

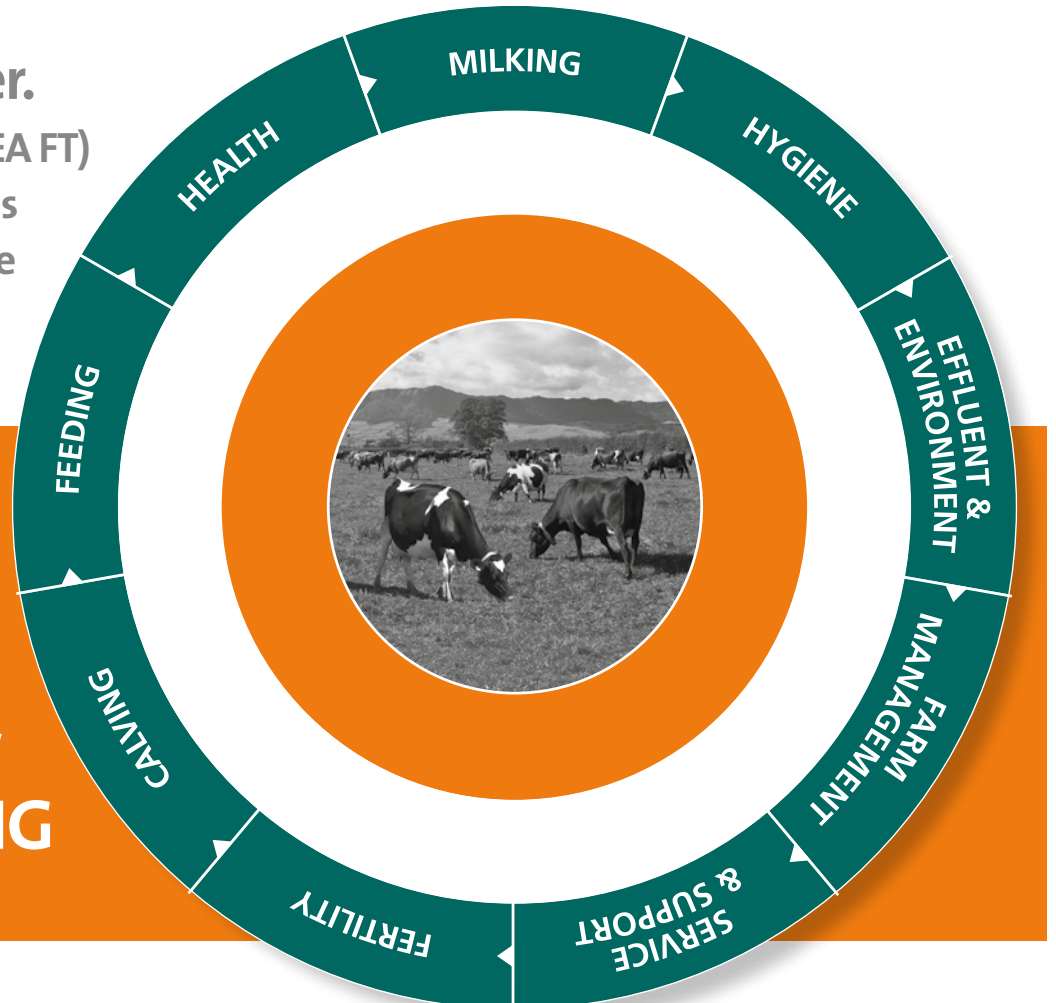
THE DAIRY FARMER

WINTER 2012

Welcome to the new look Dairy Farmer.

Now that FIL is part of the GEA Farm Technologies (GEA FT) portfolio of products and services in New Zealand, this and every future issue of The Dairy Farmer will feature more information on what this means for farmers.

THE COMPLETE DAIRY SOLUTION FROM THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW NEW ZEALAND DAIRY FARMING



Rest assured nothing has changed in terms of FIL's high quality products for animal health and hygiene. But now that it's part of a bigger family of world leading equipment brands there is a greater opportunity for farms large and small all over the country.

With the new season ahead, GEA FT is set to unveil a whole new dimension to equipping dairy farms here in New Zealand - one that starts with animal health and fertility, includes calving, feeding and milking solutions, and ends at the milk tank - the complete dairy solution, all available from one company, one team.

With well known names like WestfaliaSurge milking and cooling equipment, Houle effluent management - a new brand to the New Zealand market but trusted for more than 50 years in North America, and internationally renowned Norbco and Royal DeBoer, GEA FT has taken the best of what each has to offer and customised them to work in our unique farming conditions.

Having technology is one thing and understanding how to get the most out of it is quite a different challenge. To optimise the technology and ensure it's used effectively on your farm, GEA FT has brought together an experienced team from New Zealand's

dairy sector with specialist knowledge. Successful farms are built on sound long-term investments, so the GEA FT team work with farmers to understand what they want to achieve on their farms right now, and in five to ten years time, then work with them to make it happen.

The FIL Farm Service Area Managers work closely with GEA FT Capital Equipment Area Managers, and together with local Dealers and Rural Retailers these regional teams around the country can provide on the spot advice and expertise that's focused on getting farms to perform to their optimum productivity.

The complete dairy solution by GEA FT will be on show for the first time at Fieldays, 13-16 June. Visitors can expect an experience vastly different from previous years, one focused on farm performance, and including a range of new equipment and services.

