

Groundspread



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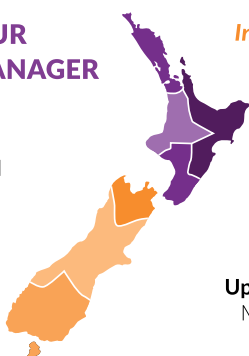
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Kenneth Irons is the sole owner and managing director of Precision Tracking (NZ) Ltd and Precision Farming Ltd.

Front Cover:

Photo with thanks from Northern Southland Transport

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Twelve months ago we were basking in the glow of a successful conference in Taupo, motivated by the theme 'Technology the Enabler'. Fast forward to the present day and we should have just completed the Christchurch conference with the fitting theme of 'Resilience'. Instead, we had to postpone the annual conference due to a worldwide pandemic and have just held the 64th AGM online via Zoom.

This is either taking irony to the next level or perhaps, as a group, we are a bit more open-minded and forward thinking than we give ourselves credit for.

During the winter months I attended five branch AGMs. Although the attendance ranged from poor to excellent, the notable thing for me was the support given to all branches by associate members.

To these supporters of our organisation, I offer a large thank you from our members for what you bring to the table in terms of knowledge and active dialogue, and also for the time you willingly invest in our association - much of it after-hours. For those members who don't put the same level of effort in as others, I believe you are missing out on the opportunities that are available - beyond the tangible benefits.

Finally, thank you to everyone for their support over this last year and the vote of confidence that will enable me to continue to represent you. Let's hope the next 12 months runs to plan.

Over the past year, our time in council has been largely dictated by the need



President John Schultz
Ph: 027 439 9768
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to react quickly to external influences, such as the healthy water legislation and COVID-19. It will be nice to spend more time implementing our strategic plan with Melanie, who is now well entrenched in her role. I, personally, wouldn't mind if things become a bit boring.

My wish list is simple - I would be happy with good climatic conditions, trucks that don't break down and everyone enjoying a profitable and safe season.

Groundspread

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Change to the constitution

A vote was carried at the AGM to modify the current process for branches to review new membership applications in the NZGFA Constitution.

This change now enables branches to determine their own process for reviewing membership applications. The aim is that new processes will be developed to enable the quicker processing of new membership applications.

New members

The NZGFA membership continues to grow with the recent addition of another new member and several enquiries, reports Melanie Dingle, Executive Officer.

"We would like to extend a warm welcome to Brad Morgan and the team from Morgan Spreading Ltd".

Based in Putaruru, in the Waikato, Brad is looking forward to meeting fellow NZGFA members at the next Waikato branch meeting.

Member login

NZGFA members are reminded that there is a members-only section on the website. This is a secure area which contains meeting minutes and health and safety and training information.

To access this area, members require a unique login - obtainable by emailing:

lisa.looppr@gmail.com.

This area is soon to be reviewed to ensure that it provides up-to-date, relevant and practical information for members.

Suggestions on this are welcome and can be submitted to:

melanie@nzgfa.co.nz.



— NEW ZEALAND —
GROUNDSPREAD
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Ted Usmar, Innovation Award winner, with sponsor Nick Allen

Award winners

The winners and runners up of the 2020 NZGFA Awards have been announced.

Congratulations goes to:

Innovation - sponsored by Trucks & Trailers

Winner - Ted Usmar, Wealleans Engineering and Mechanical

Runner up - Nathan Callander, Callander Groundspread

Health & Safety - sponsored by Graymont

Winner - Phil Johnson, Candrive

Runner up - Jessie Freer, Sandfords

Young Achiever's - sponsored by Ravensdown

Winner - Matthew Blomfield, Transport Services Southland

Runner up - Jared Usmar, Wealleans Groundspread

President's - sponsored by Ballance Agri-nutrients

Winner - Grant Anderson, Transport Services Southland

Runner up - Marty Crafar, Safe Business Solutions

Annual General Meeting sees leadership remain

The recent Annual General Meeting, held on Friday 31st July 2020, saw no change to the positions of President and Vice-President. In the absence of any challenge to the leadership roles, John Schultz will remain as President for another term. He will receive ongoing support from incumbent Vice-Presidents, Graeme Martin and Grant Anderson.

Mr Schultz thanked the executive team for their commitment and all NZGFA members for their dedication to the organisation and the ground spreading industry.

For the first time in the NZGFA's 64 year history, the Annual General Meeting was hosted online, via zoom, rather than at conference.

Farewell to Lee Cooper

Long-standing NZGFA Transport Representative and Chairman of the Taranaki branch, Lee Cooper, has stepped down from his roles following a change in his career.

President John Schultz says Lee was a motivated and active member who led his branch with enthusiasm. "He has a wealth of industry knowledge and experience and we will miss his input and ideas around the table. We all wish Lee and his family all the very best for the future".

New Taranaki Chairman, David Geraghty, will now take responsibility for Lee's branch duties.

Find out more
 about our finalists
 on pages 10, 11.

Waikato

By Graeme Martin

"Winter finally arrived following a busy autumn – which brought warm, occasional rain and of course COVID-19.

