

# Groundspread

**Volume 195**  
**November 2018**



*Wishing you a Merry Christmas  
and Happy Holiday*

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## SPREADMARK REGISTERED COMPANIES

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Spreadmark is a fertiliser placement quality assurance programme. The scheme will register spreading companies provided they have certified spreading machinery, trained operators and an appropriate quality management system which ensures that farmer/grower outcomes are

met and environmental sustainability is protected.

The Spreadmark scheme is governed by the Fertiliser Quality Council consisting of representatives from fertiliser user groups, NZGFA and fertiliser manufacturers.

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For most groundspreaders, this is the really busy season. It is our harvest! Reports from all parts of New Zealand speak of a better than average season, with good tonnages being spread under better than average conditions. One major manufacturer speaks of tonnages being 14% up on last year. Good news for everyone, the farmer, the spreader and particularly the land. The improved lamb prices and the general wellbeing of the sheep and beef sector may be the reason for increased farmer confidence.

It was good news that the major fire in the Ravensdown Hornby plant was so well managed and Hornby dispatch is now back to normal. Communication with the public and local transport has been equally well managed. Well done Ravensdown. The seasonal rush with queues at depots waiting for mixes means that any effort by fertiliser manufacturers to encourage farmers to spread on shoulders of season will be welcomed by all in the industry.

Conference 2019 will feature the introduction of four NZGFA awards – NZGFA Health & Safety Award, NZGFA Innovation Award, NZGFA Young Achiever's Award and the prestigious NZGFA President's Award. I want to give all members the chance to discuss this at their November / December Branch meetings and the opportunity to forward nominations when we officially launch the awards in February 2019. Criteria for each award is currently being compiled, as are the finer details and guidelines of the awards programme. I will ensure that this information reaches you all as soon as possible.

These awards are to recognise outstanding people in our industry, of which there are many. Nominations may come from Branches or from individual members. Award presentations will take place on the last night of Conference at the Gala Dinner.

Council has determined to turn the January meeting of Council into a strategic planning exercise. NZGFA has worked to a Strategic Plan first developed in 2013, reviewed in 2016 and due for review again next year. With the impending retirement of long serving Executive Director Kevin Geddes, Council is taking this opportunity to fully consider all options for running an organisation like NZGFA. Federated Farmers have notified Council that they are unable to supply a policy person to replace Kevin but can continue to provide financial administration.

To assist the Strategic Planning exercise, Councillors will also be asking Branches at their November / December meetings.

"What type of organisation do you want to belong to, going into the future?"

"What is the best way to have the voice of the groundspread industry heard?"

"Are Branches and a National Council the best organisational structure to represent the interests of groundspreaders?"

"Should the Executive Director be Wellington based, to be able to lobby national offices / government departments?"

"Can Branches work more effectively than they are now - how?"

"Where do you want to see NZGFA in the next 10 years?"

The answers to questions like these will give your councillors a direction for our organisation as we plan for the future.

Council have again committed to Professional Development courses for members in 2019. I am pleased to say that Ballance AgriNutrients have agreed to support the Professional Development Courses as they did in Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch and Gore last year. The 2019 courses proposed are: 'Owner and staff wellness - look after teams during pressure times' and "Develop the next management tier".

Remember to attend your Christmas Branch meetings. Your voluntary Branch officers are the unsung heroes of NZGFA. Support them, learn something about the national work of your industry from your councillors and enjoy the fellowship of your fellow groundspreaders. Sarah and I offer you all our best wishes for a successful spreading season, take a break at Christmas time, then return to a happy 2019.

Keep safe out there  
Dean.

**Merry Christmas, I hope you all have a busy spreading season followed by a well earned break - Amanda**

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— NEW ZEALAND —  
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# Groundspread

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Articles and photos contributed by NZGFA members and associates. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for opinions expressed by contributors and/or any inadvertent mistakes or omissions that may occur.



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The October meeting of the Council of the New Zealand Groundspread Fertilisers Association was held in the Miramar Golf Club, Wellington, on Wednesday 24th October. Council noted the retirement of Ross Corlett as Taranaki Councilor and expressed thanks for his contribution to NZGFA, for his work for the Taranaki Branch and National Council. President Dean Brooks welcomed Lee Cooper, Taranaki Branch chair and now Taranaki Councilor.

Since Conference in July, Council has met twice by teleconference, 13 September and 4th October to manage current issues including:

**Spreadmark Farmer Training.** John Schultz reported that Phil Johnson from CanDrive Ltd has completed a draft training curriculum for Farmer Spreadmark. Council considered the training should be very practical and cover the needs of the farmer operator spreading on the farm covering on farm hazards such as the safe handling of bulk bags and on farm environmental issues. The health and safety issues on farm must distinguish between the farmer as a PCBU and the spreader operator. John will circulate the draft to Council for further comment.

**AFSA Conference.** Dean Brooks and Kylie Schultz were NZGFA representatives to the AFSA conference held in Canberra in October. The AFSA conference covers the suppliers of fertiliser, as well as fertiliser spreading so the subject matters covered at the AFSA conference are wider than NZGFA Conferences. Council considers that there is value to NZGFA in sending representatives to the annual Conference of AFSA. Equally there is value in the reciprocal attendance from AFSA representatives from Australia. Kylie Schultz has written a report for this edition of Groundspread.

**Association Membership.** Membership is a regular agenda item at Council meetings. Many Branch areas have considerable potential to increase membership. Graeme Martin reported 10 prospective new members have been invited to the Waikato

Branch Christmas function. Councilors are asked to ensure that their Branches invite prospective new members to Branch Christmas functions to encourage membership.

**Spreadmark Code.** Biosecurity section. JAZ NZ have requested FQC to include a biosecurity section in the Spreadmark Code. The NZGFA view is that Spreadmark is about the application of nutrients to the land and the quality assurance systems needed to audit operation. Council considers that biosecurity is a totally separate area and could confuse the clear objectives of Spreadmark. This matter will be discussed at the next meeting of the Fertiliser Quality Council 31 January 2019.

**NZGFA Strategic Plan.** The existing NZGFA Strategic plan expires in 2019. With the impending retirement of Executive Director Kevin Geddes, Council considered it timely to bring the review of the Strategic Plan forward to consider whether a new strategic direction is needed for NZGFA and to develop expectations for a new Executive Director. Council plans to take a special day to determine its strategic direction using a facilitator experienced in 'not for profit' organisations. This is planned for 30 January 2019. In the meantime, at Branch meetings in November and December Councillors will raise the issue of the strategic direction of NZGFA. Is the present structure of the organisation fit for purpose? Are the current activities of NZGFA meeting member expectations? What difference to seven branches representing members to one national council may be more effective? It is hoped that Branches will contribute their thoughts about where NZGFA should go in the next period of its life as a representative organisation for New Zealand groundspreaders.

