



YOUR QUARTERLY FARMAX NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2017

TAKING STOCK

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Farmax *Advantage* newsletter.

Our case study is on Landcorp's Rangitaiki Station, a deer farm near Taupo which has used FARMAX to its advantage when making crucial changes to stocking rates and its environmental footprint.

We also hear from Poppy Frater and find out what she has been up to in the nine months since she left Farmax.

Look out for the FARMAX Tips as well which may answer some of your questions about the FARMAX Cloud and extending FARMAX files.

All the best for a great autumn; hopefully there are no more cyclones on the way!

GAVIN McEWEN
General Manager



FINDING THE RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES WITH FARMAX

Rangitaiki Station is an 8,500 hectare property 35 minutes south-east of Taupo on the Central Plateau. Part of Landcorp, Rangitaiki is a huge operation with 20 staff living on site and more than 80,000 stock units including deer, sheep, beef cows and dairy cows.

Run by farm manager, Sam Bunny, Rangitaiki is traditionally home to 22,000 ewes, 8,000 hinds, 1,200 breeding cows and 1,500 dairy support grazing heifers. In addition, they currently finish about 1,000 bulls and steers – although that number is fast growing. Lamb and young deer are also finished at Rangitaiki.

It's a busy operation – one driven by innovation and a quest for excellence.

Rangitaiki is one of New Zealand's largest deer farms. Venison and deer leather from the station are sold internationally and locally under the Pamu brand, along with wool.

THE BIG PICTURE

FARMAX software plays a key part in decision making at Rangitaiki, allowing Bunny and Rangitaiki's senior business manager, Ross Shepherd, to gauge where they are at, what risks and opportunities lie ahead, and what they can do to maximize profit and minimize loss on the farm.

"The property's stock policies and feed management is run through FARMAX," says Bunny, who has managed Rangitaiki Station for almost four

years. "It's crucial for farming."

Adds Shepherd: "It's a great tool at a management level to look at a whole farm business."

MAKING CHANGES

Recently, Rangitaiki has had a change in its stocking policy, which includes halving sheep numbers and introducing large scale cattle systems, and FARMAX has been essential in that process says Bunny.

"We are making some huge changes here and putting some new policies in place – a process that began about a year ago and will continue to be implemented over the next two years. We used FARMAX to do all the modelling work and we trialed a number of different scenarios through FARMAX."

The outcome of the policy review will see sheep numbers decreased from 22,000 to 8,500 and bull numbers increased from 500 wintered to 4,000.

The change was largely driven by significant financial gains without increasing the environmental footprint. It is also envisaged in time that all bulls will be sourced from the nearby Landcorp

"...technology plays a vital part in the modern farming practices at Rangitaiki, not only with FARMAX but with other forms...."



Sam Bunny, Rangitaiki Station

'Pastoral' dairy herd. Pasture production opportunities also influenced the policy changes: "We believe the new policy will improve both pasture longevity and utilisation," says Bunny.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

FARMAX has also helped forecast pasture and feed requirements for stock which is important, given the weather conditions. The station is 80 per cent flat land, but at 750m above sea level is a 'high-country' environment - which poses challenges for Bunny.

"We have long cold winters and late springs, so we have large periods of the year where we operate in a feed deficit. We use supplements to counter this."

Throughout the month he enters data from the farm into FARMAX to track everything from stock numbers to supplements: "We are continuously

looking at it. We can use the program to see if we can afford to buy stock now, or if it's a good time to offload stock, and make other decisions."

Both Bunny and Shepherd are confident FARMAX users. Shepherd has used FARMAX for the past 12 years, and Bunny has 7 years of experience on two different properties.

"You get more confident the more you use FARMAX," says Bunny. "Entering in accurate information is key. You learn to trust it."

Shepherd says there is a lot of value in using FARMAX, explaining that "it's the only tool that you can use to look at feed supply and demand, animal performance and gross margins all in one place, hence we use it a lot for forecasting - it's key to see your position down the track, and so you don't have any surprises."

Technology plays a vital part in the modern farming practices at Rangitaiki, not only with FARMAX but with other

forms of technology. The new cattle finishing policy has meant subdividing parts of the station into smaller paddocks, including techno-lanes using hot wires, and cellblocks of one hectare to more effectively manage the pasture.