One such new product to be launched at Fieldays is Halo, available exclusively from GEA FT. Halo is a new farm milk monitoring system, developed and tested specifically for New Zealand's conditions, that provides remote access to, and visibility of, a farm's entire milking process. Halo picks up any problems with your milk - temperature, user errors, vat washing issues and even equipment failures - and alerts you with a siren, strobe light and even a text message to help you put spoilage, wastage and lost revenues behind you.

It will be in live demonstration mode at Fieldays, so visitors can see for themselves how easy it is to use. Its effectiveness has been proven already, with farmers impressed with its ability to maximise milk quality and reduce costs.

National Fieldays is always an annual barometer of what's new in the industry. This year along with their newly integrated range of the world's best farming technology, the team from GEA FT have many exciting developments to share with New Zealand farmers.

TO FIND OUT MORE COME ALONG TO SEE THE TEAM IN THE MAIN PAVILION, STAND PB23.

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A WORD FROM GEA FT: NEW SEASON BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES

While the international outlook remains uneasy for commodities, many farmers will be thankful they have at least enjoyed a season with exceptional growing conditions, setting them up for winter. At GEA FT staff have been focused on the integration with FIL, and this will be most noticeable to our clients in Area Manager vehicles, brand colours and the extended range of products now available. No doubt both the FIL and WestfaliaSurge brands will benefit from our efforts at successful integration. The colours may have changed, but our staff remain as committed as ever to delivering quality, personable service to our valued dairy clients. **GREG MILLS - MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Your Farm, Your Life, Our World.

Farming to Succeed



NEW STAFF AT GEA FARM TECHNOLOGIES



SCOTT PRICE
FARM SERVICE AREA MANAGER

NICKY BOWDEN
MARKETING MANAGER

MATTHEW RICE
EFFLUENT BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

LEE CASSELLS
SENIOR TECHNICIAN
SHED 5

TIFFANY OXENHAM
CUSTOMER SERVICES /
ADMINISTRATOR SHED 5

SCOTT PRICE

FARM SERVICE AREA MANAGER
WAIRARAPA - HAWKE'S BAY

A decision to specialise in high quality dairy products and service compelled Scott Price to take up his new position as GEA FT's Farm Service Area Manager for the Wairarapa and Hawke's Bay regions this autumn.

Scott comes to the position with significant background in the farm service and retail sector, having spent many years working in several Farmlands outlets around the North Island. He is also very familiar with the daily demands of dairy farming, having spent 10 years farming.

Based in Dannevirke, he will be picking up the region serviced by long time Farm Services Area Manager Clint Humphrey. Clint will also be working with Scott to familiarise him with the GEA FT rubberware and equipment he will be offering to his farming clients. Clint will continue servicing the Manawatu area.

NICKY BOWDEN

MARKETING MANAGER

A high level of experience in both retail marketing and more recently in the agri-sector means Nicky Bowden is

well positioned to assume the role as GEA FT Marketing Manager. Nicky has spent the past 3 and a half years as a product and business manager at LIC, and looks forward to bringing her marketing experience to the portfolio of brands GEA FT now has in New Zealand.

Her marketing experience has included a diverse range of products through her career, including Avanti cycles and consumer goods. Nicky has watched the rebranding and absorption of FIL into the GEA FT company with interest and relishes the challenge of managing the three main brands WestfaliaSurge, FIL and Houle in her new position.

MATTHEW RICE

EFFLUENT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Matthew Rice has built a sound appreciation of the link between sustainability and agriculture while completing his B.Ag Sci degree at Lincoln. With his experience in effluent system design, implementation and layout he intends to apply that understanding in his position as GEA FT's Effluent Business Development Manager.

Matthew is charged with coupling GEA FT's quality Houle effluent equipment to the company's high level of skill and knowledge in developing efficient, low

maintenance effluent systems. "Houle effluent pumps have 30 years of trial and error behind their development, and unlike most other equipment available in New Zealand have been developed specifically for moving dense effluent sludge, it's gear that means business."

SHED 5 BRINGS NEW STAFF WITH DEALERSHIP

The opening of GEA FT's Shed 5 Dealership in Hamilton also sees some new faces bringing GEA FT technology to farmers in the Waikato.

The intricacies of putting together dairy shed components are something GEA FT's Senior Technician Lee Cassells is highly familiar with. Lee will be working throughout the Waikato region helping install new WestfaliaSurge milking equipment and Houle effluent systems.

He brings a long background in stainless steel fabrication, on farm installation experience and sales knowledge with him.

Tiffany Oxenham, Customer Services Manager, has strong links to the primary sector, having worked in the meat processing industry, and is a skilled butcher. She is quickly getting a handle on the innovative GEA FT equipment.



NUTRI-MAG TOPS FOR REACTIVITY & RESULTS

DESPITE THE GROWTH IN DAIRYING'S PRODUCTIVITY AND SCALE, MAGNESIUM CONTINUES TO BE A PROBLEMATIC MINERAL WHERE POOR LEVELS WILL PREVENT HERDS FROM REACHING THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. DEFICIENCIES OVER SPRINGTIME CAN PROVE A NIGHTMARE FOR THEIR OWNERS WHEN STRESS ON A HERD IS AT ITS PEAK.

Magnesium (Mg) is a critical element to aid food digestion and to help maintain even calcium levels. It also helps maintain normal nerve function and even slight deficiencies can impair movement and reactions.

Research has shown over peak production periods 20-30% of the country's herds are diagnosed with low blood magnesium levels, despite there being numerous supplements available on the market. In fact soil and pasture magnesium levels are believed to have fallen over the past 20 years, due to a lack of regularly adding magnesium to fertiliser mixes. Heavy use of potassium based fertilisers can worsen the situation. Higher potassium levels will deplete the amount of magnesium that can be absorbed by the cow from pasture in spring.

