



YOUR QUARTERLY FARMAX NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2014

TAKING STOCK

In this edition of *Advantage*, we'd like to thank our co-sponsors of the FARMAX Consultant of the Year Awards: DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb NZ, MPI, NZIPIIM and NZX Agri.

Their support helps us recognise the significant contributions that rural professionals make to the pastoral industry.

While nominations have closed for the main awards, the Farmers' Choice Award is open until the 31st July. Vote for your consultant!

Here at FARMAX, the team take great pride whenever FARMAX gets mentioned in the press and when our customers are recognised by winning awards. It is becoming more frequent, a sign that more and more farmers are taking up FARMAX as a valuable tool in their farming business.

"Farmers don't buy what we do, they buy why we do it." That phrase embodies what drives the team at FARMAX, a genuine desire to see our customers and the pastoral industry of New Zealand prosper.

GAVIN MCEWEN
General Manager



FARMERS – IT'S YOUR CHOICE!

This May the hunt began for New Zealand's top dairy, sheep and beef agricultural consultants and emerging rural professional with the opening of the FARMAX Consultant of the Year Awards.

The awards comprise three major categories which are the DairyNZ Dairy Consultant of the Year, the Beef + Lamb NZ Sheep and Beef Consultant of the Year, and the NZIPIIM Emerging Rural Professional of the Year.

Alongside these awards, the NZX Agri Farmers' Choice Award is a new category in 2014 which gives farmers an opportunity to nominate and acknowledge a consultant of high standing within the farming community.

FARMAX general manager Gavin McEwen said, "The Farmers' Choice Award is an opportunity to acknowledge a consultant who you think does an exceptional job for you, the community and the industry – without the fanfare of a full nomination process.

"On a regular basis we see first-hand the invaluable service that rural professionals provide farmer clients with. The feedback we receive from

farmers about their consultants is really uplifting – it shows just how much of a difference consultants can make to their clients' businesses," said Mr McEwen.

All farmers who nominate a consultant for the NZX Agri Farmers' Choice Award are in the draw to win a prize pack from NZX Agri and FARMAX for both themselves and their nominated consultant.

Entries for the new NZX Agri Farmers' Choice Award are open until 31 July. All other applications closed on 31 May, and received a great response.

FARMAX would like to say another thank you to our amazing sponsors. Keep an eye out for profiles of the award winners in our next newsletter.

To nominate a consultant for the NZX Agri Farmers' Choice Award, simply visit the FARMAX website: www.farmax.co.nz

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Martin Bennett, dairy farmer and farm consultant

WINNING COMBINATION FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Putaruru dairy farmer, Martin Bennett, has been farming for 37 years. The Bennett's South Waikato farm comprises 128 effective hectares milking 390 cows producing 160,000kgMS per year.

The farm employs a contract milker, which is just as well, because Bennett is also a farm consultant to seven dairy farmers located throughout the greater Waikato region, from Reporoa to Te Kauwhata.

Bennett started consulting around four years ago when he was able to step back from some of the day-to-day responsibilities of his own farm.

In 2012, Bennett started looking around for an information management tool for his own farm that would continue to sharpen their farming operation.

"I had developed my own feed budget on a spreadsheet many years ago and taught myself to use it. I added costings to it and over the years it just kept getting bigger and bigger and more and more complicated to use. Eventually it was a logical transition to find a complete software package that would integrate more aspects of the farm and was easier use."

FARMAX was the software program that caught Martin's attention.

Today, Bennett uses FARMAX Dairy Pro which is the most advanced version of the software. It allows him to do more in-depth analysis and model different scenarios for his farmer clients.

NO-WHERE TO HIDE FROM ACCOUNTABILITY

Bennett said once you commit to using FARMAX, it quickly tells you whether you are on the game, and

there's no-where to hide from the accountability it provides – in a very positive way.

"You'll know whether you or the people in your team are following the plan because you'll either have too much feed or not enough milk production, or vice-versa."

"It keeps people very focussed which is beneficial for everybody. Especially for your Gen-Ys who like technology."

He said it is also a great tool for motivating teams to work together towards common goals,

and dovetails nicely into staff management.

TAKING CHARGE OF THE PRODUCTIVITY EQUATION

Bennett said farming through volatile times puts an increased focus on controlling costs, and not losing track of where the expenses are and how they are being managed.

He said if you lose control, it is really hard to pull back on the cost per kilo to produce milk solids, and FARMAX tells you in black and white exactly how you are performing in this area.

"The more you get into it, the more you can fine tune your farming system because you are constantly evaluating your progress, and it fits all scenarios, from an absentee owner to a family farm or corporate ownership.

"Pasture utilisation is number one, and then you need to forward plan your production and profitability goals. FARMAX has the ability to help you continually look forward and push the boundaries and that's the winner for me."

MARTIN'S TOP FOUR FARMAX BENEFITS:

1. **Feed efficiency:** It's a brilliant education tool that helps farmers quantify the resources they have available so they can use them more effectively.
2. **Integrating cost structure and financials:** It covers most of the input and output costs of the farming business and summarises it all in one place so that you're not looking at different aspects in isolation; instead you can see where one change here affects something over there.
3. **Power of scenarios:** This is where it really cranks up and you see the benefits of building your model, keeping it up to date and testing different decisions or scenarios to make changes with the utmost confidence in the outcome.
4. **Prepares the farm for the Future:** With farming within limits well on the way, FARMAX will contribute to the farm system being more resource efficient and being able to adapt quickly to remain profitable.



