

Inside Dairy

April 2020

Your levy in action

YOUR LEVY,
YOUR VOTE,
YOUR FUTURE



LEVY VOTING
OPENS THIS
MONTH

DairyNZ 



over the fence...

How is your DairyNZ levy driving our sector forward?

That's the question we set out to answer in this edition of *Inside Dairy*. With the levy vote beginning this month, we want you to be 100 percent sure of your levy's past, present and future value.

To start with, we asked a group of farmers and others within the dairy arena for their perspectives on how the dairy sector is stronger thanks to levy support. Thank you to these people for contributing to this edition.

We also look at other areas of levy investment, such as a new biosecurity tool, how we're supporting farmers' migrant worker needs, information on our new learning resource for teachers, and a look at *Mycoplasma bovis* eradication results.

For those of you who came along to one of our Farmers' Forum events in February and March, thank you! I thoroughly enjoyed talking with many of you and I hope you found the sessions useful. We're always keen to hear feedback, so flick us an email at info@dairynz.co.nz If you couldn't make it but are keen for a quick snapshot of what we presented to farmers, check out dairynz.co.nz/farmersforum for presentation summaries.

At the time of writing this, Covid-19 has been dominating our thinking, not only about what we should do to support our own staff, but also around holding events, travelling, and advice to farmers who are employers. This continues to be a rapidly evolving situation. We'll send you regular email and social media updates and keep our website current with information and advice to support you through self-isolation, staff management and wellbeing.

You'll see a number of events promoted in this edition but, in line with Government requirements, we may need to postpone/cancel some or all of these. Please keep an eye on the DairyNZ website or contact us on 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969) for updates.

Have a great Easter, and I hope you find time to get off the farm for a break. And keep an eye out your voting pack in the post soon. Voting opens mid-April and closes May 30.

Tim Mackle
Chief executive
DairyNZ



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On the cover: Waikato sharemilkers Martin and Hazel Kelly (with children Seamus, Erin, Nelson and Killian) will be supporting a continuation of the DairyNZ levy when voting opens this month.

TAKE 5... TIPS FOR FARMERS

1. Money matters

Want the skills and confidence to manage cashflow, create financial budgets and improve your profitability? Business by the Numbers courses – short, functional and hands-on – are starting around the country in April and May. Call Mel Escott on 021 232 7964 or register your interest at dairytraining.co.nz/bbtn

POSTPONED
DUE TO COVID-19

2. Career decision time?

The dairy sector needs more dairy farmers, rural professionals, scientists and future thinkers. If you or someone you know (such as your children) want to understand the different careers and get help with study decisions, head to godairy.co.nz

3. Prep your heifers now



Give your heifers a headstart now, before winter hits. Get your team members (including graziers) on board and create an adverse event plan so everyone's prepared for challenges. Regularly weighing heifers will also help you pick up issues early. See dairynz.co.nz/heifers

4. Stock returning from grazing

If you've got cattle grazing off-farm, here's how to minimise biosecurity risks when they return. Talk to your grazer about the animals' health status, avoid mixing stock during transport, and quarantine returning stock on your farm. More tips at dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity-at-grazing

5. Get set for winter



Plans in place for transitioning cows onto crop? Make an individual paddock grazing plan, and an adverse weather plan for when crop paddocks become muddy. Communicate with your team and make sure everyone is ready for winter conditions on crop. Learn more at dairynz.co.nz/wintering

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We appreciate your feedback

Email insidedairy@dairynz.co.nz or call us on 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969). Alternatively, post to: Inside Dairy, Private Bag 3221, Hamilton 3240. For information on DairyNZ visit dairynz.co.nz.



Why the levy matters

DairyNZ's research, advocacy and expertise have never been more vital to our sector's success, says Board chair Jim van der Poel.



The milksolids levy has been part of New Zealand dairy farming for 17 years. Its roots are in funding research and development that enable us to continue thriving as farmers in an ever-changing world.

Through DairyNZ, the levy now delivers a much broader range of industry-good activities. For every \$1 dairy farmers invest, the Government and other organisations co-invest a further \$1.80.

And the return on that investment is even better: an independent economic evaluation of DairyNZ's key investments showed at least \$15 of value for each \$1 paid through the levy. This value includes costs that have been reduced through DairyNZ's advocacy work.

DairyNZ isn't just focused on putting more money in farmers' pockets, through improved productivity and efficiency (e.g. our investment in animal genetics and the Forage Evaluation Index). Our policy and advocacy teams have successfully engaged with Government to limit restraints and proposed costs for farmers. Significant wins include He Waka Eke Noa and our sector agreement to keep agriculture out of the Emissions Trading Scheme. These will save farmers over \$5 billion during the next 30 years.

Through farmer education programmes, DairyNZ is also helping to reduce injuries and fatalities on farms, while the TB programme has minimised trade constraints and the costs of managing affected herds and cull cows.

Why do I believe in the levy?

I believe in an organisation that exists to work exclusively for dairy farmers. Not many sectors have an industry-good organisation like ours. DairyNZ has helped us achieve huge success so far, and it's a real strength for our future.

I see particular value in how the levy is used to support farmers – whether it's providing expert advice during and after the recent Southland floods; researching the benefits of plantain for reducing nitrate leaching; or representing dairy farmers at the Beehive to advocate for practical, science-based solutions to improve water quality.

Dairy is our nation's biggest income

earner but with that influence comes a greater focus on our sector and its sustainability. For example, we're currently facing regulatory changes, staff shortages, and public perception challenges. How we respond and find solutions to these issues is vital – and that's where DairyNZ has your back.

DairyNZ maximises every levy dollar, reinvesting it into research and development for better farm systems, environmental management, animal care and workplaces; as well as biosecurity, public perception and education programmes, to name a few.

So, while you focus on producing milk and looking after your land, animals and people, you can be confident that we're working tirelessly to support your future.

Have your say

I encourage all levy-paying dairy farmers to vote when you receive your pack in the post this month. Don't forget to remind your neighbours too – we want as many dairy farmers to vote as possible, by May 30.

This is your levy, your vote and your future.

**DAIRYNZ
LEVY VOTE
2020**

FREQUENCY OF VOTE:
every six years

VOTE PERIOD:
mid-April to May 30, 2020

WHO VOTES:
all farmers who pay
a levy on milksolids

CURRENT LEVY RATE:
3.6c/kg MS



YOUR LEVY: DRIVING OUR SECTOR FORWARD



While DairyNZ's milksolids levy supports dairy farmers on-farm, it's also delivering significant value to the sector as a whole, creating better solutions through science and ensuring farmers' voices help shape dairying's future. *Inside Dairy* asked a selection of farmers and others within the dairy arena for their views on how the levy is working for dairying now and in the decades ahead.

