

NZ GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

Fuelled by Science, Tempered by Experience

GRASSLAND NEWS

www.grassland.org.nz

Mar 2014

ISSN 1179-4216

Thoughts from the President

Warwick Lissaman

The autumn is upon us, in some parts it feels like summer is only just arriving and autumn sowing of permanent and annual forages is on the minds of many. It is timely that you as members will have received the complimentary, revised and updated 'Pastures and Forage Plants for New Zealand' 4th edition. On behalf of the NZGA executive I trust that you will find this an invaluable 'tool in your toolbox'. Additional copies are available for purchase.

As I ponder what to plant and where to plant it, I can be assured that claims made by retailers supported by evidence from NZ based trial work can be relied upon; it is a much bigger gamble when you rely on or overseas literature alone or worse still unsubstantiated claims, testimonials and the like. Success or otherwise will be due to the sum of all the factors involved in establishing and managing a new or improved pasture sward.



Digital photos are great, memories of spring quality tend to fade when looking at summer conditions, with the right choices made it will come again.

As farmers we should never stop our own on farm research, but we should stop and think about what we want to measure before we lay down the trial, and as far as what goes into the trial - read the research first, go to the NZGA website and search the subject. One year's

trial data is never as good as multi years at multi locations, but that all takes time and bigger budgets than anyone realises at first glance.

Be aware of claims made or inferred from mixtures of facts, some which are not relevant and of course cost of product or input is also important. Isn't it interesting that the biggest cost is never the seed yet it is here that so many try to save. Conversely the way that nutrients are packaged today can really ramp up the cost per kg of nutrient per ha. The golden rules are never going to change, ensure you have what you purchased (P&G certificates etc.) and that the reason you made that choice is supported by science.

As I mentioned in my previous column, on farm capital is always limiting. When the capital structures allow for investment in improved forages and then subsequent improved animal genetics massive transformational change can occur; the day that the seed companies, agronomy advisors, agrichem and fertiliser entities, banks etc all put their capital on the line and share the profits from the improved performance will be the day that transformational change occurs across the nation on a scale never seen before.

Attending NZGA conferences and talking one on one with the researchers is a fantastic way of understanding why and what the research to date has focused on. You have the opportunity to influence where the research goes in the future and also what key take home messages can be taken here and now. I look forward to seeing old and new faces alike in Alexandra in November.

The trigger to get involved in NZGA a number of years ago was a realisation that with the drive for better animal performance per head we were taking away our one real pasture quality and pasture harvesting tool. To be rather crude about it: that being hungry animals.

And isn't that coming back to bite us on the posterior now, as we invested in animal genetics we didn't invest nearly enough in ensuring the farm and forage system



NZGA for over 80 years

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changes occurred, unfortunately that push continues unabated; the majority are not maximising the genetic potential from the animals they have so increasing the potential isn't going to improve the bottom line without the innovation required at farm system level to extract the production potential the genetic packages contain, be it forage or animal genetics.

Land use changes have meant the extra lambs coming from increased lambing % in our hill country have few options for finishing post weaning. Therefore more farmers are trying to finish them within the existing farm system and/or boundary fences. Improved cultivars of the existing species will increase the animal growth rates but will it be enough to wean lambs at finished weights. Probably more an issue where pasture production is so

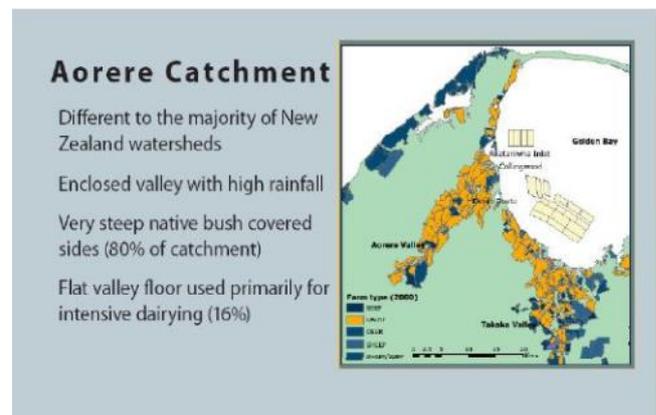


seasonal, such as the dry land east coast, are pasture composition influences on forage quality. If we do not harvest it will flower, and potentially set seed. This can be a good thing and a bad thing. Our introduced improved species inherently are later flowering than the invasive non desirable species. I am farming in Marlborough where we, along with part of Hawkes Bay and North Canterbury, have an emerging weed pest species (Chilean needle grass) on some, but not all, properties. Our aim as a community must be to support those with Chilean needle grass now so that control is possible and then also to eradicate it from any new areas. This, of course, needs constant monitoring and surveillance which comes at a significant cost.

