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Newsletter 106 13 December 2013

Last month we commented on fine limes, fast release products (note most are not **proper** fertilisers), etc. These don't save money in the long run, and money is better spent on proven limes and fertilisers, even if some products are said to be faster and cheaper, to be more expensive.

Over the years I've compared most, on an equal cost basis, and some fine limes and ones claiming faster availability, shows no real benefits. Some can be faster, but need several applications a year by helicopter operators who make a lot out of it, but the farmer pays and loses.

One farmer spent \$37,000 to do most of his hill country farm by air. He got almost no response, but should have because the farm was very low in calcium. Three tonnes per hectare of LimeMagPlus applied a year later gave an excellent response and has lasted. None of the claimed to be 'fast' products last long.

Never do large areas with any new product, because it could cost a lot for no return. Do an equal-cost trial in one or two paddocks. Sales people and farm consultants can be very convincing, but every farm is different, and it is your money, which once paid, can never be returned, except in pasture growth and animal profit. Calcium and phosphorus are your most important items, and often your highest annual expenditure of your 'left over' (sometimes called 'discretionary') money. It should be your first investment, so watch carefully for the profits you are getting from each one.

Introducing Consultant Jane Cullinane

GrazingInfo.com, now with 470 subscribers, has grown much larger than any one person can handle, which is the cause of me being up to 200 emails behind. Over the years, I have helped eight consultants learn about promoting and using GrazingInfo, but none were prepared to do it without also selling money-making items to clients like commercial fertilisers with a \$12 commission, and not sticking to the honesty of GrazingInfo. See Expensive Products below.

Recently, my health has been suffering from working 15 hours a day most days of the week for four years now. This was part of the reason for my getting attacked by shingles recently.

Over the past three months, Jane has been assisting me in the office and on the website. She is the first one who has reduced my workload, helped me positively, done things we were way behind with and added to the good features of GrazingInfo, and generally made me feel much more relaxed. She helps me achieve things.

While learning the ropes of agricultural consulting and the use of spreadsheets rapidly, Jane is making me feel positive about the future of GrazingInfo, in case something happened to me.

She is already answering some emails, and her email is jane@grazinginfo.com. Please email her if you have administrative or other questions.

Spreadsheets' names and improvements

We have changed the name of Lime Nutrient Planner to Calcium Nutrient Planner and simplified the instructions how to use it. This was because lime is a generic term, and Calcium is specific. Use it where Ca is low and P is not so low.

We have also changed the name of Fertiliser Nutrient Planner to Phosphorus Nutrient Planner and made it easier to use. Again, "fertiliser" is a generic term, and this spreadsheet is for use where P is low and Ca is not so low. Instructions on how to enter your details is on both.

Please note that in some Chapters in GrazingInfo, we may still refer to "Lime" Nutrient Planner and "Fertiliser" Nutrient Planner, but these will be found in Spreadsheets under their new names.

We have also added new excel spreadsheets, Pasture Sowing Recommendations and Pasture

Mineral Analysis. Those who have access to spreadsheets (for a one off payment of \$230 including GST - to be increased from January 2014 to \$345 including GST) can check out the above changes.

Farm sizes

The percentage of family farms, with their cheap and sometimes free staff, is declining with the increase of large corporate farms with their 100% paid staff. Not having free labour makes these large farms less profitable, so they have to be more efficient in all respects. Increasing profitability is made by using pasture analyses to get accurate levels of which minerals your stock are actually eating, with which to work, and using them to tailor your fertiliser. More than 90% of our new client farms are low in calcium, and high in P and K, sometimes adversely affecting pasture production and animal health, and therefore their production, and the farm's profits. Correcting these is a major profit-maker, using our spreadsheets. Look at the two updated spreadsheets above and see how easy it is to enter your information in the yellow cells, by getting information from your pasture analysis. Email us your pasture analysis with your suggested application rates entered on the spreadsheets, and we will check them.

Kiwifruit & PSA

I'd like to contact a Waikato Kiwifruit grower, who has PSA adversely affecting their vines, to try a natural, good farming preventative control. I was corresponding with one Kiwifruit grower and going well when he cut off communication, because he had a Kiwifruit variety that he thought would not be affected by PSA, and wanted to sell plants, so didn't want to help me help those with affected plants! Sad.

Some NZ dairy farmers are also like that, so keep GrazingInfo information to themselves and don't encourage others to join. They know that when NZ milk production increases the payout drops, because of Fonterra's auction system, which allows buyers to set the purchase price.

Dairying

Fonterra, since its beginning, has made mistakes galore, making dairying a worry, and it is getting worse. The NZ Dairy Board payout in 1950/60 was \$14 per kg of milk solids (adjusted) and dairy farmer costs then were a fraction of today's, and the share price was \$1.

The New Zealand average herd size was 60, which is the number we milked in 1958. It allowed us to buy an unpainted three bedroom Lockwood home for cash (no borrowing). Auriel painted it. Five years later with 100 cows we bought a Keith Hay two bedroom home for our sharemilker, for cash, having also bought an adjacent 30 ha also for cash - no borrowing. After winning the NZ Dairy Board most improved dairy farmer in the Waikato award in 1959, we did some consulting, contracting, exclusive agricultural equipment inventing, and manufacturing, until the demand was too great for us to cope. Manufacturers then made and sold them with commissions for us, but the milk income was far greater than today.

One hundred cows could pay for three high school children going through boarding school. I must point out, though, that school fees then were a fraction of what it costs today.

While dairy farmer profits have dropped, the Fonterra manager gets \$4 m, 15 employees at least \$1 m, and 70 get more than \$500,000 a year, when they, unlike the farmer, have nothing invested.