Michael Woodward

- ▶ New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards chair
- ▶ Otorohanga dairy farmer/farm owner with wife Susie
- ▶ Four-time NZDIA entrants: second in the 2016 NZDIA Share Farmer of the Year category (as regional winners, Canterbury/North Otago)

Having done a DairyNZ Progression in Dairying course (now the Biz Start/Biz Grow programmes), we could see the awards were a good way for us to get feedback on our performance. During multiple judging rounds, we always took something away to help hone our business or ourselves.

“DairyNZ’s COs are always helpful and take a big role in delivering.”

DairyNZ’s extensive involvement in the awards as a sector partner is strongly acknowledged, as is the great support and advice its consulting officers (COs) provide. Whether it’s support for the regional committees running the programmes, or for entrants wanting to understand what best practice looks like, DairyNZ’s COs are always helpful and take a big role in delivering.

The awards allow those in the sector to learn new ways to improve through feedback. They also push people to come up with new industry-leading ideas, with DairyNZ acting like an incubator for some of these.

The ability for the awards to showcase leading farmers, and having those farmers use DairyNZ resources, really shows the synergy between the two organisations. The Awards’ relationships with the wider sector also ensures our entrants are being judged and given feedback in alignment with our industry’s best practice. The ‘learn, connect, grow’ byline of the awards speaks to this.





Angela McEwan

- ▶ Vet and animal wellbeing lead – strategy and performance
- ▶ Theland Purata Farm Group
- ▶ Darfield, Central Canterbury

The DairyNZ information and recommendations I provide to our farmers are backed up by sound science. Their research allows me to target areas that will provide the biggest wins for our cows and people, with recommendations that have been proven to work.

Following DairyNZ's recommendations – whether by reading about them or hearing about them from rural professionals like me – puts dairy farmers at the forefront of best practice, making a real and satisfying difference to their businesses.

Without DairyNZ's resources, there'd be no direction and cohesiveness in the industry, with consultants saying different things and farmers not knowing who to listen to. For example, if it wasn't for the DairyNZ body condition scoring accreditation,

I'd still be standing in the paddock with another consultant arguing about what a 'condition score four' cow looked like!

“Without DairyNZ's resources, there'd be no direction and cohesiveness in the industry ...”

Every day, I'm using resources and research findings from DairyNZ to train people, look for opportunities to improve, and to provide strategic direction for the business. The world is evolving and we need to evolve with it. We need tools and resources that enable us to farm well in the 21st Century – and DairyNZ provides those.

Chris Rathgen

- ▶ Monitor farmer in the DairyNZ-led Forages for Reduced Nitrate Leaching (FRNL) programme
- ▶ Farm manager in St Andrews, Canterbury

The FRNL research programme has provided valuable research to help us reduce dairy's environmental footprint. It's given farmers some simple, practical solutions to reduce nitrogen leaching from the land we manage. It's also provided information to help Canterbury farmers optimise their systems and reduce cost and environmental impact.

“Individual farmers are unlikely to, and generally not in a position to, fund this research themselves.”

As a result of the research, we've been planting plantain in all re-grassed paddocks. We've reduced our stocking rate from 4.2 to 3.7, reduced imported supplements by approximately 50 percent, reduced costs, and maintained milk production. The effects have been positive: environmentally, financially, and also from an animal health/performance perspective.

When all the benefits of a mixed sward are recognised in Overseer, it will help farmers meet nutrient criteria. Reducing cow numbers and imported supplements also have a significant effect.

As more pressure comes onto farmers to reduce perceived environmental impacts, levy-funded scientific research can be used to find new tools or methods to offset or reduce these. Individual farmers are unlikely to, and generally not in a position to, fund this research themselves. As long as the research is keeping up with or ahead of industry practices and standards, it's a great tool for any sector.





Ryan O'Sullivan

- ▶ Nuffield Farming Scholarship recipient (2017)
- ▶ Major shareholder with wife Tina in a farm equity partnership, Fairlie, South Canterbury

Nuffield farming scholarships focus on the international perspective – where New Zealand fits in the global agri-food sector and what's driving things. Through my scholarship travels and research, I've learned New Zealand is very well placed to produce food to meet consumer awareness and demands. Our milk is a fantastic product with great nutritional value and many diverse applications.

However, ensuring an ongoing demand for our milk means getting things right both inside and beyond the farm gate – and that takes quality leadership. Our sector needs to foster leaders and give them the tools to succeed, and grassroots farmers are the best people to navigate through the issues ahead.

That's why money invested by sector organisations like DairyNZ to build that capability is well spent. Through Rural

Leaders, the Nuffield and Kellogg programmes are providing a pipeline of potential leaders armed with knowledge and skills in the rural community. DairyNZ's support is a big part of that.

“... ensuring an ongoing demand for our milk means getting things right both inside and beyond the farm gate – and that takes quality leadership.”

On a more personal note, my Nuffield scholarship also gave me the confidence to get in front of audiences and share what I saw, and who I talked to helped me with my critical thinking and prompted me to go for some governance roles.

Going to DairyNZ levy-sponsored events has resulted in significant gains for our business. Among other things, these events have helped to keep me on top of changes to law and dairy operations, provided training and support, and given me the knowledge to improve things like human resources systems with better contracts and rosters. As a result, our team is more involved and more driven to achieve seasonal goals.

“I left the two-day course feeling that I could really make positive changes for our business.”

A Business by the Numbers short course, run by Dairy Training Limited (DTL, a DairyNZ entity), enabled me to understand financial information and was a starting platform to show Dairy Women’s Network members how to make and track a budget and how to use that information to grow their businesses. I left the two-day course feeling that I could really make positive changes for our business. Through the support of DairyNZ and other partners, these events provide a framework to help teams grow and develop.

The amazing resources on DairyNZ’s website and the DairyNZ publications empower Dairy Women’s Network members to carry on learning, and this ultimately benefits our sector.



Jessica Goodwright

- ▶ Dairy Women’s Network member
- ▶ Farmer/farm owner with husband Lyall in Drummond, Invercargill



Jon Pemberton

- ▶ Ag Proud chairman
- ▶ Farm owner with wife Birgit, in Brydone, Southland

Ag Proud was formed last winter when environmental activists started campaigning about winter grazing practices in Southland. Me and fellow farmers, Jason Herrick, John Douglas and Jason Checketts, decided to form a group to keep an eye on the activists and give the rural sector an opportunity to have a proud voice and engage with our urban neighbours.

