



All Bruce's Christmases come at once!



He was the astounded recipient of \$12,000 worth of power tools from the Power Tool Centre in the FiL's "Clean Up and Win" competition, and admits he still "can't quite believe it". Bruce owns two farms near Waihi and has the lease of a Maori trust block, and over all the farms milks 800 cows.

Despite recently finishing an upgrade on one of the farm dairies he is sure there will be plenty of uses for the tools from the Power Tool Centre.

The competition ran over winter and gave all farmers who bought four FiL products out of a range of 23 the opportunity to win \$12,000 worth of power tools from The Power Tool Centre. A second draw meant 14 farmers also had the opportunity to win a super powerful ALTO Waterblaster for cleaning up around the farm.

"To be honest I have been so busy I have not had a chance to work out exactly what we need, but there will be a few things I am sure," says Bruce.

All three farms use FiL products, and coupled with an excellent team across the farms, help deliver consistent hygiene and herd health results. This is aided by the good relationship he enjoys with regional rep Allan Clarke. One of his managers, Kevin Wilson has never had a grade in five years of working there and Bruce says he could not have a better team working with him, which also includes his daughter Christine.

"It has been a very hectic time so far, but we have had a very

The last thing Waihi farmer Bruce Torrens won was a Christmas cake when he was 15. That was longer ago than he cares to remember, but the wait has been worth it to be the winner of FiL's "Clean Up and Win" competition.

good run through calving, and could not have asked for better weather really," he says. Bruce's family were among the first pioneers in the Waihi region to go farming. His grandfather was a miner and was determined not to see his sons follow in his footsteps.

"This is a great area to live and farm, I really enjoy the place," he says. His enjoyment has been heightened with a haul of power tools that will make the most difficult jobs around the farm a breeze.

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Spring cleaning begins for Andrew and Helen



FiL rep Clinton Humphrey and Andrew Hardie discuss cleaning up options.

Spring for Dannevirke farmers Andrew Hardie and Helen Long is looking good this year, but it got a whole lot better thanks to the Power Tool Centre and FiL. Andrew and Helen were among the 14 farmers to win a high power ALTO P140D water blaster in FiL's "Clean Up and Win" competition. FiL had made the competition simple, farmers had to only buy four FiL specified products from a

choice of 23, and they were in the draw. Andrew says with two quads, two motorbikes, two tractors and a ute he will have plenty of work for the machine this spring.

"My old one is almost past it, so we are due for a new one. The fact it has a petrol motor makes it extra powerful and we could do with that!" He says he enjoys a great relationship with FiL and has

used their products for quite a few years. He and wife Helen are equity partners on their 330 effective hectare property, milking 850 cows.

"It looks like a good start to spring, which has got us out of jail after a pretty hard autumn," says Andrew.

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Visit: www.fil.co.nz

Power Tool Centre – big on quality and service

Farmers looking for quality power tools need go no further than their nearest Power Tool Centre. In a retail market where power tools can be bought from almost any department store, Power Tool Centres focus on nothing else.

Located across the country from Whangarei to Timaru, all stores are members of the Comtool Trading Society Ltd, formed in the 1980s by retailers who could see huge benefits in collective purchasing and marketing of quality power tools. The focus was also on offering excellent levels of service and product knowledge in a complex and dynamic area of products. To this day the Power Tool Centres are based on those original goals.

Executive director of the Power Tool Centre is Ross Ellison. He says the fact each Powertool Centre is independently owned and operated reinforces their reputation for going that much further than other outlets.

"It is a reputation they have earned by being the best, and having a stake in their business," says Ross.

The level of expertise available ensures customers receive the best advice relevant to their requirements, whether it is an angle grinder to use on the farm or a circular saw for an up-coming building project.

"They are very big on doing things right first time, from supplying the right tools to servicing them for the rest of their life," says Ross.

There are 14 FiL customers who will be more than convinced about the quality and value of the Power Tool Centre's products when they receive their ALTO P140D water blasters this spring!