Aspects of a cow's physiology also adds to their vulnerability over spring to low magnesium levels.

A cow cannot store magnesium easily to draw on as a reserve, unlike calcium or copper. On average over a lactation she will take in 27g Mg/day, but actually require 29g Mg/day.

The percentage of magnesium actually absorbed by a cow will determine how much extra supplementation she requires. Only 17-30% of the magnesium taken into the rumen will be absorbed by the cow. Absorbing only 17% will mean she requires another 29g Mg/day, whereas absorbing 25% means she only needs to be supplemented with 19g Mg/day.

The quality of the magnesium supplement provided is critical to ensure that shortfall is made up effectively. FIL's Nutri-Mag is highly reactive, meaning it is more quickly absorbed into the cow's bloodstream, and redresses deficiencies faster.

A unique kilning process at Nutri-Mag's source in central Queensland produces a spiked profile to Nutri-Mag's particles. This improves the rate of reactivity in the cow's rumen and is aided by Nutri-Mag's 95-97% purity and 320 mesh fineness.

Under the acidic conditions of the rumen Nutri-Mag

has a reaction time 3.5 times faster than other brands, fully reacting in just over a minute. Poorer quality products can take at least six minutes and even up to 20 minutes to react, thereby allowing the magnesium to be passed directly through the rumen and therefore not readily available to the animal.

The superior production methods behind Nutri-Mag means it makes life easier in the farm dairy too. Its ultra fine particle size and unique shape provide exceptional stability when suspended in water. Less settling and less solidification are distinct benefits of Nutri-Mag. Trials have shown it re-suspends far more effectively than other brands, saving the hassle and stress of blocked drench lines.

"Many farmers recognise Nutri-Mag is the most cost effective magnesium product available. They also know it is the benchmark product for quality and effectiveness at a time of year when they can least afford to be treating their herd with a poor grade product," says Trevor Gulliver, National Sales Manager.

FIL advises farmers to consult with their veterinarian or farm consultant before planning prevention measures or treating for hypomagnesaemia.

SUCCESS IN FARMING ALL PAR FOR COURSE

FOR TE AWAMUTU DAIRY FARM MANAGER DANIEL BAKER THIS YEAR’S AGITO FARMING TO SUCCEED COURSE PROVIDED INSPIRATION AND INCENTIVE TO STICK WITH THE DAIRY INDUSTRY.

Now in its third year, the week long course offers 50 farm staff from both the North and South Island an insight to the successes enjoyed by others in the industry. It is also the chance to tap into some of the most knowledgeable people within the industry.

Travelling by bus, the group visited an assortment of farm and agribusiness ventures. The North Island group completed their week over late March, while the South Island course ran in late April.

Waikato farmer, businessman and mentor Grant Taylor facilitates the group, and says the quality of applicants for this year’s course was exceptional.

“We could have filled both the North and South Island twice over with quality applicants, they are a great testament to the agricultural sector,” he says.

The North Island intake received 92 applications for 25 places, and the South Island 78.

“What I found particularly inspiring was not only seeing the successes achieved by the people we visited, but the fact there were people out there prepared to also give young people a chance to enjoy the same opportunities,” says Te Awamutu farm manager Daniel Baker.

For the 28 year old dairy Farm Manager from Te Awamutu this was the second time he had applied to go on the course, and he does not regret waiting three years before trying again. “I think you need to have a bit of experience in the industry behind you, and understand the business and financial side of things, with a few of your own goals in mind,” he says.

The trip included visits to successful dairy farmers, including Henry Hendriks who farms right alongside Hamilton city, and to GEA Farm Technologies Mount Maunganui FIL manufacturing plant.

“I could see how guys like Henry farm with lower wastage, of pasture and fertiliser on land that in Henry’s case is pretty sensitive peat country - it has given me some good ideas to take back to where I farm,” says Daniel.

For Daniel the trip provided a valuable boost to his career focus and morale, after grappling with an ongoing knee injury sustained over calving season last year.

“I was debating about what I should do, whether I needed to stop farming for a year to fix it, or just ignore it. After hearing about some of the tough situations some of the people we visited have gone through, I came back with a proposal to take to my boss where I take four months off to get the knee fixed, and bringing in a mate to cover me over that time. I felt it was better to look for solutions than simply see only the problems that situations created.”

Employer response to the course has also proven positive. Grant received feedback through AgITO from one employer who said their farm assistant came back totally inspired, and as employers they intended to encourage all future staff to attend Farming to Succeed.



TRENT FINLAY, NZ SALES MANAGER
PRESENTING TO THE AGITO FARMING TO
SUCCEED PARTICIPANTS AT THE MOUNT
MAUNGANUI MANUFACTURING PLANT



FARMING HERE?

WE’VE GOT YOU COVERED.

Our team of QCONZ trained FARM SERVICE AREA MANAGERS cover the country from the Cape to Bluff. Speak to your local FIL representative to discuss your needs, and find out how we can improve your farm’s performance.