We're a volunteer organisation and support from DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand has enabled us to fund an admin person, who's taken a lot of pressure off each of us. As a result of that support, we've been able to reach a wider group around

the region by hosting barbeques in urban areas where farmers mix with the locals who can ask questions about farming. Hearing a genuine message from the grassroots has gone down well with our urban cousins.

I know that DairyNZ and other industry bodies don't always get it right but, from a farmer's perspective, the work DairyNZ does, especially on the Essential Freshwater package, has helped us to get our heads around it. The supporting science and depth of engagement with the Government showed good leadership. As a levy-paying farmer, that's been a highlight for me.

“Hearing a genuine message from the grassroots has gone down well with our urban cousins.”

Nick Hoogeveen

- ▶ Partner in the DairyNZ Selwyn and Hinds Project
- ▶ Equity partner and dairy farm manager with wife Demelza, Canterbury

Being involved in the DairyNZ Selwyn and Hinds Project is helping us to reduce nitrogen losses on-farm in line with the requirements of the Canterbury Land & Water Regional Plan, while maintaining our profit levels.

DairyNZ has done a good job of facilitating the project meetings and supplying the experts. It's good to be exposed to cutting-edge science, to hear about it in advance, and to brainstorm ideas with other farmers. Being part of the project has enabled us to understand the 'why'. I wouldn't miss a meeting.

“It's good to be exposed to cutting-edge science, to hear about it in advance, and to brainstorm ideas with other farmers.”

We've always wanted to do the right thing but didn't really have enough knowledge to understand where best to direct our efforts. We joined the Selwyn and Hinds Project in 2018 and it's helped us to focus and given us practical ways to implement the science.

We've identified that, when grass isn't growing much in autumn, nitrogen from urine patches is more at risk of leaching, so it makes sense to stop applying fertiliser at that time of year and reduce our stocking rate. Overall, we've reduced our synthetic nitrogen application by about 30 percent, and it hasn't had a major effect on production. We've also made changes to the irrigation system to make it more efficient.

One of the really good things about being part of this programme is that the scientific experts have given us the 'know how' to help us make changes on-farm.



Lands trust forges ahead

Learning about the business side of dairying has been the key to building a successful enterprise for Te Tawa Kaiti Lands Trust in Ruatoki.

Although several of its trustees had farming experience, Te Tawa Kaiti Lands Trust is relatively new to running a dairy farming business. But taking part in a Māori Agribusiness Extension (MABx) programme has quickly taken them to the next level.

DairyNZ has partnered with the Ministry for Primary Industries to deliver the MABx programme to six Māori dairy businesses in the eastern Bay of Plenty. One of these farms is owned by Te Tawa Kaiti.

From maize to milk

Longstanding trustee and kaumātua Jackie Hakeke McGarvey says the Trust was formed in 1989 by owners of several blocks of land at Ruatoki, south of Whakatane.

“We are continuing that legacy today using the combined skills of our trustees who are from three generations.”

For many years, the Trust has grown a commercial maize crop on its Kaiti land blocks (150ha), while it leased its Te Tawa blocks (190ha) to a private dairy farmer. The Trust purchased the dairy unit in 2016. At the start of the 2019/20 season, it bought a herd of 440 Friesian-cross animals, including 70 cows grown in partnership with Te Manawa o Tūhoe.

Executive officer Hinehou Timutimu says the Trust needed a well-developed plan to ensure a smooth transition into the new season, so it was essential to get the basics right from the get-go.

“We set strategic goals, including strengthening the management systems and instigating measures to achieve a best-practice, sustainable operation.”

DairyNZ’s Waikato regional leader Wilma Foster helped to

get the ball rolling, and Hinehou says Wilma has “walked the walk”, setting them on the right track by facilitating goal-setting workshops.

“Getting the basics right at ground level meant the Trust were ‘front-footing’ into dairying and prepared to take that step forward,” says Hinehou.

“From there, we developed our protocols and plans. It’s worked – we’re making excellent progress.”

Continuous learning

To help the trustees become more effective board members, DairyNZ has also helped to facilitate a professional development programme. Through governance workshops, the trustees are identifying gaps in learning, recognising individual strengths, and developing teamwork skills.

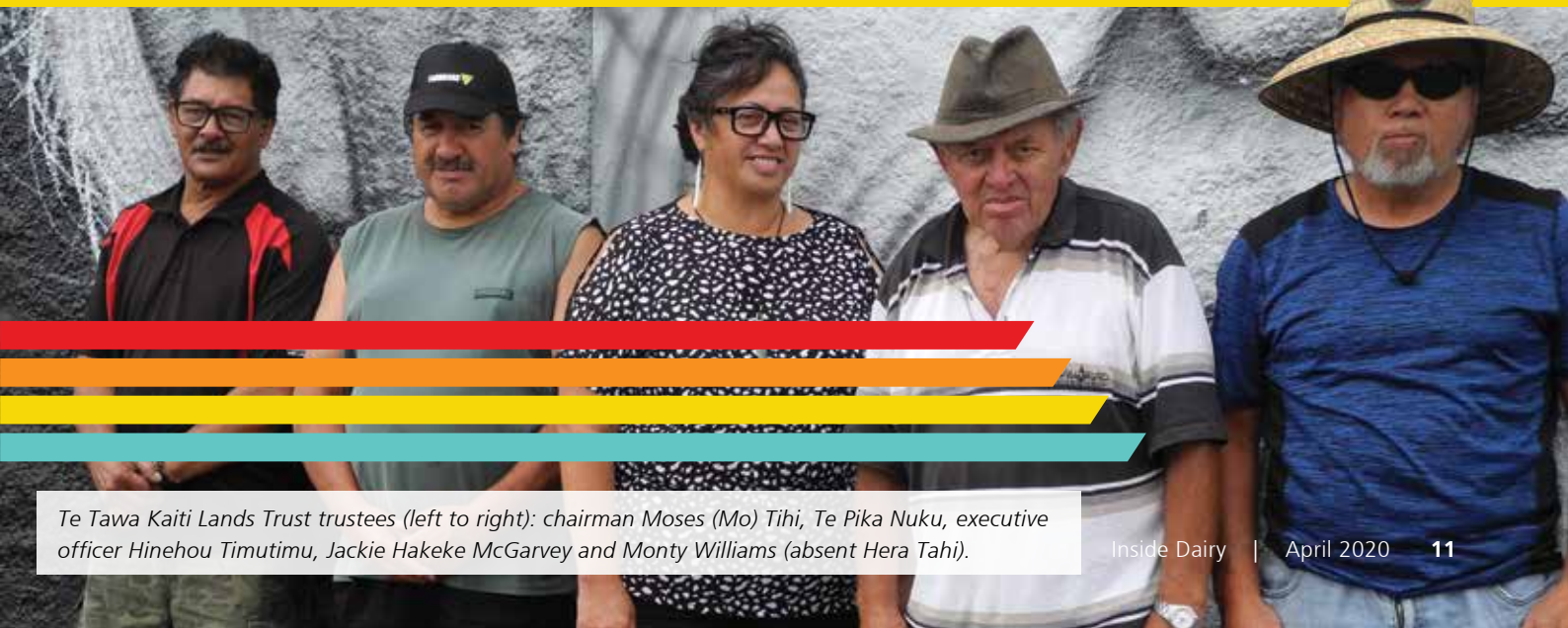
“The tremendous support from DairyNZ, through the MABx programme, has facilitated ongoing learning and is helping us to make positive progress,” says chairman Moses Tihi.