**Professional Development Courses.** Last year's professional development courses for NZGFA members were well supported. The topics, 'employee recruitment and drug and alcohol management' worked well and were well received by all attendees. Ballance AgriNutrients were thanked for their input. Nadine Parata Ballance National Distribution Manager told Council that Ballance are willing to support NZGFA Professional Development Courses again in 2019. Council considered 'owner and staff wellness'; 'looking after teams during pressure times'; 'develop the next management tier' as topics for further member professional development.

Ballance are keen to make this investment into the industry and will also make an investment into NZGFA Conference.

## NZGFA Accident and Incident

**Register.** For the last 10 years NZGFA has run a paper-based accident and incident register. The objective of this initiative has been to gain an industry wide understanding of the causes of groundspreader accidents. This matter was raised at Conference and a recommendation was made that NZGFA improve the accident reporting system currently in use. Council were given a presentation on the Lumley Torque Data programme; a Cloud based system capable of managing the total company profile. It can contain a staff register, training reports, details of individual vehicles including history can be carried in the system. Another option was the 'Spotlight Ap' an easy to use downloadable programme that can be carried on a smart phone. The Spotlight programme is free for up to 100 users. An accident or incident can be recorded on Spotlight. Accounts can be linked, and incidents added so other people may see and learn. Members join through NZGFA, register any incidents and share information. An electronic system is much more user friendly than the present paper-based system as increasingly paper based systems are being phased out. Council is seeking more information on this option.

**NZGFA Driver Training Manual.** Safety Business Systems Ltd in Taranaki submitted a draft revised Driver Training Manual. This work has been necessary to keep the NZGFA Driver training Manual current with changes to Health and Safety legislation. Worksafe NZ did not have the capacity to make the necessary changes so Council employed Rob Thompson of Safety Business Systems, Taranaki to undertake the revision. Council went through the revised manual and made suggestions for improvement. When completed the manual will be submitted to Worksafe NZ for their endorsement.

Kevin Geddes  
Executive Director



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## Northland

Hi All,

After a long drawn out wet winter it's fair to say the Mighty Taniwha Spreading Boys have been 'tapped out' – which is great to see and say – with extra cropping, etc.

We are finally seeing some good application rates on dairy farms Spring fertiliser orders; it's been a while and some good old-fashioned fertiliser as well – Super, is that a forgotten fertiliser recommended? Followed by hopefully a normal summer so some of the Hill Country

farmers can get a chance at getting their lime on as some have missed out because of too much green grass for a couple of seasons now.

The Ballance Wellsford Store has finally closed. The new facilities are a bit of a shambles at present with normal teething problems. However, Dean Geurin, from Ballance is doing his best to sort and have running smoothly for Autumn – thanks Dean. Again, watch this space...

With ever incurring costs increasing, no more dramatically than now, we as an industry must

increase our Cartage and Spreading Rates or get out of the game. Do not undersell ourselves. The average age of the Spreader Driver is getting older not younger, seriously think about it. They, the farmer, want you. Don't forget the ones that jump the fence will always jump the fence. Just remember, it is easy to put in a cheap price.

Anyway, on a lighter note, get the tonnes on. It is what we do – volume is the key.

And don't forget ... Go the Mighty Taniwha!

Cheers Single Spinner

## Waikato



Spring has most definitely "sprung"!

Everyone is reporting that they are busy

with a demand that does not seem to want to slow down. Unlike the previous two years we have had a fantastic September and October for weather allowing an early start to the season. The past two years we were under water and unable to get wheels turning until late October. Hopefully this is a good problem to have...

The demand is intense as we have an increase in maize and feed crops going in this year and with the good growing conditions we have seen good volumes of nitrogen products and spring fertiliser mixes being applied. There is considerable chat about the long range forecast with predictions of a dry summer. That coupled with the uncertainty of farm gate prices for dairy farms, I believe we are seeing farmers

make some strategic decisions re fertiliser applications which may or could impact the autumn season.

The horticulture industry is also busy following the continued increase in the kiwifruit and avocado plantings. Specialised gear and complex mixes makes for a challenge along with multiple small block properties scattered throughout the Waikato and BOP.

The 2019 NZGFA conference planning to be held in Taupo is well underway with the website up and running. Registrations can be received now for the conference – delegates, sponsors, trade displays and accommodation. The programme is looking solid with the venue and key speakers confirmed. Start your planning now to ensure your booking!! We also have some confirmed sponsors on board with confirmation from many more pending. We will continue to update you as we confirm each phase. Please visit the website now: [www.nzgfa.co.nz/conference](http://www.nzgfa.co.nz/conference)

The committee of the Waikato Association have been on a membership "drive" to attract new members. We have planned our pre-Christmas meeting and have invited local non-member operators to attend. We have also invited our Northland colleagues so looking forward to some social interaction following the business session.

With the season being busy the usual issues challenge us in regard to farmer expectation of service, product supply, pressure at local service centres but with some effective communication we all seem to get there and get the job done.

Since our last newsletter, Dick Nesbitt passed away suddenly. Dick was a long time industry member in the Waikato servicing his loyal clients. Our thoughts are with Dick's family and thanks to those members who attended Dick's funeral. RIP

So – it is head down butt up and let's press on to Christmas. It will stay busy right through so please operate safely.

Rodger Scott

## Central Districts

Hello from Central Districts

We had a dry winter with a couple of weeks of bad storms leading to a lot of lambs being lost causing a few problems to farmers and giving us time to do maintenance.

Spreading seems to be getting busier with Christmas not far away with many farmers taking the opportunity with fine weather and the odd day of rain, to plant crops and do capital fertiliser.

The last week in October and start of November have been slow for all in the Bay due to windy conditions – we are having to go out to farms and sit because of the wind.

Fertiliser store seem to be busy and is keeping up, with trucks not waiting so long. New booking-in system at Ballance in Hastings seems to be working well with the odd person forgetting to book in.

Hope everyone has a safe and happy Christmas.

Chris king



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## Taranaki

Hello from the Naki



Busy, busy, busy would best describe the current feeling here in the region.

The tide has finally turned and for the first time in three years, with good grass growth coming out of winter, which is a contrast from previous years. No pugged paddocks, a pleasant calving season, fine warm days and rain when we have needed it.

While farmers put the dairy downturn behind them, most are using this opportunity

to take advantage of this better climate. Farmers and Operators are happy with the way things are going, so it's smiles all round, long may it last.