We’re here to make your job easier.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PHONE 0508 434 569
OR VISIT WWW.FIL.CO.NZ**


Farming to Succeed



BRIAN SALVIGNY Northland / Helensville 027 472 1501	MARK MOHRING North Waikato / Hauraki / Morrinsville West 027 472 1502	GREG DUNCAN Cambridge / Matamata / Morrinsville East / Te Aroha 027 472 1505	ALLAN CLARKE Bay of Plenty / Paeroa 027 473 0572	DAVE HEWSON Te Awamutu / Otorohanga 027 499 1674	GAVIN DUNN Rotorua / Reporoa / Tokoroa / Putaruru 027 479 8470
JOHN ATKIN North Taranaki / King Country 027 472 1506	MARK WARD South Taranaki 027 482 8535	CLINT HUMPHREY Manawatu / Wanganui 027 472 1507	SCOTT PRICE Wairarapa / Hawkes Bay 027 704 5933	IAN GROOBY Northern South Island 027 472 1503	BRUCE SMITH North Canterbury 027 499 3783
DEREK JONES South Canterbury North Otago 027 491 2966	PAUL BLONDELL Otago 027 549 8182	GRAHAM BEGGS Mid/East Southland 027 472 1818	RODNEY COOK South / West Southland 027 472 1504		

MASTITIS CONTROL DURING EARLY LACTATION

ARMED WITH THE SMARTSAMM GAP CALCULATOR TOOL, YOU CAN CALCULATE THAT THE MONEY LOST ON MASTITIS CAN POSSIBLY JUSTIFY AN UDDER CHAMPION IN EARLY LACTATION.

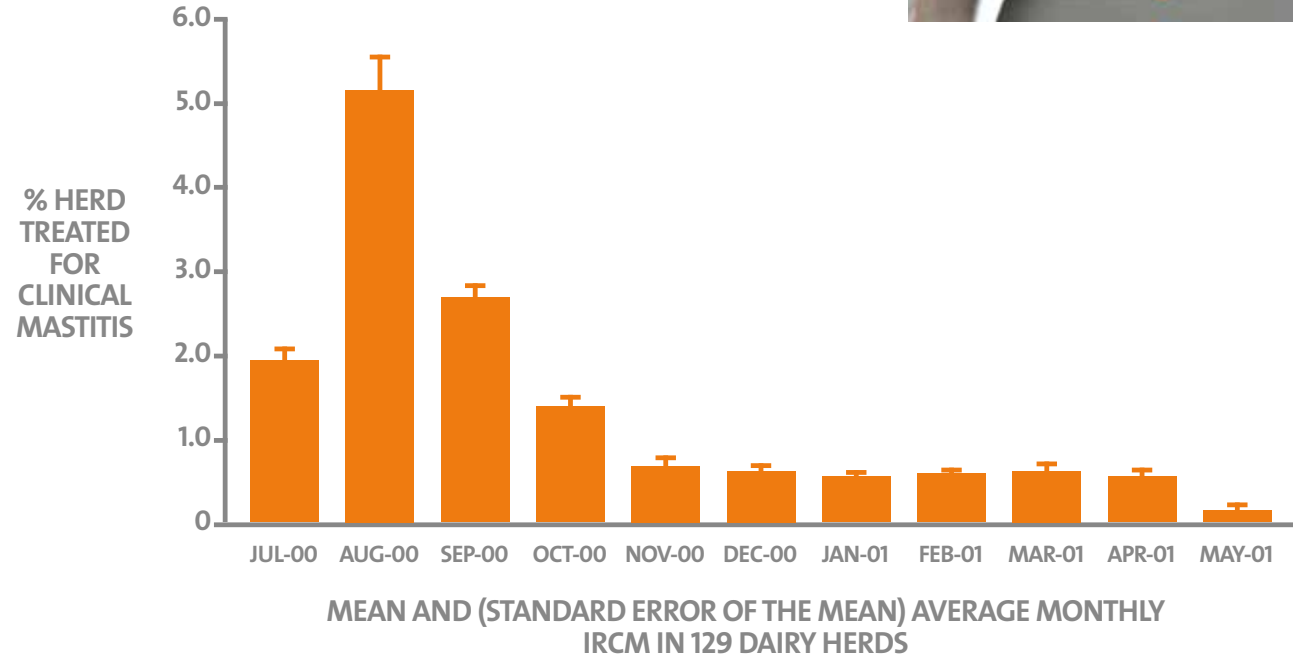


DAVID McDONNELL
BVSc MACVS

The DairyNZ’s SmartSAMM gap calculator tool utilises New Zealand industry knowledge to assess the cost of mastitis in your herd.

- The economic benefit is achieved through closing the gap between your herd’s actual, and target performance, through:
- Increased milk sales, as cows with lower SCC produce more milk
 - Lower costs and losses due to less clinical mastitis
 - Less culling and deaths related to mastitis

Early lactation is a time when mastitis has the potential to have the greatest financial impact. The largest numbers of clinical cases and failures occurring at that time of the season, leading to costs for treatment, milk withholding, labour and culling. See Graph below (McDougall, 2002), which illustrates percentage of cows treated for mastitis by month in 129 dairy herds.



This is where the Udder Champion could be incentivised to focus on the factors that have greatest economic impact. An Udder Champion is the herd owner or preferably a senior manager in the milking team who is going to focus specifically on udder health in early lactation. This person is responsible for protocols related to mastitis detection, control and prevention - including safe use of Restricted Veterinary Medicines (RVM’s). The technical and personal attributes of this person include milking experience, good clinical mastitis detection, attention to detail, animal person, clean, an educator and a team player. Sounds like a person description for a specific role - you bet and it is worth paying more for it!

What factors do we focus on in early lactation? Considering mastitis is a multifactor disease, your local veterinarian is best positioned to advise. But here are some tips to get started.

SEASON AVERAGE BULK MILK SOMATIC CELL COUNT (BMSCC)

A difference in production is in the order of 1-4% KgMS. This has potentially the greatest financial impact. This reflects the number of infected quarters in the herd.