Shared journey

Wilma says it’s been a privilege to be part of Te Tawa Kaiti’s journey.

“I’ve learnt a lot from the Trust; it’s been a mutual learning experience. They’ve shared their history, culture and love for the land, along with their aspirations for their future. It’s been great to help them develop and start to implement their plans.

“It’s also exciting to see the personal growth of the trustees over the past three years. I look forward to seeing their future success.”



Te Tawa Kaiti Lands Trust trustees (left to right): chairman Moses (Mo) Tihi, Te Pika Nuku, executive officer Hinehou Timutimu, Jackie Hakeke McGarvey and Monty Williams (absent Hera Tahī).

Your future's in safe hands

DairyNZ is using your levy to take care of the high-level stuff – like science, strategy and attracting outside investment opportunities – so you can look forward to a bright future in dairying.



INFLUENCING THE DIRECTION OF SCIENCE

Working with dairy farmers and sector partners, DairyNZ ensures scientific research is relevant and addresses future challenges and opportunities.



GOVERNMENT & LEVERAGE

DairyNZ accesses alternative sources of funding through public and private institutions and other organisations. For every \$1 you invest in industry-good activities via the levy, the Government and other organisations co-invest a further \$1.80.



ROADMAP TO THE FUTURE

DairyNZ is one of the sector partners who led the creation of the Dairy Tomorrow strategy which sets out a strategic vision for what our sector wants to achieve over the coming decade and beyond.

BIOSECURITY

DairyNZ is the majority investor in Ospri's national TBfree programme. The ongoing work in this area has meant the number of tuberculosis-infected herds has dropped from more than 200 in 1996 to less than 20 now.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

DairyNZ uses your levy to grow and upskill the dairy sector's labour pool, and enhance its public image through promotion, education and partnerships.



SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Strong partnerships are the key to a thriving dairy sector. DairyNZ invests in more than 40 organisations across New Zealand, including universities, research institutions and farmer-led groups like Dairy Women's Network.

LEVY VALUE AT A GLANCE

Ever wondered how DairyNZ invests your money? DairyNZ's levy vote in April and May provides a good opportunity to reflect on recent highlights. Here are just 10 – read about more and find out about voting at dairynz.co.nz/vote



We're sharing your voice

On dairy farmers' behalf, DairyNZ has helped prepare submissions on regional plan changes and on national land, water and climate change proposals – all aimed at getting the best outcome for farmers.

In 2019, DairyNZ made 15 national submissions, seven regional submissions and four select committee appearances, plus attended hundreds of meetings with MPs, regional councils and officials. We work with partners such as Federated Farmers, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, and dairy companies.

- Development of new hybrid perennial ryegrasses.
- Field testing of genetically modified ryegrass.



We're helping you tell your positive dairy stories

DairyNZ represents dairy farmers and their positive work on-farm. It is dairy farmers' stories, effort and passion that will ultimately make a difference. When members of the public listen to farmers, read their stories or visit their farms, it has a profound impact on the way they view dairy farming.



We're creating a cow for the future

Each year, genetically superior heifers enter the milking herd. This is worth millions to the economy annually, and DairyNZ invests in work that contributes to this.

The latest example is DairyNZ-led research that's developing new cow fertility and longevity traits. These traits will provide greater focus on fertility and good health.



We're preparing your sector for the future

DairyNZ is working with partner organisations to develop solutions so you're ahead of the game at a time when change is coming faster than ever.

For example, recent research has shown the potential for plantain to reduce soil nitrogen (N) losses from cows' urine patches. DairyNZ, together with partner organisations, is working with farmers to help make plantain work in their farm system.



We're investing in plant-breeding technologies

DairyNZ is contributing funds to three new options for creating and selecting better plants faster. These technologies are all underway:

- Genomic selection.



YOUR LEVY, YOUR FUTURE



We're responding to your regional issues

DairyNZ responds to regional issues, including severe weather and animal health problems. When swede crops caused cow illness in Southland, a DairyNZ team was quick to source plant and animal samples so we could understand the problem and coordinate support.



We're supporting local research

Each farm is unique, so DairyNZ works alongside farmers to ensure information and support is tailored no matter where or how you farm.

In every region DairyNZ supports at least one focus, research or monitor farm. The types of research carried out are guided by local farmers, to ensure it is relevant and topical.



We're supporting better grass selection

DairyNZ's Forage Value Index allows you to choose pasture cultivars based on independent evaluation. If all farmers moved from using a four-star perennial ryegrass cultivar to a five-star cultivar, it would contribute an estimated \$60 to \$100 million per year to the dairy sector.



We're backing farmer initiatives

Farmer-led catchment groups play a vital role in giving farmers a strong voice around council tables. DairyNZ supports those groups through the regional government process by making it easier to engage in the process and providing scientific evidence.



We're empowering the sector with data

DairyNZ's DairyBase records and reports the financial performance and physical aspects of dairy farms across New Zealand. DairyBase provides a range of benchmarks based on ownership type, location and production system. The information also provides robust economic analysis of Government policy proposals.



Meeting farmers' migrant workforce needs

DairyNZ recently took farmers' migrant workforce views to the Government's consultation on employer-assisted work visa processes. Farmers' voices were heard, as DairyNZ's Jane Muir explains.

Migrants are a critical and valued part of dairying in New Zealand, filling skills shortages on farms when there aren't enough Kiwi workers available. Our sector currently has about 4000 migrants on work visas (18 percent of employees) and another 1500 on resident visas (mostly employees but some employers).

DairyNZ uses part of your levy to ensure farmers can access the people they need, whether New Zealanders or migrants. Last year, we asked dairy farmers for their views on the Government's proposed changes to employer-assisted temporary work visas. These are the most commonly held visas used in relation to migrant workers in the sector.