Other winners of the ALTO P140D water blasters from The Power Tool Centre:



N. Waite
Helensville

J. Wratt
Blenheim

W. Lang
Kawakawa

W & P Judkins
Reporoa

G & V Weir
Taupiri

R & J Harrison
Hawera

J & D Moorby
Te Awamutu

C & H Fulton
Matamata

I & K Mohring
Te Aroha

A & N Watts
Hinds

M & F Linton
Te Puke

A Hardie & H Long
Dannevirke

P. Mander
Waitara

M & D Butson
Outram

Teat spray tops for cell count

Eight years dairying in New Zealand has provided opportunities undreamt of for English couple John and Diane Baldie, and new rugby loyalties have been a small price to pay.

The enthusiastic couple are in their second year share-milking 260 cows on Bruce Cotman's property at Waerenga in northern Waikato. Both admit last

season was a baptism of fire with an appalling spring seeing cows on once-a-day milking in October. This was all too quickly followed by a hard dry summer on unforgiving clay country that put the cows back on once-a-day sooner than they wanted. With this spring starting off much better, the couple are still as enthusiastic as ever about share-milking, an occupation that simply does not exist back in the United Kingdom.

"I know of three couples back home who have dropped out of dairying there. It is going through

a real hard time. Here we are quite confident about being able to grow, and eventually buy some land of our own," says John. The couple's 10 year goal was to go share-milking and they achieved it in seven. Their aim now is to build their herd's production on the rolling Waerenga country and enjoy the life they have chosen.

When they bought their herd, somatic cell count was a prime focus of John's selection criteria. He believes this and their decision to use FiL's Ultracare Iodoshield teat spray is helping keep that somatic count low. Early on in calving the SCC was around 90,000 and Diane says it is not unusual for it to stay around that mark for the whole season.

"We really make an effort with the spray, adjusting the emollient depending on the conditions. We find it sticks very well to the teats and we use it all year round," says John. He has been impressed with the low levels of mastitis experienced and believes the quality more than justifies a slightly higher price.

"When we took over here last season the area manager Mark Mohring had an excellent knowledge of the dairy, as the farm had been with FiL for six years. He completely understood our hygiene requirements and had a good history of the ins and outs of managing the dairy. We have the whole range of FiL products now and are more than happy with the level of service and quality," says John.

It is obvious this couple are huge converts to the Kiwi way of dairying and have no regrets about coming to the other side of the world to fulfil their dream to own a farm themselves. Even better, far from making them homesick, the recent Lion's tour meant they could put a bob each way on the outcome!



John and Diane Baldie

Bloateze DFA pops bloat problems



FiL area rep Gavin Dunn with Ngakuru client Dave Hannah

Farming in the Ngkuru region near Rotorua offers some great lifestyle benefits for sharemilker Dave Hannah and family, but it has had its share of challenges too.

Dave and wife Leigh milk 440 cows on the 160 hectare property that has undergone extensive re-grassing in recent years. Turning over 14ha a year into swedes and then new grass lifted the bloat challenge significantly to the point the Hannahs lost several cows in one night.

"It was a beautiful January evening and we were sitting out on the deck, and then they just suddenly started to blow. Fortunately we managed to save some of the worst, but still lost some," says Dave. Since then he has switched to using Bloateze DFA, FiL's answer to in-line bloat prevention that will not wreck alkathene pipes and dispensers. Milking through a 44 aside herringbone, drenching is not a long term option when the shed is operating at peak numbers. Dave says the in-line dosing was the

answer he needed.

"We certainly have not had anything like the problems we had then, and trough dosing is definitely the way to go," says Dave. With the property split thirds between flats, rolling and steep country he feels much of the re-grassing that can be done is complete. Using the dispenser up until Christmas last season provided peace of mind the bloat problem was under control for them. Dave, Leigh and their three daughters Renee, Nicole and Annalise came to the area from Morrinsville six years ago, at a time when clover flea had been a problem in the Waikato.