Early silage has been made and cropping is well underway. Talking with a couple of local Ag contractors recently they have suggested that maize hectares are up slightly on last year as is fodder beet in the region as farmers look to capitalise on feed.

Capital fertiliser and Lime are both being applied at good rates with ground conditions across the region more favourable than ever. Nitrogen is also strong as farmers follow the cows around boosting growth.

We have seen the odd plant issue and product shortage through the month of October, these issues should iron themselves out going forward as the cropping demand draws to a close.

The last meeting for our branch of 2018 incorporating the Christmas dinner will be held on the 24th November with an outing to the local Holden museum and Mount Panorama mini-putt before heading into town for a dinner. This will be a fun-filled afternoon with prizes going to the participating mini-putters.

Lastly, in light of Executive Director Kevin Geddes announcement to retire at the end of this year, I would just like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Taranaki branch to thank Kevin for his contribution to our organisation over the years. We wish Kevin all the best for his future endeavours.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to one and all.

See you all in 2019.

Lee Cooper

## Nelson/Marlborough

It's been one of the driest spring's here in Nelson this year making it a lot easier than usual to keep the trucks spreading. There's been light rain each week for the last few weeks so has been great for those farmers putting in crops or re-grassing. Good ground conditions are allowing for an early start to quite a few lime orders which will take a bit of pressure off spreaders when autumn fertilising begins later on.

Horticulture work has been steady right though spring with the recent increase in hop farms in our area once again providing some extra work.

Ravensdown Nelson now has their second weigh bridge up and running which can be operated from their main office; this has

seen a welcome reduction in waiting times.

Wishing you all a Happy Holiday Season, try to find time to kick back and indulge in some of our craft beer from here in the Craft Brewing Capital of New Zealand.

Mary Hogarth

### It's been all go here in Marlborough.

The wet ground has now dried up and it's been full noise both on the pasture and in the vineyard. Due to the late start with wet conditions lime and fertiliser are both still being applied in the vineyard, although we are just beginning to get busier with the bandspreading of nitrogen-based products as well.

We had the usual peak bottleneck at

the fertiliser store with daily demand for product greater than they could bring it in, but that has settled down again now budburst has been and gone in the vineyards.

There have been a few more grape developments to do this year – both new blocks and replants, although we might need to get these guys to plan more in advance rather than the last-minute panic, they all seemed to do to get the job done before the next contractors were due.

The forecast is for a long dry summer which I have to say I am looking forward to after our winter this year.

Tracy Rose

## Canterbury

Hi from Canterbury, where we are off to a flyer with plenty of work and great conditions.

Only problem seems to be loading times at the stores. Ravensdown have managed to keep things going from Hornby despite the fire that destroyed part of their shed.

Spreading companies are having trouble finding drivers to fill their trucks which

seems to be a transport industry-wide problem. Not sure why, the solution may be pay and work hour related.

As the milk companies become more compliance focused, we find our industry involved in the process. We have been asked to sign a document which sets out the farmers requirement for spreading on farm. No problem but the farmers are not required to meet standards that we

need on farm such as No Pivot Ruts, level paddock and no hidden hazards. Maybe groundspreaders should be getting these things put into the audit documents used by the milk companies?

Hope everyone has a good Christmas and New Year.

Roger Bruce



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## Otago/Southland

Hi All from the Deep South

The spring this year has been both cold and wet as well as having some very hot days, and I guess that is what spring is normally like, very inconsistent.

While the latter part of spring seems to be wetter and colder than earlier many operators are struggling to get any consistent work flow going and are generally behind on tonnages. With Christmas fast

approaching we all know that it will be a very pressurised couple of months, that is if the weather settles.

The Otago Southland Branch of the Groundspread association ran a training session for two days in October; this was an informative day with a lot of areas covered off by Peter Herrick, from HWR. There were over 40 drivers attending over the two days, and a large proportion of them are

new to the industry. This is a real positive and shows that we are finally getting some traction around promoting our industry and making it an attractive career, by being able to attract new people to come and drive a spreader truck.

I hope you all have a good run leading up to Christmas and can take a good break.

Cheers Steve Whitehead

## Donation to Hospice Southland

The Otago/Southland NZGFA Branch gave a generous gift of \$3000 to Hospice Southland. It was donated via Tony Laker from Laker House of Travel who was a guest speaker at the 2018 Invercargill NZGFA Conference.

Hospice Southland were very appreciative

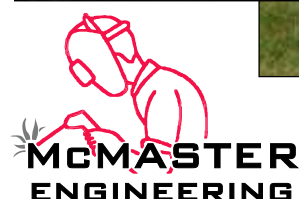
and said this support enables them to continue to provide specialist palliative care services in Southland and the Wakatipu Basin free of charge.

*Peter Herrick presents Tony Laker with a \$3000 cheque for Hospice Southland*



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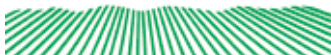


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## Otago Southland Branch donate to helicopter trust

The Otago/Southland Branch were so impressed by Lloyd Matheson's presentation on helicopter rescues at the recent NZGFA Conference they chose to donate to the trust.

"Lloyd gave a motivational speech at our recent Conference in Invercargill and the Committee chose to give a generous donation to the worthy cause," says Donna Herrick.

"Lloyd and his team provide support and rescue to many in the Fiordland/Southland areas."

The branch donated \$3000 to Lakes District Air Rescue Trust.

*Tina Powell on behalf of the NZGFA Otago/Southland Branch presents a cheque for \$3000.00 to Lloyd Matheson of Lakes District Air Rescue Trust.*



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## Retirement Tribute: Kevin Geddes

**New Zealand Groundspread Fertilisers' Association (NZGFA) Executive Director Kevin Geddes is to retire from Federated Farmers and NZGFA at the end of the year.**

Kevin Geddes started his service with Federated Farmers as a farmer in the Central Otago and Ashburton districts, going on to becoming an elected Feds representative then Mid Canterbury Provincial Chief Executive in 1991.

After the 1998 restructuring of Federated Farmers he joined the national organisation as a Senior Policy Advisor. From then on Kevin worked on a number of national policy issues (such as transport regulation and fertiliser issues) and he serviced the Grains (now Arable) industry group and mentored a succession of Grains and Arable policy advisors. Kevin has also been a longstanding Executive Director of the Fertiliser Quality Council.

Kevin took up the position of Executive Director of NZGFA in 2000, at a time when the association was in a difficult financial position and looking to move forward. Kevin supplied professional guidance and assisted the association to manage the challenges it faced.

