



YOUR QUARTERLY FARMAX NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2015

TAKING STOCK

In this edition of *Advantage* we look at changes to product pricing with Generation 7 (for more information, head to our website).

We also take a look at the 2015 Consultant of the Year Awards, congratulating our winners - Phil Journeaux, Lycinda Lett and Sully Alsop.

Our feature case study is Landcorp farm Te Karae, a sheep and beef farm in Northland. We talked to farmer Gareth McKenzie and business manager Dan Brier to see how Farmax is used to maximise biological and financial performance on farm.

As spring arrives, we hope that the weather treats you favourably in your corner of the country. We would love to hear from you if you have questions or comments, or want a chat!

GAVIN McEWEN
General Manager



NEW PRICING WITH FARMAX GENERATION 7

We have spent the last three years investing capital, time and resources to increase the number of New Zealand farmers using Farmax to enhance their farm performance and profitability, yet Farmax is still under-utilised.

Many of our investments are culminating in the second half of 2015. First is the rollout of Farmax Generation 7 or the Farmax Cloud which is currently underway (if you have not yet been upgraded to the Cloud, we will be in touch with you soon). Initial feedback from customers who have experienced the new 'drop box' like functionality and flexibility has been extremely positive!

The second major initiative we are rolling out is a change to our pricing model. Unbelievably, Farmax subscription prices have not gone up in 12 years, while other on-farm costs over that time have risen close to 50%. The good news is that while the price of Farmax subscriptions will change, the overall effect will be negligible: some prices will go up slightly and others

will go down.

Our new pricing will be simpler and clear paths will exist to upgrade to additional functionality. There will be FARMAX Analysis for consultants (mainly) and FARMAX monitoring tools for farmers (mainly).

Consultants using FARMAX Analysis will have a 'pay as you go' system. \$200 per year enables a consultant to create a model of a farm entity and do unlimited scenario analysis.

Farmers can choose from our suite of monitoring tools, which provides a clear path for upgrading from basic to advanced.

The tables below feature some of the changes to products and pricing. For more detailed information head to the Farmax website under the Products and Services tab.

The roll-out of new pricing and products will begin in October 2015.

"...Unbelievably, Farmax subscription prices have not gone up in 12 years..."

OLD

SHEEP, BEEF AND DEER

FARMAX FarmTools	\$142 p/m
FARMAX Pro	\$142 p/m
Pro with physical report	\$150 p/m
Pro with physical and financial reports	\$167 p/m
Management block	\$27 p/m

DAIRY

FARMAX FarmTools	\$83 p/m
FARMAX Pro	\$125 p/m
Management block	\$27 p/m

NEW

SHEEP, BEEF AND DEER

Performance Monitoring	\$100 p/m
Professional	\$150 p/m
Advantage	\$167 p/m
Advantage +	\$188 p/m
Management block	\$27 p/m

DAIRY

Performance Monitoring	\$100 p/m
Professional	\$150 p/m
Management block	\$27 p/m

FARMAX AN ESSENTIAL TOOL IN THE HARD HILLS OF THE FAR NORTH

When you manage a strictly grass-only breeding unit, Farmax is an essential tool, says Te Karae Station manager Gareth McKenzie. Te Karae Station, located in the far north in Kohukohu on Hokianga Harbour, is a hard to medium contour, kikuyu-based farm, owned by the Office Treaty Settlements and leased by Landcorp.

Te Karae has been stuck in ownership limbo awaiting treaty settlement for some time, meaning the normal infrastructure you would expect to see on this type of property, isn't there.

"It's a traditional farm, and a hard farm. It's wet and muddy and the pasture quality is poor," says McKenzie.

"You can't get any heavy machinery on it in winter, so if you run out of grass, it's all over - there is no more.

"We're working to try to break it back in to get better feed quality and better weight gains."

McKenzie runs 688 cows and 3,300 sheep on the 874ha (effective) property.

While this year hasn't been so bad he says, generally McKenzie and his staff member can only navigate the farm on horseback between June and early October, so buying in feed is not a luxury afforded to them.

"Because it's not high quality sward, Farmax is really handy with monitoring my replacements' monthly weight gains," said McKenzie.

"I have to achieve those monthly weight gains because I haven't got any summer crops or any other quality feeds that I can use to speed their growth rates up.

"You can't do big weight gains on this farm; you've got to do it gradually, so if you don't monitor your weights and your weight gains on Farmax, once you fall behind, you don't catch back up."

Because Te Karae is a grass only system, McKenzie has to get his feed budgeting allocation exactly right, so he runs a two-year file to find opportunities where he can make a feed surplus further down the track.