The Rotorua region is relatively free of the pest, and Dave suspects the higher proportion of clover may account for the greater incidence of bloat compared to further north.

FiL Area Manager Gavin Dunn says the area can be prone to bloat when conditions get cold but not frosty, and cows are on their first break.

Bloat aside, Dave says he loves farming in an area close to Rotorua that affords excellent waterskiing in nearby Lake Whirinaki, part of the Waikato hydro lakes network. So much so he keeps it up over the crisper months of the South Waikato winter!

Strength in Sponsorship

One of the strongest sponsored relationships in agriculture will only be getting stronger following FiL's confirmation of its commitment to the Agriculture ITO "Bound to Succeed" leadership programme.

National Sales Manager Phil Wicks says FiL is looking to increase its level of co-operation and support for the scheme. Many Agriculture ITO trainees have already benefited from FiL's sponsorship of the programme held by Outward Bound, Anakiwa, now in its second year. All cadets returning from the three week course have spoken about the greater level of confidence and motivation they have got from it and their optimism bodes well for the agricultural industry's future. Phil Wicks says FiL is looking forward to supporting young people further by being more involved with Agriculture ITO's regional prize-giving ceremonies around New Zealand.

He says FiL remains committed to a programme that will ensure new, enthusiastic young people want to stay in the industry.

Agriculture ITO Marketing Manager Katherine Long says "FiL have been a great partner in supporting our vision to develop young leaders in the rural community and we are committed to developing our relationship with FiL for the further benefit of all involved."

Website boosts farmer knowledge

FiL has met the challenge of providing reliable, useful information to farmer clients by upgrading the company website, and now it reaches a new level. Farmers wanting to seek out information on FiL's wide range of products can access it via the website, arming them with all they need to know about the company's quality products.

Communications Manager Kate Seaford says providing all the product information electronically is a natural progression from offering it previously as a pre-printed folder.

"It used to be that the information was only available to our stockists and retailers. We value our farmer clients and appreciate their high degree of savvy when it comes to understanding what goes into different animal health and dairy hygiene products. Putting all this information on-line for them to access reflects our complete confidence in what goes into our products. We want to provide as much information as possible to those making the purchasing decisions on farms," says Kate. Product specifications are listed under FiL's five main areas: Dairy Hygiene, Animal Health, Nutrition, Animal Markers, and Other (General Farm Products).

Simply by clicking into each product farmers can get a profile of the product they are interested in. Information includes a product summary, benefits and uses, directions, and pack size. Importantly, with new health and safety regulations under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, information is provided on how best to store and handle the products, as well as safety and first aid advice.

Farmers wanting to know how good the products are can refer to testimonials from existing users about the products on-farm benefits.

"Once they know how much a product costs, they have the information they need to assess the cost per active compound in the products, and work out if a competing 'cheaper' product really is a good deal or not," says Kate. She says oftentimes they will find the higher quality compounds in FiL products off-set any price differences with other products.

With the busy spring season well upon them, many dairy farmers will appreciate they can make informed buying decisions without having to leave the farm.

"This will also help lift the level of understanding between our area managers and their clients about what goes into our products and what specific components are important to different farmers," says Kate.



Check out the FiL website at www.fil.co.nz

Licking lameness with genetics

For many dairy farmers spring time brings an annual headache of lameness and foot problems, a serious issue as pressure comes on to get cows up to full production and back in calf again. Dairy cow lameness is a complex, multi-faceted problem in national herds, with many climatic, management and nutritional factors impacting on it. Over 40% of herds report some level of lameness in one or more cows. The average incidence is around 4% per herd, yet the range is huge, varying from zero to 36%, and 15% of herds report incidences of greater than 10%.

Long-time vet and lameness expert Jos Vermunt has recently reported lameness costing around \$200 per cow. Applying the average incidence of 4% across the national dairy herd of 4 million cows the problem is costing New Zealand farmers \$32 million.

