

We appreciate those who email us kind comments after receiving our newsletters. One wrote -

“Everything is going well on the farm at the moment. Please keep writing the newsletters. They are about the only thing I read at the moment that relates to what is happening on our farm.”

A new subscriber who joined this week, answered why she joined by saying, “Pure frustration from false advice.”

MORE SUBSCRIBERS PLEASE

Can all of you please encourage more to join <http://www.grazinginfo.com>

I know that it is \$30 out of discretionary money which is zero, but GrazingInfo can save and/or make a hundred times that - if read and used.

While on the topic, our thanks go to the colossal number of four (4) who have donated so far, which represents the subscriptions of 43 new subscribers.

Dairy farmers who are milking too many cows (that's most in NZ) and/or feeding too much bought feed, who join GrazingInfo, and use 'Dairy cow numbers for max profit', will usually reduce their cow numbers and produce less milk for more profit. If all NZ dairy farmers did this, they, Fonterra, New Zealand and the world, would be better off. Excess production is most New Zealand farmers' biggest mistake, often caused by Fonterra and their likes chasing all types of farmers for more of whatever they produce.

DAIRY FARMERS, INCREASE YOUR PROFIT AND ENJOY YOUR FARMING

Smith brothers in Vancouver Island, Canada, were going bankrupt so paid for me to go to their 600 cow dairy farm that had a 12 a side herringbone (swing over) dairy. Brad and Melody Cowan in coastal Oregon USA, who I had helped, recommended me. Smiths grew pasture enough for 300, so had to buy enough for the other 300, which I said to sell. They reduced their mortgage and dismissed one staff member. Their profit returned and they farmed happily there after.

Lincoln University has at last published information to show that fewer cows can give more profit, because the improved genetics are able to perform to produce more milk per correctly fed cow, which cows can't if not well fed. See the 'Grazing 40% Rule' spreadsheet.

Dairy farmers in other countries dislike Fonterra and NZ dairy farmers for producing too much milk and lowering international milk prices. Check the payout and production figures over the years and you'll see how price effects bought production. In marketing it is known that 5% excess production reduces prices, and 5% under production increases prices. It becomes a double ended sword because the exchange rate rises after any increased production.

If all grazing dairy farmers reduced their costs by milking the optimum number of cows as shown in the Excel software called 'Dairy cow numbers for maximum profit' to calculate the optimum numbers to milk, they would, in some cases, buy less feed and less urea, so total production would decrease, but profits would increase. Fonterra's payout would then increase, because they would not have surplus milk that reduces the crazy auction price system, and reduces the payout to farmers.

There are thousands in New Zealand in the same boat, i.e., milking too many cows, buying too much expensive feed, so losing money. The coming lower milk payout will increase the loss problem of buying milk production. In the next northern hemisphere winter, when their production decreases, yours can be higher than last summer's, provided you have your ryegrass calcium figure up to 0.8% by spring, breed and spread earthworms and move your earthworms around the farm to increase their hybrid vigour. Read the updated Earthworms chapter.

It is a pity that LIC, DairyNZ, etc., are not honest with dairy farmers so don't use Lincoln's information and the Ruakura figures from 1991 and mine from 1989. Ruakura stated that if most stocking rates were decreased, production per cow would increase by even greater amounts than those I have used in my software called, "Dairy cow numbers for max profit kg." This year (at last) Lincoln has said the same. Twenty years ago I gave Lincoln the software and one wrote back, "I appraised all the GrazingInfo spreadsheets and found them comprehensive and easy to use".

Dairy farmers should now be using the spreadsheet to work out how many cows to milk next

season for maximum profit. Getting it right (90% are overstocked) could earn up to \$10,000 more per hundred cows, reduce pugging and weeds, and would make yours and your family's life more pleasant.

SELENIUM ESSENTIAL BEFORE CALVING

Most cows in herds I see when reading farming magazines and in photos sent to me for diagnosing ill health and low production problems, are too low in selenium. Even those fertilising with Selcote Ultra, but not feeding Solminix are low, and those feeding Solminix, but not fertilising adequately, which means suffering low calcium and low humus, are low. Organic farms are the worst, because the organic approved Selenium chips are water soluble, so go too high and then leach and are mostly gone within four months of rain.

Solving the deficiency is easy by feeding the best soluble selenium through a dispenser.

When fertilising, use Selcote Ultra because it doesn't leach, or a new 'One year organic selenium', but I have not seen these do what the name claims. Have you? If you have please send me the pasture analysis figures and dates of applying One Year Selenium.