- Prevention of infected cows entering from the previous season - Dry Cow Therapy and culling. This opportunity has passed for the current season
- Prevention of late dry period infections in heifers by teat sealants 30 days prior to calving
- Teat-spraying at high rate on all cows, all teats, complete barrel, high risk dilution, each milking to reduce the spread and invasion of contagious major and minor bacteria after milking
- Milking machine test and maintenance eg service, replace specified rubberware
- Milking technique and hygiene eg cluster change, alignment and slip. Milk dirty cows last

NUMBER OF CLINICAL CASES AND MASTITIS CULLS

Early detection and treatment of cases will reduce BMSCC and improve the chance of cure and less retreatment. At an estimated cost of \$120 per case the inconvenience and frustration may be an underestimate to most farmers. BMSCC does not necessarily reflect the level of clinical mastitis in the herd.

- Detection - cluster application/removal is a critical time for experienced milkers or Udder Champions to make their presence felt. Early detection and treatment results in better cure and cull rates
- Teat-spraying once again can have a significant financial impact by reducing the incidence of clinical mastitis by 50-100%
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory for mild clinical cases may reduce culling rate

Start advertising today for someone on your team to take this responsibility as an Udder Champion.

EFFLUENT SYSTEM KEEPS FUTURE IN FOCUS

FUTURE PROOFING HIS 200HA FAMILY FARMING BUSINESS MEANT NOT ONLY A NEW GEA FARM TECHNOLOGIES (GEA FT) WESTFALIASURGE ROTARY DAIRY, BUT ALSO A NEW EFFLUENT SYSTEM ON KELVIN THOMAS’S PROPERTY NEAR REPOROA.

Kelvin knew the existing effluent system may have been adequate with the new dairy, but future plans include intensifying the operation through installing a feed pad. “I did not know a lot about GEA FT’s solid separation systems, but soon found out how a system like that would eliminate blocked effluent irrigator nozzles. This is something that can be a big problem once you increase the fibre and supplements going into your herd,” says Kelvin.

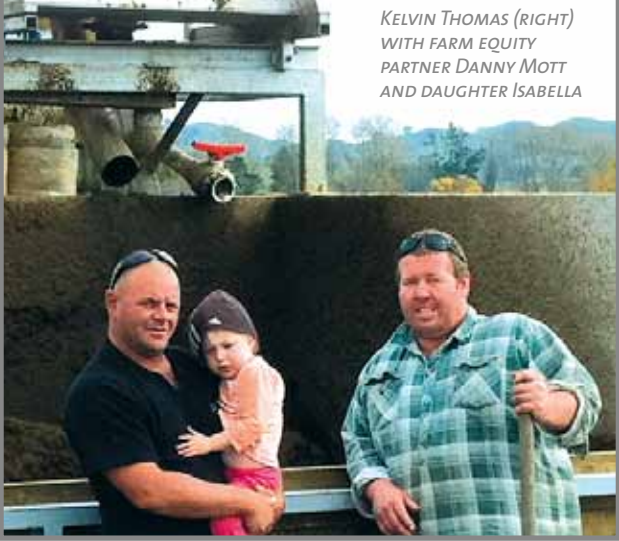
Keen to avoid that problem sooner rather than later the decision was made to install a system with the new dairy. It includes a Houle Agi Pump, a Houle Slope Screen Separator and dry solids storage bunker design. Full design, installation and service of the dairy and the effluent system came through GEA FT’s Taupo Dealer TED Limited. “Trevor Horn at TED did an excellent job, and we really have had very few problems in our first year with either the dairy or the effluent system.”

The separation system has the Houle Agi Pump deliver raw effluent from the dairy over the screen separator, with the solid material stored in a concrete bunker. Waste water is directed into the farm effluent pond, and solids into the bunker below the screen separator.

Kelvin then distributes the dry solids onto crop paddocks and lower fertile paddocks. He sees some major benefits coming from separating the waste stream into solid and liquid. “Like any farm we have been using too much pure water for washing down and cooling. The quality of the separated waste water is such that in future we intend to use it for flood washing the yard, and ultimately only be using pure water for plant washdown.”

Removing the sludge out of the waste stream also helps save energy. A relatively small pump is required to do the distance work delivering only waste water to the effluent irrigator.

With no moving parts the screen separator is proving a maintenance free system, without the need for motors and presses. “Between the dairy and the system we have a very efficient operation that will cope well with our plans for the future,” says Kelvin.



KELVIN THOMAS (RIGHT)
WITH FARM EQUITY
PARTNER DANNY MOTT
AND DAUGHTER ISABELLA

TAG I.T. TECHNICAL MANAGER
RUSSELL GIBBS (LEFT) WITH
JOSH WHITE TAG I.T. MANAGING
DIRECTOR, AND A HALO MONITOR
SHOWING VAT CAPACITY,
TEMPERATURE AND VALVE STATUS.

HALO KEEPS MILK QUALITY AT PREMIUM

DAVE FORSYTHE'S TE MAWHAI DAIRY OPERATION IN THE SOUTH WAIKATO HAS TWO THIRDS OF HIS 1000 COW HERD MILKED OVER WINTER AND INCLUDES SIX STAFF TO KEEP THE FARM RUNNING.

With a 36 aside herringbone dairy, he will often have staff on shift milkings, starting at different times to vary the routine and give them a sleep in or time off.

With the changes in staff routine he wanted to ensure milk quality remained constant, and eliminate the usual concern areas including wash down water in the milk silo that may place that quality at risk.