Kevin's rural industry knowledge gleaned through his many years with Federated Farmers and his wise counsel has assisted six presidents and numerous national councillors.

The NZGFA has clearly benefited from Kevin's high standards of integrity and his unstinting loyalty – he is very generous with his time and we have appreciated that he chose to spend time



*Captain Kevin and Lorraine Geddes – a steady hand at the wheel*

working on NZGFA business when he could be retired. Kevin was awarded a Life Membership for his long service to NZGFA at the 2016 NZGFA conference.

Kevin has now finally decided to retire and spend more time with wife Lorraine and family.

We thank Lorraine for her support of Kevin and the contribution that she made at Conferences; their presence and friendship will be missed by many.

Friday 21 December will be Kevin's last day with NZGFA and Federated Farmers.

We thank Kevin for his contribution and dedication and wish him all the best as he approaches his retirement.

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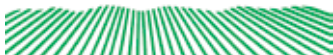
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## NZGFA 63rd CONFERENCE 2019 – TAUPO

**Conference arrangements are well under way for the 63rd NZ Groundspread Fertilisers Conference to be held at Wairakei Resort in Taupo from 7 - 10 July 2019.**

Hosts for the 2019 Conference are Waikato Branch. The conference theme is "Technology the Enabler" and the organising committee say there will be top class speakers on innovation within the technology field.

"We are hoping this will help give you an insight into how different forms of technology could help you within your businesses in the future," says Conference Organiser Abi Cane.

"As we develop the conference, we are looking to introduce a new format for the programme including business sessions to ensure relevance to our industry. One objective is to hold a formal Gala dinner – black tie with industry awards demonstrating excellence. More on this to come."

As well as an innovative conference programme the Committee are working on an exciting partners programme which will feature some of the wonderful experiences Taupo offers.

Wairakei Resort is a large hotel with great facilities, everyone will be able to stay at the same venue and the conference sessions will be held there too. Wairakei Resort have offered a discounted rate for accommodation - you can take advantage of this rate to extend your stay and enjoy the Great Lake Taupo region. Experience the thrill of adrenalin activities like jet boating, bungy jumping, white water rafting and sky diving or relax in a healing geothermal hot pool or with a scenic cruise to the Mine Bay Maori Rock Carvings. The region is home to two of New Zealand's best golf courses - The Kinloch Club and Wairakei Golf + Sanctuary. At the southern end of the lake, you will find Turangi, a world renowned trout fishing hub. Further south, you will find Mt Ruapheu, New Zealand's largest ski area. There are waterfalls and ancient forests to discover, gourmet food, boutique shopping, art and craft galleries.

Conference Registrations will be online at [nzgfa.co.nz](http://nzgfa.co.nz) – all members and associate members will receive an email advising when registration is open as well as a link to the registration form plus a downloadable version if required.

"It will be great to see as many of you there as possible."

**For sponsorship/trade display information please contact Abi Cane on phone 021 548845 or email: [Abi@centraltransport.co.nz](mailto:Abi@centraltransport.co.nz)**



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**Anders Crofoot, Chairman of the Fertiliser Quality Council (FQC), says there is strong need for agri-focused educational resources.**



Around three years ago the FQC decided to lend its support to a proposal for a school resource that would use examples from primary industry (food production in particular), to teach science and critical thinking. The idea behind the resource was hinged on evidence that some primary school teachers were finding science hard to teach.

This was seen as a good opportunity for the primary sector to help teachers by creating a free, curriculum-based, easy-to-teach online resource. It was considered a perfect in-road into schools to raise awareness and understanding of the science behind growing and producing food. Room was also identified for the resource to introduce to children the idea that the future for farming is bright - and positively glowing with career options.

The project was awarded MPI Sustainable Farming Fund funding. It was developed over a couple of years and the result was the web-based Soil, Food & Society teaching tool. This tool draws on the story of 'where food comes from' to explain scientific concepts and encourage scientific exploration. As the name suggests it talks about the link between soil, food and society. Importantly, it talks about nutrients in the air and in the soil. The resource explains that we all need nutrients to live and grow and that plants are no different. It also includes a positive description of fertiliser as the addition of nutrients to the soil; nutrients that are necessary for crop growth and food production.

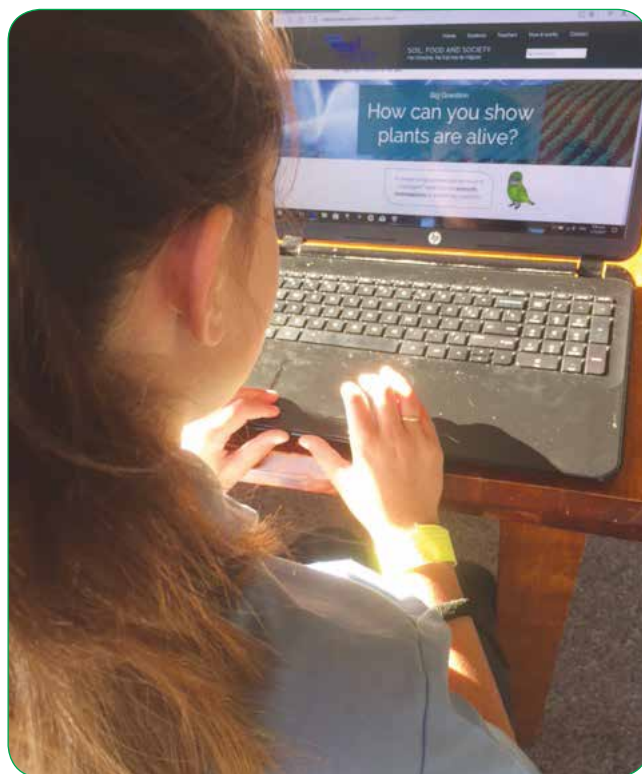
To date, the Soil, Food & Society tool has been well received by primary school teachers, enviro schools and ag clubs. It is also one of the few MPI SFF projects to continue after the MPI funding came to a close. However, to keep the project in front of primary school teachers FQC realised it needed a dedicated push by an experienced team; a team who could present it to teachers and explain to them face-to-face why they should use it.

Fortunately, that experienced team comes in the form of Young Farmers' Agrigation division. Agrigation devotes a whole website to agricultural education. It looks after a suite of agricultural-based teaching resources and its representatives have good connections with the teachers they target. The good news is that the Soil, Food & Society resource has now been added to the mix.

FQC believes that working with Young Farmers will mean more teachers will utilise the resource for their science classes. It will also increase the longevity of the tool and, down the line, allow us to extend the scope to include greater education around the vital role that fertiliser plays in farming and food production.