We included farmers' feedback in our March 2019 submission on the Government's essential work skills visa consultation, and the immigration policy changes were announced in September 2019. These changes, to be rolled out between now and 2021, show that dairy farmers' voices (and other submitters' similar feedback) were heard.

What are the changes?

In June 2020

Rather than categorising positions by occupation, jobs will now be classified as 'low-paid' or 'high-paid' in relation to New Zealand's median wage (currently \$25.50 per hour). The

classification of jobs into 'low-paid' and 'high-paid' will more accurately reflect various roles on dairy farms. DairyNZ supports this move.

From 2021

Other significant changes from 2021 are listed below.

- A new three-step, employer-led visa application process (employer check, job check and worker check).
- A strengthened labour market test across New Zealand for 'low-paid' jobs.
- In Waikato, Canterbury, Otago and Southland (outside of the major cities), 'low-paid' migrant employees will be eligible for a visa of up to three years (followed by a 12-month stand-down period). Employers in those regions who offer a job paid at or above the median wage won't have to do a labour market test.
- 'High-paid' migrant employees will be eligible for a visa of up to three years, and can re-apply for another after that with no stand-down period.
- All employers hiring migrant workers will need to be accredited, although it's recognised that small employers have different resource capabilities.
- Migrant workers can bring their families.
- Discussion with Immigration NZ around the possible introduction of sector agreements.

For DairyNZ's tips and advice on employing migrants in the dairy sector, see dairynz.co.nz/employer

For regular updates on policy changes to temporary work visas see immigration.govt.nz

Key points

1. DairyNZ's levy helps us advocate for farmers' Kiwi and migrant workforce needs.
2. Dairy farmers' views are reflected in the upcoming changes to immigration policy.
3. These changes will help ensure dairy farmers' and migrants' workforce needs are looked after.

Let's D-BRiEF on biosecurity

Your levy is funding a new biosecurity tool to reduce the risk of threats reaching your farm and damaging your business.

Animal diseases, plant pests and insect pests pose a considerable threat to dairy farming. As part of our continuous improvement to DairyNZ's biosecurity work and support for farmers, we've created the Dairy Biosecurity Risk Evaluation Framework (D-BRiEF).

We already know a lot about some high-risk organisms, such as foot-and-mouth disease, velvet leaf and fire ants. However, we still have much to learn about many other organisms in the world that could harm our sector – so we'll be filling in those knowledge gaps through D-BRiEF.



What's the benefit for you?

By understanding which organisms pose the greatest risk, and why, we can make better decisions about how we spend your levy to reduce these risks.

We're currently:

- working with the Government and others on strengthening pre-border and border biosecurity to prevent new incursions
- looking to develop targeted New Zealand-based surveillance programmes to detect new incursions more quickly
- providing farmers with on-farm biosecurity guidance to reduce the possibility of current and new threats reaching your farm and damaging your business

What is D-BRiEF?

D-BRiEF is a tool designed to help us tap into the knowledge and experience of experts from New Zealand and overseas, so we can better identify and assess the risk of organisms in a transparent, and scientifically credible manner.

It prioritises which organisms could be the most harmful by looking at:

- the likelihood of organisms getting through our borders (and onto dairy farms)
- how widely they could spread if they do arrive
- what impact the organisms could have.

Why is this important?

Biosecurity threats can affect your pasture and crop yields, milk production, reproduction and animal welfare. Some diseases are also a risk to people's health and can affect the trade of our dairy and animal products. Furthermore, our dairy sector would collectively have to share the cost of responding to any incursions.

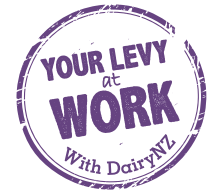
- working with other bodies to create pre-agreed response plans, so we're prepared for incursions and ready for a fast and more effective response.

These actions greatly increase our chances of preventing or eradicating an incursion.

Find out more at dairynz.co.nz/biosecurity

Key points

1. DairyNZ is working across a number of areas to reduce biosecurity risks.
2. Our D-BRiEF tool will allow DairyNZ and other experts and agencies to share more information about more organisms.
3. D-BRiEF will enable DairyNZ and dairy farmers to be more proactive about biosecurity.



Farming kit an early hit

DairyNZ's new learning resource for teachers, 'The Farming Kit', is already sparking enthusiasm in youngsters keen to learn about dairying.

Based around a bright and colourful interactive activity mat, 'The Farming Kit' has been designed to support schools' curriculum requirements. So far, 500 of the kits have been distributed to primary school teachers across the country.

Bringing the farm to the classroom

Teachers of younger children say their students are enthusiastic about the kit's 'farming' topic and its content, which encourages learning through science, literacy, storytelling, numeracy, waiata, poetry, role play and artwork.

The kits introduce the animals, ideas, and language of the New Zealand dairy farm, using bright imagery, stories and interactive activities. This supports teachers to enrich their students' farming vocabularies and help them understand where milk comes from. It also helps students learn more about what happens on a farm each day, including the important role farmers play in caring for their cows and the environment.

By linking to other information about dairying, including 'Rosie's World', the kit is highly relevant to New Zealand kids, teachers and their parents.

Kit content and tasks

Te Reo is integrated throughout the learning resource and on the vibrant interactive 'farming' mat which forms the backbone of the learning package. Also included are a range of resources that support storytelling.

In one of the kit's tasks, children follow the lead of painter Ted Bracey, who lived most of his life in the Waikato, surrounded by dairy farms. Ted particularly liked painting farmland, mixing mostly green layers. Children are introduced to Ted's work and encouraged to learn to mix paints into the green shades that they might see on a farm, while learning about the colour wheel.

Farm visit follow-ups

Schools that have received The Farming Kit have also been invited to apply for a school farm visit in their local area. With the support of amazing farmer hosts, these visits provide additional enrichment of classroom learning.

In 2019, more than 4500 children visited a farm through the School Farm Visit programme.

Check out The Farming Kit at schoolkit.co.nz/farming

Key points

1. The Farming Kit was released to 500 primary school teachers in late February 2020.
2. Students are enthusiastically using the kits and connecting with what happens on a dairy farm.
3. A water quality-focused classroom resource is due to be released in March 2020 to another 500 teachers (for Years 4 to 8).



Students from Waitaki Valley School, Kurow, get creative using The Farming Kit from DairyNZ.

M. bovis eradication on track

Solid progress is being made to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis* (*M. bovis*), but finding and containing infected farms remains an urgent priority.



programme, and the new National Beef Survey, will also help to give assurance in the future that the disease has been eradicated.

