



**YOUR QUARTERLY FARMAX NEWSLETTER**  
WINTER 2019

## TAKING STOCK

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

Our feature case study follows a Kiwi farmer across the ditch, where he is adapting his New Zealand farming knowledge to the very different Australian climate and conditions.

You'll also get an insight into the changes in the new SBD release, plus some interesting tidbits about the upcoming Dairy 7.2 version.

It was great to see many of you at the 2019 Fieldays in the usual Hamilton fog, and I'm sure we will see some more of you at ag events over the next few months.

All the best for the coming months on the farm, especially those heading into a busy calving season.

**GAVIN McEWEN**  
CEO

*Gavin*



## TAKING NEW ZEALAND ACROSS THE DITCH

On an old volcanic plain to the west of Melbourne and Geelong sits Warrambeen Farm, traditional calm and flat land except for the stark remnants of volcanic cones which are scattered across its 4,000ha.

The farm manager Andrew Kirk has been on Warrambeen for nine years and works alongside a senior livestock manager, a machinery operator, casual backpackers and Lincoln University students, all looking after the farm's 8,500 merino ewes.

The farm has a diverse mix of areas, with a quarter of the farm still uncleared and used for environmental offset, and 1,100ha dedicated to cash cropping. It is heavy clay country with all stock water coming from underground bores, and the annual shearing happens in May for three to four weeks.

Andrew is originally from Hawke's Bay, having worked first on a family farm, then subsequently working for a very "progressive farmer" who, alongside consultant Phil Tither, of AgFirst Pastoral Hawke's Bay, introduced Andrew and the team to FARMAX.

There were four farms, with a different block manager on each, so FARMAX was a "good way for his sons and I to feed physical farm data to him....then he was able to make decisions and look at the business as a whole through that," says Andrew.

### ACROSS THE TASMAN

When Andrew moved to Australia to farm in his wife's native country, FARMAX went with him. He had felt a little bit underpowered not using the software at the new farm, especially



The Kirk family, Warrambeen Farm

coming from a farm that used it every day.

Andrew explains, "It [FARMAX] is one of those things when you get into it you can get a little bit hooked and quite enjoy working with it...some software programs can become a bit of a chore to get in and use and FARMAX certainly isn't one of those."

Using a New Zealand software system on an Australian farm could have been quite the challenge, but Andrew was keen to give it crack and in the end it worked a treat.

He's used FARMAX to build up a history of the farm seasons, record decisions that have been made, pasture covers, pasture compositions; "just building up data history".

The ability to get more accuracy when it comes to feed budgeting is a huge factor, one that Andrew appreciates for

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Farm manager Pete Barker and team

the long term:

"I find it really important for making confident feed budgeting decisions and especially with a six to twelve month outlook. It's very easy to allocate on a piece of paper the short term for two or three months, but to look six months or further out and quickly analyse a few different scenarios of how the season might pan out...it's a very quick and efficient way of doing longer term feed budgeting."

#### A CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

Assurance when it comes to making hard decisions is also vital and Andrew feels a lot more secure when FARMAX matches what his intuition and experience are telling him:

"We farm for four to six months on dry feed and the spring and autumn seasons can be quite variable. Some tough decisions on finishing stock and supplement allocation need to be made in dryer seasons."

FARMAX gives confidence in the decision and aids communication to the property owners. This then leaves the execution a straight forward process."

With less FARMAX users in Australia, Andrew acknowledges how beneficial it was using it back in New Zealand with a larger farmer group and ample data, and being able to use the software more to its potential.

And with no consultant to help him he relies on his advanced FARMAX training course knowledge which really enhanced his skills and understanding of the whole system.

Every now and again, the Farmax HelpDesk comes in handy for a few tricky questions as well, but Andrew hopes that over time, more Australian farmers will use FARMAX and pool their data for powerful benchmarking information.

