

Newsletter 138

8 April 2016

Facial Eczema this summer has been the worst for some.

PLEASE answer the following and reply to us at support@grazinginfo.com Thanks.

If you applied LimePlus at 5 tonnes or more per hectare every year since 2014, have you had any Facial Eczema this 2015/16 summer?

YES?NO

We never used zinc and never had Facial Eczema on our two farms (Piako Road, Gordonton from 1959 until 1984) and then Greenhill Road, Hamilton, until 1987), while neighbours did, on Greenhill Road one had 18 affected in their back paddock, simply because we applied the correct amount of LimePlus.

In March 1987 three Ruakura scientists came to our Greenhill Road farm, only 3 km from theirs, and from our hill, claimed that our farm had had rain because it was green while Ruakura was brown. I pointed out that our two neighbours were brown and buttercup covered.

They asked what we had done. "Spread agricultural lime and earthworms were the main reasons". On one paddock the earthworms had spread only half way across it, so they claimed that the greener part was a better soil type, when all was peat. We walked across to the greener part which had ten times more earthworms which were Calignosas, the animal manure eaters. The 'scientists' didn't say a word, and never publicised it then or since, which is a typical 'Not invented by us' disgraceful syndrome. It has lost animal farmers millions of dollars collectively, and caused Facial Eczema suffering, bad enough for prosecution.

Earthworms eat the thatch on which Facial Eczema spores breed, so none is left to feed the spores.

In the 1930's there was a bad outbreak of Facial Eczema in the Waikato, so the government asked Ruakura to fix it, with no limit on the cost. Typically they looked for treatment, rather than elimination, but didn't succeed, while Gladys Reid discovered zinc. At agricultural university in 1946/7 I was taught prevention which I used pre 1959 when we won the NZ Dairy Board's 'Most Improved Dairy Farm' in the Waikato award, thanks mainly to adequate lime and magnesium preventing milk fever. Applying more than others did helped my wife, Auriel, and me discover that some of the scouring that ruminants suffered in New Zealand, but not in South Africa, was from our high manganese, low selenium and cobalt, which humus in neutral soils hold.

Please reply re your Facial Eczema.

Best wishes,
Vaughan Jones
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