It may also surprise many farmers to learn that genetics also play a part in lameness, and recent work by Livestock Improvement Corporation (LIC) has helped identify a Mobility Breeding Value in dairy cows. Led by LIC's Breeding Manager Allan McPherson, the index has enabled LIC to identify artificial breeding bulls whose daughters will offer more resistance to lameness.

Allan McPherson says lameness heritability is relatively low, at less than 5%. "Often you find health and fertility traits are quite

low for heritability. For example fertility breeding values are only around 2.5% as well."

He says the genetic differences between susceptible and non-susceptible cows are there, but there is also a lot of environmental and management factors that can cloud the lameness issue.

Research has shown a strain difference between traditional and non-traditional bloodlines has become clearly apparent.

"The more traditional Kiwi cow, including traditional New Zealand bloodlines for Friesians are at the better end of the mobility scale. However the animals with purer Holstein origins shower greater susceptibility."

He says often farmers have already recognised the resistance of traditional black-hoofed Jerseys to lameness and crossed them with their Friesian herds. The mobility value is available this season, but Allan McPherson is cautioning farmers about expecting it to be a silver bullet for their lameness problems.

"If you are looking for some solutions, then this can be part of your two pronged plan to fix it, with attention being paid to management and environmental aspects as well." His advice to farmers who don't have problems with lameness is not to worry about selecting bulls with good mobility BVs.

"It is like anything, if you want to address this trait then you will be trading off other more production orientated traits, and if there is no problem there then you should not worry about selecting for it."

Management aspects affecting lameness can often be easily identified and fixed. This would include how fast cows are walked into the shed, the use of dogs and motorbikes, and race design. Environmental aspects include race-way drainage and water conditions around standing areas. Lameness management can be made more complex by nutritional aspects including rumen pH.

"If the pH is too high it can effect the flow of blood to the hoof area, heightening susceptibility to lameness."

LIC have a team of Friesian, Jersey and cross-bred bulls on hand for farmers to select from this season.

Longer term, Allan McPherson is excited about the potential of conformation predictors for picking lameness in breeding stock.

"It may relate to the hoof angle on the ground, or perhaps a score on the animal's walking style."

FIL PRODUCT PROFILE

Tell Tail reveals all in dairy herds

Research has shown one of the critical areas for determining a herd's performance is correct heat detection at mating time. Often, the larger the herd the greater the reliance upon staff to make the right call on whether a cow is on heat or not. This is not always the easiest thing to do. Fil have helped make farmers mating decisions easier with a high quality Tell Tail range of oil based oestrus paints. Coupled with the comprehensive Fil Mating Management System, the tail paint range simplifies this critical part of the dairying year.

Tell Tail is available in a choice of six vivid fluoro colours in either applicators or tins. The unique

design of the Tell Tail 1litre and 500ml applicators won the company a Prototype Award at the Fieldays in the late nineties. The applicators make the sometimes tricky job of marking cows simpler, eliminating the need for messy paint brushes and drips.

Since coming up with the applicator Fil's tail paint range has gone in leaps and bounds with the development of the fluoro formulation of colours. Greater sensitivity to heat detection is provided with the fluoro paint, with dulling indicating the possibility of a heat. Given the incidence of shy breeding in some herds, this can

often be the only indication of the animal having a heat.

Farmer comment on the fluoro range focuses on the excellent visibility of the paint at a distance, with one farmer being able to see the colours clearly from 2km away. The ability of the paint to hold on for at least three weeks without flaking helps reduce the time consuming job of 'touching up' tail paint. However when touching up does have to be carried out the handy 500ml bottles are just the ticket, being small enough to fit in a back overall pocket and easy to use while climbing over rails to reach cows.



Premises to set new standard



The next exciting stage in FiL's growth is now in place with the release of plans for the company's new headquarters at Port-side Drive, Mount Maunganui. The new developments are as necessary as they are exciting, says General Manager Gavin Cherrie.