Here are some actions we've taken to more rapidly find and contain infected farms:

- Streamlined the tracing processes by which animal movements are identified and suspected farms placed under surveillance.
- Shortened the timeframes for issuing stock movement restrictions (Notice of Directions – NOD) when there is a high risk of infection in stock. In some cases, NODs will now be issued over the phone to save time.
- Sped up the turnaround of results from on-farm testing.

Rate of infection declining

There's no question that *M. bovis* has had a huge impact on our sector, particularly on some individuals and families. And although we're far from out of the woods, latest data from the 10-year programme gives us confidence that we're on track to eradicate the disease from New Zealand.

Infected herds are being identified and removed at a rate that's consistent with earlier predictions. Also, processes have been improved and farmer feedback heard, resulting in quicker compensation payments, more farmer-focused processes and shorter turnaround times for farms under movement restrictions. Meanwhile, the number of properties confirmed with *M. bovis* to date is almost in line with what was estimated at the start of the phased eradication programme.

All of this is encouraging. However, identifying and restricting stock moving from infected farms, and preventing further spread of infection, remains a top priority. It's critical that farmers keep accurate and up-to-date NAIT records, so at-risk animals can be identified quickly.

Improvements to the programme

Additional work is underway to identify any new cases of the disease. The ongoing national Bulk Tank Milk Surveillance

programme is what's known as the Estimated Dissemination Rate (EDR). This is the number of farms that each newly infected farm will then go on to infect. To eradicate a disease, this number needs to be (on average) less than one. The rate of infection between farms has been declining progressively since 2017 and the EDR for *M. bovis* is currently less than one, which gives us confidence that we can achieve eradication.



Help for affected farmers

DairyNZ understands that *M. bovis* has been extremely challenging for some individuals and families, and we encourage affected farmers to seek support by calling our Farmer Information Service on **0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969)**.

How to turn off the milk supply

What's the best method for helping cows to switch off milk production as we approach dry-off? To a large extent, the jury is still out, says DairyNZ's Jane Lacy-Hulbert.



Two tools traditionally used to reduce milk volumes before dry-off are reducing the frequency of milking and/or reducing feed intakes.

For cows already producing low volumes of milk, say less than 10L/day, the process is straightforward – just stop milking them. Switching to less frequent milking won't help at this late stage. Instead, focus on reducing feed intakes for the first seven to 10 days after dry-off, then resume feeding to gain condition.

For those cows producing more than 10L/day and being milked twice a day (TAD), advice varies. Both of these common approaches have their upsides and downsides:

- Reducing milking frequency from TAD to once a day (OAD) immediately before dry-off can help reduce milk volumes somewhat, but it can also affect somatic cell counts (SCC) and cause udder swelling/pain.

- Altering nutrition may more effectively reduce cows' milk volumes (by reducing feed intakes, e.g. metabolisable energy by up to 50 percent). However, this leads to hungry cows and welfare concerns.

What overseas researchers are exploring

The latest research from Europe may provide an alternative approach that better mimics natural weaning by a calf. It explored setting milking machines to remove cups early, once cows reached a predetermined milk volume at each milking.

Thresholds were reduced by five percent each day for the final 10 to 12 days before dry-off. Milk volumes for the trial cows declined from an average of 20kg/day to 14kg/day. Control cows remained on 20kg/day till dry-off. In Europe, the outcomes for udder health and teat condition were good, and slightly better than for cows milked to the conventional take-off point.

This approach is worth investigating in New Zealand systems and exploring how to apply it without relying on sophisticated milking systems. However, it also requires further investigation for higher SCC cows, i.e. those above 100,000 cells/ml.

What we recommend

For now, use a combined approach to reduce milk supply to below 10L/day (less than 0.8kg MS/day), by reducing milking frequency and feed intake in the last seven to 14 days of lactation. Cows can then remain on maintenance levels for a further seven to 10 days, depending on how bagged-up the udders remain.

For more information, see dairynz.co.nz/drying-off





Setting up a fertile herd

DairyNZ-led research confirms the Fertility Breeding Value (BV) may contribute more to reproductive performance than originally thought. DairyNZ's Samantha Tennent explains how to apply the findings on-farm.

Unreliable cows that don't get in calf easily each season create stress and rob farmers of profit. All farmers want cows that produce well, get back in calf, and remain in the herd as long as possible. That's becoming more achievable on-farm, thanks to recent research findings from the Pillars of a New Dairy System programme*.

Fertility findings

Pillars has uncovered the significance of the Fertility BV in contributing to reproductive performance. Our measure of reproductive performance, the 6-week in-calf rate, is driven by cows being submitted and conceiving in the first three weeks of mating. Trial work demonstrated that animals with higher Fertility BVs started cycling sooner and had higher submission rates, giving them more opportunity to get in calf.

What does this mean for your herd?

The trial compared cows with extremes of high (+5) and low (-5) Fertility BV, which you won't see on a typical farm. The trial isolated the BV to understand how it impacts a cow's reproductive performance. The current average Fertility BV for a New Zealand cow is 0.5; we'd consider any herd with an average Fertility BV below this to be low.

To find out your herd's Fertility BV, request a 'Herd BV Averages' report from your herd improvement company. Compare the figure for your mixed-age cows with your younger animals. We want to see the Fertility BV trending upwards in the younger animals, indicating progress.

If your herd's Fertility BV is below average and/or is lower in younger animals, you may want to emphasise fertility in your breeding goals.

Also consider your herd's current reproductive performance. The New Zealand average for 6-week in-calf rate sits around 67 percent, compared with the industry target of 78 percent. Herds with lower performance will see more impact from improving a low herd Fertility BV than a herd with above average performance.

Choosing bull teams

When selecting your mating programme, take all your breeding goals into account. Using an automated team of bulls from your breeding company can be sufficient, but it pays to compare your herd's BVs with the proposed bull teams' BVs.

The best way to control the genetic improvement of your herd is by nominating bulls. Select bulls with as high a Fertility BV as possible, without compromising too much on your other breeding goals.

