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# DoloZest® News

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## Nitrogen naturally

We love big-picture stuff as without the big picture it's impossible to know where the detail fits, and the following statement is one I heard from a long-time farmer when we first started milking cows.

*Pasture grows six foot a year, it just depends on when it comes.* In short, the peak growth times of spring and autumn never change, however within those periods there are fluctuations that no-one can predict accurately. Our 17 years of monthly pasture cuts provide a unique insight which we're always keen to share with our clients.

## The best of the best from North Otago



This is a typical sight in North Otago at present. Irrigated lowland with lots of wispy seed head and little base, particularly clover.



This is typical of much of the pasture on the property of Tim and Joyce Fox at Gemmells Crossing, less than 15 minutes from the centre of Oamaru. This particular shot is of

dryland, clover-rich pasture with the wheel track providing an indication of the depth and density of the sward.



This one speaks for itself and the sign was placed over twelve months ago.



This is a mob of breeding cows and their calves grazing a river flat. Utilisation isn't high, however every inch of the surface is covered preventing moisture loss over the next phase of summer. [more detailed photos on our website]

We'll continue to visit this area each month noting with interest the rate of regrowth and the species that thrive under this system.

It's important to appreciate that before strong above ground growth takes place, the old root mass, dung, and dead material on the surface of the soil must be digested.

Growing pasture is an energetic process and digestion always comes before activity, a principle most of us have had reinforced in the 2–3 hour period after Christmas dinner.

Please note the quality of the stock in the photo. Another principle of truly successful livestock farming is the ability to fully feed animals each and every day. Balancing that with high utilisation of pasture is a skill learnt over time as a result of keen observation. There are no absolute rights or wrongs and everyone does it a little differently.

Even though rainfall throughout December has been plentiful in North Otago, and more is forecast for this month, the 30-day grazing interval is still recommended. Should the daily growth rates continue to remain well-above maintenance requirements there's the opportunity to make hay, balage, or push long pasture ahead for grazing by mature animals in autumn.

We very much appreciate the phone calls from clients with their observations and thoughts on the progress of their operations, and we thank Stuart Pritchard for his permission to print a portion of the email received just prior to Christmas.

*"I sleep very relaxed every night knowing that we are not polluting the rural sector, and that our wetland remains in a very healthy condition. It is a real pleasure to have healthy soils and farm as well as happy healthy cattle, thank you. The farm provides me with a clean fresh life and we are thinking of tomorrows rural health through becoming increasingly green and caring for our land..."*

### **Recent road show**

The four-venue road show culminating in a presentation at Lincoln University on the 29<sup>th</sup> November was a genuine success, and has provided the recognition and endorsement necessary for the next phase in the growth and development of Functional Fertiliser.

The meetings were held at Fairlie, Gore, Culverden, and Lincoln. 60 people were present at Gore, with a packed room of 45 at Lincoln.

There were fewer at the other two venues but there was genuine interest and participation from all those that attended.

The topic was **Clover as Kingmaker** with focus on the results from the 15 + years of measures from properties using Functional Fertiliser products and programmes.

The road show, part of the ongoing Agmardt funded project, was instigated and organised by Rod McMillan, a consultant and sheep milk farmer at Lincoln.

At Fairlie and Gore there was a supporting presentation by Dr Alistair Black, Lecturer in Plant Science at Lincoln. At Culverden and Lincoln Dr Tom Maxwell, Lecturer in Plant Science at Lincoln, also presented informative and useful information.

At each venue Gary Walton a well-known and respected Farm Adviser ran participatory workshops.

Guy Martin, a long-term client farming near Lincoln provided his own perspective based on practical experience.

It was a memorable 4 days and with follow-up already underway, a platform has been laid from which Functional Fertiliser will prosper.

The message that pastoral farming is an environmentally positive activity; one where carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere with the carbon stored in the soil was well-received.

Because clover fixes nitrogen in response to declining plant available levels, significantly less is lost to groundwater than when applied as fertiliser, primarily urea.

Carbon and nitrogen are closely linked so as carbon is sequestered in the form of humus, more N as well as moisture and other nutrients are held and available for plants, the reason for the steady increase in total pasture production from DoloZest and CalciZest based inputs.

Functional Fertiliser programmes are designed specifically for legumes. Where clover flourishes, high fertility pasture species also thrive.

***Functional Fertiliser - Supported by Science***