"We have had such a strong period of growth in recent years, and simply had to look for larger premises that could comfortably house our operations staff and offer good production flow and improve FiL's safety, quality and environmental performance.

The new office and production facility had to fulfil some specific criteria for the company.

"We looked for a design that offered smooth material handling and operations flow. It also has to be as resource efficient as possible, including rainwater recovery, utilise natural light where possible and natural ventilation," says Gavin.

Lighting is provided by Solatube illumination systems and there are numerous passive light, heat and ventilation systems built in to heighten economy and comfort.

The building will offer twice the area FiL currently has. Being purpose built it future proofs the company for on-going growth and product development.

Blow away bloat with FiL

As greater amounts of clover have re-established in pastures after being ravaged by clover flea and root weevil, bloat has once again become an issue for many dairy farmers. With herds getting bigger and labour becoming more critical in larger farms, more farmers need an alternative to drenching cows daily for bloat. FiL offers the full range of quality bloat products that are the answer to the modern dairy farmer's prayer.

FiL have developed Bloateze DFA specifically for use through alkathene piping and in-line dispensers. Its components are developed to avoid damaging alkathene pipe systems whilst still offering an exceptional level of protection against bloat challenge. For farmers drenching every day, still the most reliable method of control, FiL have a reliable cost effective solution. Bloateze will aid in bloat prevention, at a highly competitive price.

Bloat Tips

It is essential when mixing bloat products to use a high quality water for mixing to protect the integrity of the product. Ensuring the product is fully dissolved before use is important and sometimes warm water may be necessary.

- Start treatment early to get stock used to taste
- When drenching, mix dose in as much water as possible – greater dilution will ensure quicker dispersion
- Start treatment with low dose rates
- If pasture spraying ensure the whole break is done
- Continue treatment until well after bloat symptoms have ceased.
- Check calcium and magnesium levels. Lower levels and sodium imbalances can intensify the effects of bloat
- Excess potassium through fertiliser applications can worsen imbalances. If potash fertilisers are used, salt should be added to drench.

FiL PRODUCT PROFILE

Bloateze and Bloateze DFA

FiL offers two reliable and cost effective solutions for the prevention and treatment of frothy bloat in cattle and to keep things simple for farmers and their staff they have developed a specific 'Dilution Chart' for the two products.

Key Benefits - Bloateze

- Easy to mix even in cold water
- Suitable for drenching, pasture spraying or trough treatment

Key Benefits - Bloateze DFA

- Alkathene friendly for safe application via in-line dispensing systems
- Dosatron approved
- Suitable for drenching, pasture spraying or trough treatment

Phone your local FiL Area Manager to get hold of a copy of FiL's Bloateze Dilution Chart. This A3 sized chart provides all the information required for diluting and applying both products to your stock. Printed on hard wearing adhesive plastic, the chart can be added to the farm office or shed wall so that the information is always available.

Pack Sizes: 200L, 100L, 20L and 5L

Always refer to the product label for directions for use, storage and handling instructions or call your FiL Area Manager for more information.



Long Term Weather Predictions

September

Wetter than average everywhere.

September may be wetter than average for both islands, the North Island by 9% and the South Island by 4%. For the North Island the least rain should be around the 16th, and the most rain at or near the 18th. For the South Island the least rain period may be around the 10th, and the wettest around the 12th and 21st.

Wetter than the norm in the North Island could be Northland to South Waikato, Whakatane and King Country. Drier than average could be Te Puke, Taupo, Wanganui, Masterton, and around Wellington, with remaining districts around average. In the South Island wetter-than-average are likely to be Nelson, Motueka, Westland and Queenstown. From Kaikoura to Invercargill along the East coast should be average to drier.