Over a year ago he opted to install a Halo dairy monitoring system. Developed by Hamilton company Tag I.T, Halo is essentially a black box for farm dairy monitoring, capable of multiple monitoring of critical aspects within the dairy and on the farm that can regularly cause headaches or expensive losses for farm operators.

The system provides web based access to such data as milk temperature post cooling and within the silo, silo milk volumes, vacuum levels and even vat valve positions. The system is also capable of recording rainfall, soil moisture and ground temperature.

“We had been getting caught with the occasional problem of wash down water getting into the milk silo from staff not changing the valves over. Once Halo went in, that risk was gone. The system has alarms to let you know if valves have not been shut off or changed over,” says Dave.

The ability of the system to log data has also provided a useful trace back ability when problems have arisen with milk temperature, enabling the timing of the problem occurring to be determined.

Tag I.T. Managing Director Josh White says Halo has come from years of discussion with farmers about what some of the key loss and quality areas are in farm dairy milk harvesting.

“These are problems where the impact of a loss or a grade has grown significantly in recent years, thanks to larger herd sizes, bigger vats and sometimes more complex milking plants. The loss of a vat full of milk in springtime due to a grade issue is something that you will struggle to pull back through the rest of the season.”

Once parameters are programmed in, Halo monitors for exceptions. These may include wash water temperature not up to correct level, milk temperature in vat exceeding the preset maximum temperature or a mains power failure. Alarm text messages are also broadcast for temperature faults and wash water temperature faults.

Dave also sees the value over coming years in Halo's ability to prove compliance around key areas like cooled milk temperature.

“This winter we are hoping to be able to add sensors to measure effluent volumes, and coupled with the soil moisture sensors we can determine how much effluent can be applied without risk of runoff.”

Data from sensor sites is relayed remotely to hardware installed in the farm dairy, then transmitted to Tag I.T's remote server every 10 minutes. If an exception in the data is detected, then it will be transmitted sooner, and an alarm will also be activated at the dairy.

Halo has given him the confidence to run the dairy with junior staff for the past 18 months, and Dave sees Halo as a tool many dairies will have in the future as a matter of course.

“For us the return from Halo will be just an ongoing ability to maintain quality by overseeing those areas that can bring problems. We are already having to document milk temperature for compliance and quality, this is a very easy, accurate way to do so.”

Halo is sold and distributed exclusively in New Zealand by GEA Farm Technologies.



STOP OR GO?

WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED.

UDDER MARK is part of FIL's range of animal markers specifically formulated to identify those cows which have been treated with antibiotics and require a milk withholding period. Made in New Zealand, **UDDER MARK** is highly visible, long-lasting and can be applied to the udder from any angle ensuring good coverage of the targeted area.

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GEA Farm Technologies

MAINLAND VIEWS

TECHNOLOGY HELPS DRIVE CONVERSION SUCCESS

CRAIG COPLAND AND HIS FAMILY COULD HARDLY BE ACCUSED OF DOING THINGS BY HALVES WHEN IT CAME TO CONVERTING HALF THE FAMILY'S 700HA CROP AND BULL BEEF OPERATION TO DAIRY FIVE YEARS AGO.

CRAIG COPLAND

"We decided to start the conversion in September, expecting to be milking by the following spring, but we ended up starting in March - straight into winter milking 500 cows," says Craig.

For someone who had spent their farming career to date managing bull beef, it was a sink or swim season, and five years on the farm operation is thriving. With his brother Wayne running the cropping operation, and Craig looking after the dairy side on the Rakaia property he says there is little they would do differently if converting again.

The family opted for a 60 bale WestfaliaSurge farm dairy that operates all year around, with 850 cows being milked on winter milk contract this season, and total

numbers due to lift to 1300 for the 2012-2013 season.

Talking to other farmers in Canterbury who had installed WestfaliaSurge dairies, and the prospect of the Dealer Betaquip being only 5 minutes down the road at Rakaia, compelled the Coplands to put WestfaliaSurge at the top of their list.

"Talking to people who already had WestfaliaSurge equipment, convinced us that this was the best plant to have if you wanted in shed feeding capable of really matching feed to yield," says Craig.

He was also impressed with the platform design, sloping away from the operator means the water ends up over the front, not over you.

The cabinet design of the bails also provided a more condensed, compact bail set up that is easily cleaned. Operating with the DairyPlan software, Craig says the shed's diagnostics for individual cow status is exceptional. This includes the ability to store and analyse milk conductivity, with two consecutive elevated readings resulting in an alert at the third milking to indicate possible mastitis infection.

With set calving periods at three times through the year, March, December and August, heat detection is almost a full time demand in the operation, and last season they installed GEA Farm Technologies Rescounter activity collars on the cows.

With the ability to detect mounting activity, the collars see the relevant cows drafted out at the end of milking.

"You could have a dozen cows that the collars have detected that don't look like they have had a heat, and sure enough, the AB technician finds they are on."

He has found the dairy is capable of meeting their goal to only have one person milking.

"For an owner operator wanting to get the most out their herd and shed, coupled with DairyPlan it is an excellent choice."

COASTERS LOYAL FIL CLIENTS

RICHARD AND ALISON KNIGHT COULD WELL BE TWO OF GEA FARM TECHNOLOGIES (GEA FT) MOST LONG STANDING CLIENTS, THANKS TO THEIR LOYAL COMMITMENT TO THE FIL BRAND FOR THE PAST 27 YEARS. BOTH NATIVE COASTERS, THEY STARTED THEIR FARMING CAREERS INLAND FROM HOKITIKA AT KOWHITIRANGI, AND TODAY OWN FOUR DAIRY FARMS IN THE GREY VALLEY AT AHAURA, 35KM FROM GREYMOUTH.