Can we as a community take on this opportunity and create flexible farm systems where grazing pressure can

be ramped up and then outlets for destocking of areas for 'environmental health' of our whole forage system and therefore whole community. The animal genetic claims and promises suggest this should be easy, so it is the forage and or farm system that is preventing the realisation.

When the Aorere river catchment made the news for all the right reasons, it was when the whole community understood the issues and bought into finding the solutions. (<http://www.landcare.org.nz/Regional-Focus/Nelson-Office/Aorere-Rai>)



When we in rural new Zealand want to do similar we must all chip in, landowners obviously have the most to lose or do they? In reality we all will be the losers. It is interesting how community solutions are found when working groups of volunteers join hands, the irony is that often they then join hands with paid employees/contractors/regulatory entity employees/funding bureaucrats/bankers/the - list goes on.

We all need to own the problem or it will not go away, the contractor who says, I will leave a bit so that I have something to do next year is a problem, the farmer who says I am selling in 5 years not my problem, is a problem, the truck driver who says I only drive this truck, the scientist who says I have done what I was asked and written the report, are all not buying into the solution. A management plan should never be required of a farm with a pest or weed problem without the neighbours and the neighbours neighbour, the contractor the receiver of the stock/produce etc also being required to do similar; when we all share in the project inputs, and success, we will make it happen.

NEW: NZGA tests social media

NZGA is on LinkedIn

If you are interested in social media and networking you can now find NZGA on LinkedIn.

Join our Group (find us under the Interest tab). We already have a few members but the aim is to get many more. I'm still finding the best way we can use this but I

do post the occasional reminder or notice. I'm hoping this could be somewhere members can share topics and links that interests them that is related to grassland agriculture in a positive way. By sharing or liking NZGA posts the messages can go to a wider audience, your networks.

Pasture and Forage Plants for New Zealand

NZGA Research and Practice Series 8; 4th Ed. 2014

Written by Alan Stewart, Graham Kerr, Jacqueline Rowarth and Warwick Lissaman.

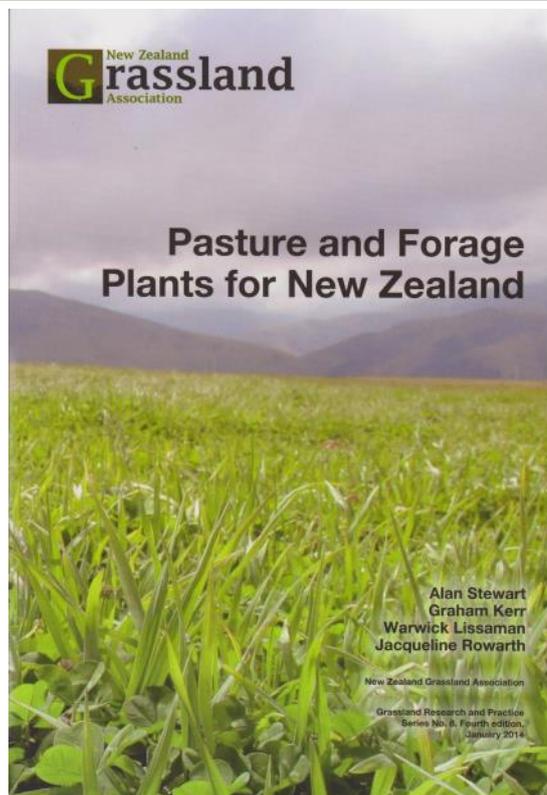
Editors: M Casey and K Davis.

This updated edition is a valuable guide for helping farmers and other land managers understand the broad range of pasture and forage plants available in New Zealand. It should also help with the choice of the right species, cultivars and sowing rates for different farm systems and livestock requirements.

This book is ideal for students, farmers, scientists and agribusiness and is fully referenced.

This edition has a broader range of topics than earlier versions and includes:

- * Why renew pasture?
- * Choosing a pasture mix
- * Pasture renewal
- * Cultivars - grasses, legumes, herbs, brassicas and fodder beet, forage cereals
- * Endophytes
- * Pasture persistence
- * Environmental conditions



How to order: The book is available at www.grassland.org.nz or contact Marie at eo@grassland.org.nz for larger orders. **RRP \$45 or NZGA members \$40.**

Mobile APPs for farmers

EO - Marie Casey

We are starting to see a few mobile apps for agriculture just as more farmers replace old phones with new smart phones. Here are some links to some I have found that you may like to test.

