

Hot news about health.

About a third of my farmer clients and nearly as many townie subscribers, have a health problem - some are serious. This is why I've written the 18 health chapters, some of which are now being read more than the farming chapters.

Many subscribers have Celiac disease (gluten intolerance), but don't know it. Glance at the Human Health chapters, especially Gluten and test yourself against bread. I wrote 'glance' because so many are not 'readers', but when they identify some of their health problems as caused by gluten, they'll read it all. Generally, the readers become successful farmers and people, while the nonreaders suffer. You'll see more on this under Farm Problems below.

New Zealander's problems

The weak policies of successive governments have run our country down. A radical change is needed.

Even our middle class families have financial problems - both work, fewer own homes, some have had to give up pets, reduce visits to doctors, dentists and hairdressers, eat cheaper food, and, worst of all, some are going hungry. None except the small wealthy group are able to save.

Admittedly one sees people on TV complaining about poverty while smoking, covered in tattoos and with untidy gardens, that could be growing vegetables, however, there are many doing things correctly, but suffering more than previously, proving that under recent governments, most people are worse off, and getting worse.

In 1954 aged 23 I left starving millions in Africa to come here to what was the most socially balanced country in the world, with 100% employed, so got a job on a dairy farm at \$60,000 pa equivalent with keep, the day after arriving, helping the owner on a 90 cow Katikati dairy farm. I applied for only one job and was the only applicant! The adjusted milk payout was \$14 per kg of milk solids. I hope someone from Fonterra is reading or will be told at the next meeting. Costs were a small fraction of today's.

In New Zealand there were no tramps or beggars, very few cripples, no hungry, few divorces, but many happy people, who discussed the weather more than politics. Now, government, local body inefficiencies and costs come up early in conversations.

The major difference was interest rates on homes and farms which were about 4% then. To protect lenders, borrowers had to have saved at least 20%, so there was none of this silly and dangerous 95% and higher lending that is happening again now. If borrowers couldn't save the 20%, how would they pay the interest?

No one knew what inflation was. Salaries of the poor were about a third of the top earners (now a thirtieth), and were sufficient to be comfortable and fully fed.

Borrowing interest rates in USA are now about 4%, UK, Japan and Switzerland 3%, and ours nearly 6%. How can this be justified.

The high interest rates of our major banks', all Australian owned, are skinning townies and ruining farmers. They are taking the profits of about \$10 billion a year to Australia. Why did our government sell BNZ, and Telecom, which is netting 10% (today's paper) for a shoddy service.

Solutions

The solution for our failing society is simple - 4% interest rates with a 20% deposit needed on loans and 75 cents to the US\$ fixed exchange rate. These would reverse the depression and the bankrupts yet to add to the hundreds. Crafars would not have failed.

Not many know that China has fixed a low exchange rate that favours their exporters, and reduces imports, so China thrives. We have the opposite.

Our high dollar is partly because New Zealand is a safe investment because our hard working farmers have made it so. The more who invest money here, the higher our exchange rate goes, and the less our exporters earn.

It is not always low wages that makes Chinese goods cheaper. A Hamilton company is now

manufacturing a plastic item back in Hamilton at a cost of just over one dollar each, instead of just under one dollar in China. Plastic moulding takes only one person to operate several machines, despite this, 90% of small plastic products are made in China. Their fixed low exchange rate initiative has created their colossal volume of sales. Our politicians have been hobnobbing with the Chinese for a decade and learned nothing.

Three years ago the three big Australian banks' profit was \$11 billion, most sent to Australia, which was the same as Fonterra's total export earnings in that year, so if dairy farmers have nightmares tonight after having worked their fingers to the bone for Australians, and the dairy farmers applying clusters to 700 or more cows twice a day, have their sore arms and shoulders, even sorer, we should sympathise.

A solution would be for farmers to have their own bank.

Not many know this, but our exchange rate is strong because of millions of dollars invested here to benefit from our high interest rates (and security). Because of this our exporters are losing, and because our big Australian banks can borrow at 3%, as much as they can lend, they are oozing profits which go to Australia.

No worries - for some

Most politicians are well-off with money in banks so they are happy with the high interest rates (compared with overseas) and the rich getting richer, and don't care about the poor becoming poorer, or companies not growing like they could. If all had 'international' borrowing interest rates, with 75 cents to the US\$ exchange rate, employment would increase. What is John Key waiting for? The next election is getting closer and there is a surprise coming.

If our government doesn't act soon, NZ could suffer the riots and destruction by the poor, that have occurred in some countries over the last few months. Note how aggressive the Auckland wharf workers have become. I'm not taking sides, but the last straw can force stronger action.

My wife and I don't borrow now, we lend, so none of the above is for anything except our caring for New Zealand which has been so good to us and our family. My CV Resume shows this in Free Items on <http://www.vaughanjones.info>

Farm Successes and Failures

A happy South Island subscriber (one of dozens NZ wide) phoned to thank us for our lime-plus information that he has used for three years, and to tell us that he and his sharemilker had each recently paid \$100,000 income tax, while an overstocked, urea and no lime using dairy farmer (not a GrazingInfo subscriber), had to sell two farms to be able to keep their original one.

Farmers are the biggest borrowers because of farms' high capital values, so borrowing at 4% would really improve their situation, however, as long as milk is over-produced and auctioned, most in bulk, the payout will be low. Over-production, which the high stockers and high supplement feeders, accentuate for little or no profit to themselves, also helps keep milk prices down. It takes only a 5% surplus to reduce prices.