Milk whey powder

Farms have been ruined by applying whey powder and other waste milk products. When applied first, it appears to be quite effective for the first two years. But after a few years, the ground becomes so hard that one can't push a tread-in into the ground.

To spread it over a number of farms on a rotating basis, once very three or four years, is a good system of disposing it, helping both farmers and the dairy companies. Some dairy companies have had difficulty in disposing of their waste products, while some are charging farmers exorbitant prices for it.

As to the pasture glut last spring, we know that after droughts, grass grows faster as all the minerals etc., have been stored up and are released after rain come.

Some people have become quite sick after eating commercial whey powder in different forms. Heavy metals remain in the solids of many products, as they do in whey powder. Fonterra should know these things.

If protein powder is needed, Thompson's Pea Powder protein, with Compatibility 80 (Good) Hg 0, Cd 0, Pb 0, Mn 2. The Mn shows grown in New Zealand in our high Mn soils.

Artificial nitrogen - e.g., urea

This is a sensitive topic to write about, because most farmers are set in their ways regarding it.

Those who have plenty of healthy productive legumes in 'live' soils usually don't need urea, which they know is like a drug, once started, has to be continued.

All those with ample clovers know that applying N will decrease the clovers and increase farm costs, decrease earthworms (which means increase facial eczema) and in some cases increase underground water pollution.

I see many farms in the Waikato that have almost no clover now, because of applying urea for years, and applying almost no lime, with its needed synergisms, called LimeMagPlus.

One dairy farmer near Gordonton in the 1970s applied so much urea, at the advice of a private consultant and MAF, that his bore water became high in nitrates causing his sharemilking son and family to become unwell. His son's family wanted him to stop, but he and his farm consultant didn't, so the son left the farm.

The owner later became unwell with Parkinson's disease and died younger than normal. I warned about it then in *The Dairyman*, but got no support.

Now many bore waters in New Zealand are suffering from high nitrates, making them unsuitable for human consumption. Get your bore water tested, to protect you and your family.

Kaiapoi water from Canterbury is excellent and is available from some supermarkets, sold as "NZ natural", bottled at source. Even if your water has as little as 1 ppm of Hg, Cd, etc., it does much more damage to someone drinking water all day, than the same amount in a vitamin supplement capsule (see > Mercury in Humans).

Farm bore waters and town waters are usually high in toxic elements, usually manganese and nitrates on New Zealand farms and Hg and other heavy metals in town supplies. Some save their roof water carefully for drinking. It is best to wait until it has been raining heavily for half an hour to wash away bird droppings, petrol and other contaminants from your roof and guttering, then begin collecting the water. Most of these contain a little N from bird droppings and a bit of Zn from galvanised roofing, neither of which are harmful.

Human Health & Supplements

Good Health Premium Vision (Comp 95 Hg 0, Cd 0, Mn 0, Pb 0) is the best supplement we have ever taken, getting our selenium up to 1,200 nmol.

It has Bilberry for improved vision, grape seed as an antioxidant, ginkgo biloba leaf, beta carotene, lutein, Vit C, Vit E, copper gluconate, chromium, selenium and zinc. It is possibly not enough zinc for those that have copper piping in older homes suppressing zinc uptake, or the high copper from some Maple syrups.

Good Health Premium has no Magnesium or Boron because both are too bulky, so need separate tablets. We take Good Health Mg Ultra (Mg Phosphate, Amino Acid Chelate, Citrate, Aspartate) and now Pure Boron glycerinate, which has no heavy metals, from some chemists or from Chris Rhodes. See Human Health Specialists.

We used to take Radiance Boron Picolinate capsules, but it went from low heavy metals in 2012 (Comp 70, Hg 4, Cd 2, Mn 3) to Comp 55, Hg 15, Cd 20 in 2013 - far too high. Now we changed to Organic Virgin Coconut oil from Philippines (Comp 80, Hg 0, Cd 0, Mn 0), which is low in cholesterol and has 90 ppm of boron and 90 ppm of selenium. A level teaspoon once a day should be enough. A desert spoon once a day pushed my selenium three times too high (3,000 nmol), but we grow 90% of our vegetables fertilised with Selcote Ultra and OrganiBOR, so get a lot of selenium from that source, too.

Many people suffer from arthritis and osteoarthritis because doctors work on treatment rather than prevention, they don't know about the good effects that boron has on these two joint problems. We must also remember that selenium helps muscles that are all around joint, supporting them, and needs to be taken if necessary.

Some countries, like the Philippines, Senegal and part of North America as well as other countries have adequate boron and selenium, in which case more should NOT be taken.

At 82, we also take Thompson's Vit B6, Vit D, and Good Health Krill Oil, all with no or low heavy metal levels. Younger people may not need them.

Learning

If you live in the area covered by the Waikato Times and don't get it, you should. It gives excellent coverage of farming. See <http://www.stuff.co.nz/> and click Waikato Times, Farming.

Accommodation

Accommodation in Hamilton for visiting here, or friends coming is on River Road at Little Lodge B&B. \$85 a night for single. More than 2 nights - \$80 or \$125 per night for 2. More than 2 nights \$120. 07-855-6433, littlelodge@xtra.co.nz www.littlelodge.net.nz

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2014 Payments

Please remember this is your last chance to pay subscriptions for the 2014 year at the current \$57.50 will take you to the end of 2014. Unfortunately, with costs and added administration, we will be increasing this from January and paid up only subscribers will get access. Payment details above. Thank you for supporting GrazingInfo.

Best wishes,
Vaughan Jones
GrazingInfo Ltd