* Funded by dairy farmers through the milksolids levy and by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE). For more information dairynz.co.nz/pillars

Key points

1. Genetics is only one of eight key management areas of reproduction.
2. Know your herd's current Fertility BV status before planning your breeding programme.
3. Use your support network to assess your herd and plan for improvement.



just quickly

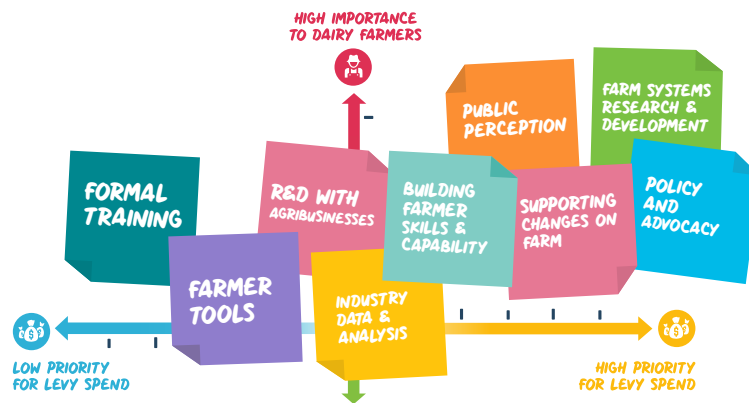


SIDE2020
POSTPONED
DUE TO COVID-19

23-24 June
 Lincoln Event Centre

Evolve at SIDE 2020

Run by farmers for farmers, South Island Dairy Event (SIDE) is returning to Canterbury this June. Come along to connect, discover, grow and, ultimately, 'Evolve' (this year's theme). Keynote speaker Dr Ceri Evans, an award-winning psychiatrist who has worked with the All Blacks, will share his Red-Blue mind model to help you perform under pressure. Meanwhile, MC Julia Jones will keep you energised and informed. You can choose from one of 18 workshops, and there'll be plenty of fun and networking at the SIDE dinner Barn Dance. Register today at side.org.nz



WHERE SHOULD WE SPEND YOUR LEVY?

Late last year, members of DairyNZ's Board and Senior Leadership Team visited 33 locations to connect with nearly 500 farmers in informal meetings. We asked farmers to rank key areas of DairyNZ levy investment (excluding biosecurity, which accounts for 25 percent of investment). It created a lot of debate about what was important for farmers and who should pick up the bill for these areas. The feedback will help guide our focus.

The illustration above shows how farmers ranked each area. Do you agree? To give us feedback and/or to see a summary of the questions raised at these meetings, go to dairynz.co.nz/refresh

Dairy farmer keeps up to speed

DairyNZ congratulates Bay of Plenty dairy farmer Bobby Dean (32), who placed fourth in the elite men's race in his fifth Coast to Coast event in February (time: 11 hours and 27 seconds).



Photo: Marathon-Photos.com

"It's surprising how many dairy farmers I see at that event," he says.

Bobby and wife Anna (also a multi-sport competitor) are full-time contract milkers in Te Puke. A keen runner at high school, Bobby realised he needed to get fit again after "five years sitting on a tractor". These days he also competes in 500- to 700-kilometre expedition races here and overseas.

"Training gets me off the farm. Keeping fit and healthy's great for wellbeing while making farm jobs easier too."

Animal rankings improved

Farmers can now make more accurate breeding decisions thanks to an upgrade of animal evaluation software for NZAEL (New Zealand Animal Evaluation).

The current software, NZAEL 1.0, has been fine-tuned to give farmers more accurate predictions of an animal's genetic merit. NZAEL 2.0 incorporates more than a decade of industry research and development and is the first step towards an independent national genomic evaluation system planned for 2021.

NZAEL, a wholly owned subsidiary of DairyNZ, has been working with CRV, LIC, and other breeding stakeholders to achieve what will be a major step forward for the dairy cattle breeding industry in New Zealand. Read all about it in this month's *Technical Series* (pages 13-17) or visit dairynz.co.nz/breedingvalues





OAD success: homework is key

An Atiamuri dairy farming couple speaking at DairyNZ's Nelson once-a-day milking conference this month say their successful milking frequency change came down to good research.

Keith and Wendy Lambeth will share their advice on how to get the best results from changing to once-a-day milking (OAD) at the conference in Nelson on April 29 and 30. They also attended the conference in 2018.

Before switching to OAD in 2018, Keith and Wendy did their homework.

"We'd been thinking of going to OAD for a number of years and had historically done that around Christmas anyway," explains Keith.

"We'd been finding as much information as we could from various sources, including talking to other people who'd done it. The DairyNZ conference reinforced what we'd already learnt and gave us a bit more confidence."

Inspiring others

The Lambeth's research also helped to get other farmers on board, including their equity partners who operate a sheep and beef farm in North Canterbury, Keith says.

"One of the key things was getting them comfortable with the decision. We did the financials and had a good understanding of what the impact was going to be in that first year.

"Something I recommend, and it's what we did, was talk to the bank from an early stage. In fact, when we talked about OAD, the bank commented 'why wouldn't you?'"

Redress to de-stress

This is the Lambeth's eighth season on the farm and second season milking OAD. They haven't looked back.

"The idea was to take the stress out of the system for everybody really – the cows, staff and us – and it's done that," adds Keith.

"We changed our morning milking start time from 5.30 a.m. to 6.30 a.m. We don't often work past 4.30 p.m. outside peak times."

Production-wise, the couple is now on par with what they were producing two years ago on twice-a-day milking (up until Christmas), after initially dropping around five percent in the first year of OAD.



Conference details

Hear Keith and Wendy talk about their transition to OAD at the conference, alongside other farmers telling their own stories.

Experts will be on hand to share information too, ranging from the latest research on reducing milking frequency and the role of genetics and selection, to business risk and milk quality/composition.

Doug Avery, author of *The Resilient Farmer*, will be a guest speaker at the dinner on day one. Day two will include on-farm visits.

For more information, including the full programme visit dairynz.co.nz/events

POSTPONED
DUE TO COVID-19

Farm details

➡ Herd size: 470 Jersey/Jersey Cross

➡ Farm size: 200ha

➡ Location: Atiamuri, central North Island

April events

Important note

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, many of the events below may have been cancelled, postponed or shifted to an online event. Please go to dairynz.co.nz/events for details.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	07-09 SOUTHLAND/SOUTH OTAGO Prepared for winter? Set yourself up for success at a DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand workshop. Discuss best practice and create a wintering plan for your farm. Visit dairynz.co.nz/events to register.				11	12
13	14 WAIKATO Tatuani Discussion Group meets 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. to talk about seasonal issues affecting farmers in the region. For venue and details contact Brig Ravera on 027 288 1244.				18	19
20	21 NORTHLAND The Warkworth Discussion Group has its next meeting on Terence, Neil and Lynnette Trotter's farm between 10.30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Details from Hamish Matthews on 021 242 5719.				25	26
27	28	29-30 TOP OF THE SOUTH ISLAND The Once-A-Day National Conference is back! If you're wondering about flexible milking, this conference is for you. Held in Nelson and the price is \$180 + GST per person. Further details from Gray Beagley on 021 286 4346.				

NORTHLAND

Looking for an informative workshop that covers the whole recruitment process?

Together with Dairy Women's Network, PaySauce, Primary ITO and CC Recruitment, this event in Whangarei on April 30 will look at a range of topics suited to anyone working with a team on farm.