#### PEOPLE POWER

It is interesting in an industry epitomised by animals that people can be the biggest challenge and the biggest blessing as well. Andrew says one of the great challenges in farming is finding people with the right attitude, but when you do

that's when the magic and progress happens:

"We are very lucky - at the moment I've managed to get a couple of guys and a Lincoln student that are absolutely outstanding, we're in a bit of a golden era at the moment... really it's those motivated young people that challenge the way you are doing things and bring a lot of enthusiasm and it really lifts the whole team and the whole business when you've got those people in there."

It's a challenge but when you get it right it's the most rewarding part of it as well, it makes achieving the goals that much easier."

And with a strong team on Warrambeen it's no surprise that on-farm productivity is increasing each year, helped by some investment in a new cropping enterprise strategy that "needed a real kick along".

Over the past few years the cropping enterprise has greatly improved, as have the financial gains, with additional profits feeding back into fencing, fertiliser and pasture renewal.

Andrew knows that for every farmer, doing development on the back of cashflow is always a challenge, but things are looking very positive for Warrambeen and amongst the classic bluestone woolsheds and rugged volcanic cones it is sure to continue to prosper.

## HAVE YOU MET... SAMUEL DING

Software Engineer

Samuel joined the team initially on a summer internship through Waikato University with a Masters of Information Technology under his belt, and is now a permanent full time member of the team. As a software engineer, Samuel helps Farmax's products evolve to meet the changing needs of New Zealand farming.

Prior to this he worked in modelling bioprocesses for agricultural and food products. During this time, he earned a Masters of Engineering in Bioengineering from Beijing University of Chemical Technology. Samuel enjoys problem solving and is always looking to best utilise his engineering, machine learning and bioengineering skills here at Farmax. When not in the office, Samuel enjoys travelling and hiking across the country.



## IN BRIEF

### DON'T FORGET TO UPDATE YOUR PLANNED OR AUTOMATIC PAYMENTS

Farmax has switched banks and is now banking with ANZ Bank NZ. As of June 2019, payments should be directed to our new account.

**Bank Name:** ANZ Bank NZ  
**Account Name:** Farmax Limited

**Account Number:**  
06-0294-0952997-00  
Please contact [accounts@farmax.co.nz](mailto:accounts@farmax.co.nz) if you have any questions.



# LATEST FARMAX SHEEP, BEEF & DEER RELEASE

FARMAX Sheep, Beef & Deer (SBD) users will have noted an update was released recently, which addresses some bugs and adds some new functionality. We encourage you to follow the prompt to install the new version if you haven't done so already.

Here are a few highlights to check out the next time you're using FARMAX.

## 1. ASSIGN PADDOCKS TO BLOCKS

You have always been able to select Add by Paddock (A) in a Cover Measurement record to open the Paddock Records screen (B) and add your paddock covers in order to calculate your Farm Average Cover.

Now you can now specify which block a paddock belongs to (C) and this selection will be remembered for future measurements.

FARMAX will calculate the average cover for a block using the total area of the paddocks' measure on that block. This means even if you only measure a few paddocks on a given block, FARMAX will still calculate an average cover.

If any paddocks are unassigned, FARMAX will calculate the farm average cover based on the average of the paddock observations (using paddock area).

## 2. MOB LIVE WEIGHT SCREEN

The Live Weight screen (D) appearance has changed to make it more consistent with other screens. The table now sits beneath the plot rather than beside it.

