

CASE STUDY



Roger & Caly White, Farm owner and operators, Cheviot Hills, Gisborne

UPGRADE TO THE FERRARI OF FARM MANAGEMENT

Roger and Caly White have farmed their 800 hectare Cheviot Hills property for more than 23 years.

They run 2,800 Coopworth ewes and replacements, and 220 Angus/KiwiCross cows to a terminal sire with all progeny retained through their first winter.

They like being organised. In fact you can ask Roger about almost anything that's been done on the farm in the last 10 years, and he can tell you right down to which mob he drenched early in 2006 - because it's all recorded in his FARMAX system.

DITCHING THE SPREADSHEET

Roger came across FARMAX when he was investigating a new business venture.

Up until then, he'd been designing his own spreadsheets in Excel to record information about his farm to monitor its performance and production - but he says they were complicated to set up and use.

He had a 'bit of a play' with FARMAX and quickly realised it offered much more than his spreadsheets - it was the Ferrari, whereas the spreadsheet was the family sedan.

With this analogy in mind, its powerful modelling capabilities were very appealing - and he's been using it ever since to help him run the farm.

"At the end of the day you can't buy the information you put into FARMAX - it is about your farm alone, unique to you and worth the investment of your time and the best tool you can find to make sure you get your decision making right."

PROOF IS IN THE PUDDING

Among other things, Roger uses FARMAX to record animal health information, and sales and purchases; forecast his feed deficits and surpluses and set his feed budgets; and test the effect that any changes to his farming practices will have on the farm by running

different scenarios.

"FARMAX is really well written and the way it works is really clever. It's intuitive - and it's actually taught me a lot about what I should be monitoring on the farm. I use it like a diary, and I am in the system entering data, forecasting the next few months or testing different scenarios at least once a week."

But he says you've got to want to use it properly, go through the learning curve and persevere to truly get the benefits of its forecasting and modelling features.

He also said, with the right information entered, you have to believe what FARMAX tells you will happen and that it is accurate.

"When FARMAX agrees with the changes you want to make, i.e. the outcome is good, you love it - but when it doesn't agree, it's easy to ignore that advice. But the proof is in the pudding, and when you see the decisions you've made come to fruition because you've been guided by FARMAX, that's when you really switch on and become a big fan."

PEACE OF MIND

Roger said farming today is all about managing risk and being able to confidently make decisions as early as possible.

"What you do now, what you do next, risk analysis and risk management, balancing environmental and financial decisions - you can't rely on educated guesses to get things right."

"You need a tool you can rely on that will crystallise your thinking, take away the clutter and help you determine your next course of action with confidence - and that is exactly what FARMAX does. You can't put a price on that sort of peace of mind."

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