Selenium chips based on sodium selenite, which is very soluble, can increase levels to four times what they should be, which is bad and dangerous, especially for horses. Sodium selenate can also be dangerous. Elemental selenium as Sodium Selenade is the best. Write these details in your diary and dairy.

Someone in the fertiliser business, wrote to me, "I am very sceptical of the XX company's selenium claims." So please check what you buy.

1 kg per hectare of Selcote Ultra is only \$8 per hectare and you get what you buy because its release is at a speed that pasture can use it all, as needed.

If selenium is low now, inject it, with B12 if needed because of low cobalt, and start applying the optimum lime-plus with selenium and cobalt which increases nodulation

Cow selenium level of L:Se nmol per litre at 3,000 is optimum and 5,000 is the maximum.

New born calves should have 20,000 so cows need ample to achieve this. It is high because there is no selenium in milk, so calves don't get any until grazing, when 90% of pastures are low. There have been vets who don't know the above. Some think 700 is OK for cows and blamed 20,000 for killing calves.

PASTURE ANALYSES

Some have not been sending enough ryegrass tissue needed by Hill Laboratory to do all the tests. Please send at least 200 grams, which is a large, heaped, double handful, from about 30 takes across the paddock or area being measured, always away from high fertility places.

Testing for aluminium is a separate test so requires a bit more grass.

A subscriber asked why I suggest testing for aluminium. Aluminium toxicity has lost many farmers thousands of dollars because it causes more ryegrass pulling than any other factor, while Black Beetle and previous soil pests get blamed. Light volcanic soils and others with high aluminium levels cause the costly ryegrass pulling more than soils with lower aluminium levels. Light volcanic soils can have a pH of 6.1 and a low ryegrass calcium level of 0.5% instead of 0.8%. Walton in central Waikato has suffered this for 50 years that I know of, i.e., hard pans, lack of clover, lack of earthworms, low boron, low magnesium, poor pasture growth and worst of all, ryegrass pulling, because they had not applied enough lime-plus, because of stupid pH testing. Ryegrass pulling has occurred for so long that most farmers don't even notice the small pulled ryegrass plants, which, if they do, they think is the norm. Read the updated Calcium chapter in Elements.

I repeatedly ask farmers on all soil types from peat to pumice, if ryegrass pulling is a problem, and almost all say, "No." I then get down on my knees and show them that they often have about 20 per square metre. Other reasons include having sown pasture too thickly (more than 25 kg of mix per hectare), which I proved and have written about many times since 1960, and DairyNZ at last showed it in 2011.

I see ryegrass pulling in photos in ag papers and in those emailed to me because I don't have time to visit the farms.

Because the pH is OK according to the 'establishment', but not according to me, farmers then don't solve the problem with lime-plus. My son-in-law and daughter farmed milking goats near Walton three

decades ago, as did many friends, and I had a Walton consulting group at about the same time. Boron is also low there. I got Ruakura to do a boron trial which they wrongly said gave no response!!! Read Elements > Boron.

Remember that what you see is better than any test figures, so if your soil is soft and crumbly with no hardpan, then aluminium is not likely to be a problem, so don't test it.

For pasture tissue going to Hill Laboratory, then write, "As done by Vaughan Jones, but without aluminium."

However, if most pasture levels are optimum as per the spreadsheet Pasture Tissue Analysis figures, but you have ample earthworms and hard soils, especially a hard pan down about 10 to 15 cm, you are likely to have excess aluminium that lime-plus (calcium with it synergisms), read Elements > Calcium (updated).

In the last 3.5 years I've done hundreds of lime-plus recommendations and had to do only three P fertiliser (Gafsa) ones, because the pasture P figures showed high P, and low Ca, B and Co all because of low Ca, and low selenium, partly because of low Ca. All have had good responses, but not all deficient elements will increase to optimum after only one application. It took Fernyhoughs three applications totalling eight tonnes per hectare to get the photo in Elements > Calcium, but it must be pointed out that they had applied almost none for 50 years - partly because of the pH of 6 or more, and mainly because of the 'establishment' and fertiliser sales people claiming that calcium was not needed.

One farmer who had very deficient soils and felt that magnesium had not risen enough. Instead of reading Elements > Magnesium, applied the much more costly (in the North Island) dolomite, which MAF 60 years ago, and two of my trials described in Elements > Magnesium, showed that the same cost serpentine achieved far better results.