It is hugely important that primary industry engages with young children. Supporting those in charge of teaching them at school is a great way to ensure the facts about agriculture are presented and affirmed. If we can steer our educators and our young learners down the path of agricultural truth, with resources like the Soil, Food and Society one, we can help to counter-balance any uninformed and inaccurate comments about our industry. In a world where social media is often mistaken as the Sooth Sayer on every subject imaginable, the need for teaching tools like this remains strong.

**The Soil, Food & Society tool is available at [www.soilfoodsociety.org.nz](http://www.soilfoodsociety.org.nz) online. It is a free resource for teachers, home schoolers and ag club leaders working with students in Years 5 – 8.**



*Student using the Soil, Food & Society teaching resource*

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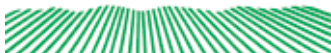
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## Latest news from Fertiliser Association

The Fertiliser Association of New Zealand publishes Fertiliser Matters, a newsletter providing useful news about the fertiliser industry, including new research and technological developments.

They now offer an e-newsletter version of Fertiliser Matters and have also updated their website.

To subscribe to *Fertiliser Matters* – sign up at <http://www.fertiliser.org.nz/Site/contact/sign-up.aspx>

Here is an article kindly reproduced from the September Fertiliser Matters.

### Review reveals no notable difference between fertiliser application methods

There are no significant differences between pasture production achieved using urea applied as a fine particle when compared to a granular form, a recent review has shown.

Led by Jeff Morton and commissioned by the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand, the review critically examined the results from 22 fertiliser trials, mostly conducted in New Zealand, from as far back as 1954.

“We were seeking to find out whether fine particle application

fertilisers (FPA) are more effective than solid granular fertilisers in producing pasture dry matter,” says Jeff. “This was in response to the recent resurgence in FPA, especially in Southland – a method that has been touted as having agronomic and environmental advantages over other fertilisers.”

Granular fertiliser is solid, whereas FPA – an application method largely unique to New Zealand – involves grinding the urea,

mixing it with water and applying it as slurry. FPA has been claimed to achieve a 40-50% higher conversion of nitrogen (N) to pasture dry matter than granular urea. This has been attributed to factors such as a more even distribution and the potential for FPA to absorb N directly through foliage, thereby minimising soil losses.

“In the research literature we mostly found no statistically significant difference in pasture dry matter yield when fertilisers were applied in these two different ways,” says Jeff. “We also looked at the literature on liquid fertilisers – where the urea is ground and dissolved in water – and found no difference there either.”

While two trials showed FPA to work better than granular fertiliser, both studies used mini plots or glasshouse pots, with higher rates of nitrogen. “Our explanation of why it was better in this method of experimentation compared with field trials was that they were pouring a lot of liquid onto a very small area of leaf so it wasn’t similar to what would happen in the field.”

Other field trials which showed some extra benefit when using FPA did not have any statistical analysis to support the results.

“Overall, there is insufficient experimental evidence to support the application of fertilisers in the FPA form over the traditional granular form.”

Economic and environmental comparisons between fertiliser types were outside the scope of the review.

The full research report has been published in the New Zealand Journal of Agricultural Research.

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## The collaboration journey continues...



By Stephanie Laird

This month Ravensdown has enabled TracMap integration with HawkEye; our farm mapping software that helps farmers make smarter decisions for better farm and environmental outcomes.

HawkEye currently provides proof-of-placement maps for spreading undertaken by Ravensdown joint venture spreaders. Now, collaboration with TracMap means that TracMap-enabled spreading contractors can provide proof of placement to HawkEye.

So, what does this mean for you?

- Farmers can choose where their farm management data is, enabling secure and accurate evidence of fertiliser placement

**ravensdown**

- Planned applications, integrated with fertiliser plans and orders, mean the whole team is working from one plan
- Making informed decisions on what nutrients to apply, using the right product, in the right place, at the right time

As a farmer-owned co-operative, we are dedicated to finding ways

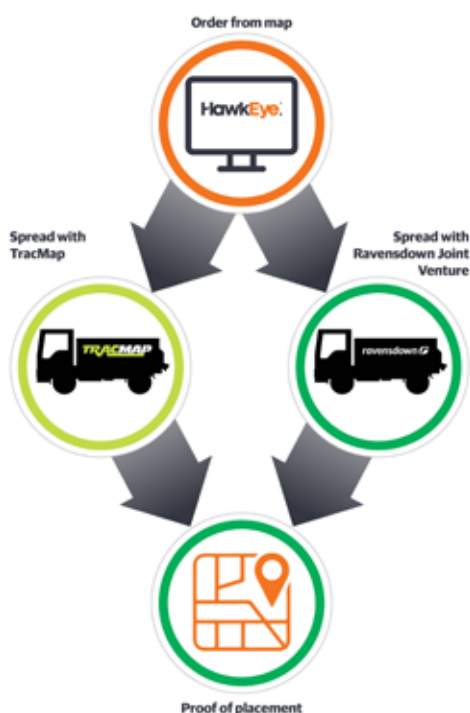
to help make farming smarter. Our guiding principle is technology that makes things easier for the farmer and their chosen spreaders. Automation and efficiency have the potential to release farmers from the office, so they can invest their precious time on-farm.

TracMap integration is an example of this in action and we will continue to look for further collaboration opportunities with other industry players in the future.

Our vision is open partnerships that put farmers' interests first.

Quick 4 on TracMap/Hawkeye Integration:

- Spreaders must give permission for spreading data to flow to HawkEye. TracMap will liaise directly with spreaders as opt-in requests are received from customers.
- TracMap data goes automatically in to HawkEye, once the job has been completed within TracMap online, or within 60 days (whichever is sooner)
- NPKS data will be recorded on Ravensdown single-line products, and where NPKS data is provided for mixes
- Customers can opt in by contacting our HawkEye Service Support team (0800 73 73 73) or support@hawkeye.farm)



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### Looking to sell or buy gear?

Classified listings are free for NZGFA members in Groundspread.  
Email to [amandaryan@farmside.co.nz](mailto:amandaryan@farmside.co.nz)

Or list online in The Sales Yard section of NZGFA website (log in to the Members Toolkit Section on website: [www.nzgfa.co.nz](http://www.nzgfa.co.nz))

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# Strategic plan review

The New Zealand Groundspread Fertilisers' Association Strategic plan is to due to be reviewed in January 2019.

The Strategic Plan was first developed in 2013 and reviewed in 2016.

With the impending retirement of Executive Director Kevin Geddes, the National Council is taking the opportunity to consider fully all options regarding the running of NZGFA and its strategic direction.