When the ACT policies under the Labour government in the 1980s pushed interest rates up to 25%, we borrowed our \$250,000 mortgage from Switzerland at 5%. We could not have paid the interest of \$62,500 a year from a dry stock, or from any farm.

The solution is for farmers and earners of overseas exchange to have their own bank and lend to the earners at 4% from their \$14 billion that farming brings into New Zealand every year, and from the low interest countries seeking investments at 3%. See Bank for Farmers in Free Items.

Solutions

I have always sought solutions, so came to New Zealand at age 23 and wanted my own farm, but could only afford peat, but was advised against it by previous employers, and was told that I'd go broke as peat farmers were at the time. I researched peat and found peat farmers were not doing what Dutch immigrant MAF researcher Frank van der Elst had proved. There's a lot of peat well farmed in Holland.

I bought a peat runoff in 1955, moved on an ex ministry of works cottage, built a milking shed, won the most improved dairy farmer in 1959 and put on a 50% sharemilker and retired in 1966. In 1958 we built a new three bedroom Lockwood house out of income - without borrowing, and in 1964 moved on a Keith Hay two bedroom house for our sharemilker, again from income without borrowing, and

bought an adjoining 29 ha without borrowing - easy at \$14 per kg of MS. My consulting and contracting helped.

I've helped many farmers (hundreds) and companies (14) succeed since 1960, as shown in my CV Resume on my web site <http://www.vaughanjones.info> under Free Items.

Now I want all New Zealand to succeed. In a nutshell, this means by stopping the rich fleecing the rest and by increasing exports - of all products, not just from farms.

Some will say that 4% interest will cause inflation, but it didn't in the 1950s, it helped the development of new pumice and peat farms which needed capital and it helped New Zealand's growth like we've not seen since. The current actual inflation rate is higher than promoted. Ask any farmer or housewife.

New Zealand has developed a society of wealthy fat pigs running the country with rules that support themselves. I call them pigs, because they have their snouts in the troughs.

Examples are the organisations that set the salaries of the chief executive officers (CEOs) based on the number of staff under them. This causes CEOs to do everything possible to grow their organisation and create situations that require more departments and so more staff. The government currently combining departments proves this happened. The growth of Environment Waikato, now Waikato Regional Council, which has grown from a few dozen to 365 staff is another example.

In my milking days the free MAF shed inspector checked effluent and said to me, "Let's look at your drain system." We walked to the end and he suggested raising the last stop by a foot in case of heavy rain." I agreed and we walked back chatting like old friends. I feel sad about today's arrogant council staff who take it out on all, because of a few.

Must have some farming news

Eight tonnes of lime-plus per hectare and some chisel ploughing changed a drought affected hill farm to springs running again cleanly, and less runoff from the thick dense pastures. I wanted to get the council to come and see what good farming does, but the farmer nearly had a fit in case the inspector found a fault in his effluent system, which in all fairness to him, can occur on hills with the old ratchet spreaders stalling, etc.

A new subscriber wrote, "Applied 2,500 kg of lime without trace elements as I didn't find your website till after it had been applied. Took pasture samples on 2nd March and did a small lime-plus trial at 6,000 kg/ha and definitely have more worms 20+."

Earthworms are far better indicators of the need for lime than pH, which can be completely inaccurate. Read Soils > Earthworms. The aluminium figure is also a more accurate measure of the need for calcium than pH. Read Elements > Aluminium.

One farmer had a paddock that had close to optimum pasture mineral levels (those that affect growth), but it was a slow grower. Its low N level confirmed it. The very high aluminium level of 418 proved that ryegrass would not be going down, so lime-plus was needed.

Lime without its synergisms is inefficient so less productive and will not increase pasture production by up to 200% as done by most of the trials using lime-plus that I've done.

Dozens who applied adequate lime-plus in spring and early summer increased earthworms and reduced facial eczema spore breeding thatch within a month, so saved the costs of zinc and the lowering of selenium and copper in the whole herd, that is caused by feeding facial eczema levels of zinc. I love telling that we had no facial eczema from 1958 until 1987 when we sold our last farm, used no zinc, but applied optimum lime-plus.

Measure your cow's blood levels soon and copper levels in livers. Read the Blood spreadsheet first.

Frequent questions from subscribers and consultants -

1. Penny Royal has increased this year especially on our place. Have you a biological way of getting rid of it.

"Yes, optimum rates of agricultural lime and its synergisms will get rid of it, and after a few more applications, buttercup and other weeds will decrease. In all cases drainage needs to be adequate. See Weeds."

2. Why does pasture not grow well in some parts.

“Reasons include; strong gusts of wind while spreading*, uneven spreading as seen on other than square or rectangular paddocks, shallow topsoil areas, and a lack of sufficient soil nutrients so poorer areas show deficiencies first.”

These poor areas are good to use for lime-plus trials at four or five tonnes per hectare. If it rains, check it a week later and you'll see how it can beat nitrogen of any kind. Then check it before and after grazing. Before, because animals graze areas fertilised with lime, boron and salt shorter.

* Lime is usually very dry and fine so blows easily. Adding 50 kg per hectare of coarse agricultural salt makes the lime damper because salt absorbs moisture and reduces blowing.

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