Temperature:

Whangarei, Auckland, Opotiki, Hawkes Bay and Wellington could be warmer than average. Northland, Bay of Plenty, and Taupo may be average-to-cooler and the rest of the North Island will probably be average. In the South Island, the West Coast, Canterbury and South Canterbury should be warmer, and Blenheim, Marlborough, Timaru, Queenstown, Dunedin and Gore cooler, with the remainder on average. On or near 17th, rather cold conditions may prevail in Canterbury, when maximum temperatures could plunge about 7 degrees below normal.

October

Warmer overall, dry in the Eastern North Island

The North Island may only see about 74% of its average rainfall for October, whilst the South Island

could exceed its average by 8%. For the North Island the least rain should be around the 29th-31st, and the most rain at or near the 16th, 19th and 23rd.

For the South Island, the least rain period may be around the 28th/29th, and the wettest around the 15th and 22nd.

Rain figures for South Island districts could be mixed. The wetter regions should include Fiordland, South Canterbury, Alexandra, Queenstown, Te Anau and Invercargill.

Temperature:

North Island temperatures will be warmer than average. Places may include Whangarei, Auckland, Opotiki, Gisborne/Hawkes Bay, Wanganui and Wellington. Average-to-cooler could encompass much of Northland, parts of inland Bay of Plenty, Taupo and New Plymouth. The rest of the North Island should be average. In the South Island, Marlborough and Canterbury may be warmer, and Nelson, Grey-mouth, Oamaru and Dunedin should be cooler, with the remainder of districts average.

November

Average rainfall in North, less in South

The South Island could get 13% less rain than average. For the North Island the least rain could be around the 13th, and the most rain at or near the 23rd. For the South Island, the least rain period may be around the 10th, and the wettest time around the 23rd.

In the North Island wetter than the norm districts are likely to be Kaitia to Whangarei in the north east. Districts drier than average may be Rotorua, Waikato, Tokoroa to Taupo, Taranaki, Horowhenua and Kapiti coast. In the South Island, Nelson and Motueka are likely to be wetter than average. Westland, South Canterbury, the Southern hydrolakes, Timaru, Otago, Gore, and Invercargill could be drier than average.

Extracts reprinted from "Predict Weather Almanac 2005" (Random House), available from bookstores nationwide.



Plains full of potential for Northern migrant

The wide open spaces of Canterbury lured FiL's newest Area Manager south five years ago, and have drawn him back out onto the road for the company. Based in Ashburton, Bruce Smith has just taken up his new position as the Area Manager for the Canterbury region, covering the vast Plains area from Culverden in the north to Oamaru in the south.

Bruce brings with him many years of experience in and around the dairy industry and looks forward to taking his skills on the road with him to service FiL clients and grow the business. He has just completed a three-year stint with a rural merchandiser and it has given him plenty of opportunity to be conversant in all FiL's quality products.

"I am looking forward to meeting farmers on their own patch and providing the service and back up that many of these big operators here need. There is plenty of opportunity to help train up new staff in hygiene techniques, and staff are critical on these big farms, you can't get away without them."

Bruce is originally off a dairy farm in the South Waikato region and milked after leaving school. He took five years out of dairying to work in a dairy company store and also gained his fitter and turner's certificate.

Being outdoors is one passion for Bruce, and playing rugby is the other. While in the South Waikato he played for Hinuera near Matamata and took up a job with animal exporters Animal Enterprises.

"I learnt a lot about animals, animal welfare and health there." Missing the cows, he returned to dairying and went share milking in 1991. Realising there was nothing to hold him back he headed to Canterbury, working on a 1200 cow farm on the Ashburton coast. It has proved an area offering lots of opportunity for anyone looking to work hard, and play rugby.

"I love the game and found the cows were getting in the way a bit, so we bought a house in Ashburton and I went back engineering." He has learnt not to

be afraid of change and believes as long as you take some skills away with you, no experience is wasted. He loves living in an area that is thriving with new jobs and people.

