

Newsletter 137

6 March 2016

We hope that you have all had reasonable rainfall. We've had 86 mm over the last two weeks, which with the earlier rain, made it our best February for a long time. So much for the wrong repeatedly predictions by scientists and the staff at NIWA.

Milk Payout

The media and people who write gloom, with little help or solutions, have recently not mentioned what can, and is being done, for example what the little 140 farm Tatua Co-Op near Morrinsville has done for a hundred years i.e., always paid their farmers more than the big companies, and now there are two private organic milk companies paying two to three times more than Fonterra, whose handling of their organic milk producers has been disgraceful and not what they told the media they would do. Their organic dairy farmer numbers have halved and payout decreased.

Powdered organic milk is in strong demand, selling at NZ\$14,000, which is three times more than standard milk powder, and baby formula organic milk powder is even higher. What is Fonterra doing about increasing organic milk production and marketing, to help their dairy farmers? Nothing that we know of. Fonterra reduced the little extra they paid to their organic producers. In countries where organic milk production has increased substantially, while Fonterra's has decreased, they are paying 100% more than standard milk. It amazes me that dairy farmers tolerate Fonterra.

Someone suggested that two Fonterra managers come and learn from www.grazinginfo.com so I was very excited and spent a day and a half preparing information on how our GrazingInfo dairy farmers improved their farms and increased their production and milk quality to organic, with before and after details and photos of everything from reducing costs and improving milk quality, to marketing.

On arrival on Friday 1 pm, they told me that they only had an hour, as if I had asked them to come and help me, which showed their lack of practical knowledge, so I was unable to present it all. At the end, they expected me to do more for them, which their eight hour a day secretaries could get for them from www.grazinginfo.com

I've worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, helping mostly dairy farmers, for no income, because Fonterra has ruined our dairy industry.

The two Fonterra managers were out of their depth. To achieve what I suggested they would have to learn and work! They have still not joined the free www.grazinginfo.com that has all the details of how to improve milk quality and profits, with testimonials and evidence galore proving it in 260 chapters. One is called Milk Profit & Quality in the Dairying folder, which I recommended they and some Fonterra staff read. So should all of you, dairy and others. The farmer A did what I suggested which was LimePlus, and to reduce cow numbers and doubled pasture production, reduced mastitis from thirty affected cows to one, improved milk quality, so was given a Fonterra milk quality award, etc, etc, which should have been awarded to www.grazinginfo.com The Fonterra manager wanted me to send them a copy when their secretary could download it and encourage some of their staff and 9,000 members to do so and **read it**.

Amazingly Fonterra has not asked Farmer A, or me what the highly successful farmer did to improve his milk quality by so much.

Fonterra managers think that their being big, having the best milk and boasting, is all that is needed. Some of their junior staff tell me about Fonterra's inefficiencies. They've made 17 serious costly mistakes in recent years.

Not the highest payout

They repeatedly boast about their \$8 payout of a few years ago, claiming that it was the highest ever, but the payout when we were dairying on our first farm on a 60 hectare peat farm with a 90% mortgage at 6% in the 1960's, milking 26, 45 and then 60 cows, was \$14 in today's money. It enabled us to buy a new three bedroom home without borrowing, and in 1980 a two bedroom house for a sharemilker milking 200 cows, again without borrowing, and buy 30 adjacent hectares without

borrowing. Costs were minimal. Now thousands of dollars every year are going to DairyNZ and to council bureaucrats, both for no benefit to farmers. Go to a DairyNZ field day and you'll see.