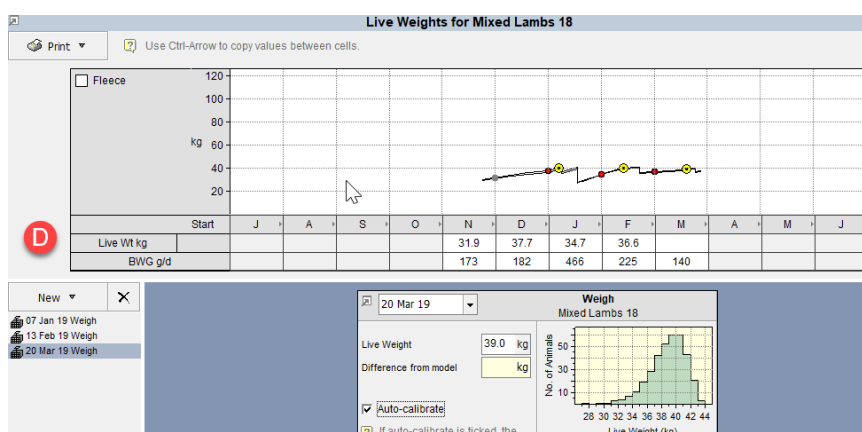
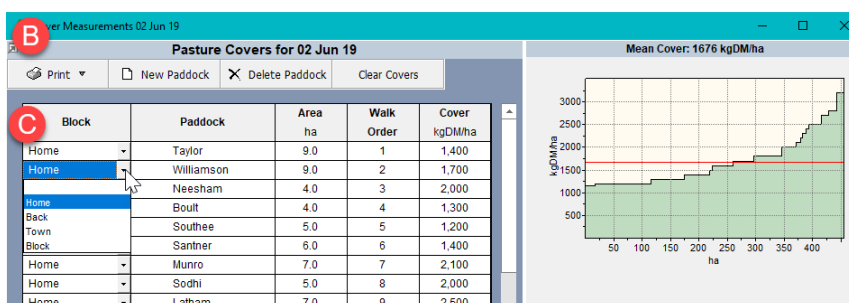
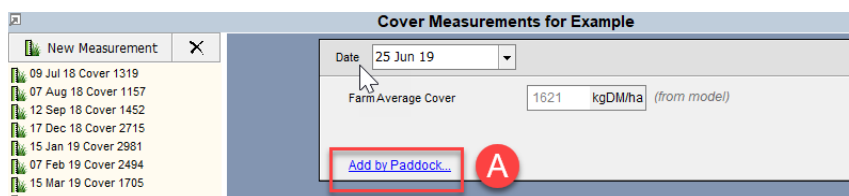
## 3. UK VERSION UPDATES

### Expenses

Users with UK region files – your expense year used in your files now aligns with your farming season (January – December).

### Mob Weights (E)

Feedback on the UK breed weight ranges suggested mature weight needed to be increased, as the mature weights were previously much lower than NZ breeds. We have added new weight ranges and included a label to guide the user selection.



# FARMAX EMERGING RURAL PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Once again, Farmax is excited to be sponsoring the Emerging Rural Professional of the Year Award, which will be presented at the New Zealand Institute of Primary Industry Management (NZIPIM) conference in Christchurch on August 5th.

With a prize package worth more than \$3,000 up for grabs, last year's winner Laura Keenan said, "this award has been

an amazing launch pad for a career in the primary industries...I would encourage all young industry members to apply for this award and broaden their horizons."

Applications close on the 21st of July. You can find the application form and prize package information on the NZIPIM website: [www.nzipim.co.nz](http://www.nzipim.co.nz).



# SNEAK PEEK AT DAIRY 7.2 RELEASE

We have been busy working on a new FARMAX Dairy release which focuses on entering monthly monitoring data in the Performance screen. Here is a preview:

## 1. FEEDING OUT

The new Feeding Out pop-out screen allows you to update and add supplementary feeding for a month or 10-day period as either a per head amount (A) or as a total amount fed (B). You can also enter supplements used in units such as bales, rather than kgDM.

## 2. MILK ACTUALS

With the addition of the Milk Actuals screen, you no longer need to move to FarmTools to enter your monthly or 10-daily actual milk production values.

