

NZ GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

Fuelled by Science, Tempered by Experience

GRASSLAND NEWS

www.grassland.org.nz

December 2019

ISSN 1179-4216

President's Welcome

Warren King

It is a great privilege to be elected to lead the Executive Committee of the NZ Grassland Association (NZGA) as your new President. I feel very lucky to have served under excellent Past-Presidents, each of whom brought their own personality to the role and always sought to contribute to the association's goals. The ranks of Past-Presidents of NZGA contains some illustrious names in NZ pastoral agriculture and their legacy sees the association approaching its 90th birthday in great shape.

That is not to say that there aren't some significant challenges ahead. The mission of NZGA is two-fold: to help deliver great science to those who can use it – farmers and rural professionals – and, to help science understand what key challenges in pastoral agriculture lie ahead. This mission is becoming increasingly difficult, with declining capability in agricultural science and challenging funding environments just two issues of many. In addition, the almost overwhelming focus on the environmental performance of pastoral agriculture and the 'transformational' agenda coming out of Wellington sometimes makes rational conversations in this space seem

impossible.

I think that the NZGA annual conferences have always been beacons in this space, providing a forum for robust discussion about pastoral agricultural science, practice and community. I am also excited that NZGA has several initiatives underway to try to make an even bigger difference.

Firstly, we have begun to engage more closely with some of our key stakeholders (mid-career professionals, institutional R&D providers) to better understand their needs so that NZGA can better deliver value to them.

Secondly, I am delighted that NZGA is planning to revisit the Pasture Persistence Symposium 10 years on, and to work on co-hosting the 2021 Conference with an organisation focused on agricultural extension. Watch this space!

There is much to do but also much to be positive about. I am already looking forward to next year's conference in Invercargill, where the issues that challenge us at a national level are keenly felt (and seen) locally. I look forward to seeing you there.

In the meantime, Merry Christmas!

Introducing the current NZGA Executive

President: Dr Warren King, AgResearch

Vice President: Laurie Copland, farmer, Audit Committee Chair

Members: Aaron Meikle (Beef+Lamb NZ); Dr Jo Kerlake (AbacusBio); Dr Alistair Black (Lincoln University), Laura Keenan (Agricom) and Dr Mike Dodd (AgResearch).

Laura (co-opted member in 2019) and Mike were elected to the Executive at the AGM in November. We farewelled Graham Kerr after 13 years and David Chapman (DairyBZ) after six years.

Introducing Mike Dodd

Mike is a Senior Scientist in the Farm Systems team at AgResearch, based in Palmerston North. His main areas of research expertise include grassland ecology and soil science in the context of intensive pastoral systems which



must operate to achieve multiple sustainability goals. He has been involved in a wide range of research areas over a 30-year career, including pasture agronomy and germplasm development, silvo-pastoral interactions, integrated catchment management, indigenous forest

restoration, landscape ecology, soil carbon dynamics, and systems modelling.

The majority of Mike's work has been with AgResearch based initially at Whatawhata and Ruakura in the Waikato then at Grasslands in the Manawatu. He was also seconded to DairyNZ from 2016-2018 focussed on improving intensive pasture production and persistence.



NZGA for over 80 years

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Volume 81 of the *Journal of New Zealand Grasslands* has been published in print and online with a digital object identifier assigned to each paper for the first time. Check out Volume 81 online [here](#).

The Journal has always published articles on a range of subjects and with a variety of approaches. The newly formed Journal Editorial Board has recommended that each paper be assigned to one of five categories prior to publication in order to recognise this diversity. The categories are: *Research Article; Literature Review; Agricultural Practices; Perspective or Regional Overview*.

Research Articles are the traditional science papers that report on novel, robustly designed empirical studies while Literature Reviews contain a comprehensive analysis of the published work on a particular subject plus a summary of knowledge gaps. Agricultural Practice papers provide the opportunity for authors to report on applied work. One example would be a practical, on-farm demonstration over multiple years that describes the situation before and after the application of previously published scientific research. Authors are likely to include farmers, consultants, and/or

extension workers as well as scientists. The purpose of a Perspective paper is to provide a qualitative and balanced summary of a specific topic supported by relevant published literature. Regional Overviews are solicited by the Conference Organising Committee to provide relevant information of the area where the annual conference is held.

Now it's time to start thinking about volume 82! The 2020 paper-offer submission form is available on the Journal's website or can be downloaded [here](#). The **deadline for submission of paper offers is 14 February 2020**.

This year, authors need to specify which one of the above categories their work fits into. Authors whose offers are accepted by the Executive in mid-March will be sent a specific manuscript template for the relevant category to assist them with writing up their work. Referees will also be supplied with a form specific to the category of manuscript they are reviewing to ensure the scope of their review is appropriate for the type of work conducted.