"It's hard to make money off the trading stock, so I use Farmax to maximise the number of stock units I can run on the place - that's the only way I can really make profit."

This year, he is running 33 more breeding cows than he did last year.

"It's not much of a gain in normal terms, but here it is a gain," he says.

When McKenzie buys in finishing stock, he buys large animals so he knows he can finish them in time, and says using Farmax shows him where his feed surplus is which means he can work on his weight gains to make sure the cattle will be sent off by April before his winter



Gareth McKenzie

feed is impacted.

In addition to the monitoring that the programme allows him, it's the confidence and reassurance that Farmax provides that is of just as much value to McKenzie, who has been at Te Karae for just 15 months.

"I have spent the majority of my 16 years of farm management on big pieces of land in the King Country - ryegrass country.

"Working with kikuyu has been a big change for me. It's very different to what I'm used to so I've had to rely on Farmax to confirm that I'm making the right decisions, which would have been more instinctive on properties I've worked on previously.

"Farmax, in conjunction with a Sward Stick, is giving me confidence a long

way out that that won't happen, that we're on budget and heading in the right direction."

"Taking into account the lack of infrastructure, coupled with the build-up of kikuyu stolon, animal performance is hard to achieve at Te Karae," says Landcorp's Northland Area manager Dan Brier.

"Gareth has made huge progress on the farm in a short space of time without many of the tools (such as crops) he was used to. His attention to detail has really allowed him to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

"And Farmax is a big part of that success. Gareth carefully monitors his feed and animals and plugs the data into the programme.

"When he comes to me with a concern or possibility, he has already quantified it on Farmax and we can get straight to work on solutions and opportunities, which means we can put robust solutions in place without having to work on guesses and maybes."

McKenzie was also one of the first Farmax users to use the cloud-based system which he says has made life a lot easier for communication between himself and Brier, who's based in Wellington.

"Dan knows Farmax so well and has taught me how to fine tune my file to maximise profit. Using the system in the cloud has meant that I can call him with a query; we can create scenarios together and try out different rotations, all in real time and online. It's brilliant. We can make decisions a lot faster."

FARMAX CLOUD DEMO

In August, Julia and Poppy travelled to the Hawke's Bay to do one of the first Farmax Cloud demonstrations. Farmers and consultants were upgraded to the Cloud (Gen 7) and given a tour of the software and its new features. We received great feedback, with everyone positive about the new version, particularly farmers who were excited that consultant changes to the file were visible immediately.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2015 CONSULTANT OF THE YEAR WINNERS

The 2015 Farmax Consultant of the Year Awards were held at the annual NZIPIM conference in Ashburton on the 3rd of August. It was a great night, with well over one hundred guests in attendance - a mixture of rural consultants, farmers, and other agricultural industry representatives.

The winners were three outstanding consultants whose value to New Zealand's agricultural industry is undeniable, and whose projects will greatly support farmers and the industry.

The Beef + Lamb NZ Sheep and Beef Consultant of the Year was Sully Alsop from Baker and Associates. Based in the Hawke's Bay, Sully's winning project aims to look at ways breeding type farms and finishing type farms can align their resources with the goal of producing product consistently in specifications and timing that would allow for processors to plan for stock supply.

Phil Journeaux from AgFirst Waikato was named DairyNZ Dairy Consultant of the Year. Phil was wrapped with his win, saying the highlight of receiving the award was being recognised by his peers. His project will look at the impact of environmental constraints on land prices.

Another AgFirst Waikato team member, Lycinda Lett, was the Emerging Rural

Professional of the Year. Lycinda, who was on maternity leave when she received the award, said it was exciting to watch the live Twitter updates on the awards from home. Her project will look at farm workers "to understand the benefits of shorter roster systems on dairy farms and to start to establish some financial detail in this area of farm people management."

The \$20,000 award prize pool for the three categories included a paid overseas study trip, funds for professional development, and funds to take paid hours off work to complete a project or initiative that will be of benefit to the pastoral farming industry.

We received a huge amount of nominations for the awards, with everyone in contention contributing positively to New Zealand's agricultural industry. Thank you to everyone who nominated themselves, a colleague or their own consultant.

Thank you to our sponsors - Beef + Lamb NZ, DairyNZ, NZIPIM and MPI.

Congratulations to all of our winners and our finalists as well. We look forward to hearing how Phil, Sully and Lycinda go with their travel and projects!

IN BRIEF

FARMAX PAPER AT GRASSLANDS

Farmax team member Poppy Frater is presenting a paper called *Livestock feed intake assumptions in decision support tools; a stocktake of the current science and assumptions used by livestock models* at the New Zealand Grasslands Association conference from 3-5th November. If you are attending be sure to watch her presentation!