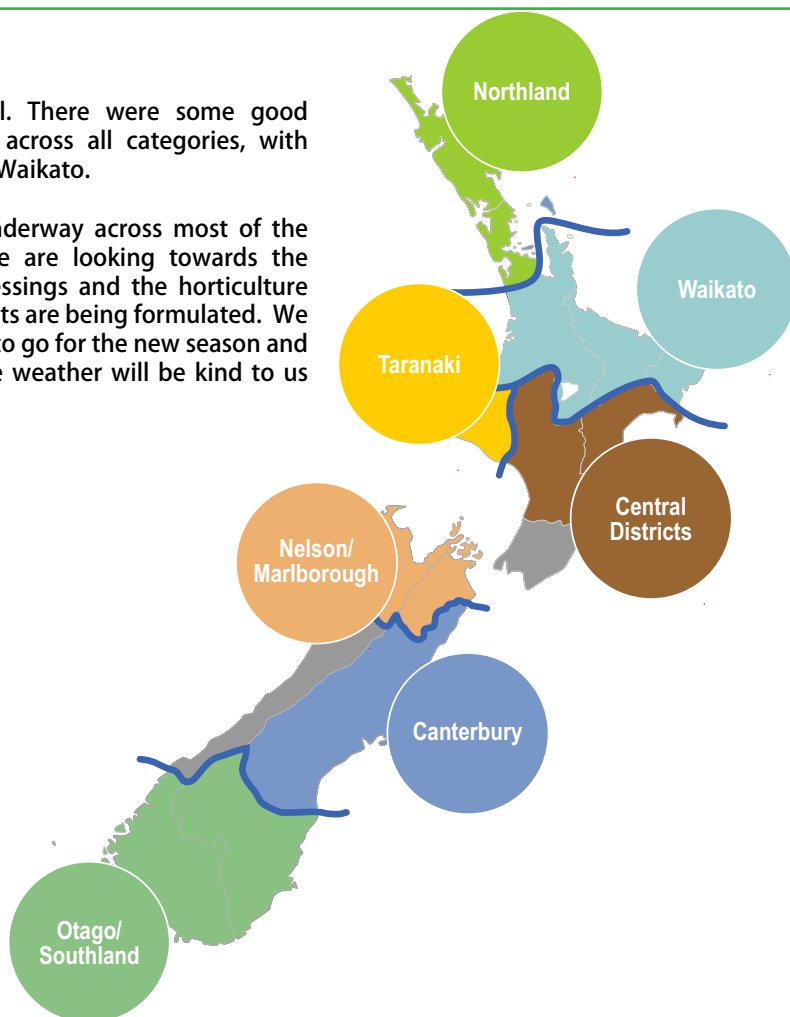
The Waikato Branch AGM was held on June 26th with a good turnout of members in attendance. It has been a relatively busy year for the branch with training and a few new members. Officer elections were held and our new vice president is Gordon Dobbs with Nathan Callander as our branch delegate.

With the pending development of the National Freshwater Policy, many are considering what impact this will have on operators, including reduced rates of N, timing of application and nitrogen caps. It will be interesting to see this play out for the industry. Many farmers are unsure of this and are concerned that the current status of the decisions will have some negative effect on their ability to ensure enough feed is grown.

The NZGFA Awards have now been judged and I was delighted to be part

of the panel. There were some good nominations across all categories, with several from Waikato.

Calving is underway across most of the region so we are looking towards the critical N dressings and the horticulture kiwifruit inputs are being formulated. We are all ready to go for the new season and hopefully the weather will be kind to us all."





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INNOVATION IN FERTILISER TRANSPORT

Taranaki

By Dave Geraghty

"Wow what a year. The Taranaki branch has had a few changes with the retirement of Lee, who will be missed, the re-appointment of Tom Cloke and the new appointment of Alistair MacGregor to vice chairman.

As I sit here in August looking out of the window at a blue sky, a dry swamp, and a non-stop rotation of spreader and bulk trucks heading out the gate, I can't help but wonder when or if the rain will come. Some parts of the region only received 60% of the average July rainfall and 80% YTD, this is great for fertiliser sales and calving but if the rain comes late and plays catch up it could make spring and maize planting a lot more challenging. This means we all need to be prepared for what may be in the pipeline.

This year so far at Osflo we have put three drivers through various parts of their HT ranging from class 2 to class 5. Earlier this year, the branch had planned to hold a first aid training and refresher course for our members but unfortunately COVID-19 messed up all of our timings. We hope to revisit this training in the future."

Nelson/Marlborough

By Brent Hogarth (Nelson)

"I hope everyone has managed to take a break over the winter and get some winter maintenance done. We have had the usual quiet June to mid-July, but with it being such a mild and very dry winter here, we are now seeing some early nitrogen applications and a bit of lime going on. The hop farms are still expanding in the Tasman region which provides some extra winter work but with so many being developed it makes me wonder if they won't flood the market. Our AGM was held on 1st July with good attendance."

By Tracy Rose-Russell (Marlborough)

"Spreading has been reasonably quiet, although steady here recently. However orders are beginning to flow in at a substantially increased rate for the vineyards since we hit 1st August. We are beginning to get some lovely warm days so pasture work is also likely to increase.

There hasn't been a huge amount of development of vineyards this year – whether this is due to a lack of available suitable ground or a cautiousness post

COVID-19 of expanding in the current market.

The AGM saw Tracy Rose-Russell taking on the local chairperson's role, otherwise the roles and committee members remained stable. Rose Ag has a couple of new spreaders arriving – one of which is to tackle the tricky narrow vineyard rows and will be able to squeeze down two metre rows. Winter has been good for maintenance and some Spreadmark testing but everyone is now looking forward to the sunnier longer days."



Canterbury

By Roger Bruce

"Hi from Canterbury, where we are having the most amazing winter ever with no storms or bad weather. Many companies have been out putting on lime and now starting base fertiliser. It should be noted that at some stage soon we need some rain to set up the spring growth.

The AGM has been held with no changes to office holders, but this year the committee organised a get together for drivers with two guest speakers and the Healthy Driver Drive Programme presentation as well. This was well attended with over 70 people coming to hear Mark Inglis telling his story of how his life changed after losing both legs from frost bite on Mt Cook and how he went on to climb Mt Everest, win silver in cycling at the games in Sydney and how his organisation is helping people with amputations in poor countries adapt to life.

After a very nice lunch we heard from Cynthia Johnson about how to know the difference between stress and pressure and once you know this what to change in your life to cope with these events. Both talks were well presented and engaging.