Big is bad

It is known that highly paid managers put less effort into work. They are too busy working out what they will do with their next million dollars. New Zealand dairy farmers, as well as being very good at dairying, have to start being good at politics and administration, not themselves, but by those paid to do it (Fonterra), and the politicians. Prime minister John Key went to Sri Lanka to help their dairy industry, but ignores ours. Sack him. Dutchman Theo Spierings went to Holland and helped his country improve their dairy industry build a faster producing milk factory, and he helped China produce 12% more milk in 2014, so they've stopped buying ours, but he has done nothing to help our dairy industry. He could have got the government to pay for the milk for schools like they used to do. Fonterra should also campaign to get interest rates reduced from being the highest in the Western world benefiting the rich and the Australian owned banks, by billions of dollars every year (they borrow at 3% from Japan and Switzerland and lend at double that), and to reduce our exchange rate more. Imported fertiliser costs increasing, won't matter, because dairy farmers can't afford any, and most of their money should be spent on NZ produced LimePlus, calcium and magnesium, which are the low cost item on most farms and has been for ages, but fertiliser companies push P and K, despite it already being toxically high on many farms. Fonterra has made so many costly mistakes, and Spierings has made so many ridiculous statements, such as in the NZ Herald, "New Zealand owes it to the rest world to show them all, how to produce low cost milk". Who pays him? Sack him too, with a hefty fine for sabotaging his employer.

In USA the political parties both support their farmers hence the high subsidies and payments to not overproduce, their farmers vote for the one offering the most. In New Zealand farmers vote National even if the candidate is a baboon, and National know it.

Organic beef in USA

Our beef farmers have been getting good prices, making much more profit than dairy farmers.

This has just arrived from the editor of the USA Stockman Grass Farmer which I wrote for, decades ago. It shows the demand for pasture fed and organic beef in USA.

"Grassfed beef is now about five percent of the USA national market. That's five billion dollars worth. Organic grassfed beef sells for an 87 percent premium. Pastured pork is very profitable. Currently USA is having to import pigs from UK to meet demand. 'No-grain' grass fed milk also sells for the highest dairy price, but is only available in New York and California."

End

I've said for a long time that dairy and beef farmers should set up a New Zealand organic milk and meat organisation called 'New Zealand Organics'.

I've converted thousands of overseas farmers to grazing, which reduced their production substantially, but increased their profits.

All farmers MUST look to the future. All must also organise what needs to be done for themselves, so must acknowledge that organic foods are wanted by those who can afford it. USA and UK are the markets that need it and can pay the higher prices.

An Auckland poultry farmer sells free range eggs in California at way above their prices, so no one worries about them, and the wealthy people want and buy them. Wealthy people run USA, so the Auckland free range poultry farmer is loving it. Dairy and beef farmers, please emulate him. You have far superior products than grain-fed, and Americans know it and want them.

Cow broken bones, shoulders and legs

You will have read that some farmers have had many cows and heifers breaking bones.

Have any of you who are liming correctly **with** deficient minerals, and feeding Solminix and salt, had any breaks? Please let me know if you have, or have not, or know of any farmers who have had any, and what they were doing farming wise. Thank you.

Serious health problems like this are not new, and over the decades few vets have solved them. Diagnosing and treating is income for them. Vets are now doing a starve because there are too many and farmers are forced to learn prevention.

The high rainfall West Coast of the South Island suffered bad milk fever that even two bottles of intravenous Calciumborogluconate didn't fix. I analysed their pasture and found as I thought, very low boron, so got them to fertilise with it, which fixed things. Good farmers may get only one cow per 300 with milk fever.

Poverty Bay hill farmers had lambs breaking legs within a week of birth on their steep hills, which meant death. I suggested fertilising with 5 kg/ha of Copper Hydroxide, which is lump free, whereas copper sulphate can have lumps, which if eaten, can kill. Copper worked. Read about it in the two chapters on it. Calcium without copper makes bones hard. Drop one and it could break. Drop a copper pipe and it will bend. Auriel and I take copper. It is in Natural Value Maple Syrup, naturally. We have both fallen and not broken bones badly.

Both of these above cases were more than thirty years ago. You can read more about them in the two (farming and human) Copper chapters.