Doug Avery (L) and family

FARMAX SUPPORTS BEYOND REASONABLE DROUGHT

In May, FARMAX was proud to sponsor the *Beyond Reasonable Drought* roadshow featuring Doug Avery, who – with his son, Fraser – has been a proud FARMAX user for the past eight years. Farmers at five venues throughout Northland had the opportunity to meet and learn from the inspirational Marlborough farmer, Doug, who moved his family farm ‘beyond reasonable drought’ by making some radical changes to how the farm operated.

Doug’s message is a poignant one: he realised, in order to prosper and grow his business, he had to change his way of thinking. He realised there is no point fighting against things that can’t be changed so he learned to work in harmony with them. Now the only weather Doug worries about is *whether* he will, or *whether* he won’t. He and his family enjoy a lifestyle many self-employed people are still striving to achieve.

The *Beyond Reasonable Drought* roadshow was an initiative to introduce Doug Avery to sheep and beef farmers and enable them to learn how they can move their businesses forward profitably and sustainably with innovative ideas, new tools and a new-found attitude.



JOINING IN WITH DAIRYING WOMEN

In March our team enjoyed the opportunity to attend the Dairy Women’s Network annual conference in Hamilton. It was great to catch up with customers and talk about the impact FARMAX is having on their businesses. Women are a significant part of New Zealand’s farming history and it is awesome to see the presence of women in dairy farms, dairy businesses and the dairy industry today. For more information about the Dairy Women’s Network, visit their website: www.dwn.co.nz.



Julia Hoddinott, FARMAX

IN BRIEF

FEDERATED FARMERS GISBORNE/WAIROA HILL COUNTRY FARMER OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to FARMAX users, Rob and Karen Newman, who won Federated Farmers Farmer of the Year in the Gisborne/Wairoa Hill Country category. At a field day celebrating their win, it was clear why Rob and Karen received the award, after working hard on their farm for seven years they have made significant progress towards making the farm a more profitable and sustainable business.

CLOUD PILOT

FARMAX has developed a cloud version of Pro which will revolutionise the FARMAX software. Having a cloud-based system will mean that customers can download their farm files at any time of the month and will have full visibility of who has updated their file and when. This cloud version is currently being piloted with some FARMAX customers...watch this space!

BAY OF PLENTY DAIRY INDUSTRY AWARDS

FARMAX was proud to support the Bay of Plenty Dairy Industry Awards by sponsoring the prize for Sharemilker/Equity Farmer of the Year 2014. Congratulations to Brett and Natasha Grindrod who won the award.

MAINTENANCE RELEASE OF FARMTOOLS DAIRY AND PRO DAIRY

We are currently working on new versions of FarmTools Dairy and Pro Dairy which will include improvements to the physical summary to align figures with DairyNZ, an updated nitrogen screen to accommodate overlapping applications and updated databases e.g. tax values and milk pricing. The maintenance release will be available soon.

FARMAX WINTER TRAININGS LINED UP

FARMAX training sessions for our sheep and beef and dairy software are scheduled for June and July in locations such as Ashburton, Taupo, Rotorua and Hamilton. For more information, or to register for a course, head to the training calendar at www.farmax.co.nz.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is expected that global consumption of beef and mutton products will increase by 30% by 2050. The biggest increase will be in India, where consumption will increase by 138%. Interestingly, by 2050 it is expected that consumption of beef and mutton in Canada and the USA will decrease by 19%, the largest decrease in the world.

FARMAX CUSTOMERS ARE BIG WINNERS

We wanted to give a shout out to FARMAX customers, Hugh and Sharon Ritchie of Drumpeel Farms, who won the Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year title in April. Upon their win, Farmer of the Year committee chairman, Peter Todd, commented that: "This is a large-scale business both in livestock and cropping using the very latest technology to make efficiency gains in production and optimise profitability with the better land competing with dairy returns. All this is achieved with a strong focus on sustainable farming and a passion for the environment and his soils." From the FARMAX team, congratulations Hugh and Sharon!



FARMAX recently launched *My Forecast* - New Zealand's first online tool forecasting pasture growth to within a 5km by 5km location anywhere across the country.

As the name indicates, *My Forecast* gives you just that - a pasture cover growth forecast for your farm - it is that specific. The online tool uses data from the industry-developed Pasture Growth Forecaster, which was developed through funding from Beef + Lamb New Zealand and DairyNZ.

For a small monthly fee of \$9.95 + GST, you get access to powerful information that helps you make better decisions on farm. Sign up today at www.pasturegrowthforecaster.co.nz.

FARMAX TIPS

TAX VALUES

With the 2014 IRD tax values being released, it is important to ensure these are being used in your FARMAX file. Tax values should be automatically updated when your file goes through the FARMAX HelpDesk, but it is good to double check this. Using the latest tax values paints a clearer picture of your capital value and gives you an advantage when moving your file forward in to 14/15.

NEW LOCATION FEATURE

The new season is upon us and all of you will be in the process of tidying up next season's model. Now is the perfect time to utilise FARMAX Dairy's new Location Feature. Benefits: there are half the amount of mobs and it is easier for staff to update events with less mobs. For help on using this feature contact the friendly team at FARMAX.

HAVE YOU MET... MATT



Matt Pilkington is our technical specialist at FARMAX, looking after the HelpDesk, assisting customers with technical questions, managing the PGF service and helping run FARMAX training courses. He is also in charge of office comedy and All Blacks

sweepstakes. His favourite part of the job is getting to meet customers and interacting with them at trainings and events. Matt enjoys the outdoors, particularly hunting and fishing, which is in contrast to his inner-city Auckland upbringing. His pride and joy is his Toyota Hilux 4x4.