There has been a little bit of a discussion here around whether liquid fert should come under Spreadmark. We are not sure on this one but it is something that needs to be sorted, especially with the

proposed nitrogen and environmental rules - the outcomes of which will affect our industry."

Otago/Southland

By Nigel Powell (Verge)

"Hi all from the deep south. The end of autumn, start of winter saw the great weather continue down here allowing us all to carry on and get a lot of lime done before the wetter conditions set in, but it has been nowhere near as wet as our friends have been getting it up north.

We have been having some really good frosts mixed with thick fog lately keeping the bulkies busy applying grit to the roads to try to help the traffic stay on the road.

During the first week in August we held three driver training days run by Canterbury Driver Training. These had a great response from our members with 37 drivers attending.

We held our Otago/Southland AGM on the 3rd of July at Winton. We had a good turn out of 23 to the meeting and no changes to the committee keeping Steve as chairperson, myself as vice-chair, Tina as secretary and Grant as our national council delegate.

A big thank you to all who attended and to our sponsors AB Lime and Fernhill Lime for the gifts to give away to everyone and a massive thank you to Ballance and Jeremy Begg for their very generous prize give away of two nights accommodation for two at Carrick Lodge Motel in Cromwell, \$100 meal voucher at the Bannockburn Hotel and a hoon around the track at Highlands Park in their Porsche Cayenne Taxi.

All those that attended the AGM got to put a number in the bucket and Jeremy Begg drew out Dwight Gray from Mainland Spreading as the winner. I'm sure Dwight and Rena will have a blast. Stay warm, dry and keep safe all."





Otago/Southland committee members Steve Whitehead, Tina Powell, Grant Anderson, Nigel (Verge) Powell

Tour of the regions - Otago/Southland

Groundspread Magazine is taking a tour of the regions to find out more about what goes on at each of the seven branches. Being a rural association, the organisation of the NZGFA into branches is one of the best ways to ensure representation nationwide and facilitate connections between members.

Groundspread Magazine recently touched base with Tina Powell, Secretary of the Otago/Southland Branch. Tina talks us through the challenges and opportunities facing this small but active membership.

How do you find running the branch?

Because we cover such a wide area, it is often hard to find days and times for meetings that suit all our members. Members also have to travel a fair way to meetings, but most are committed to doing this.

The beauty about running our branch is that we support each other.

Our members include many variable types of spreading businesses, including some large, well-structured enterprises with up to 15 trucks alongside sole operators. This allows our smaller businesses to gain knowledge and learning from the bigger organisations.

How many members do you have?

We have 23 members, including five life members and six associate members.

What are the challenges for ground spreaders in your area?

The weather and ground conditions play a big part in our daily challenges. The northern Southland area can get very windy, so windy they built a wind farm on the hills at Mossburn.

Wet spring seasons have not helped over the last few years, especially in the western and southern regions of Southland. The wet creates lots of hazards with all the hill work, especially where operators are faced with very steep terrain. Incompatible blends and sometimes poor-quality nutrient blends can also cause a few problems but we work as best we can with the products so that we make sure we do a professional job for our customers.

It is fair to say that our customers and suppliers do not always understand the issues and costs associated with applying fertiliser mixes. This is just one of the reasons why we all strive to maintain good relationships with our customers.

We endeavour to learn what the farmer wants, needs and expects and in turn we

impart our knowledge about spreading accurately, evenly and safely.

How do you encourage new members?

Our membership already represents over half of all the spreading companies in the region but we are very active with members always putting the word out to new and existing companies in our area to promote our branch. We try to explain the benefits, both professional and social. We have recently launched a branch Facebook page to move into modern times and make the flow of communication a bit easier.

We are really keen to reach more young people and encourage them to join the industry.

What is the biggest benefit of joining your branch?

The biggest benefit of joining our branch is the ability to gain and share a wealth of industry knowledge and skills from a large diverse group of operators. This also includes personal development and mentoring from senior branch members. Being a member and meeting others in your industry, you are able to build strong relationships and make great friends in the branch.

How often do you meet up?

We try to hold a branch meeting every 3-4 months usually alternating the location between Gore and Winton to even out the travel time for members. Our branch committee tries to meet up whenever we can to have a yarn and a beer.

We host our AGM over a bite to eat and a drink. This gives everyone another opportunity to catch up with each other. We also hold driver training days throughout the quieter winter months.

What is the best way to join?

Joining is super easy, you can contact Tina, the branch secretary, for an application form or download one from www.nzgfa.co.nz, then simply complete it and email it to Tina.

tina.powell@nsth.co.nz

The next Otago/Southland meeting will take place in either September or October.

Trusted since the 60s

Groundspread Magazine caught up with Brett Gilmour, rural operations manager of long-time NZGFA members, Northern Southland Transport and Cromwell Transport.

When you are running one of the largest rural transport fleets in the Otago/Southland area, you need staff with good solid skills, says Brett Gilmour - who has been in charge of rural operations for the two companies for the past seven years.

"Our staff, both past and present, have made these businesses what they are today. Since the companies started in the 1960s, we recognised the value in employing the right people with the right attitude and skill set. This means that over the years we have built a great team - one that can instinctively think outside the box and problem-solve for our clients."

Creating a positive workplace culture has been of significant benefit to the businesses, which together employ 90 people, not only has it given Northern Southland Transport, and sister company

Cromwell Transport, their own identities alongside their Queenstown based holding company, Trojan Holdings Ltd, but it has also enabled both businesses to focus on promoting the need for flexibility. "Both companies work very closely together, we often swap trucks and now have many drivers who can shift between the two businesses and hop into different vehicles, as and when needed."

With branches in Lumsden, Mossburn, Te Anau, Invercargill, Queenstown and Cromwell, the companies provide services throughout the South Island, as well as Inter-Island as required. Their 16-strong fleet of spreaders is a regular sight en-route to its four fertiliser bulk consignment stores for Ballance and two for Ravensdown.