B+LNZ ONETAI ENVIRONMENT FARM PROGRAMME

Farmax is excited to be involved in this new extension project, by providing modelling and strategic analysis for Onetai Station. The B+LNZ programme is aimed at farmers who want to help identify tools and practices that will result in real environmental and financial improvements.

FARMIQ INTEGRATION TESTING UNDERWAY

Farmax are excited to announce another integration development, designed to create efficiency for our customers. In collaboration with FarmIQ we have developed and are currently testing a new release of Farmax, that will allow FarmIQ users to integrate their FarmIQ and Farmax files. This new development enables the transfer of key stock movements, stock reconciliation and pasture covers from FarmIQ to Farmax.

SUCCESSFUL MASSEY TRAINING

Each year we hold introductory Farmax training courses for students at Massey and Lincoln Universities, and this year we had a total of 71 students take part. If other educational institutions would like Farmax training sessions, feel free to contact us.



L-R: Phil and Sully



Lycinda

TAKING THE SWARD STICK TO NEW HEIGHTS

We imagine the camera-mounted drone with a Sward Stick attached would certainly take the leg work out of your monthly pasture walk. Even with the most advanced ag technology, the Sward Stick is still a farmer's best friend. We were reminded of this after seeing some photos from Neil and Philippa Gardyne's Beef + Lamb New Zealand Demonstration Farm. The Gardyne's project is testing the workability of agridrones for mainstream farming and Farmax's very own Sward Stick was centre stage on the drone.



DID YOU KNOW?

The agricultural industry will have to feed an additional 1.5 billion people by 2030, so sustainable agriculture is becoming more essential. The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations lists principles for sustainable food and agriculture, which include improving efficiency in the use of resources, acting to conserve and protect nature, and enhancing the social equity and justice in agriculture. (FAO United Nations, 2015)

WHAT LAST YEAR'S COTY WINNERS ARE UP TO...



Last year's winners were (L-R) Canterbury consultant Wayne Allan, Hawke's Bay Ballance consultant Hannah Best, and Wairarapa consultant Chris Lewis.

Allan, who has his own consulting company, won the Sheep and Beef

Consultant of the Year and is part way through his project that looks at understanding seasonal returns from sheep and deer, and feeding on those margins to increase overall profitability.

He says winning the Farmax award has been great for his profile and that he enjoyed attending the International Farm Management Association Congress in Quebec, Canada in July.

2014 Dairy Consultant of the Year Chris Lewis has completed his research, having received 70 replies to his survey, which he says is a testament to the respect those in the industry have for the awards and his project.

Lewis' project was around gauging consultant's perceptions of environmental indices, where consultants are getting their information

from currently, and what changes and opportunities they see necessary to improve this suite of tools going forward.

Hannah Best, who was named Emerging Rural Professional in last year's awards, has recently moved on from Abron to take on a business extension role with Ballance Agri-Nutrients.

She has collected the data for her project, which is trialling an inoculum product on New Zealand farms that is currently not being used commercially in New Zealand, to establish appropriate application methods and ideal application rates.

She said Abron is collecting more data on the trial in other crops in different parts of New Zealand.

NEW ACCREDITED CONSULTANTS

Farmax's new accreditation programme has been very successful so far, with many rural consultants completing assessments to become Farmax-accredited.

Our accreditation programme was set up to develop and improve participants' Farmax skills and knowledge. At the end of the course participants should be able to make decisions, find solutions and develop scenarios to produce meaningful information and engage real-world scenarios in Farmax.

We would like to celebrate those who have passed our accreditation levels, so congratulations to the following people who have completed the Bronze accreditation:

BRONZE

SHEEP, BEEF AND DEER

Emma Bell Jock Cameron



DAIRY

Grant Leigh Kevin Wilson
John Vosper Tony Waugh
Taisekwa Chikazhe Eric Jacomb
Brian Clarke



If you would like to become accredited or need more information, head to www.farmax.co.nz/training-and-advice/farmax-accreditation/.

FARMAX TIP

SAVING LOCAL FILES TO THE CLOUD

If you have upgraded to the Farmax Cloud and have a file to load into the Cloud - either for an existing farm or a new farm - please follow the below steps:

1. Find the file saved on your computer and double click on it
2. Click File → Save As
3. The Cloud window will appear
4. For a new farm, in the first panel click Farm → New Farm and enter the farm name and details
5. Click OK
6. The new farm will appear in the list in the first panel - click on it
7. In the middle panel, click on the folder called Scenarios
8. In the last panel, enter the file name
9. Click on Save

For more information please visit our website or contact the HelpDesk.