RICHARD & ALISON KNIGHT
ON THEIR AHAURA PROPERTY,
IN THE GREY VALLEY, WEST COAST

Colin Bishop, now GEA FT's South Island Sales Manager made one of his first door to door sales to the Knights when he was responsible for covering most of the South Island on his own.

"Our boss at Kowhitirangi had used FIL product, and we decided to stick with it when we moved up here. The products are good, reliable and we have enjoyed an excellent relationship with Farm Service Area Manager Ian Grooby."

"To be honest it is as much the man as the product, he knows all our sheds well, and does exactly what he says he will do, service is excellent," says Richard.

The Knights' four properties in the Ahaura district range from 250 to 560 cows, and Richard says Alison's input is just as critical to the farms' operation. "She is very involved, and very much the cow lady around here."

Being further up the Grey River Valley means the Ahaura district generally delivers drier summers than the coast, and this season has seen exceptional growing conditions throughout the whole year, after a tough season in 2010-2011.

Supplement levels see the farms in a good position heading into winter, and work has been good for the Knights' youngest son Matt, kicking off his first year as an agricultural contractor in the region. "He is just starting off, but it has been a good year to do that with plenty of work around," says Richard.

However like most farmers Richard is cautious about the coming season, wary of the slide recently

witnessed in milk powder prices on the Fonterra auction, and what that may mean for early payments next season. "It is a tough job to know where things are heading, given where the dollar is and how volatile predictions are right now."

Ian Grooby says he has enjoyed the long relationship with the Knights, and appreciates the role he has in helping the busy couple deal with any hygiene issues within their four farm dairies. "Richard is a busy man, and it is good to feel part of their team."

Ian is something of a fixture on the coast himself. While living in Murchison he has numerous clients on the coast and has spent all but two of the last 22 years with FIL, and now GEA FT.

He welcomes the support of the large new parent company, introducing new rubberware products he can offer his coast clients.

LA NIÑA OVER, AND A MILD START TO WINTER FOR NEW ZEALAND

Neutral conditions prevail in the tropical Pacific (no La Niña or El Niño), after the end of the 2011/12 La Niña event. Near New Zealand, lower than normal pressures are expected to the north of the country, with higher than normal pressures over southern New Zealand.

The NIWA National Climate Centre’s outlook for early winter, May to July 2012, indicates air temperatures are likely to be average or above average over most of the country, except for near average in the east of the South Island. Seas around New Zealand are likely to remain near normal or slightly cooler than normal during early winter.

Early winter rainfall is likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island, and near normal in other regions. Similarly, soil moisture levels are likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island and near normal in other regions. However, river flows are likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island, normal or below normal in the west of both islands, and near normal in the north and east of the South Island.

OVERALL PICTURE

TEMPERATURE

Seasonal temperatures are likely to be average or above average over most of the country, except for near average in the east of the South Island. Despite the overall pattern of near or above average temperatures, frosts typical of winter will occur from time to time.

RAINFALL, SOIL MOISTURE AND RIVER FLOWS

Early winter rainfall is likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island, and near normal in other regions. Soil moisture levels are likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island and near normal in other regions. River flows are likely to be normal or above normal in the north and east of the North Island, normal or below normal in the west of both islands, and near normal in the north and east of the South Island.

REGIONAL PREDICTIONS FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

NORTHLAND, AUCKLAND, WAIKATO, BAY OF PLENTY

Early winter temperatures are equally likely to be near average or above average. Seasonal rainfall totals, soil moisture levels, and river flows are all equally likely to be in the near normal or above normal range. Probabilities are assigned in three categories: above average, near average, and below average. The full probability breakdown is:

	TEMPERATURE	RAINFALL	SOIL MOISTURE	RIVER FLOWS
ABOVE AVERAGE	40%	40%	40%	40%
NEAR AVERAGE	40%	40%	40%	40%
BELOW AVERAGE	20%	20%	20%	20%

CENTRAL NORTH ISLAND, TARANAKI, WANGANUI, MANAWATU, WELLINGTON

Seasonal temperatures are equally likely to be near average or above average. Early winter rainfall totals and soil moisture levels are likely to be near normal for the three month season as a whole, while river flows are likely to be near normal or below normal. Probabilities are assigned in three categories: above average, near average, and below average. The full probability breakdown is:

	TEMPERATURE	RAINFALL	SOIL MOISTURE	RIVER FLOWS
ABOVE AVERAGE	40%	20%	20%	20%
NEAR AVERAGE	40%	50%	45%	40%
BELOW AVERAGE	20%	30%	35%	40%

GISBORNE, HAWKE’S BAY, WAIRARAPA

Seasonal temperatures are equally likely to be in the near average or above average range. Early winter rainfall totals, soil moisture levels and river flows are all equally likely to be in the near normal or above normal range. Probabilities are assigned in three categories: above average, near average, and below average. The full probability breakdown is:

	TEMPERATURE	RAINFALL	SOIL MOISTURE	RIVER FLOWS
ABOVE AVERAGE	40%	40%	40%	40%
NEAR AVERAGE	40%	40%	40%	40%
BELOW AVERAGE	20%	20%	20%	20%

NELSON, MARLBOROUGH, BULLER

Early winter temperatures are equally likely to be near average or above average. Seasonal rainfall totals, river flows, and soil moisture levels are all likely to be in the normal range. Probabilities are assigned in three categories: above average, near average, and below average. The full probability breakdown is:

	TEMPERATURE	RAINFALL	SOIL MOISTURE	RIVER FLOWS
ABOVE AVERAGE	40%	20%	20%	20%
NEAR AVERAGE	40%	50%	45%	45%
BELOW AVERAGE	20%	30%	35%	35%

WEST COAST, ALPS & FOOTHILLS, INLAND OTAGO, SOUTHLAND

Early winter temperatures are equally likely to be near average or above average. Seasonal rainfall totals and soil moisture levels are likely to be in the near normal range, while river flows are equally likely to be in the near normal or below normal range. Probabilities are assigned in three categories: above average, near average, and below average. The full probability breakdown is:

	TEMPERATURE	RAINFALL	SOIL MOISTURE	RIVER FLOWS
ABOVE AVERAGE	40%	20%	20%	20%
NEAR AVERAGE	40%	50%	50%	40%
BELOW AVERAGE	20%	30%	30%	40%

COASTAL CANTERBURY, EAST OTAGO

Seasonal temperatures are likely to be near average. Early winter rainfall totals, river flows, and soil moisture levels are likely to be in the normal range. Probabilities are assigned in three categories: above average, near average, and below average. The full probability breakdown is:

	TEMPERATURE	RAINFALL	SOIL MOISTURE	RIVER FLOWS
ABOVE AVERAGE	30%	30%	25%	25%
NEAR AVERAGE	50%	50%	50%	50%
BELOW AVERAGE	20%	20%	25%	25%

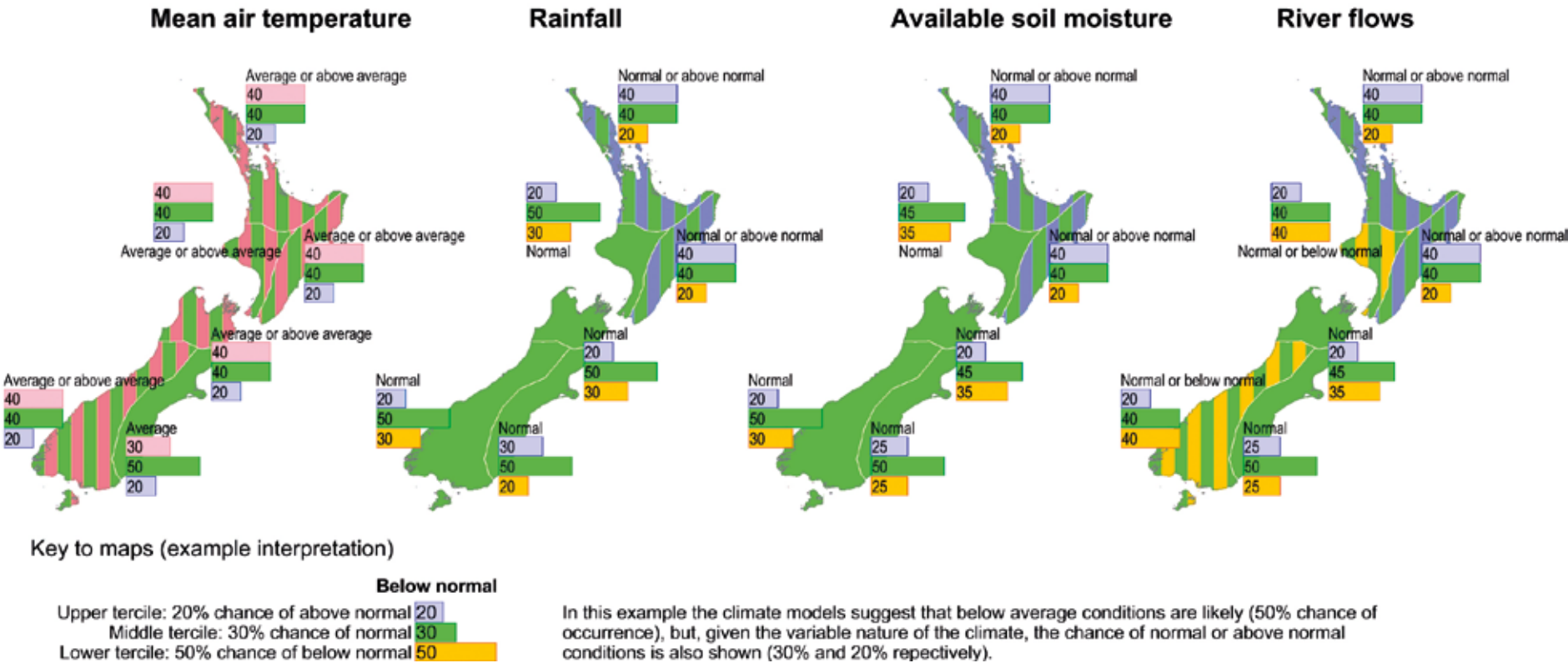
BACKGROUND

The 2011/12 La Niña event ended during April, and present conditions in the tropical Pacific are ENSO-neutral (no La Niña or El Niño). The three-month average of the Southern Oscillation Index (SOI) for February-April is close to zero. Sea surface temperatures are now warmer than normal in the eastern tropical Pacific. Almost all global climate models predict neutral conditions in the tropical Pacific over early winter (May-July), with about half of them continuing this situation over the subsequent three months. However, about half the models predict the evolution of an El Niño state during the August-October period. NIWA will continue to monitor the global climate situation. In spite of the collapse of La Niña in the tropical Pacific, the easterly circulation regime that has been dominating New Zealand climate patterns since December 2011 is expected to persist through the May to July 2012 period.

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OUTLOOK FOR MAY - JULY 2012:



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