National Council is suggesting members discuss their views at their Branch meetings and Councillors will take this feedback to the Strategic Plan Review being held at the January Council meeting. Some questions to consider are:

- Is the present structure fit for purpose - are seven branches and a National Council the best organisational structure?
- Should the Executive Director be Wellington-based to be able to lobby national offices/government departments?
- Are current activities meeting members expectations?
- Can Branches be more effective than they are now?
- Where do you want to see NZGFA in the next 10 years?

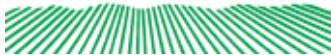
Below is an overview of the current Strategic Plan. Your Branch Councillor will have a copy of the full document.

## Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019

- [1] VISION: NZGFA is recognised as the paramount representative organisation for the Fertiliser Groundspreading industry in New Zealand.
- [2] THE OBJECTS FOR WHICH THE ASSOCIATION IS ESTABLISHED:
  - (a) To promote, protect and advance the commercial interest of members and to advise members on all matters relating to the distribution of bulk lime and fertilisers.
  - (b) To promote or to oppose legislative or other measures affecting the trade of members.
  - (c) To engender by association a fraternal feeling amongst the distributors of bulk lime and fertiliser.
  - (d) Generally to maintain and conserve the interests of the distribution of bulk lime and fertilisers and to do all such other things as may be conducive to the attainment of the above objects or any of them.
  - (e) To purchase or lease such real or personal property and to effect such improvements thereto as may be considered advisable for the promotion of the objects of the Association.
  - (f) To invest, control and dispose of the funds and the property of the Association.
  - (g) To borrow and raise money for the purpose of the Association and to secure the payment thereof in such manner as may be determined and for that purpose to charge mortgage all or any of the property of the Association.
- [3] MISSION: NZGFA exists to represent its members and to provide value for membership by:
  - Promote industry standards
  - Maintaining effective relationships with regional and central government agencies
  - Developing alliances with industry bodies
  - Providing a learning and development network
  - Establishing business alliances which deliver benefits

to the members

- [4] KEY FOCUS AREAS:
  - [4.1] Membership – increase and broaden our membership base.
    - Increase membership by 10%.
    - Broaden member services
    - Better engage members
    - Build member capacity to conduct their business.
    - Increase member awareness of NZGFA.
    - Develop knowledge sharing.
  - [4.2] Environmental Stewardship – promote environmentally sustainable practices.
    - Continue to lift industry standards.
    - Strengthen NZGFA environmental credentials.
    - Promotion of Spreadmark to achieve 100% uptake by members.
    - Increase the NZGFA influence in the Fertiliser Quality Council.
  - [4.3] External Relationships – advocate on behalf of our members and the Groundspreading industry.
    - To develop policy positions on key industry issues and member concerns.
    - To advocate cogent policies to government and industry
    - To strengthen relationships with government and industry.
    - To strengthen relationships with key supplier groups in the interests of members.
    - To understand relevant legislation and implications for member's businesses
    - Identify and promote business opportunities for members.
  - [4.4] Communication and Engagement.
    - Position NZGFA as the premier fertiliser groundspreading industry organisation representing the interests of members and the groundspreading industry to all New Zealand.
    - Generate a demand for NZGFA members as superior groundspread industry operators.
    - Position NZGFA as a responsive professional industry association working in the community in the interests of its members.
- [5] GOVERNANCE:
  - [5.1] Goals.
    - The business of the Association is conducted in an open and businesslike manner.
    - Provide an efficient and effective service to members.
    - Broaden the revenue stream.
    - Remain compliant with all legislative and regulatory requirements.
    - Achieve an annual 5% surplus in the Associations Annual Financial Statements.
    - Maintain reserves equivalent to 100% to annual income.
    - Regular monitoring of the Association's Strategic Plan
  - [5.2] Strategy.
  - [5.3] Success indicators.



## MyBallance up and successfully delivering value



Ballance soft-launched the MyBallance nutrient management platform in partnership with Precision Farming in

April this year, followed by the formal launch at National Fielddays in June, and then the system went live on 1 August.

Over the last decade, a dozen or more farm technology platforms have been developed and released, some of them operative today while others have fallen by the wayside. But being brutally honest, none of them has acquired more than a relatively small percentage of the 30,000 or so arable farmers in NZ after years and years of selling. It's really only been early adopters and some larger corporate farming groups that have taken up these systems.

On the other hand, MyBallance in only a few months, has acquired over five thousand unique users. That in anyone's book is an outstanding success.

### So what is making the difference?

You'll have your own views as a professional contractor servicing your customers you know well, but here are some factors to consider.

Firstly, you need to look no further than the income and expenditure statement for the average arable farming business to see that nutrient management is one of the largest, if not the largest, line item in the expenditure section. Taken across the country, farmers invest the best part of \$2 billion in the planning, purchasing, freight, storage, application, recording and reporting of fertilisers, lime and other nutrients.

Second, it's a dynamic activity that requires a lot of expertise – yours as a contractor included – to surgically apply that extent of investment, and to do so in a provably compliant and sustainable way.

Third, Ballance has shown the way for large co-ops in NZ to collaborate professionally and respectfully with other businesses of all sizes. It used to own and run Ag Hub so it has first hand knowledge of what it takes to run an ag tech business. But it is a specialty sector, just like running a contracting business, and so it has chosen to partner with well respected brands in ag tech, specifically Precision Farming, and also with Precision Tracking and TracMap.

Those companies too, have understood the greater benefits of collaboration and show how firms that can compete to keep a market sector functioning efficiently and competitively, can also in the right mindset, also collaborate for the greater good of the primary industry we all need to take care of, since it's farmers who pay the bills of hard working contractors and ag tech companies.

So the MyBallance system is up and running, initial inevitable teething problems have been or are being sorted out and tens of thousands of orders a month are successfully being created by farmers and their advisors and staff, processed through the financial aspects, the fert plan process, the single and mixed products stages, the notification to aerial and ground spreaders and the GPS companies are doing their work in helping completing the guidance, job management, invoicing, proof of application and NPK recording.

### So where to from here?

Farmers are clearly wanting farming information and data in fewer systems, so they don't have to use one app for soil moisture, another for fertiliser ordering, another for turning on their irrigation or checking their milk vat temperature.

This is where seeing the complementary benefits of contractors working "horizontally" with farmers think and work "vertically". By that we mean this. Contractors move in the horizontal plane going from farm to farm doing the same work on many farms. At the same time, milk tankers move on the horizontal plane doing the same thing on many farms. So too do vets, electricians, silage cutters and so on.