All the spreaders run McMaster Engineering twin spinner bins, except two which run Bredel bins, and all are equipped with Whitehead V3 computers which are synced to the new Tracmap TML units. Brett says this computerised equipment is essential in today's climate of precision agriculture and safety first.

"This technology allows us to do the best job we can for our clients. Importantly, it

helps us look after and stay in touch with our drivers."

The terrain here ranges from steep and rocky hill country to flat and rolling dairy country, and we service large stations right down to small farmlets. Some of these places require substantial planning as they are very remote and sometimes require fertiliser and bulkies to be barged across lakes. This can mean that drivers are onsite for up to a week, often without cell phone coverage. In this situation they use a satellite communicator with GPS to reach the office when they need to. This system has a driver check-in alert and a 'finished for the day' function, which is a great way of making sure we know they are safe and off-farm."

Brett says the bulkies are busy year-round, often being utilised to spread grit and clear snow from the highways across Southland and Central Otago, during the winter months.

He concludes that Northern Southland Transport and Cromwell Transport are the best businesses to work for in the area. "We are long-established, trusted and client-focused - and the best bit is that we are still growing and looking to what the future holds."

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Ground spreading industry is in good hands

The winners and runners up of the 2020 New Zealand Groundspread Fertilisers Association (NZGFA) awards were congratulated by Executive Officer, Melanie Dingle, on their contributions to the ground spreading industry at the association's recent online AGM.



Ted Usmar
Winner - Innovation Award

Ted Usmar, head of engineering at Waikato-based Wealleans Ltd, was awarded the Trucks & Trailers sponsored Innovation Award for his long-term commitment to continuous improvement to technical efficiency and driver safety.

During his 30 year career, Ted has created engineering solutions that ensure spreader trucks work as efficiently as possible while offering the best safety features for operators. From making small tweaks to full re-designs, Ted's foresight and innovation is recognised in New Zealand as well as overseas.



Phil Johnson
Winner - Health & Safety Award

Phil Johnson, driver trainer at Canterbury Driver Training Ltd, scooped the Graymont-sponsored Health & Safety Award.

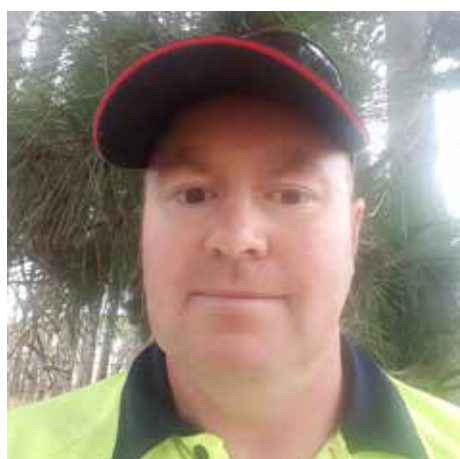
Phil was commended for his diligence in developing thorough training programmes that create competent and qualified ground spreader operators, who are highly proficient in the area of health and safety.

Phil regularly reviews his training modules in his quest to provide the best quality health and safety training for the industry.



Matthew Blomfield
Winner - Young Achiever's Award

The Ravensdown-sponsored Young Achiever's Award, a category for aspiring under 35s, was presented to Matthew Blomfield (age 22) of Transport Services Southland Ltd. Matthew, a natural communicator, was recognised for his respect of the environment as well as his passion for farming and his profession and his ability to engage effectively with customers. Matthew's advocacy for ground spreading has led him to attend careers events and youth groups, where he has been transparent about his love of agriculture and his job and encouraging others to join the industry.



Nathan Callander
Runner up - Innovation Award

Nathan Callander, an enthusiastic and talented ambassador for the industry who has the mechanical aptitude to solve complex spreader truck issues through clever engineering design, was named the runner-up for this award.



Jessie Freer
Runner up - Health & Safety Award

The runner up for this award was Jessie Freer, of Taranaki-based the Sandford Group. Jessie was praised for successfully updating old systems and implementing new health and safety procedures across 10 sites, 140 staff and 100 trucks.



Jared Usmar
Runner up - Young Achiever's Award

Jared Usmar, operations manager for Wealleans Groundspread, was chosen as the runner up for this award, based on his competency and his commitment to training new recruits as well as to testing new innovations.



Grant Anderson,
Winner - President's Award

Grant Anderson, of Transport Services Southland Ltd, was pronounced the winner of the prestigious President's Award, sponsored by Ballance Agri-Nutrients. Grant, who is a vice-president of the NZGFA, as well as its dedicated

health and safety representative, was congratulated on his leadership and mentoring skills as well as his advocacy for the industry standard, Spreadmark.

Grant's commitment to growing the

industry professionally, while augmenting health and safety practices, in particular, incident reporting was also recognised.

Marty Crafar, formerly of Safe Business Solutions Ltd, was named as the runner up in this category. Marty was applauded for his commitment to guiding ground spreader operators through business challenges, providing ideas, hands-on advice and resources across human resources, health and safety, management and auditing.



Marty Crafar,
Runner up - President's Award

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Strength of an association

By Melanie Dingle, Executive Officer, NZGFA

Now that we have reached the other side of the challenges that lockdown threw at business operations so suddenly, I have had time to think about the role that industry associations play - not just in times of crises, but in general.

If we look back to the end of March, associations were rapidly recognised as the main go-to places for information, guidance and support.

After COVID-19 hit, the first contact MPI had with industry associations, representing primary industries and supporting sectors, had over 80 participants. I can't even begin to guess the actual number of businesses these associations represented - but suffice to say it would be many thousands.

Like many other organisations, the NZGFA had to quickly mobilise to ensure we understood and kept abreast of the government announcements. As the voice of the ground spreading industry, we instinctively saw it as our role to decipher and communicate the 'what now' and 'what next' to our members.



