

NZ GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

Fuelled by Science, Tempered by Experience

GRASSLAND NEWS

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FROM THE DEEP SOUTH

Chris Smith

As I sit at my desk looking out at the frost on the ground this morning it brings home to me that winter is now upon us. With our farmer members busy with wintering stock it is time for the rest of us to reflect on the past year and think ahead to the next season.

With much of the country still suffering from a lack of rain I feel embarrassed to note that Southland has experienced the second highest annual pasture production in 20 years. New Zealand's geography and position in the world makes us particularly prone to weather extremes. El Niño weather patterns, such as over the past summer, typically result in drier than normal periods over much of the country but brings more west to southwest winds to Southland and hence adequate rainfall, and, normally above average pasture growth. In contrast a La Niña can result in more subtropical storms and rain for the North but a greater risk of drought in the South. When I look at the years when these two weather patterns affect our climate, Southland has a 67% chance of above normal pasture growth with an El Niño but a 70% chance of below normal pasture growth

with a La Niña. While not everyone has access to such data, the papers presented at our conferences and published in the proceedings are a great and sometimes overlooked source of information that I encourage all members to take the time to peruse.

Looking to the future planning is well underway for our next conference in Oamaru 5-8 November. Once again, we welcome the both the Agronomy Society and Society of Animal Production who are joining us. I would like to encourage all our farmer members to put it in their calendar now so they can plan to attend at Oamaru.

Finally, I would like to thank all the contributors to this year's conference who I am pleased to say submitted their manuscripts in a timely fashion. This allows for the editorial process to hopefully be completed earlier than in previous years. This early submission of manuscripts takes a lot of pressure off Marie as acting editor as well as our section editors to ensure we can have the Journal printed in time for Conference.

AGYIELDS NATIONAL DATABASE

Derrick Moot

At the conference in Rotorua Derrick Moot ran a workshop on the database. We will be repeating this in 2024 in November for anyone that is interested.

At the conference in Oamaru the AgYields workshop will help you upload or extract data from the national database. So bring along a dataset to upload or simply come along and see how to access the database.

AgYields is an open access data base of pasture and crop yields and growth rates from all over New Zealand. Over the past three years we have been uploading peer reviewed

published datasets and unpublished commercial and farmer collected data into the database.

AgYields is hosted by Lincoln University and freely available for you to filter and extract data to be used for research and consultancy/commercial purposes.

The collection of data is time consuming and expensive. AgYields aims to ensure valuable data are stored and readily retrievable to assist the continued success of New Zealand pastoral and arable sectors. Link to the [Database here](#).

MARK the Date

NZGA Conference 2024 Oamaru

"Dust to Dollars"

Planning is well underway for the next conference to be held at the Oamaru Opera House in the from the 5-7th November 2024.

Watch out for further details and registration.



NZGA for over 80 years

SPONSORED BY AGRESEARCH

The editorial process for this years Journal is underway once again. Producing this Journal every year and making NZ agricultural research available to all is a key role of the Association.

As the interim editor I am requesting all authors and reviewers - please respond promptly to any requests as we would love to have the Journal available at conference again. It is a long process to get papers reviewed, back to authors, and then through the typesetting process to the final version that is published.

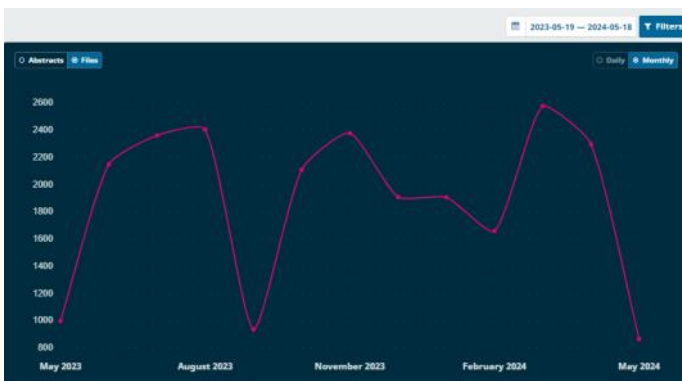
One thing I often see is comments from other academic editors: it's getting harder and harder to get find people who agree to review manuscripts yet this is a critical step for a peer reviewed Journal. This year we have had over 50 papers submitted which represents well over 120 authors.

So once again this is a plea for those who are asked to review - please consider supporting all our authors by taking on the request. Remember it may be your paper that is struggling to get a reviewer!

If you aren't sure of the reviewing process or have never done it before ask the Associate Editors or me for help.

The Journal

Now that it is a dedicated digital Journal (accessible [here](#)) we are able to access much more information that helps to understand how the Journal is used and how often papers are accessed. Below is a summary of the last 12 months.



In addition, authors can track how often individual papers are downloaded.



How can authors help improve the visibility of their research?

There are plenty of opportunities for authors to help spread the word on their research. Once it was enough to make sure you were published in a relevant journal with a good paper title and relevant keywords.

However with the advent of smart search engines there are other opportunities researchers should not ignore!

