

Testimonials - General

1. Dr Koos Baars ex Ruakura 1995.

I have known Vaughan Jones since 1985 when I was at Ruakura Agricultural Research Centre and tested the electronic PastureGauge© he had helped invent and develop. After I was made redundant in 1994 Vaughan helped me get started in agricultural consulting and article writing for the agricultural media.

I found that his knowledge of soils (peat in particular), pastures, animals and how to profit from farming, was far ahead of most others. I later learned that Vaughan led the field in many things such as-

At the Dairy Research Corporation field day in March 2000 at Ruakura, they, for the first time, recommended 14 t/ha when establishing pastures on raw virgin peat in Manuka. Vaughan had been applying and recommending this rate since 1958. This increased earthworms which eliminated thatch on which the facial eczema spores breed, so from 1960 he had no facial eczema on his two farms, while neighbours did. See Animal Health > Facial Eczema.

In about 1985 he identified that black muck (caused by blood) around pin bones was a symptom of coccidiosis and a cause of many weaned calves not growing as they should.

Some veterinarians did tests and disputed that it was coccidiosis, but treatment for it fixed them. Some vets later acknowledged this.

The financial benefits of off farm investments, to my knowledge not promoted by anyone else.

For several decades he encouraged Ruakura to do their trials on an equal cost and “profit made” basis, not solely on maximum production. Ruakura director John Penno was the first to sometimes do this, but then got the CEO position for Synlait dairy company.

In 1984 when Vaughan’s young stock were not thriving he developed a soluble nine mineral mix he called Solmin. After proving it over three years, he sold the formula to DeLaval who sold a thousands tonnes a year to New Zealand farmers. Vaughan gets no royalty. Vets have since convinced DeLaval to not add salt to the mix now called Solminix because it improves animal health so much that vets loose work.

Solmin has been analysed and copied by companies in New Zealand and USA. Feeding it through an on-line dispenser he helped invent they found that calves grew faster and needed less or no worm drenching. Read Worm Drenching and Resistance.

A far better all plastic dispenser with no moving parts is now made by Cook & Galloway, 5 Belfast Pl, Frankton, Hamilton 3204. 07-847 7583.

His son-in-law and daughter Ian and Sue Dobbs reared 160 beef calves each year and divided them in two to use 80 as a control. Drench resistance was mostly caused by unnecessary drenching and mineral deficiencies which can cause slow growth and scouring by a deficiency of copper and selenium. This eBook gives a full description of and prevention of drench resistance.

From our first meeting I found that I could ask him questions on a wide variety of agricultural topics and get answers which he had thoroughly researched and usually tested and proved on his farm and/or many of his several hundred farmer clients’ properties.

One example was in 1993 when I asked him where his information on leaching caused by superphosphate came from. He faxed the following to me.

“In 1964 Hogg and Cooper found that mixing superphosphate and potassium chloride (called Potassic Super) markedly increased potassium leaching. He added, “Why has this not been publicised”.

“In 1984 Steele and others found increased losses of nitrates after applying nitrogen, associated with increased leaching of calcium, magnesium, sodium and potassium.

“In 1991 Heng and others from Massey University found much the same. Their Department of Soil Science measured the leaching of nitrogen, potassium, calcium, sulphur, magnesium, sodium and chlorine in two trials. They used field tiles so they could measure the drainage water before it entered the main drain. In a two year trial, on a low fixation sulphur soil, they found that leaching of these elements was an average of 38% higher with superphosphate than with elemental sulphur and reactive phosphate (RP).

“The application of the 50 kg of sulphate in 450 kg/ha of single superphosphate in early winter gave a five times increase in leaching. “These results agree with the field observations of Gregg and Goh in 1978 and with Smith in 1983, who found an increase in leaching after applying single superphosphate.

“The first autumn rains gave the greatest increase in nitrate leaching, because levels had built up over summer. “The scientists recommended that where sulphur was required, elemental sulphur and

reactive phosphate be used.”

End of fax.

While in his office, going by the many phone calls I've heard him answer during downturns, it takes pain before some farmers seek help. The phone conversations would start, “My production is not increasing,” or “My perennial ryegrass is pulling,” or “Bloat is a nightmare,” or “Your client next door to me has no animal health problems,” or “I have 10% empties, but your client down the road has only 3%, can you help me.”

When he ran field days on his clients' farms or on the 20 ha Gallagher Demonstration Peat Farm on Kahikatea Drive, Hamilton, which he developed and ran, he would get up to a hundred attend, with a minimum or no advertising - just from his newsletters and word of mouth.