Ground spreaders are becoming more visible

Throughout the earlier days of COVID-19, much of the information was complex, frequent and fast-changing. By working closely with suppliers and having regular contact with MPI, we were successful in ensuring that all our members knew what they could and couldn't do it, and how they could do it - safely and legally.

Lockdown put many industry associations under the spotlight and it either showed their strengths or exposed their weakness.

I believe the NZGFA came out strong. Lockdown gave us an opportunity to fine-tune our information gathering, bolster our networks and be more visible than we have ever been before.

For many years, the ground spreading industry has flown under the broader agricultural radar. Lockdown, however, meant we had to speak up and show our faces. We had to engage with MPI, as well as introduce ourselves to our fellow industries.

Interestingly, government was confident that it could successfully communicate important information via industry associations. Government used the industry association route knowing not only that it would reach the right target audience but that the interface of the associations would interpret the information and present it in the right way to their members. This meant that we, the NZGFA, were recognised as a credible organisation capable of interpreting crucial information and communicating this appropriately to our members.

On the back of this, awareness of the ground spreading industry, and our association, is growing. This is important as there is undoubtedly a correlation between the success of an association's work and its visibility.

For example, an association is more likely to receive acknowledgement when lobbying or presenting a case if it is known

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to the wider industry, government agencies and ministers and has a pre-existing relationship. Similarly, visibility in the media - in print and online - builds credibility and reputation; two things that are really important when you are advocating.

Whether there are big issues on the horizon or not, building and maintaining relationships and being abreast of current and potential areas that impact our members should be part of our day to day operations as a matter of course. I see it as our role to always be in a position to support NZGFA members and I see our members as responsible to speak up and let us know what the issues are.



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Here's the thing.

We've heard farmers for years asking if only they could have all their farm data in one place. But that hasn't happened yet, so farmers are reliant on suppliers holding their data for them.

The problem with this situation from the farmer's perspective, is that this means their farm data is aggregated by function, not by farm. Their fertiliser data is with their fertiliser co-op, their water data is with their irrigation scheme, their financial data is in their accounting platform, their stock data is with their genetics co-op and their health and safety information is with their safety system provider.

A nightmare for farmers.

So if you as their ground spread operator put their data with your provider who does only one thing, then your farmers are having to get your data from a database that suits you, but it doesn't really suit them. It's just another single piece of farm information that is isolated from all the rest of their data.

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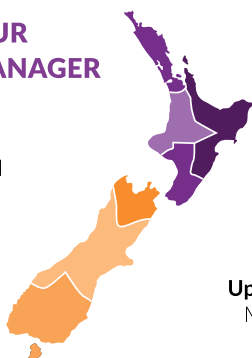
Simultaneously, Precision Farming puts your farmers in the centre of their business. So not only their fertiliser data, the application data from you, but also their water, effluent, irrigation, stock diary, spray diary, pasture growth and feed wedge, their staff safety and well-being as well. So you become a strategic partner with your farmers, along with their other key suppliers. *One Farmer - Many Suppliers.*



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Kenneth Irons is now the sole owner and managing director of Precision Tracking (NZ) Ltd and Precision Farming Ltd.

Farmers need more data shared more easily

Farmers have long been asking for more effective ways to aggregate their farm data so they can make better, evidence-based decisions in their farming businesses.

Across New Zealand and globally, farmers are wanting to get secure access to their data, to be able to exchange it with approved users like suppliers, agronomists, bankers, insurers, and service providers, and increasingly with those who buy the food and fibre they produce. In a pandemic world, being able to provide accurate data about food quality is important to food manufacturers, supermarkets and others selling food to end consumers. So the benefits to farmers and others of being able to aggregate data, and derive value from doing so, are well documented and widely agreed.

However, there is a problem. Unlike other major industries, the ag sector is still grappling with the best ways for farmers and their suppliers to exchange data. The key to this is using widely accepted data standards, thereby enabling trusted data exchange.

NZ farm data standards and interoperability

Three years ago, the Precision Agriculture Association of New Zealand, PAANZ, recognised the need to advance New Zealand's position by being able to better use its assets like NZ Farm Data Standards and the kiwi system called Datalinker, by aligning with global standards.

So PAANZ formed a sub-committee, chaired by Kenneth Irons and resourced by experts from across the ag sector, to lead the research and recommendation for the adoption of the world's best resources to help NZ manage farm data, in line with global best practice.

The systems used by the world's top 200 ag tech businesses like John Deere, Syngenta and Bayer were recommended.

Sir Bill English in a webinar series

This work was reported to hundreds of people in a webinar series in April and May, to show the industry the resources available and how ag data can be shared in a pre-competitive context, so that ag sector companies and co-ops large and small, can securely exchange data to help farmers improve profitability, productivity and sustainability in their farms.

Sir Bill English spoke in the fourth of the four webinars, from this experience as a farmer, Minister of Finance and Prime Minister.

"There are two reasons [for integration] in the ag sector - one is just knowing your customer better. The ag sector is a bit like government agencies - they exist in a lot of silos, just as suppliers do in the ag sector, and they know a lot about their version of what the customer does, but they don't know much about the customer as a whole" Sir Bill said.

"There's a second reason in the ag sector... I can remember the dirty dairying campaign where half a dozen organisations with multi-billion dollar balance sheets got beaten in public relations by one old guy with a typewriter running Fish & Game. And I could never quite understand why the custodians of these large, risk-laden balance sheets allowed that particular risk to run wild" said Sir Bill. "A key to it is data, because the farming community is now in a position where regulators are responding to political pressure... but with blunt tools... because we are not giving them better tools."

Sir Bill went on to explain his views on the reasons some large companies resist exchanging data, and challenges each of

those reasons.

The series can be viewed on YouTube by searching "New Zealand Agriculture Interoperability Workshop".