DEERFeed APP - a simple calculator for deer feeding requirements

This APP development was supported by a Sustainable Farming Fund deer industry project. It was designed simply to answer the question "How much should I feed my deer?"

It is intended as a simple tool to assist with farmer feed budgeting and assisting them to meet their targets for profitable finishing.

This is a 'native' app - it is a website that can be downloaded and used offline once it has been 'pinned' to your start menu, desktop or phone home screen. Go to deerfeed.co.nz or deerfarming.co.nz to download.

FDE Calculator

DairyNZ helps farmers with their effluent management - with an APP for Apple or Android mobile devices.

There are 2 calculators in this app, the Quick Calculator which is for spray irrigation systems such as travelling irrigators & sprinklers, and an Advanced Calculator which is for slurry tankers and muck spreaders.

Go to the link below to access the APP

<http://www.dairynz.co.nz/page/pageid/2145866686?resourceId=797>

Grass2Milk

Grass2Milk helps dairy farmers make informed decisions about the nutritional requirements of their stock.

See more at: <http://www.onefarm.ac.nz/resources/toolbox/grass2milk/#sthash.lhlt1mjj.dpuf>

This APP was developed by One Farm at Massey University. This website also provides information on other APPS and online tools available for farmers.

Beef+Lamb NZ

Beef and lamb have a variety of web based tools including a Pasture Growth Forecaster.

<http://portal.beeflambnz.com/tools/>

2014 is the International Year of Family Farming

The 2014 International Year of Family Farming (2014 IYFF) is a worldwide celebration, declared by the United Nations General Assembly, that aims to stimulate active policies for sustainable development of agricultural systems based on farmer families, communal units, indigenous groups, cooperatives and fishing families.

This yearlong celebration aims to raise the profile of family farming and smallholder farming by focusing world attention on its significant role in eradicating hunger and poverty, providing food security and nutrition, improving livelihoods, managing natural resources, protecting the environment, and achieving sustainable development, in particular in rural areas.

Family Farming is the predominant form of agriculture both in developed and developing countries

There are over 500 million family farms in the world. Their rural activities are managed and operated by a family and rely predominantly on family labour.

They range from smallholders and medium scale farmers, to peasants, indigenous peoples, traditional communities, pastoralists and many other groups in any region and biome of the world.

Family farmers are an important part of the solution for a world free from poverty and hunger

In many regions, they are the main producers of the foodstuff consumed every day in our meals.

Over 70 percent of the food insecure population lives in rural areas of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Near East. Many of them are family farmers, especially smallholders, with poor access to natural resources, policies and technologies.

All kind of evidence shows that poor family farmers can quickly deploy their productivity potential when the ap-

propriate policy environment is effectively put in place. Facilitating access to land, water and other natural resources and implementing specific public policies for family farmers (credit, technical assistance, insurance, market access, public purchases, appropriate technologies) are key components for increasing agricultural productivity, eradicating poverty and achieving world food security.

Family Farming supports sustainable development

Family Farmers run crop-diversification based agricultural systems and preserve traditional food products, contributing both to a balanced diet and the safeguard of the world's agro-biodiversity.

Family farmers are embedded in territorial networks and local cultures, and spend their incomes mostly within local and regional markets, generating many agricultural and non-agricultural jobs.

The International Year of Family Farming

All the characteristics above make family farmers hold the unique potential to move towards more productive and sustainable food systems if policy environments support them in this path.

The IYFF gives us a clear opportunity to further highlight the strategic role of family farmers in agricultural and rural development and strengthen their capacities.

Governments may show their political commitment building juridical framework, institutions and policies for family farmers.

Establishing platforms for policy dialogue with family farmers' organization in order to generate consensus, build and implement effective policies is a major target of the IYFF.

<http://www.fao.org/family-farming-2014/en/>

Member Update

EO - Marie Casey

We recently posted the Tauranga Proceedings and the new Research and Practice 8 to all members. If you have yet to receive yours there are 3 possible reasons

- Lost in the mail - probably not that likely but it does happen
- Change of address - these are not always returned to me so I cant chase up your new address
- Your membership for this year is still to be paid. (We have approx. \$20,000 worth of membership in arrears).

To update any details please email me at eo@grassland.org.nz and I will get your books dispatched.

Alexandra Conference - Wed 5 - Fri 7 November*

***Note the days of the week**

Time to put this in your diary and start the planning to attend. The Exec are about to review the abstracts and are really pleased with the large number of submissions.



The local organisers are ahead with their plans and have interesting field days planned with lucerne, irrigation, high country soils, merinos and dairy grazing all on the agenda.