Anyone with an animal bone breaking problem should look at their ryegrass analyses and apply deficient items preferably with a little fine lime powder from Graymont (was McDonald's) as a carrier or Sechura reactive phosphate if P is more deficient, from Asura Ltd, Box 65-317, Mairangi Bay, Auckland. 021-331-620 Matt Webby <matthewwebby@yahoo.co.uk>

They can be mixed in on your farm or at a fertiliser depot. Copper sulphate and OrganiBOR boron are poisons. Read my chapters on them. Boron was the first weed killer. So handle them with care, and shower straight after, before giving your child a hug.

Autumn pasture seed sowing

Mid March is the best time here to resow after crops and to oversow thin pastures, provided it rains!

Seed Suppliers

The only seed company I know of that recommends lower seeding rates per hectare, at about the same as I have done highly successfully for 50 years, is Specialty Seeds NZ Ltd, Box 29-389, Fendalton, Christchurch 8540, NZ. or 76 a Hayton Road, Sockburn, Christchurch 8042. Email: mail@specseed.co.nz Free phone: 0800 727 8873.

Both high rates and drilling cause overcrowding which stunts and weakens the plants, and costs more. Specialty Seeds carries a wide range of seeds and will seek what is requested. Some seed companies have very few brands and recommend theirs against all others.

Some big farmers buy seeds direct from seed growers, but be careful. What guarantee do you have that you are getting what you have ordered?

A problem not always allowed for is that germination can be satisfactory after a number of years, but the ability of the germinated seeds to survive as healthy strong plants, declines with age because the endophyte has died. So check the seed's age.

Whatever seeds you buy, inspect and test at least 20 for germination on a kitchen paper towel and covered with a paper towel and a clear plastic elastic cover, all on a plate and kept moist, but not covered in water which suffocates seeds. At least 90% should germinate within five days. Also check that you get what you ordered. An Oregon, USA company was fined \$100,000 for illegal labelling and in New Zealand I've seen Forager Chicory growing where Puna Chicory was ordered and paid for, and a winter ryegrass growing in a mix where none was ordered. A good company sacked a seed mixing staff member for adding any clover, not the ordered one.

Panicum, a bad weed grass that is very high in toxic nitrates, came and grew with bought Shirohie millet forage crop from Australia. Farmers must be aware of human errors and plain mistakes and check for them.

Suggested Waikato mix for high fertility soil, Superstrike coated and inoculated legumes.

kg/ha

- 10 Trojan NEA2 Diploid ryegrass = 200 seeds per m².
- 10 Bealey NEA2 Tetraploid ryegrass = 150 seeds per m².
- 2 Best cocksfoot for your area = 50 per m².
- 0.1 Best Timothy for your area = 30 seeds/m².
- 0.2 Weka white clover = 30 seeds/m².

- 0.2 Tahora 2 white clover, the highest N producer = 30/m².
- 1 Colenso or best Red clover or best for your area = 10 seeds/m².
- 0.2 Endurance Plantain = 12/m².
- 0.2 Choice or the best Chicory = 40/m².

The mix is because, variety is healthier, like us, animals prefer it, and it tells you which are best for your farm and management. If other grasses do better than ryegrasses, then your soil is likely to have an aluminium hardpan, which ryegrass roots won't grow down through, so it pulls out, or tears out under hooves and tractor wheels. The cause is 90% sure to be a lack of enough fine, soft lime, is seldom solely insect damage, but can be both. Check it in paddocks. Read both Soils and Insects.

Don't let anyone sell you Kopu large leaf white clover, except for a one or two year pasture, because it was bred from an annual clover so doesn't last.

Never buy any AR endophyte ryegrasses because cows don't like them so eat less and milk drops and ryegrass staggers increases, especially if selenium is low, which most are, especially on organic farms because Selcote Ultra selenium prills are not allowed, which is another pathetic organic rule. If your supplier tells you of a better proven variety for your area, soil type and fertility, check with the grower before buying it.