But farmers see the world vertically, that is, they don't want information about the one job on lots of farms, they want information about lots of jobs on one farm – theirs.

This is one of the big reasons why MyBallance in partnership with Precision Farming is being taken up by large numbers of farmers.


Not only can they see many functions on their farm in the one system, but they can also see how these functions relate to one another. They want to see the relationship between nutrient application and grass growth, between fertiliser applications and irrigation scheduling, between milk production and grazing rounds, between trucks visiting farms and staff health and safety.

It could be argued that the dozen or more farm technology platforms that have seen only modest uptake over the last decade have either addressed only one need on farm, or if they have simply grouped several information sources together, they have really only co-located different bits of farm information behind a single password. Handy, but not life changing.

The MyBallance specialised platform for nutrient management, compliance and sustainability, in partnership with Precision Farming who brings advanced integrated farm technologies across inter-dependent farming systems, and supported by contractors who are central to the success of farmer-customers and use either TracMap or Precision Tracking technologies, is the way of the future. And five thousand farmers are agreeing the future is already here.



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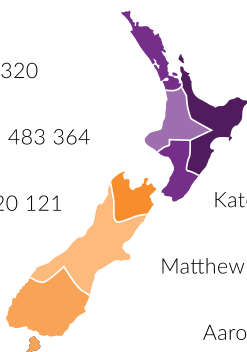
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**Chief Exec**  
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**Upper South Island**  
Kate Cromie 021 483 391

**Central South Island**  
Matthew Stanford 021 483 359

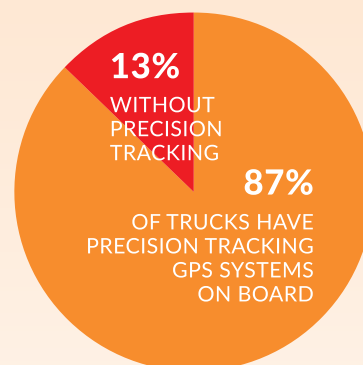
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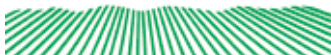


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## 90 Day Trial Period – No Panacea for Poor Recruitment



In 2009 the Employment Relations Act was amended to enable employers to use 90 day trial periods for new employees. What this means for employers is that

an individual's employment can be ended in that 90 day period without providing a reason and avoiding any risk of a personal grievance. That is, providing the trial period is agreed in the employment agreement prior to the individual commencing work. The intention of this provision was to encourage business to take on new staff.

This sounds like a safe option for employers and is a useful "get out of jail free" card for when it is obvious a new employee is not a good fit for a role or the business. However, a 90 day trial period should never be an alternative to good pre-employment checking and recruitment processes, for a number of reasons:

**90 days isn't that long** – If you speak to many employers, employment problems will often emerge well after the 90 day trial period has expired, especially if new employees are on best behaviour for the duration of the trial period. After this time, you are stuck with managing a problem employee, which could have been avoided through a good interview process and background checking.

**It can take longer than 90 days to train a new employee** – Often it can take 6 months or longer for an employee to demonstrate full competency in a role. By the 90 day mark it may be too early to tell whether the employee will become a fully contributing member of the team, or whether there are significant gaps in their ability to perform well over the longer term.

### Damage to employer reputation

– Quick and frequent exits and high turnover can ring alarm bells to prospective employees about what it is like to work for a potential employer. This could make it difficult to find talented staff, especially in areas where there is a limited labour market from which to recruit.

**Time is precious** – In small businesses with limited resources having to spend time recruiting new employees is disruptive enough to operations, let alone having to recruit again shortly after due to a poor recruitment decision.

### Past behaviour indicates future

**behaviour** – poor recruitment decisions can be avoided with well-designed recruitment processes that ensure you know who you are employing and what you can expect in terms of performance or conduct. There are always the exceptions, but a good result from an

employment background check usually means they'll be a good employee for you too.

**Do it right, the first time.** A robust recruitment process needn't be much more time consuming and can actually save you time and frustration later down the track. We recommend that at a minimum you undertake a structured interview process including questions about past performance and specific examples of work, verbal reference checks with past managers/supervisors, and ask to sight originals of any qualifications, licenses, registrations required, as well as photo identification and work visas and permits (if applicable).

*For assistance or advice about how to recruit the best person for the job without having to rely on a 90 day trial period clause – call Safe Business Solutions Ltd to avoid the pitfalls of hiring the wrong person! Freephone 0508 424 723*

# Actions speak louder than words.



Graymont is committed to NZ Groundspreading, and when we talk about quality, consistency and service, we make sure our actions speak louder than words.

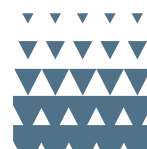
- ▶ We perform quality testing daily.
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# GRAYMONT

GRAYMONT



## Fertiliser made easy!



**By Nadine Parata**

National Distribution Manager

Lots of activity and excitement down in mid-Canterbury last month as we officially added two more self-service silos to our distribution network. Located in Ashburton at our SealesWinslow feedmill and on-farm in Wakanui, the silos provide greater convenience and flexibility for our customers.



Quick and easy to use, the silos are open 7-days-a-week giving farmers and spreaders the freedom to work with the weather to their best advantage. Once

signed up for a silo access card, farmers simply go online to MyBallance and convert their SustaiN fert plan into an order then pick up the product from the silo when they need it. Our 'fertiliser made easy' model is already a hit with farmers and spreaders alike, with weekends proving to be a popular time for our Wakanui silo.

Our Anama self-serve silo was the first cab off the rank in 2017 and was met with a positive response from local farmers and spreaders. A few tweaks to the prototype followed and we successfully piloted our first North Island silo in Whakamaru. The latest model, which has been installed in Ashburton and Wakanui, further expands our network as we continue to look for opportunities to support customer demand.

Our Wakanui silo, which is situated on-farm near the coast in mid-Canterbury, is the first of our twin silos offering customers the choice of Urea and SustaiN. A second twin silo is underway in Winton and is due to open for our Southland customers later in December.

