Newsletter 47
9 August 2011

Apologies for the lack of newsletters, but updating the web site has taken a lot of time, and is still not finished. Also I get so many urgent requests for help with animals sick or dying mostly from mineral deficiencies, especially from USA, where my influence to change from confinement to grazing, continues to grow. Unfortunately, pasture mineral analysing for correct fertilising, and mineral supplementing in the drinking water, are hardly done, outside of NZ.

Changing dairy farmers to grazing in North America increases their profit, but decreases their production, which reduces surpluses, which is good for New Zealand.

99% of NZ farmers fertilise pastures with lime, minerals and trace elements at least annually, while very few do so to pastures in other countries, so they get sick animals. Some have ad-lib minerals which are useless. In the drinking water is the only successful method. Sheep don't drink much so need perfect fertilising. Some are trying spraying on Feedtech at 0.006% of the animal weight per day. Please let

The first two Peat Chapters under Soils, are at last in order. Two more are being worked on. Apologies for the delay.

I need a dozen top, capable, honest, enthusiastic, caring-for-farmers, devoted, thorough consultants, throughout NZ who must be - repeat HONEST - a dying breed today. There are too many selling sand, coal dust, etc., at high prices to gullible farmers, who have subsoil on their farm that can do a lot better job because there is a lot more to bring up and mix in their depleted soils more cheaply. See Soils > Cultivation.

Increasing winter pasture growth

Urea hardly ever gives the most profitable return on soils that are deficient in calcium, sulphur and boron, and seldom does in the cold of winter. Ammo and a few new liquid nitrogen fertilisers can give better growth than urea, especially if S is low, which it will be after the rain most in NZ have had, and if elemental S was not applied at sowing new pastures. N needs S to work.

LimeMag

This is a finely ground soft lime with serpentine (magnesium silicate and trace elements) from Rorisons who mix elements with their lime. See how Calcium (Ca), boron and deficient trace elements at 3,000 kg per hectare or more, can grow a lot more clover based pasture even in winter than urea does on soils deficient in these more important elements. Don't apply it on pastures to be grazed before calving, but grazing them the day after calving will give good results with controlling milk fever, and healthy milking cows and young animals, which need optimum calcium levels of 0.8% Ca in ryegrass to grow.

Do a comparative farm pasture trial with an equal cost of LimeMag and deficient elements, against plain lime, and you will never go back to plain lime. Lime is a fertiliser, so use the Lime Nutrient Planner spreadsheet and add the deficient minerals, and you'll get the best out of the lime. The Lime Nutrient Planner is far better than Overseer, which doesn't allow for trace elements.

Most soils in most of Japan, across most of North America, New Zealand, and wet areas of Australia, are low in calcium, sulphur, boron, magnesium, selenium (except dry arid areas of North America where selenium is high, and some other elements).

The Pasture Mineral Records spreadsheet is attached. Entering your pasture analyses figures into it will allow you to monitor trends and correct them. You'll see very quick increases in pasture yields following applications, something you won't see in soil tests, because they take longer to have any effect.

Soils that have not had the correct amounts of lime for decades, which is much of New Zealand, have given pasture and crop growth that farmers can't believe, so some phone and ask if the increased growth that they are getting is possible from just lime and its synergies. It sure is.

New pastures

These should have got Ammo, or a better nitrogen if you know of one, about six weeks from sowing, and every six weeks thereafter. If not, ryegrasses and other grasses will die. If farming organically, apply poultry manure every four weeks, and make sure that the soil has plenty of lime, serpentine and boron, to get the best out of the poultry manure.

For soils, pastures and these supplements to do their best, soils need more than 30 earthworms per spade spit.

Planning and Budgeting

Whenever you have a bit of time, it is good to plan and/or update your 12 month schedule for everything, and do your long term plans for your farm and yourself.

If your profit is not increasing on average every year, look for ways to do so. LimeMag and trace elements rather than P and K, both usually high in most NZ soils, is one way. Read Calcium and Beef. Another is off-farm investing, which solved our decline in profit from 1987, and has saved many from going backwards or bankrupt. Also see Buying Investment Properties in GrazingInfo.

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