Vaughan spent his working life farming and in its industries, and since 1960 helped farmers to improve their peat. For decades he has been recognised as an expert in developing, managing and fertilising peat.

He has always been sure of his information and when necessary to get the message across, is forceful. With his thorough knowledge, wide reading, lateral thinking and hundreds of on farm trials, he was often well ahead of his time. He has addressed thousands of farmers and consultants in New Zealand and overseas.

He is well aware that any farm is a system with many interactions dependent on each other, so he realised the importance of balanced fertiliser mixes with all necessary major and trace elements for the health of soil, plants and animals. In this he was years ahead of his time when most farmers only applied 15% or 30% potassic super to their farms. He found that no K was necessary for years and then 5% K was ample because he never applied water soluble S. Since 1960 he has helped many farmers change their fertiliser policies with tremendous success. His messages were spread through his promotion of the Fieldays (when he managed it and for a decade) annual Farmer of the Year contests run by NZ Fieldays and with many farming articles in New Zealand and overseas publications.

During the 80's he was a regular speaker at Stockman Grass Farmer conferences across America, each attended by up to 500 farmers. He introduced New Zealand farm equipment to North America and other countries and arranged ongoing sales earning large amounts of overseas exchange annually.

Then Vaughan contributed extensively to graze-l, the international discussion group on grazing on the Internet which Taranaki Polytech ran, but closed it after the organiser left. Vaughan then started his GrazingInfo eBook which most types of farmers, lifestylers and all people, will benefit from tremendously. He sends regular newsletters to his 480 members at no costs to them.

Some of our laboratories have acknowledged that soil testing peat has problems because of the lightness and variations in peat densities, but as I have written, soil tests from mineral soils are not much better. The trouble is that until farmers take pure ryegrass samples and compare them with soil samples and what is actually happening on their farms, they don't learn.

Thank you Vaughan.

2. Bob Gjerdingen.

Though I no longer receive Graze-L, someone recently forwarded me a copy of a posting where a person from a small town in Minnesota suggested that I should stop whining about Graze-L, get off the list, and "get real".

Everyone is entitled to their opinion. But just as bad money drives out good money, so does uncivil shouting drive out polite and respectful conversation. Some of the more recent members of this list might be surprised to know that in Graze-L's early days we sent in "member profiles." We got to know a little about each other, and maybe for that reason we tended to shout less and converse more. I smiled when I recently saw someone on the list refer to Vaughan as a "prima donna". What else would be a proper title for one of the greatest grazing consultants in the last 40 years? In my opinion, this list has been fortunate to have his input, and I have saved many of his postings, which represent a lifetime of experience on several continents. I have a similar respect for many of the other agricultural specialists who have contributed to the conversations.

3. Hadley Falconer. 7 March 2010.

Ivan Forlong, owner of Forlong's Furnishing suggested I use you after you saved him \$30,000 on his peat farm.

After six months on GrazingInfo and one consulting visit by you, the improvement in our farm is outstanding.

4. Phil Taylor, Ngaroma.

Some of our laboratories acknowledge that soil testing peat has problems because of the lightness and variations in peat densities, but, as I have written, results from mineral soils are not much better. The following example from a good and astute farmer shows this. The trouble is that until farmers take pasture samples and compare them with soil samples and what is actually happening on their farms, they don't realise this. Sheep and beef farmer Phil Taylor on 311 ha in 160 paddocks at Ngaroma, wrote

Graze-L, a world-wide Internet forum of 1,000 grazing farmers.

Vaughan Jones, I explained my problems. He visited our farm, saw the thatch, Yorkshire fog, small and few clovers and animal health problems, took pasture samples and recommended lime. \$15,000 dollars worth went on. The fertiliser recommended was no more expensive than previously. After two years of applications based on Sechura, animal health problems almost ceased, earthworm activity increased, dung patches disappeared quickly, grazing was much more even, thatch started disappearing, roots penetrated the soil to 225 mm or more, contrasting green urine and dung patches in the early spring don't show up because all is greener, and without the use of N. Clovers are making more N, giving the whole farm a green look which makes it stand out. During the 3 years of the beef downturn I have not applied any fertiliser, and yet I still have 17 su per ha, and everything goes away prime, cattle in 18 months (except for a handful) and lambs at around 17 kg. Feeding soluble mineral mixes through the drinking water has helped with the animal health, growth and finishing. All elements, including manganese, which used to be toxically high (385 ppm caused by low calcium and using Serpentine Super), are now in the medium to high level and balanced, according to recent pasture and soil tests I took out of interest. How can this be happening with no fertiliser for two years?