He believes the FiL job will deliver on all fronts. "I can still remember when it was quite a small company, and it has come a long way with some great products," he says. There is good potential to grow the business in mid-Canterbury, given the variety of FiL products and the different farming types found on the Plains.

"For example you often see sheep farmers using products like caus-mag, and there is potential for other products like Booster Blocks," he says. Life is busy with three children Braden, Acashia, Dremayne and wife Marlene and of course- the rugby.

"I played until I was 34 and never thought I would give up, but coaching makes up for it!"

Diamond V XP – a key to calf rearing for profit

Calf rearers keen to increase their returns turned out for a seminar held on FiL's high performance feed supplement Diamond V XP, held in Morrinsville recently.

Diamond V XP is a supplement used to optimise digestibility and promote the development of healthy rumen bacteria in calves. Based on a yeast culture it is designed to enhance the numbers of "positive" bacteria found in the calf's gut, increasing the gut's ability to produce volatile fatty acids. FiL General Manger Gavin Cherrie says the seminar, held in conjunction with Seales Ltd, attracted calf rearers and farmers wanting to learn more about the supplement.

"With rearing margins stretched tighter than ever, many rearers are keen to see how they can keep costs down and hit their target weights sooner," says Gavin.

Unlike some coccidial supplements that kill off bacteria in the gut, Diamond V XP provides a rich nutrient source for rumen micro-organisms, stimulating rumen development. Digestion is maximised, improving the ability of the calf to convert feed to body tissue. Rearers attending the seminar heard about Diamond V Mills extensive laboratory and field trials. They also had the opportunity to quiz Dr Mark Kujawa, Vice President of the company on the products use.

"The fact we make most products ourselves and actually import under licence only one or two is a testament to the value we place on Diamond V XP. We only focus on the highest quality products and this is one of them," says Gavin.

One calf rearer committed to using Diamond V XP is Waitoa based Robert Van Rooyen. "I had heard about the product a few years ago, and then again on the radio driving into town to pick up more meal," says Robert. He asked his grain merchant to add some Diamond V XP to the mix.

"Within a few days the calves just looked better and they had firmer dung," says Robert who rears 800 calves a year.

He laughingly admits when it comes to calves, rearers have to be "muckologist" to get a good handle on calf health.

He had noticed when calves go onto grass they get meal scour, and with Diamond V XP this disappeared. At an additional \$30 a tonne to the feed price Diamond V XP offers a good return through the calves consuming less meal, says Robert.

"It works out at 10 calves per tonne, or \$3 a calf. We use less meal, and you only need to use 5kg less per calf to pay for it. Last year I reckon I used 20kg a calf less, so it definitely pays."

In the low margin, volatile business of calf rearing this sort of return is too great to ignore. Robert says he would not be without Diamond XP on his rearing operation. "There is no doubt, it is a very good product."

Dispenser gives measuring cup the boot

Dispensing wash chemicals effectively and safely doesn't always happen in the farm dairy, often resulting in wastage, splashes and even chemical burns. FiL have teamed up with Grant Ferrier of The Dairy Shed to offer their clients a high quality, accurate and affordable detergent dispenser.

The Dairy Shed Chemical Pumping System is already in place in over 50 dairies around the Manawatu and Grant says all the feed back has been outstanding. His machine will be available for sale through all FiL area managers from this spring.

"I have deliberately designed the machine differently from the vacuum based systems around on the market. It is driven by an industrial standard electric motor and is very idiot proof to operate," says Grant. Vacuum based dispensers have the disadvantage of requiring the plant to be on to deliver the required dose of chemical. Often however this is not the case, such as when the vat is being cleaned before the morning milking.

Because the unit operates with electronics, dispensing proves to be more accurate and direct,

eliminating any potential over or under dosing of wash tubs. "You would only need to be putting in an extra 50 ml a day and you would be wasting over 25 litres through the year. In most cases it is fair to say the wastage could be twice that."

Grant says he admires FiL for taking on the dispenser, knowing some clients may actually end up using less detergent by cutting down on waste.