AgriTechNZ & the industry transformation plan

In May, PAANZ merged with AgriTechNZ, forming one industry body made up of 150 large and small businesses, research organisations and others.

In the recent elections for the Executive Council, Kenneth Irons was elected Chairman of AgriTechNZ - and will continue the Ag Data Standards work within AgriTechNZ.

This work forms one of the six key strategies of the NZ Government's Agtech Industry Transformation Plan, and is funded by \$11.4M announced on 21 July by Hon Phil Twyford and Damien O'Connor.



Kenneth Irons; Chairman, AgriTechNZ and Owner & MD Precision Tracking Ltd and Precision Farming Ltd.

How does this help the ground spread sector?

It is important operators are recognised by government and regulators as valuable contributors to the aggregation of farm data, using world-class GPS technologies, and encouraging their farmers to use electronic platforms for planning, ordering and recording nutrient applications.

Along with the good work others in the fertiliser and spreading sectors are doing, it will be good to have Kenneth Irons's voice advocating for the ground spread sector at ministerial and official central government, regional council, and industry level, through his role leading AgriTechNZ in support of the Industry Transformation Plan, including one of its six work streams on Data Standards and Interoperability.



Kenneth Irons and Sir Bill English presenting at the Ag Data Standards & Interoperability Webinar, May 2020

Straight to the future with the V3+

The ground spreading industry is becoming increasingly sophisticated in terms of the technology it employs. One of the leading products on the market for spreading applications is the V3 Spreader Control System, which, over the years, has been continually developed by technology and electrical entrepreneur John Whitehead.

The V3 helps ground spread operators perform at their peak by continuously adjusting the fertiliser feed to maintain the correct application for the current conditions. If, for any reason, anything is off target, the V3 will warn the operator with an audible alarm or shut the system down, if needed. This enables operators to remain focused on the task ahead, rather than worrying if anything has gone wrong.

John Whitehead has now developed the V3+, a future-focused follow on from the V3. Featuring a new hardware revamp, the V3+ offers three different levels; standard, mid and advanced. The standard level accommodates most standard spreaders, with the main features including - single floor single spinner, blower, blower flap, turbo, rate adjust, bout adjust, seat switch, GPS and two speed diff. The mid option

allows for another level of control by providing operators with the ability to command dual spinners and dual floors independently, enabling infinitely adjustable 'variable rate spreading'.

Where the spreader truck is fitted with load cells, the V3+ will display weight as well as monitor and prompt the operator to correct any product density errors that arise. This eliminates the risk of incorrect spread rates being set. The mid V3+ also performs side select, sidling spinner, and when fitted with a three dimensional gyro has the potential to monitor the vehicle angle and alert the operator if there is risk of a rollover.

John explains that the advanced level is the pinnacle of the V3+, with this level being capable of controlling four trace element hoppers in addition to the main hopper, and featuring spread pattern adjustment mechanisms and data transfer apps. In addition, the advanced level can house up to four external mounted cameras, storing time lapse images for reference in the event of an accident.


All three levels come with a new rugged daylight readable, full colour touchscreen tablet to enhance the user ability for the operator. The tablet is fitted on a docking station, which is provided, and mounted

to the dash where the touch screen can be powered on and off with the main switch. The touchscreen can also display camera and scales information, which helps reduce the number of screens required in the truck - enhancing driver safety.

As with the other V3 products, the new V3+ interfaces seamlessly with all quality GPS systems.



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Minor incidents still need to be reported

By Grant Anderson,
NZGFA Health & Safety Representative

It is easy to focus on the major incidents that occur in our industry, and forget about the small ones, usually because major incidents frequently cause injury, damage or disruption. In addition, there is typically some kind of action that has to be taken after the event - whether it's vehicle-towing, rescheduling jobs, filing incident reports, completing insurance claims or logging the event on the Spotlight app - and this makes major incidents hard to brush under the carpet.

However, research shows us that for every one major incident, there are 10 minor incidents in the lead up. This season, six major incidents were reported and I know of three others that weren't reported. If we accept that we had nine major incidents, that means we had up to 90 minor incidents occurring in the lead up to these major events. If everyone had reported the minor incidents, we would have had a considerable amount of data to analyse and interpret. Importantly, we would have had time on our side to correct mistakes - and possibly prevent a major incident from happening.

This season, zero minor incidents were reported. That's ninety separate incidents worth of data that wasn't captured.

We need to turn this around starting from now. We need to get into the good practice of reporting all minor incidents - including near misses.

These minor incidents are like alarm bells ringing. They give us advance warning that something bigger will likely happen further down the track if we are not careful. Let's start taking notice of the minor incidents and use them to our advantage - and by that I mean use them to help prevent a major accident.

This isn't about blaming or shaming. It's about keeping people as safe as possible. Do the right thing, report all incidents no matter how small.

Wellbeing



Lisa Tamati
100% commitment takes you to success

Beating the odds

Lisa Tamati, ultra endurance athlete and coach, knows what it takes to overcome obstacles, chase massive goals and face fears. Having experienced the extremes in her personal and professional life, Lisa has made it her mission to pass on what she has learned. Lisa was due to speak at this year's NZGFA conference, in the absence of our annual get-together, she now shares with us some of her guiding principles.

Make hard work part of life's philosophy: We have all heard the saying 'work smarter, not harder'. That is true to an extent but I would suggest working

smarter *and* harder are the real keys to success. No one ever becomes a master overnight on just talent alone. You can't just want to be a champion. The hard graft, the daily grind, the small rituals that take you - often in micro-increments - towards success requires 100% commitment.

Make every day a learning day: Learning is part of life. Those who embrace the often frustrating and time-consuming effort it takes to learn new habits, routines, or training methods are those who position themselves for long term success. Don't become complacent when it comes to your own growth professionally or as an individual. Always assume there's more to something you've already mastered and look for ways to improve upon past achievements. This is what separates the champions from those who never reach their potential.