NEA2 endophyte is excellent. Cows love it and milk can increase by up to two litres per cow per day, depending on the time of the year. I've seen an AR endophyte ryegrass a foot high in the same paddock trial where Bealey NEA2 was grazed to the ground. In Canterbury a few sheep broke into this large grass variety trial and ate only the NEA2 endophyte grass as shown.



Avoid plain Bealey without NEA2 endophyte, because it has no endophyte to control insect damage which is not a problem in the cool insect-free deep south, but is needed in the north.

Impact AR perennial ryegrass has been reported to cause bad ryegrass staggers.

Beware that some farmers are paid to recommend some pastures. One recommended an AR ryegrass, until he found that his cows didn't like it, so withdrew his long written recommendation, but the company continued using it for another year.

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Mastitis

Dairy industries worldwide want lower SCC levels. Most dairy companies are currently happy with 200,000 cells per ml, but some dairy companies have plans to reduce it and use penalty grades to achieve it. There are many of our members with levels under 100,000 and some produce milk with only 50,000. Good milking machines correctly adjusted, teat spraying, LimePlus to reduce manganese and other heavy metals, feeding Solminix with salt and not rushing cows, all help.

There is a vaccine being tried, which is typical of the New Zealand veterinarians 'treating' instead of preventing. Treating gives them work and income from selling medicines, whereas prevention earns them nothing, except a good name.

Read Milk Profit & Quality in Dairying.

Health

The pressure so many of us are under, puts a load on our bodies, so identify any pain you may have and research and treat it. Cold compresses for 5 seconds on my head and ear area, reduced my balance problem amazingly. Take preventers such as Thompson's Organic Magnesium, sulphate, and zinc.

Good Health Premium Vision has selenium and Vit E and more.

Avoid eating antibiotic-fed poultry and grain-fed beef meat. The government plans to eliminate

animal fed antibiotics by 2045. I have already eliminated it.

Livestock associated 'methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus Antibiotic-resistant disease' took the lives of 23,000 Americans last year. USA beef is on sale in NZ supermarkets. Avoid it. Buy New Zealand pasture fed or organic meats. To find it, Google for 'Organic meat in New Zealand'. The size of organic eggs, poultry, vegetables, etc., are usually smaller, because they are not artificially force fed with superphosphate, etc. Check everything. No one can be trusted these days. If a product is larger suspect that it might not be organic. Muscle Testing finds them. See Human Health.

USA health specialist Dr. Mercola stated in his July 2015 newsletter that USA's first large-scale animal factories in the early 1970s, were confined to egg laying hens, but pork and beef producers soon followed. Today, most meat sold in USA (beef, pork, chicken, turkey, etc.) is grown in corporate-controlled systems using large-scale production and distribution, built around overcrowding, with the help of antibiotics to avoid bad health breakouts. By 1980, most chicken, pig, beef, and some dairying fast foods became the norm.

The world wants clover based pasture fed milk which good dairymen in New Zealand produce without urea, but Fonterra doesn't bother to promote it.

Budgeting? Dairy farmers must be fed up with budgeting and the work involved.

Ignorant politicians and publications galore tell farmers to budget. Have they tried to budget when there is nothing to budget with, because all goes in fixed charges and essentials.

When you first see a spreadsheet, it looks a bit bewildering, but after you start at the top you'll see how easy it is, just entering into the yellow cells.

However, if you don't measure it, you can't manage it, so might lose it. Use the appropriate budget spreadsheets. If you have not already bought the spreadsheets and can't afford the \$200 for the 50, click 'pay by cheque' and tell me and we'll fix it without you paying. This can't last forever because we have to pay a lot to the Webmaster to run the 400 chapters and send newsletters to 480 members and have just paid \$6,000 for a new website, and pay staff. Over the 20 years we have put in thousands of dollars in time and cash, and have not made a cent out of it because that was not our aim, but have got a lot of pleasure giving something back to NZ farmers who helped us when we came here from South Africa in 1954.