Here are just a few suggestions to follow up on.


1. Create an online research profile in an academic research sharing network such as ResearchGate or Academia.edu and add a link to your articles in your profile.
2. Create a Google Scholar profile (make it public) and let Google help.
3. Add a link to your latest research in your email signature.
4. Use the DOI link to help with impact (enables downloads to be monitored).
5. Not published in an open access journal? You can share the pre print of any Journal article (AOM - authors original manuscript). Check the publishers guidelines.
6. Institutional websites - make sure these are updated if this is an option.
7. Social media - LinkedIn, X and Facebook - use your account/profile to promote your latest work or research relevant to a topic.
8. Get an ORCID

Why ORCID?

Authors can now add their **ORCID** number to their work. It is a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes an author from others with the same or similar names or if you change surname.

Authors who wish to, need to do the verification through the Journal website by logging in [here](#) and Edit their profile there.

To Edit your Profile:

- Go to 
- and select Edit Profile
- then select Public tab
- Create or Connect your ORCID ID (to verify ORCID number).

These are just some tips to get you started on increasing your research viability.

JOCK ALLISON OBITUARY

Arthur (Jock) Allison died peacefully in Dunedin recently, aged 80 years.

Jock was a long standing member of NZGA and made a huge contribution to NZ agriculture. He was a vocal supporter of all things agricultural research all his life. Many stories surround Jock and his contributions and these were shared at his funeral.

His career was closely entwined with Invermay Research Centre over nearly 60 years. Jock was passionate about the benefits agricultural research could bring to farming, and promoted the extension of the science, not just its publication.

His early research changed the recommended rates of ram to ewe ratio from 1 to 50 to more than 1 to 100. That simple change has had profound impacts on sheep breeding industry and set the scene for many later developments.

His training in reproduction research led him to import Booroola sheep to improve New Zealand sheep reproduction rate. Years later the mapping and identification of the causative mutation was instrumental in creating to what is now the AgResearch Animal Genomics Team.

Separately, he was the director of the Invermay campus from 1978-86 and during that time he oversaw the redevelop-

ment of the campus. He also encouraged the creation of the deer research group during that period.

After leaving AgResearch he was involved in several separate importations of sheep breeds with the introduction of the East Friesian in particular having a major impact, not only as a sheep milking breed, but also as part of the dual-purpose composites. These typically also include the Texel breed. Composites that include both breeds often lead the sire lists of NZ maternal sheep breeds.

He was a founding member of what is now AbacusBio, an international genetics improvement company based in Dunedin. He was also engaged in a number of governance roles including as a director of AgResearch from 1992 to 1999.

In more recent years Jock is perhaps best known for his successful campaign against consolidating Invermay animal research at Lincoln and Palmerston North. Such a move, he argued, would lessen farmer accessibility to scientists and make their work geographically less relevant.

Thanks to John McEwan, Invermay, for the background information. For some additional background on Jock's early achievements he suggests you read the [Sir Arthur Ward Award 2000 oration](#) and for a more recent summary the article by [Neal Wallace from Farmers Weekly](#).

NZGA HISTORY

The long history of NZGA has been carefully collated by Dr Deric Charlton (ex AgResearch and NZGA Life member), as a small hobby in his retirement. Although Deric has stopped attending conferences, he remains interested in both the history and success of the NZGA and has put his considerable resources of notes, photos, and memories to work. As we approach a hundred years since NZGA was founded it seems relevant to share this with members, many who will only recently have joined or have never heard of some of the founders of NZ pastoral research.

It seems best to introduce what Deric saw in NZGA in his own words – "One day back in the 1960s, I discovered a set of thin volumes called Proceedings of the New Zealand Grassland Association. Inside them I discovered gold! At the time I was lecturing to students at the West of Scotland Agricultural College near Ayr, Scotland. The papers presented at each annual conference of the NZGA in the 1960s were in easily understood language and salient discussion points were included after each paper. To me this was practical farming information on pastures that could be applied on farms, whereas other research volumes were written in technical language in which scientists are required to document results of their research. Discovering these volumes

led me another life and career in New Zealand and a life-long enthusiasm for the NZGA and its annual conferences."

Introduction and the formation of the NZGA

To celebrate the people involved in NZGA over the years the history has been presented as a series of chapters which are hosted on the [NZGA Website](#).

- Presidents
- Honorary Life Members
- Researchers
- Academics
- NZGT Award winners – Ray Brougham Award, farmer, and regional award winners
- Advisers and agribusiness sectors
- Farmers
- Administrative management
- NZ Grassland Trust history

Every one of these groups form an essential part of the team that is NZGA and deserve thanks for their efforts and continued support of the Association.

In the beginning, starting in 1931 – read more about how the Association began [here](#).

MEMBERSHIP ARREARS

As we get close to the end of the financial year we have a large number of members yet to pay their membership. If we have lost your contact details please let us know.

We will be removing those members in arrears before we invoice for the 2024/25 financial year in August.