FACIAL ECZEMA

This is written about in farming magazines with regular monotony and animals suffer pain, simply because their owners have not read what I've written about facial eczema prevention since 1960 and is in GrazingInfo > Animal Health. Without having to use zinc there is no reason for any facial eczema in any animals, including sheep - without drenching, once lime-plus has done its job of increasing earthworms. Correct amounts of Lime-plus applied soon will control it 99% next summer but always count spores. Read Facial eczema.

NO SPRAYING

Please don't spray your new pastures for weeds. I never have, and always had the best pastures in the area because we fed them fully with lime-plus and proper fertilisers. If weed seedlings are thick, apply more lime-plus, and/or if looking yellow apply the best N (Ammo or a better liquid one if there is - do comparative trials) as soon as yellowing starts, and again as yellowing starts about six weeks later, until the clovers are working.

FIELDAYS

NZ Agricultural Fieldays 13 to 16 June at Mystery Creek near Hamilton. See Free Items or Events for accommodation and other details.

FERTILISERS

There are now many products sold as fertilisers, which in the true sense of the word - and results, are not. Too many farmers, especially organic ones, are believing smooth talk about 'biology', 'ecology', etc., from sales people of products that are not fertilisers. Fertilisers are not bad, but superphosphates are. Read Elements > Phosphorus.

The analyses of the many 'alternatives' show that they are not silver bullets and not fertilisers and will not grow more pasture than those that contain the most deficient minerals, based on pasture tissue analyses. If you are not convinced, by a tonne and compare it with what Lime Nutrient Planner and Fertiliser Nutrient Planner spreadsheets show is needed, at the same total cost.

Currently, calcium with its synergisms, is the best silver bullet for 90% of farms. It wasn't 30 years ago when most farmers applied enough lime.

As a consultant I make a point of checking all the products that I can. Three Probitas users I visited

showed no benefits, and my visit to the Probitas owner, Ewan Campbell's Waihi farm, showed hard soils and sick earthworms, and my trials applying Probitas showed that it was not worth the cost of about \$400 a tonne, by a long way. Its main content is serpentine worth about \$220 a tonne. I've used serpentine every year since 1954 on all our farms and sections so got no financial benefit from Probitas trials, but did slightly on the park next to our home which has not had anything applied since taken out of farming and subdivided for sections in 1970.

The Dairyman July 2007 News

Probitas guilty of misleading public

AFERTILISER sold under the brand name Probitas did not offer the benefits claimed. The company, Probitas Ltd, has been fined \$200,000 and man who sold it \$60,000, in the Tauranga District Court for misleading the public. They have also been ordered to pay \$12,499 in costs.

Ewan Campbell was found guilty of five charges and Probitas Ltd of 11 charges of breaching the Fair Trading Act by misrepresenting the effectiveness of Probitas. The representations were made in brochures, on a promotional CD and in person.

The Commission is now considering civil action to recover customers' losses.

Campbell, a farmer from Waihi, formulated and sold the Probitas fertiliser nationwide. Probitas comprises natural ingredients, including sea clays, soft shell-based lime, paramagnetic rock and iron sand. Farmers and horticulturists paid \$300 - \$350/tonne for Probitas, which, Campbell told them, would activate the electrical and magnetic processes in the soil.

An expert witness said there was no scientific basis supporting the way Probitas was supposed to work.

Commerce Commission chairwoman Paula Rebstock said the fertiliser industry is a vital part of the New Zealand economy, with farmers spending \$1 billion annually.

Fertiliser is generally the most expensive single item on a farmer's budget, costing most between \$20,000-\$40,000 yearly.

"It is crucial that farmers can trust the claims made about fertiliser. It is a major cost in their business, and they need to know they are getting what they are promised," Ms Rebstock said.

She said that because Probitas does not work as a fertiliser, farmers using it will have lost productivity.

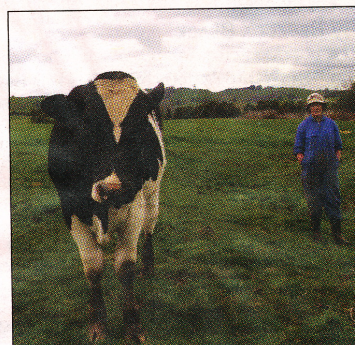
"The Commission's experts estimate that this productivity loss would have been up to 5% in the first year, and the effects will compound over future years," said Ms Rebstock.

"Farmers will not be able to put their losses right by switching fertilisers. They will need to apply more fertiliser than usual to counteract the effects of using Probitas."

The use of Probitas is estimated to have cost the national farming industry \$5 million in lost productivity in the first year of use alone.