Please feel free to email jnzgeditor@outlook.com if you have any questions.

Tips and Trick for authors

- Bookmark this link to access [Volume 80 and 81](#)
- Copy and paste/send the link to your papers from the Journal website rather than downloading and sending the pdf—that's better for increasing Journal profile and citation
- Create an NZGA Endnote library

You can now download details of all papers published in the journal/proceedings since 2006 into your own EndNote library.

Step 1. Download the file "[JNZG 2006 to 2018 ris.txt](#)" to your computer.

Step 2. Open your EndNote library (or create a new library) and go to File -> Import.

Step 3. Choose the file: "JNZG 2006 to 2018 ris.txt" as the import file. Use Reference Manager (RIS) as the Import option; and choose Import All and No Translation as the other options.

Step 4. Click Import and all 500 references should be imported into your EndNote library.

Note: you can download the .txt file into an Excel spreadsheet if you don't have EndNote.

Mid-career Worksop with NZGA members

Jo Kerslake & Laura Keenan

The New Zealand Grassland Association has been providing farmers and rural professionals the latest science around pastoral research since 1931. However, the 'typical' NZGA member is somewhat changing. Our demographic of early to mid-career rural professionals, who directly service farming clients, is growing significantly. These individuals relish the opportunity to be apart of this Association for the access to the latest science and the incredible networking opportunity the annual conference offers.

To understand how this demographic might shape the future of the association Executive members, Jo Kerslake and Laura Keenan, held two interactive workshops in 2019.

They found that the invited attendees had a fantastic grounding in the purpose and objectives of the NZGA. This portrays the strong relationship the Association has with its members. The annual conference was a highlight and they

liked how the 'whole industry is brought together in an unbiased way'.

They highlighted the opportunity the conference provides for them to connect with their colleagues from other regions, as well as different professionals from the wider ag industry. The attendees from universities noted that they liked the support provided for postgraduate attendance (the Student Travel Awards) and that it was highly valuable for their personal development and networking.

Further positive feedback was provided in relation to exposure to the different farm systems at the conference and being the first to hear much of the recent science in agronomy and farm systems.

As the workshop convenors had hypothesised, early to mid-career members were keen to see more interaction from a social media perspective to keep up to date and create

more targeted engagement with the membership. There were also several requests from rural professionals about having a “how to” around writing and presenting a paper with the Executive discussion the opportunity aim to provide this session at Invercargill in 2020.

As expected, the print Journal was a point of contention, with groups evenly split on whether to retain or dispose.

In addition, further networking opportunities will be considered by the Executive with a networking breakfast for early to mid career members planned for the next conference.

The great interest we received for co-opted and executive positions was also extremely positive for the organisation,

Napier Conference

The Napier Conference was another successful event for the Association.

Over 280 people attended the three days and Hawkes Bay provided the weather and hospitality it is known for. Attendees had a range of field tours to choose from which ranged from catchment work to apples and organic vegetable production.



The conference got off to a great start with a series of excellent guest speakers including Garth Eyles and Tim Skerman (HBRC), Gerard Hickey (Firstlight) and Melissa Clark-Reynolds. They summed up the challenges facing NZ agriculture from both the environment and the customer.

The Levy Orator this year was Dr Liz Wedderburn, Assistant Research Director at AgResearch.

The topic was ‘Musings on a sustainable Agricultural Journey’.

Liz gave a great overview starting with early grassland work and reminding us of the importance of responding to the signals.



and these will continue to be effectively communicated through all of our channels.

The Executive will explore the potential to provide more interactive and engaging communication to our members throughout the year, while encouraging new individuals into the Association. Regional networking opportunities and the formation of the new Editorial Board will provide an effective platform for early to mid-career professionals to publish papers in the future.

It is clear the NZGA is providing many benefits for the early to mid-career demographic which we are excited to see continue. For further information on these workshops, head to www.grassland.org.nz.

She started by looking at a brief timeline of policies and events and moved on to global trends and the role of grasslands based livestock.



It was notable this year that nine of the Life members to the Association were present. President Graham Kerr acknowledged this at the conference dinner. These are members who have given extraordinary service to the Association over many years.



From L to R in the photo are Errol Thom, Pat Garden, John Caradus, Jeff Morton, Derek Woodfield, Gavin Sheath, Dick Lucas, Tom Fraser and Maurice Yorke.

Post Conference Survey

We survey the conference attendees post conference to see what they thought of the event. Mike Dodd has kindly offers to analyse the last 5 years survey data so a summary will be in the next newsletter. This year 106 attendees replied to the survey (44% response rate) which tells us how engaged our members are so many thanks to all that replied.

The NZ Grassland Trust Awards will also be highlighted in the next issue however congratulations go to Dr Gavin Sheath who was awarded the Ray Brougham Memorial Trophy.