Identify the roles and skills needed, learn how to recruit the best staff, gain effective interview techniques, and get your head around employee contracts.

More event details at dwn.co.nz/events

WAIKATO

The 2020 Dairy Women's Network national conference is coming to Claudelands Events Centre in Hamilton on May 6 and 7.

Themed 'Make it matter', the conference aims to provide members with the tools to fast-forward and lead with confidence, and shift the focus to being happier, healthier and smarter within businesses. Join us for two incredible days of learning, networking, socialising and taking stock of what's important to us and our businesses.

Register now at dwn.co.nz/dwn2020-conference

FOR A FULL LIST OF WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS MONTH, VISIT

[DAIRYNZ.CO.NZ/EVENTS](https://dairynz.co.nz/events)

BAY OF PLENTY

If you can take some time to get off the farm this month, get along to a discussion group in your area.

These provide a great learning experience in a relaxed group environment, where you can investigate the farm system of the host farm. You can also discuss management practices and identify opportunities and solutions that meet the hosts' future goals and objectives. Seasonal issues and challenges affecting farmers in the area are also on the topics table.

Find a discussion group near you at dairynz.co.nz/events



DairyNZ consulting officers

Upper North Island – Head: Sharon Morrell 027 492 2907

Northland

Regional Leader	Tareen Ellis	027 499 9021
Far North	Amy Weston	027 807 9686
Lower Northland	Hamish Matthews	021 242 5719
Whangarei West	Ryan Baxter	021 809 569

Waikato

Regional Leader	Wilma Foster	027 246 2147
South Auckland	Mike Bramley	027 486 4344
Hauraki Plains/Coromandel	Jaimie Morgan	021 245 8055
Te Aroha/Waihi	Euan Lock	027 293 4401
Cambridge	Lizzy Moore	021 242 2127
Hamilton	Ashley Smith	027 364 9296
Huntly/Tatuanui	Brigitte Ravera	027 288 1244
Matamata/Kereone	Frank Portegys	027 807 9685
Pirongia	Steve Canton	027 475 0918
Otorohanga/King Country	Denise Knop	027 513 7201
Arapuni	Kirsty Dickens	027 483 2205

Bay of Plenty

Regional Leader	Andrew Reid	027 292 3682
Central Plateau	Colin Grainger-Allen	021 225 8345
South Waikato/Rotorua South	Angela Clarke	027 276 2675
Eastern Bay of Plenty	Andrew Reid	027 292 3682
Central Bay of Plenty	Kevin McKinley	027 288 8238

Lower North Island – Head: Rob Brazendale 021 683 139

Taranaki

Regional Leader	Mark Laurence	027 704 5562
South Taranaki	Nathan Clough	021 246 5663
Central Taranaki	Emma Hawley	021 276 5832
Coastal Taranaki	Caroline Benson	027 210 2137
North Taranaki	Ian Burmeister	027 593 4122

Lower North Island

Horowhenua/Coastal and Southern Manawatu	Kate Stewart	027 702 3760
Wairarapa/Tararua	Rob Brazendale	021 683 139
Eketahuna	Andrew Hull	027 298 7260
Hawke's Bay	Gray Beagley	021 286 4346
Northern Manawatu/Wanganui/Woodville	Rob Brazendale	021 683 139
Central Manawatu/Rangitikei	Charlotte Grayling	027 355 3764

South Island – Head: Tony Finch 027 706 6183

Top of South Island/West Coast

Nelson/Marlborough	Mark Shadwick	021 287 7057
West Coast	Angela Leslie	021 277 2894

Canterbury/North Otago

Regional Leader	Ross Bishop	027 563 1785
North Canterbury	Amy Chamberlain	027 243 0943
Central Canterbury	Ross Bishop	027 563 1785
Mid Canterbury	Stuart Moorhouse	027 513 7200
South Canterbury	Heather Donaldson	027 593 4124
North Otago	Alana Hall	027 290 5988

Southland/South Otago

Regional Leader	Ollie Knowles	027 226 4420
West Otago/Gore	Ollie Knowles	027 226 4420
South Otago	Guy Michaels	021 302 034
Central/Northern Southland	Nicole E Hammond	021 240 8529
Eastern Southland	Nathan Nelson	021 225 6931
Western/Central Southland	Leo Pekar	027 211 1389

DairyNZ directors

Jim van der Poel	021 848484
Elaine Cook	027 223 2049
Colin Glass	027 486 4064
Jacqueline Rowarth	027 694 4334
Peter Schuyt	027 557 4242
Jo Coughlan	021 522 142
Tracy Brown	027 291 1716

Or send an email to: chair@dairynz.co.nz or director@dairynz.co.nz

TARANAKI

The Taranaki regional winners of the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards will host a field day on April 6. It's a great chance to find out in more detail why they came out on top and to view first-hand what they're doing right.

The Share Farmer of the Year, Trainee of the Year and Dairy Manager of the Year were announced at the regional awards dinner on March 14.

See the results and get the field day event details at dairynz.co.nz

LOWER NI

The Manawatu and Hawke's Bay/Wairarapa regional awards dinners for the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards were held on March 26 and April 1. Later this month, the region's overall winners will host field days on April 15 and 22.

The three awards – Dairy Trainee of the Year, Dairy Manager of the Year and Share Farmer of the Year – highlight the talent, skill and passion of people working at all levels within the dairy sector.

See the results and get the field day event details at dairynz.co.nz

CANTERBURY/NORTH OTAGO

Following on from last year's pre-mating workshops, DairyNZ is running an event called Repro Day in Timaru on April 2 and Ashburton on April 3. This is your chance to hear how other farmers' repro performance is tracking, and take their lessons onto your farm.

We've been following three farms in Canterbury to help them reach their reproduction goals. We'll be reviewing their pregnancy results at each event, highlighting areas they did well in and areas for improvement, and sharing their future plans. A BBQ lunch will be included at each event.

More details at dairynz.co.nz/events

SOUTHLAND/SOUTH OTAGO

Join us for a Smart Wintering workshop to learn about wintering good management practice and creating a wintering plan for your farm. These events are brought to you by DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand, with support from Environment Southland and Otago Regional Council. Register now at dairynz.co.nz/events

You can find plenty of other wintering information and advice, including a new video on creating a wintering plan, at dairynz.co.nz/wintering

ONCE-A-DAY MILKING CONFERENCE 2020

POSTPONED DUE TO COVID-19

NELSON

APRIL 29-30

REGISTER AT [DAIRYNZ.CO.NZ/EVENTS](https://dairynz.co.nz/events)



Dairynz 



DO IT ONCE
DO IT RIGHT