The conclusions I have come to that soil tests are not to be believed and there has been a catalytic response from Vaughan's balanced fertiliser recommendations. Pastures were mostly Yorkshire fog. Now there is more ryegrass and clover. The mixes varied slightly each year, depending on the pasture analyses, and were about 450 kg/ha in total, based on Sechura: 0 N, 54 P, 0 K, 31 Elemental S (6 kg of this was in the Sechura), 1 Mg (in Sechura), 135 Calcium carbonate (in Sechura), 32 salt (half in the Sechura), 6 borax, 0.4 kg cobalt, and 0.5 kg of Selcote Ultra, all per ha. Vaughan Jones is a very well respected consultant here and overseas. I and a number of farmers have made a large amount of money using his advice.

5. B. Rateaver.

All I can say Vaughan about your reply to the member is WOW!

If only I knew as much as you do, oh, oh, oh, how happy I would be.

I don't know how you can be so constantly kind by answering graze-l questions. They all know you are an authority. People like xx are no doubt young and haven't had time to learn all the millions of things you know, or probably she could never learn all.

6. Jon Gammon.

Vaughan, most folks actually read what you write rather than key in on certain lines. What you wrote was right on the mark and appreciated by many. In this world of artificial courtesy and not disagreeing with anything, it is refreshing to see someone have a realistic and well founded thought.

7. Joe Gillson, ex Eshowe South Africa, 1775 Longbeach Road, RD 4, Ashburton.

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today, and for doing the great work of creating and adding to your Grazinginfo.com web site. I have found it a place to find in depth and extensive clarity on many topics. With all the contradictions around and almost thoughtless actions on farms, your information has always brought light, clarity and most of all, sense to many issues.

Thank you again for your great effort, NZ farming is richer thanks to you.

8. Phyllis Tichinin, Hawkes Bay, NZ.

It was reaffirming speaking with you about your lifelong campaign to regenerate agriculture into something that truly produces balanced soils, healthy plants and animals...there is a long way to go but you're a tremendous inspiration.

9. Nick Speirs, Scotland.

I have read your replies to many a question and I have much respect for your answers as you seem to have experience on a wide front!

I asked once concerning the use of Urea or DAP to help spring growth, I was impressed by your answer, I was a learning NZ Herd manager in 1995 with a farmer who used too much superphosphate with its high sulphur levels, as well as urea and DAP, so he suffered at the hands of bloat. I look forward to at least a meeting, if not to use your services when I get there.

10. Dr Tone Vidrih, Biotechnical Faculty, Agronomy Department, Slovenia.

I told you already before about how much I profited from your information and all the knowledge that I got from you when you were here in Slovenia and I am really sorry that our farmers do not use more grazing to profit more from what you are telling. Farmers here still remember you well after your seminar for them.

11. Carlos E. Batallas, M.Sc.Ruminant Nutrition & Management, Quito, Ecuador.

I always thought you were an example of generosity and wisdom to all learning and "expert" graziers. Every time I read your messages I learnt something. For that I'm grateful.

12. Anon.

We wish to congratulate you on your valued information that you so readily pass on to so many farmers. It is a great service that you perform. The reports that we have been receiving back about the organic dairy industry, are that it is very fragmented, and unorganised, with no cohesion to take the industry forward. This is because nobody will agree on anything, and cannot look at the big picture. As an industry trying to gain financial support to move forward, it would not surprise me, if the funding was reduced. Everyone has their own ideas, and each is valuable to them and someone else. We wish you and your business, all the best. We have to survive and through your help, I'm sure others are surviving very well. Well done and thank you.

13. Bruce D, NZ.

Thank you for all your advice on fertiliser and animal health. I put 30 tons of the LimeMagPlus mix on end of June. Great looking lime. I have read your recommended books - More Food--Tiedjens, Pleasant Valley and now into Louis Bromfield's Malabar Farm.

I am looking forward to putting the rest of the lime mix on as it makes sense after reading these books and what you have said.

14. Warren Beck.

Every thing going well on the farm at the moment thanks. Keep writing the newsletters they are about the only thing I read at the moment that relates to what is happening and needed on our farm.

15. Bill R. August 2015.

I looked at your website. It should be compulsory reading for every young farmer before they get brainwashed by the "mainstream".

16. Joe Gillson, Ashburton, NZ. 20 October 2009

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