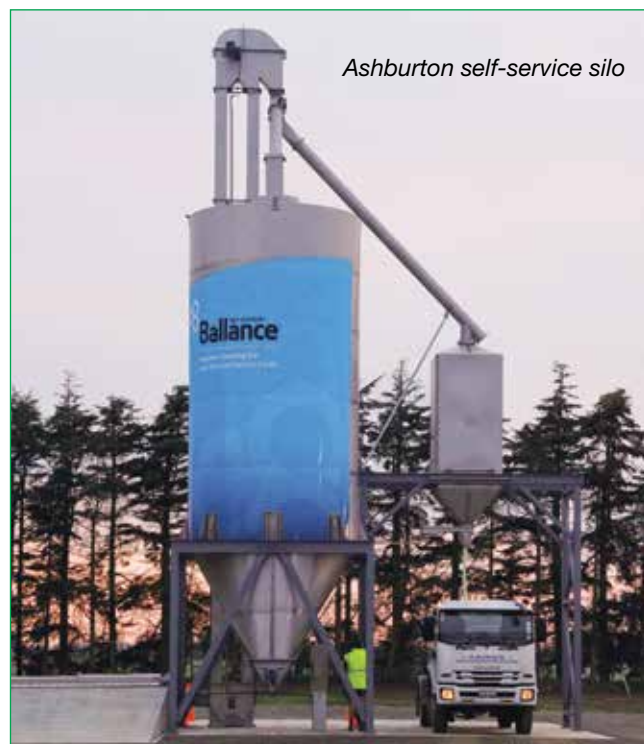
Easy to spot from the roadside, the new silos have a strong presence in the local community and are proudly branded in Ballance blue. We like to think of them as our ATM for fertiliser!

If you'd like to know more or would like to sign up to use any of our self-service silos around the country, jump online at

[ballance.co.nz/selfservicesilo](http://ballance.co.nz/selfservicesilo) or contact your local nutrient specialist.

Until next time,

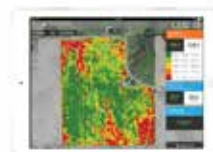
**Nadine**



Ashburton self-service silo



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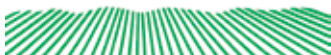
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By Kylie Stenton, Canterbury Branch NZGFA

Flying over NSW on the way to Canberra you can see exactly the impact of successive years of drought. Canberra has about the same estimated average rainfall as us in North Otago but no irrigation. It reminds me a lot of what our valley looked like 25 years ago.

At the meet and greet on Tuesday night they acknowledged a legend of their industry while enjoying continuous nibbles and perusing through the National Museum of Australia (what a fantastic building and collection).

We started early on Wednesday morning with "Economics & Market Policy". This was my first indication into what this conference was about and really how different most of the spreading business models in main Australia are from ours in NZ. Most spreading businesses in main Australia with the exception of South Australia and Tasmania, are a one stop shop from Fertiliser Purchase, Importation, Sales, Agronomy, Ship to Store and finally the on-farm spreading. For the most part the actual on farm spreading side of their business is quite a small component comparatively and this was reflective in the conference sessions and speakers.

The second session "Fertilizer Handling & Application Technology" was aimed more towards the Agronomy side of business and Ship to Shed expectations. Rod Abbot did have a good presentation in this session about safety requirements and documentation especially after accidents. Tim Ross spoke about cross contamination of product.

Greg Griffith in session 3: "Business Leadership & Management", talked exclusively about the benefits and pitfalls of a family owned and run business. His organisation [www.wearefamilyowned.org.au](http://www.wearefamilyowned.org.au) sounded absolutely beneficial for its clients in providing peer assistance, promotion, succession templates and dispute resolution. They are looking to branch into New Zealand around May 2019 and would be worth looking out for.

Session 4: "Soil & Plant Nutrition", was again directed more towards Agronomy and had some interesting scientists who could lend positive data toward whoever's product was paying for the trial.

Thursday we ventured out to a driver training centre where we finally got to see some Trucks. They had the Scania and Mercedes guys speak and then a few more scientists who frankly failed to impress me with developing technology around remote measuring of N which they had no timeline on, when it would be available or even its reliability!

We headed out to a farm to watch an Accu-Spread demonstration



*Viewing Mercedes truck at Driver Training Centre*

(which they passed over the trays twice in the same spot before measuring) then onto another farm for a compost application demonstration. Now this stuff came out of Sydney and the operation was owned by one of the Australian Super Funds. It was household garbage that they picked up and sent to a "composting" plant that removed as much of the large plastics, glass and metal as they could. It tracked through this plant for 5 weeks assisted by heat and moisture and the end product was then ground up and trucked off to be applied at 17 t/ha. They were half way through a 27 year contract and were starting to run out of land willing to have it applied. The contractor swears the farms that use it love it (potentially subsidised product) but all you could see was the remnants of plastic bottle tops so I'm not sure if I would want to use it on my land.

That night we conversed with an ex-association President and I came to the conclusion that all states worked completely separate from the next. There was no representation from Queensland at conference and as you could imagine it's a fairly large producing state. They had no real unified voice in regard to the spreading truck side of business toward regulatory administrations and in turn spent a lot of time expressing concerns about laws inflicted on them instead of helping to shape and develop those laws. They have absolute control over fertiliser quality as they were the ones importing and on-selling it.

All in all it was a fantastic learning experience. I met some really interesting people and I thank the NZGFA for the opportunity.

## A timely reminder from SBS to take a break this Christmas

Our present New Zealand work culture rewards overwork! Long hours - despite the known downsides, are impacting our work-life balance and we've now got a growing number of 'overworked' jobs. In the latest OECD Better Life Index, NZ had the ninth-highest percentage of employees working more than 50 hours per week, at 13.8%. NZ scored higher in the Index than USA, Australia and the UK.

While we tell ourselves 50-60+ hour work weeks are justifiable to 'finish the project off', 'just get ahead of the workload' or 'keep ahead of the demands' just to temporarily get through, often this becomes a pattern and one week of long hours becomes two, two become a month and so on, and we unwittingly become immune to the additional hours being worked.

Long-term, 50-60+ hour working weeks can impair personal health, jeopardise safety, and increase stress. There are countless reasons not to push employees too hard - primarily, health and safety. It is important an employer does not require an employee to work such an unreasonable amount of overtime that it may

affect their health and wellbeing. Even if an employer feels they are generously compensating the employee; the employees' health and safety at work is paramount, and overwork could lead to common mental health problems like stress, anxiety and burnout.

Sleepless brains are aged brains. The body doesn't create new brain cells, but it does maintain the ones we have, while we sleep. Therefore, not sleeping means our brain cells can't be maintained, which leads to their death. Insufficient sleep is incredibly unhealthy because the health of our entire immune and lymph system is dependent upon sleep and rest patterns.

Yes - success comes from hard work, and yes CEOs are paid millions of dollars to deliver, and small business employers who stand to reap rewards may choose to work long hours - but we should be mindful that while oddball hours and absurdly long slogs in the workplace may work for us, we not only set an unattainable standard for many others but we're slowly damaging our bodies. The money and success may feel good - but it's pointless if we're not well enough - or alive, to enjoy it!





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