"Technology is important to our business, and we are open to change," says Bunny. "We are always looking at different ways we can do things and trying to challenge ourselves to be informed."

"...we are always looking at different ways we can do things and trying to challenge ourselves to be informed..."



WHERE ARE THEY NOW? POPPY FRATER

Poppy worked with Farmax from June 2015 to July 2016. After taking the long route back to the UK, via Australia, Bali and India, she began work with farm consultancy firm, SAC Consultancy, in November last year. She is now developing her role as a grassland specialist for beef and sheep farms. Let's hear from Poppy:

I think it is fair to say that grass is underutilised in the UK. Most sheep and beef farms are set stocked and depend on bought in feeds and conserved forage. However, things might be changing. The uncertainty of subsidies and lamb price into the future is causing a bit of a stir. The upside, perhaps, is a greater focus on grassland management. This is just a feeling, but I am speaking with more farmers wanting to make more of grass. Here is a taster of some of the projects I am involved with.

All grass wintering: rotational grazing through the winter to ration grass and reduce feed costs. I see this as a good route into rotational grazing, We have more certainty about what the grass is going to do (not much!) and after embryo implantation the ewes can withstand hard rationing. I have been developing technical guidance material, spreadsheets and YouTube clips to support farmers getting started. Not much new to you FARMAX subscribers I know!

Live lambs: we have a group of farmers that are focusing on increasing lambing percentage through



Poppy Frater, SAC Consultancy

body condition scoring, vaccination, late pregnancy ewe nutrition, lambing management and data collection. It stems from a comprehensive review ('Improving neonatal survival in small ruminants, C. Dwyer et al.') which brought together the research to date on the topic.

FARMAX in the UK: following the development of a UK version of FARMAX, there are a group of grazing enthusiasts that are very keen on the software. I have been training them on how to use it and make the most of it.

That's all I can say for now. I am missing the New Zealand scenery and climate very much. Hope the season is shaping up to be prosperous and enjoyable.

FARMAX AT THE RABOBANK AGRI-LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Rabobank Agri-Leadership Programme (RALP) is an industry good initiative funded by Rabobank with the mission of attracting more top performing students into the primary industries.

The programme was hosted at the University of Waikato halls of residence from the 16th-19th of January this year.

Year 12 and 13 high school students from the Waikato region were selected to attend the four day programme based on academic performance, leadership skills and extra-curricular activities.

The top 30 applicants made it through to the event and 11 different companies were visited, from farming businesses to

processors and science organizations to marketers.

Farmax hosted a mini-workshop at RALP to educate the students on the role of computer software in modern farming businesses and the advantages it can provide in data storage, modelling and analysis. The students were also shown how FARMAX can be used as a farm systems education tool.

Farmax greatly appreciated the opportunity to support the Rabobank Agri-Leadership Programme, and we are excited about the talented students entering our primary industries!

“...we are excited about the talented students entering our primary industries...”

DID YOU KNOW?

Cats sleep for up to 66% of their lives (16 hours per day), beaten by koalas which sleep for 75% of the time (18 hours per day). In comparison, adult humans generally sleep 7-8 hours per day, and sheep and cows only sleep for 4 hours per day!

FARMAX/FARMIQ INTEGRATION

Did you know FARMAX and the FarmIQ Farm Management System have collaborated in an integration to allow our common customers to share data between the programmes? The integration brings stock transactions and pasture cover information from FarmIQ into FARMAX.

We know none of our customers like to enter data twice so we look to partner with organisations such as FarmIQ where farmers are entering similar information that FARMAX needs to generate forecasts.

The integration, available to all FARMAX Sheep Beef & Deer Monitoring customers, has been up and running for a while now, and we've had the opportunity to address some early teething issues. We are pleased that with a few tweaks we've ensured integration now better reflects the way farmers use the respective programmes.

If you have any questions about the integration, or you want some help getting set up, please contact the Farmax HelpDesk and we can advise the best steps to take.

FARMAX CONFERENCE POSTPONED

Regrettably we have made the decision to postpone the 2017 Farmax Conference to a later date to be advised.