New Zealand has ridden on the sheep's backs, then the cows' backs and is now relying on beef animals, and tourism. Read below under Tourism which could help some farmers.

The 'Budget Dairy' and 'Budget Farm' are simple. See 'Read First' in Spreadsheets before proceeding. Start at the top left of each spreadsheet and work down. If you need help, ask your spouse, children, friend or accountant to do you a favour. Some accountants should have all the figures on their computer so should be able to do a budget for you fairly quickly. Get a quote.

Remember that bad risk businesses have to pay higher interest rates than safe ones, so you must make yours look professional, accurate and safe.

If you are dairying use 'Dairy cow numbers for max profit' first. It has been a main reason for massive profit increases because most dairy farmers milk about 20% too many cows. See 'Read before using spreadsheets' at the top of spreadsheets.

In Canada Smith Brothers were going broke milking 600 cows. They grew enough pasture for 300 and bought feed for 300. I said to sell 300 cows which reduced their mortgage.

Tourism

This has been claimed by some to be New Zealand's future overseas income earner, now that farmers' earning ability have decreased thanks to the bad Labour government in 2001 allowing USA to close the NZ Dairy Board, and set up the bad operation by Fonterra, and the bad National government for not fixing it.

Tourism in 2014 earned \$10 billion which is what dairying earned in a good year. 'Tourism New Zealand' the country's official tourism agency, is actively promoting the country as a destination. Recent promotion spending was NZ\$7 million/year just in China, so not much profit compared with farming earnings with no government costs, but income tax earnings.

The Waikato is the top tourism destination now, because of our many popular venues led by Hobbiton Middle Earth, and the Lord of the Rings film trilogies. Enjoy a fascinating two-hour guided tour in excellent rural scenery near Matamata. See www.hobbitontours.com Then there is Raglan for

good surfing, 'Hamilton Gardens' in Hamilton which some say are the world's best, Hamilton Zoo, bush walks, etc. I've spoken with Kiri the manager of Tourism who agreed that visiting farms to see cows, sheep, beef and deer grazing on pastures would be another 'Wow' for overseas visitors. This needs willing farmers to be open at any time. If you'd like to make some money, contact info@hamiltonwaikato.com or phone +64-7-843-0056. Your spouse may manage the tourist tours on your farm and area.

One of our members with Alpacas has tour buses calling almost weekly and paying a nice amount.

Grazinginfo History

The first person to join Grazinginfo.com was a Swiss, Wilfried Egli, who with his wife Nelly and daughter Silvia Fretz, are very good friends. He is a sheep farmer, the first to graze them in Switzerland and to make a major contribution to grazing and farming in Switzerland over about 50 years.

I met them because they were the Gallagher importer/distributors in Switzerland, who I visited twice a year as Gallagher Marketing Director. Auriel came with me on every third trip and we stayed with them, and in their holiday home once.

When telling Auriel that I was writing about them, she said, "Such nice people". Nelly took Auriel to their 'market' which impressed her.

Switzerland is a very organised country. Sitting in their train once, it started to moved off, but so quietly and smoothly, that looking out the window I thought there was an eathquake because I didn't think we were moving.

Swiss watches last. Wilfried gave me one 30 years ago and it is still like new. He also gave me a cowbell which is still like new. I use it for calling Auriel in our home where her office is 30 metres from mine, and she always comes smiling. We bought press button electronic ones which only lasted 13 months, so we gave them up and ring the lovely solid sounding Swiss one that has no batteries or parts to fail. In Switzerland they used to hang them on grazing cows necks before high power fencing controlled them and cows would go into the bush, and get lost without a bell.

It is interesting that the best Gallagher importer/distributors are farmers who started by using an electric fence and then imported and sold them. Hoorah for farmers.

Hoorah also for Switzerland, for being such a well organised country, keeping out of the Common Market, which is a failure, and making excellent things like thin sharp knives that cut anything, and last, and with the best rail service I know of, always on time with an excellent goods transport system.

Best wishes,
Vaughan Jones