Trust your gut: Learn to trust yourself: Do the research and your due diligence. Look outside the well-worn paths and find ways around obstacles. Back yourself and remember the experts aren't always right.

Be willing to get knocked down: Getting knocked down doesn't say much about you; it's how you get up that determines whether you will ultimately succeed. See setbacks as opportunities for your personal growth. Instead of looking at the first bump in the road as an excuse to turn around and head home, use it as an opportunity to inform your game plan and adjust your strategy.

Develop habits and rituals: Developing habits and rituals will help build a framework for success. You can't control the outcome or final goal but you can control the action, the steps you take along the way. Habits, done consistently, are the building blocks, the stairway to

your goal. Have a willingness to grind it out. Either pay the price of discipline or the much heavier price of pain and regret. If you are too lazy to do it now, you will regret it later when you no longer have the choice.

Age is no barrier: Don't be ageist. Don't listen to society's imposed limitations of what you can do and when. Make up your own rules and follow only your own high expectations of yourself. Sixty is the new 40. We are now able to take our own health and longevity into our own hands. The knowledge is out there to slow down ageing and to remain high functioning until late in life. Make it your goal to learn what you can to stay healthy and strong. Influence your future.



Lisa Tamati has recently released her latest book: **Relentless** - a story of despair, hope, love and the incredible insights found in the darkest of moments.

Find out more at www.lisatamati.com

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North Island Update

By Jim Laird, Jim Laird Driver Training

PG Smith kindly hosted a training and awareness day at their Helensville depot last month. I ran the course and was pleased with the excellent attendance and the commitment by several to travelling some distance from Kerikeri and Wellsford, as well as from around Helensville for the event. I also ran another training day in Whangarei at McQuin Groundspread, which was also well attended. The level of engagement of operators is extremely encouraging for our industry and I give credit to the Northland branch of the NZGFA for initiating this on-going training for its members. These training days are crucial for the health and safety of everyone who works for, or comes into contact with, our industry. They also provide an important social outlet for what can often be quite a solitary job.

Southland Groundspread Winter Training Update

By Ken Holland
HW Richardson Group

Last month, the Southland sower operators and dispatchers came together for an afternoon of health and safety reminders at the Bill Richardson Transport World, in Invercargill. Grant Anderson gave a thorough overview of the Spreadmark health and safety requirements. Graeme Wylie, from Bigfoot, also spoke about CTI tyre inflation. This was an interesting

session and included the various settings and their usage, different ground conditions and operating at the highway pressures. Many spreading companies are now installing CTI and report that they are pleased with the increased driver safety and the reduction of tyre wear that the system provides.

The afternoon finished with a training session on correct vehicle recovery requirements. This session included; accessing the environment, set up and preparation, methods of towing and the use of correct recovery equipment. Transport Services Ltd provided a sower, which was used to practically demonstrate the correct recovery techniques. The entire session was most valuable.

New health & safety course on horizon

By Phil Johnson
Canterbury Driver Training Ltd

I am thrilled and privileged to be named the winner of the NZGFA Health & Safety Awards 2020. It's a team effort, developing and delivering our training programmes, huge thanks to everyone here at Candrive who has been instrumental in making our courses a success. I would like to thank all of you who have supported us over the years that we have been involved with NZGFA and their quest for quality training and health and safety. We really appreciate your support; we are committed to continuing to work with you. Congratulations to all the category winners and runners up, it is an honour for all of us.

For the past couple of months, we have been working on the development of a new health and safety driving course, suitable for all employees not just spreader operators. We hope to have this up and running by the end of the year.

It's been great to be able to return to our normal training calendar. Winter is always a busy time for training, as companies take advantage of the quieter months to upskill their employees. The last couple of months we have run multiple courses around the South Island, with the most recent ones in Otago.

Congratulations to the following drivers who have recently completed the Spreader Operator NZ course and have been awarded Spreadmark Driver Certification.

- **Mayfield Transport** – Patrick Smack, Richard Hanson, Christopher Brook
- **Transport Waimate Ltd** – Matthew Cole
- **Wealleans Group** – Paul Kanyon, Michael Moore, Alister Monson, Ronson Dunn, Craig Bennett, Joshua Morgan, Bradley King, Christopher Riley, Ben Lincoln
- **Wilson Bulk Transport** – Jason Gully

Just a reminder that if you have completed a Spreader Operator NZ theory day course with Candrive, you must return your fully completed books for final sign off before you can be awarded Spreadmark Driver Certification. Please send your completed books to: Candrive, PO Box 345 Rangiora 7440.

Nano-coating, a problem-solver for slow-release fertiliser

A team of Lincoln University researchers led by Associate Professor in Animal Science, Craig Bunt, have been investigating how the use of nano-technology in agriculture could be used to increase productivity as well as reduce environmental impact.

Dr Bunt says the groundbreaking nano-coating could be applied to seeds to control the timing of germination and also to fertiliser to control its rate of release into the soil. "Controlling the rate of release for fertiliser is important because release that is too quick can result in excessive nitrogen being lost into the soil and waterways. This can have a negative

impact on the environment, including causing pollution." In addition, when nitrogen is lost to the soil, waterways or the atmosphere, farmers must then apply more fertiliser to achieve the results they desire. This inevitably increases their farming costs.

Dr Bunt explains that while some controlled-release fertilisers are currently available, they do have significant limitations, including a lack of robustness (which reduces their effectiveness) and a high coating:fertiliser ratio. "Our technology uses a novel and revolutionary coating that will solve these limitations. It will be a New Zealand-specific solution that increases sustainability, enhances productivity, and helps improve yield and export revenue".

The project, which is now in its second year, will take around three years of product

Research & Development



Dr Craig Bunt
Leading research into nano-technology

development, after which industry will be consulted.

