It can also be applied to effluent blocks where tactical sulphur and nitrogen are needed.

On hill country the product is suitable where there is good phosphate fertility but sulphur is still required and nitrogen is needed.