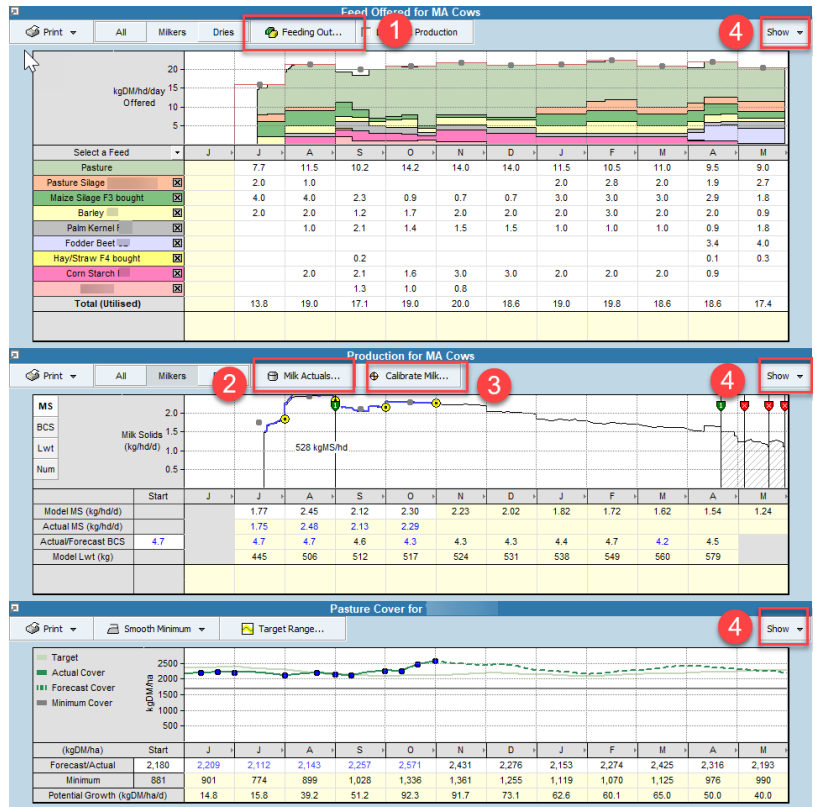
## 3. CALIBRATE MILK

With the Calibrate Milk pop-out screen you can automate the process of calibrating your modelled milk production to your actual production. This should be your last step in the monthly monitoring process after checking cow numbers are correct and supplementary feeding and actual production has been entered. The auto button (C) in Calibrate Milk will adjust Pasture Offered (D) to match the pasture intake requirement to the actual production, updating your forecast milk production and pasture cover.

## 4. SHOW BUTTON

Now you can choose which parts of the Production screen you want to see, then create space to focus on a table or plot. The three sections of the Production screen each have a show button, which allows you to decide if you want to show the section or show just the table or plot. When selecting 'Hide All', the size of the remaining shown sections will resize to take up the available space.

Keep an eye out over the coming months for the release of this exciting new version of FARMAX Dairy, with many more enhancements to be announced soon.



**Feeding Out**

Milkers: November 18, Whole Month

	Daily DM per Head	Total	On-Hand 30 Nov
Pasture Silage F2 bought	kgDM/hd/day	tonnes DM	0.00 tonnes DM
Maize Silage F3 bought	0.70 kgDM/hd/day	16.12 tonnes DM	0.00 tonnes DM
Barley F1	2.00 kgDM/hd/day	51.75 tonnes	0.00 tonnes
Palm Kernel F5	1.50 kgDM/hd/day	38.38 tonnes	0.00 tonnes
Fodder Beet Bulb F8	kgDM/hd/day	tonnes DM	0.00 tonnes DM
Fodder Beet C2	kgDM/hd/day	tonnes	2.80 tonnes
Hay/Straw F4 bought	kgDM/hd/day	big bales	0.00 big bales
Corn Starch F6	3.00 kgDM/hd/day	75.09 tonnes	0.00 tonnes
DDG F1	0.75 kgDM/hd/day	18.77 tonnes	0.00 tonnes

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