It was a difficult decision to make, as the Farmax team were genuinely looking forward to the positive engagement with our users and collaboration partners.

The reason behind the decision, which we are happy to share with our customers, is that we are deeply involved in a strategy refinement process.

We want to get that right, and had hoped to make several announcements about the future direction of Farmax and our products at the conference, however, we feel we have run out of time to do that justice. We have a lot of exciting news, but we are not quite ready to announce it yet.

Therefore, the decision was made to postpone the conference, with a new date to be confirmed later in the year.

For those of you who have already registered a full refund of your conference fees will be processed as soon as we are able.

IN BRIEF

FAREWELL JULIA!

January was a big month for the team as we said goodbye to our valuable team member Julia Hoddinott. Julia worked for Farmax for four and half years and was ready for a new adventure. We have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside her over the years; her voice will definitely be missed! We wish her all the best for future endeavours.

FARMAX TRAINING COURSES

We have now released new training dates for 2017 throughout the country. To see if there is a training near you please go to our website, click on the Training & Advice tab, and look at our event calendar. If you would like to attend a training and can't see a date that has been set for your area, please register your interest by e-mailing the Farmax HelpDesk at support@farmax.co.nz.

SIGN OF THE TIMES

A Smart Car Charger has now been installed at the Waikato Innovation Park. Please feel free to download the 'PlugShare' App to utilise the Car Charger here at the Park when you come to visit us.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Amazon Rainforest and Amazon Basin produce about 20% of the world's oxygen supply, possess 20% of the world's freshwater and contain over 50% of all plant, animal and insect species.

HAVE YOU MET...ANDREW?

Andrew is the new product design lead at Farmax. He is a townie who has learned more about agriculture than he ever expected spending over 15 years spent designing software for New Zealand farmers. Andrew is a usability specialist with a very hands-on approach to researching his users' unique needs, so he is no stranger to overalls and gumboots.

During a previous role at LIC, Andrew designed and led the development of MINDA software. He went on to design its successors on the web and mobile, including MINDA Milk, MINDA

Lookup and MINDA Calving, as well as other LIC products like MINDA Land & Feed, EZ Link and Protrack. Outside of LIC, Andrew's work has included designing the current AgResearch website, the current app of The Warehouse and consulting for the likes of Mainfreight and Massey University.

Andrew has a Bachelor of Computing and Mathematical Sciences (BCMS) and a Bachelor of Arts, both from the University of Waikato. He holds User Experience Certification (UXC) from

Nielsen Norman Group, the world's leading user experience consultancy.



FARMAX TIPS

HOW TO EXTEND YOUR FARMAX FILE

In FARMAX you can extend your current 16/17 season file to the 17/18 season to begin planning for upcoming events. Follow the below instructions to extend your current one-year file:

1. If your 16/17 file is already a two-year file, you will need to archive and drop the first year before continuing to step 2. Under Tools menu -> select 'Drop first year'
2. Under the Tools menu -> select 'Extend One Year'
3. Select the source file to use as a template:
 - a. This Farm: This uses the currently open file as a base. All events, growth rates and opening/closing numbers will be copied across to the new year.
 - b. Another File: This gives the user the option of selecting any cloud file as the template for the new season.
4. After selecting the base year/template file the user will be presented with Define Templates. This allows the user to set the names for the mobs/objects in the 17/18 season. Alternatively, you can do this once the file has been extended.
5. The 17/18 year is now added. It is very important to thoroughly check through this year to ensure the properties for blocks and mobs are correct and adjust the events to suit the plan for the farm.

For assistance please contact the Farmax HelpDesk.

CLOUD SAVING - HOW DOES THIS WORK?

Here is a brief explanation of how your file saves to the FARMAX Cloud.

When you open and begin working in your FARMAX files, FARMAX requires you to manually save your changes by clicking the 'Save' button located on your toolbar.

By clicking 'Save' your changes are saved to your local cache in the background of the FARMAX software on your computer.

When you then close out of the file or the FARMAX application your saved changes get synced up to our cloud servers.

If you happen to be working offline in FARMAX, your files will be saved to your local cache and will be uploaded when you reopen your software online.

Therefore, your files will always be saved to your local cache and will then upload to our cloud servers once you have closed out of the file, saving the final version from that session.