Ms Rebstock said the claims made about Probitas were hard for ordinary farmers to assess.

"Mr Campbell used scientific language and gave customers a CD packed with complicated explanations of how Probitas was supposed to work," said Ms Rebstock.



Farmers may have lost productivity.

"It is not reasonable to expect all farmers to have the expertise to assess these claims themselves, so it is crucial that representations of this nature are accurate and can be substantiated."

In his judgement, Judge J. R. Callander concluded: "While no farmer actually complained of deception, the representations and conduct were clearly deceptive and misleading. The real science shows that farmers were clearly taken in and misinformed by the representations and this, ultimately, would have been to their detriment."

Agrissentials is now being looked into by the Commerce Commission for selling Rok Solid as a fertiliser. I've seen farms using it that had production of 600 kg of milk solids (MS) per hectare per annum for three years in a row, from users who then contacted me. It costs about \$400 per tonne for contents worth about \$60. On the farms the MS production should be well above 600 kg.

While on costs, liquid seaweed and fish products such as Maxicrop, Response, etc., cost about \$3,000 a tonne for the solids, which is what you'll be buying, because the rest is water.

An interesting point about Rok Solid is that farmers often ask them where the 'Rok' comes from and tell me, if up north, they answer, "From down south". If down south, they answer, "From up North"!

I don't plan to buy and check any because six users have lost thousands of dollars trying it, each for three years. Their milk production and pasture analyses reveal that it has little value.

When sales people talk about the "Paramagnetic energy level stimulating the multiplication of the soil biology," suspect a lack of useful facts. If the soil lacks the main basic elements, so is hard and/or has a hard pan without earthworms, its biology (whatever that means) will not exist so there is nothing to be stimulated.

Remember that there are people galore after your money, from bank managers to investors and sales people, with fake fertiliser companies leading, followed by the fertiliser companies and consultants who ignore lime and its synergisms which sets soils up for the other essential elements.

In Waikato Times on 14 May 2012

A company selling ground volcanic rock as fertiliser is being investigated by the Commerce Commission under the Fair Trading Act.

Agrissentials, owned by former Tauranga vegetable grower John Morris, sells its Rok Solid fertiliser for \$400 a tonne to farmers throughout New Zealand.

Its main ingredient is ground basalt rock to which is added fish, seaweed and other sources of phosphate, potassium, selenium, cobalt and boron.

Not any rock will do, according to Morris. "Before we mine it we analyse the paramagnetic energy level. This stimulates the multiplication of the soil biology."

Commerce Commission spokeswoman Allanah Kalafatelis said an investigation was started earlier this year after a complaint was received from a user of the fertiliser.

"We don't expect it to be a short investigation because of the science involved. There's a small number of experts we can go to," she said.

Morris said the commission had written to him in January, saying it was following up comments about the fertiliser made in a newspaper article.

He had asked who had complained but the commission would not give any names.

"They told me it was not one of the two big fertiliser companies. I think it was probably my old friend Doug Edmeades."

Edmeades, a Waikato soil scientist who has publicly accused Agrissentials of using "scare tactics" to promote its products, said he was not the complainant and was not involved in the investigation.

He has said in a newsletter to his clients that because Rok Solid's chief component was silica it was unlikely to have any effect on pastoral soils. He put its value, after allowing for the added nutrients, at \$60 a tonne, assuming they are plant-available.

Morris said he started Agrissentials 18 years ago after finding his conventionally fertilised plants were not growing to their potential. "I looked for where the best soils were on the planet and found they were where the ice glaciers had rubbed the rock, leaving metres of dust behind.

"I felt I couldn't go wrong doing what Mother Nature had done for millions of years."

His website has a report from Northland soil scientist Andreas Kumann on soil tests from dairy farms using Rok Solid.

The site also features botanist David Bellamy talking about farmers who are returning to the "essentials" of agriculture.

Morris said he felt confident the Commerce Commission would find he was not doing anything wrong.

End

Was he doing anything right?

There are low analyses items such as Roks and Humates (they are not fertilisers) with some ppm and pbm levels rather than percentages. Before spending a cent on any of them, get an analysis, after which you won't buy it. Some soils have even higher levels of some elements than the product being sold to you.

For the next year many farmers will be scratching to buy any fertilisers, so make sure they are what is most needed.

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This is the new wording at the top of each new chapter now because some are copying the information and using it as if it is theirs. Some organic vendors are the worst, by using phrases to try to sell more of their products. It is flattering, but I want all to know where to get more information.

Make the right practical decisions.

Vaughan Jones
GrazingInfo Ltd