"They are obviously aiming to provide a high quality product and service, and this is another way of achieving that."

The machine comes with a two year unconditional warranty and has components designed to withstand industrial conditions where operation is far more frequent than twice a day.

Grant's company provide full installation and servicing for the machines, and will programme them for the specific dairy wash. At this stage there is an acid wash programme only, for dairy and vats. However Grant is working on one that offers a combined acid-alkaline programme for both vats and dairies.

There is a machine available for larger farm dairies that have a separate tub for vats and plant, with a two headed pump to draw from each tub separately.

The machine runs off single phase power, and only has one small part that requires replacing once a year. This is covered at the company's annual service inspection.

"It is not only the cost savings you make with the dispenser, there are other issues too. It ensures less detergent is going into the environment through the wash water, and also protects staff from the risk of burns and eye injuries by doing the dispensing for them."

He says FiL were the ideal progressive company for him to market his dispensers through because they appreciated the value to their clients and how it fitted with FiL's image as a responsible, quality detergent provider.

FiL National Sales Manager Phil Wicks says he was particularly impressed with the high quality components of the dispenser.

"We have looked at a lot of products out there, but Grant's system offers not only the high quality components, but an excellent level of service right from installation to on-going maintenance. It certainly fits well with our quality products."

The dispensers are available through FiL Area Managers for \$50 below the normal retail price, at \$700 for a single head and \$849 for twin, installed.

The many faces of FiL

Lifestyle and loyalty keep local boy in the North

Northland is a long, skinny territory for FiL Area Manager Bryan Eaton with five hours driving from one end to the other, but one he would not trade for anywhere in New Zealand.

A true Northland lad, Bryan has been with FiL for 11 years and his area has earned him a huge amount of loyalty among many customers he now considers friends.

For him the challenge has been to deliver a consistent high level of service over an area that stretches 'way down to Helensville and as far north as Kaitiā, with all sizes of dairy farms in between.

"It is an area I have always loved, and I guess the only problem is I probably don't get to go fishing as much as I would like," says Bryan. Living at Maungatāpere with wife Carolyn and his two daughters Gabrielle and Kelsey, Bryan finds his location relatively central to the majority of customers.

With its warm wet winters, Northland has long had split calving and this helps spread the seasonal demands of the job, keeping the phone ringing "pretty much all year," he says. Even those farmers still on traditional seasonal supply have a big spread within their calving dates in a region often challenged by heavy rainfall, followed by localised dry conditions. Yet despite the climatic challenges Northland is finding greater favour among non-Northland farmers looking for more affordable land and attracted by the great recreational opportunities Northland offers.

He has seen some big changes in rural Northland over recent years as more farms have amalgamated while others have been split up into life-style blocks. On the larger farms he enjoys spending time training staff on the intricacies of plant hygiene, and has even seen a few graduate through the ranks to become share-milkers and clients.

"I feel I have had a fantastic degree of loyalty from my clients up here and believe FiL's sponsorship of the Agriculture ITO's 'Bound to Succeed' programme is an excellent initiative that holds huge benefits to the industry by attracting and keeping young people in the agricultural industry.

While some in the industry may be mixed about life-style blocks, Bryan says they present an excellent opportunity to companies like FiL with its diverse high quality product range.

"You can't change what is happening, and we can provide small block holders with products like Booster Block that are ideal for the few head of animals they have."

Despite its strong growth, Bryan says FiL is one of those rare companies that has managed to retain its small company feel.

"They have managed to create a very broad range of quality products. I feel it is possible to say your piece quite easily, and we are all working to a common goal, to deliver excellent service and product on the farm."

He says the appointment of Phil Wicks as National Sales Manager with his experience at LIC reinforces the company's commitment and understanding of its dairy customers.



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beyond expectations and helping the farmers they serve achieve real results.

Call our hotline now and we'll put you in touch with your local FiL team member.



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