Looking forward

By Jeremy Begg, Regional Distribution Manager, Ballance Agri-Nutrients

It has been a challenging three months for many with droughts in the far North, followed by floods and a relatively mild winter in the deep South. Ballance has been busy with its winter maintenance programme, preparing for the start of the new season. I know many of you have also been doing the same with your own plant and machinery.

Unfortunately, the NZGFA conference was unable to proceed this year and we really missed the opportunity for an annual 'get together'. It was particularly disappointing given the amount of work the Canterbury branch had put into preparations. Despite this, the NZGFA Awards carried on and I would like to congratulate all the winners and runners up. There were some great nominations and some closely contested categories.

Congratulations to Grant Anderson from TSL who took out the President's Award. As sponsors of this award, we look forward to hosting Grant in the near future. Congratulations also to John Schultz, Graeme Martin and Grant Anderson for being re-elected to the President and Vice Presidents roles respectively, at the NZGFA AGM.

As we look forward to spring, the order banks are starting to fill, and product is starting to move out of stores and onto paddock. With relatively low feed levels across many parts of the country, we are expecting a busy start, which bodes well for the next few months.

Changing gears - recovery mode

By Ant Boyles, National Logistics Manager, Ravensdown

Post lockdown, Ravensdown turns its focus to supporting the ag sector as the country moves into recovery mode.

We recognise there are some uncertain times ahead for many, both within the sector and New Zealand wide. Our purpose is to enable smarter farming for a better New Zealand, and it has never been so relevant.

With uncertainty remaining in many international markets, Ravensdown is

Storing and handling bulk fertiliser

By Philippa Rawlinson, Executive Director, Fertiliser Quality Council



Reducing truck movements in store will help preserve the quality of the product

Good storage and handling practices ensure a safer workplace and a cleaner environment while helping maintain the quality of bulk fertiliser products and blends for the end user. To help ground spreaders do their job, the FQC is encouraging every part of the fertiliser supply chain - from receipt through to dispatch - to take responsibility for maintaining the quality, both physical and chemical, of the product so that it remains fit for purpose all the way.

We have developed a series of guidelines to help ensure best practices occur while fertiliser is being stored and handled.

committed to supporting the industry by offering uninterrupted supply of key farm inputs and expert advice on how best to use them.

Our field, logistics and stores teams are currently holding regional pre-season planning meetings to make sure we are prepared for the coming season.

Some of you will also have been involved with site or regional meetings, and we welcome the opportunity for your feedback to keep us on a continuous improvement path. These sessions are critical to ensuring we are fully aligned, with a focus on good service and providing quality products to our stakeholders.

These include sections on storage considerations, receiving and segregating products, product handling, bagging off and transporting fertiliser.

Examples include, rotating products so first in is first out, reducing in-store truck movements, displaying visible product labels, not storing incompatible products next to each other and securing and covering all loads during transportation.

The guidelines are available on our website at www.fqc.co.nz - where they can be downloaded and printed as a poster.

The international supply chain continues to operate, despite issues in a number of countries, so our stores are full; waiting for spring to kick off. We look forward to seeing you at our doors.

Lastly, a big congratulations to all of this year's NZGFA Award winners. As a first-time judge it is apparent there's a lot of talent out there.

As proud sponsor of the Young Achiever's Award, Ravensdown was rapt to present the prize and award to this year's winner, Matthew Blomfield, at his home base of TSL in Nightcaps. Well done Matthew - you are a very deserving recipient and we look forward to hosting you on our sites.

Paving the way for precision ag

By Anders Crofoot, Chairman,
Fertiliser Quality Council



Established in 1994, the true value of the Spreadmark standard is only now being realised by the wider agricultural industry.

For the past 25 years Spreadmark has been quietly underpinning successful nutrient placement across both the ground and aerial spreading sectors. Initially, this fertiliser industry standard was devised to raise the bar across the profession. It was created to ensure that there was a thorough code of practice in place for nutrient spreaders to adhere to and so augment their reputation.

Spreadmark accreditation was set up as voluntary in anticipation that spreader operators who trained to meet the Spreadmark requirements would have a competitive edge, particularly as more and more farmers began to recognise the assurances that Spreadmark accredited spreaders brought with them.

At the heart of the Spreadmark programme was the determination to ensure that fertiliser was distributed on the land where it would be of the most agronomical benefit and have the least negative environmental impact. This meant accurate and even placement was paramount – this also gave an early nod to the precision agriculture movement we see today.

It is no wonder then, that Spreadmark is repeatedly described as being 'well before its time'. For the best part of



a quarter of a century, Spreadmark accredited spreaders have been practicing precision techniques to ensure the best outcomes for farmers as well as the environment.

In addition, the Spreadmark scheme was created to include high level spreader operator training across health and safety, risk management and aligning the nutrient spreading task with the overall farm management plan.

Spreading companies that seek Spreadmark accreditation undertake stringent testing to allow them to use the Spreadmark trademark. In turn, the benefit to fertiliser users who employ Spreadmark accredited operators is that they are guaranteed that their spreading job will be accurate and even, that health and safety won't be compromised and that no environmental regulations will be transgressed.

This, again, showed great foresight as these are some of the important areas on which modern day agriculture places

great emphasis.

Today, Spreadmark goes one step further in that spreading operators now use highly sophisticated technology that enables them to provide auditable proof of the completed spreading task. As we all embrace an increasingly auditable world where traceability now plays a major part in food production, farmers, growers, food processors and regional councils are increasingly being required to provide evidence of fertiliser spreading for their farm audits.

New Zealand food companies, too, are being asked more and more by overseas buyers to prove that the manufacture process is environmentally considerate, ethical and authentic – right down to how the nutrients were applied.

Without doubt we will see more and more requests for proof of nutrient placement but fertiliser users can rest assured that if they are using a Spreadmark accredited operator, these requests can be easily satisfied.

The Spreadmark scheme is a fertiliser placement quality assurance programme.

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