

17<sup>th</sup> October 2018

# DoloZest® News

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Functional Fertiliser Ltd



## Attitudes are changing

Firstly, we'd like to thank everyone for the steady stream of orders this spring. We never take business for granted and it's a genuine pleasure to continue to be able to contribute.

Along with the orders from long-time clients there's been plenty of new business, and a considerable lift in enquiry, which will turn into business in the future. Just as in farming, where we are now is a direct result of the work put in by everyone involved, particularly over winter.

Sue Edmonds recently addressed a Tirau Lions Club meeting on the topic of fertiliser. At the end of the presentation her views were challenged, and then publicly defended by one of our long-time clients in the district. That takes some doing. It's far easier to keep the head down and say nothing so we're delighted and appreciative.

We'd also like to thank those that have called or sent a quick email commenting on the recent video clip on the NZ Herald website. For those who haven't seen it can be viewed on our website, [www.functionalfertiliser.co.nz](http://www.functionalfertiliser.co.nz)

There is a road trip in conjunction with staff from Lincoln and one of our committed clients, planned for the South Island later this month and next. Five workshops, and by the end we'll have a far better feel for mood amongst farmers in the south, and we'd be delighted if current clients wished to attend. The advert with dates and places is on the other side.

We've worked quite independently over the last fifteen years. The volume of soil fertility products required nationally is such that we're able to service only a very small proportion of farmers. Our goal is to steadily grow our client base while still being able to maintain the current level of service.

Being able to provide for the friends, families, and neighbours of clients is a real buzz, so many thanks to all of you that have discussed soil fertility with others and encouraged them to make contact.

**Functional Fertiliser – the  
Future of Farming**

### Spring growth

“Almost, but not quite”, is the message we're hearing from around the country. The usual theme of excellent animal health, strong milk production, and pleasing growth rates of young animals is also coming through.

With more monthly pasture cut data comes fresh questions. The stand out this spring is growth rates from the month of September in coastal North Otago very similar to those for the same period from coastal Bay of Plenty.

2 <sup>nd</sup> October	Soil	Sept growth
Gemmells Crossing N Otago	10.5°C	41.4 kgDM/ha/day
Otakiri Bay of Plenty	17.2°C	43 kgDM/ha/day

The soil temperatures were significantly different on the day of cutting, which we think is largely indicative of September temperatures. We have often stated that spring soil temperatures are a sound indicator of the rate of pasture growth, and one month's figures doesn't alter that position, however there are obviously other factors at play.

One long-time client has stated that he doesn't mind what winter conditions are, provided there's plenty of sunshine, which highlights a really important point. Pastoral farming is primarily the conversion of sunlight via photosynthesis to usable energy.

Less direct sunlight means less energy available on farm and that directly impacts on pasture growth rates and animal performance.

Wet soils take longer to warm and in wet conditions there's less direct sunlight to make that happen. The animal requirement for energy in these conditions is higher, which is why top-quality pasture hay is such a valuable supplement. The long fibre improves rumen function allowing animals to extract the very best from each mouthful.

During a wet winter the intervals between grazings usually become shorter as stock are moved on more frequently to reduce soil damage. As a result, the recovery time for both soil and plants is often less

than optimum, resulting in less monthly pasture growth.

Utilisation of pasture in these conditions is poorer and, although more pasture is left behind, it's often damaged or trampled and recovery is slower than anticipated and hoped for.

There is currently surplus feed on some run-off blocks and there are two factors worth considering.

Firstly, the pasture may have been quite mature when grazed in winter, and where that was the case there was a large root base to stimulate regrowth.

Secondly, where there was only a single grazing during winter there's been a longer recovery time compared to pastures now being grazed every 25 days.

If there is a single thing to be etched into our psyche it is that when there is a longer recovery time after grazing both the quantity and quality of pasture produced is significantly higher.

**The way to maximise growth by extending the grazing interval is to have available plenty of quality high-energy and fibre supplement, and the very best in winter and early spring conditions is top quality hay made in summer from permanent grazed pasture.**

How much is too much?

Animals will not eat a mouthful more than is required to satisfy their requirements, and the immediate benefits for lactating animals are **increased milk production and less weight loss.**

Older non-lactating animals grow more quickly and gain weight more rapidly. Hay can also be made available for recently born animals still being reared on milk. It hastens rumen development ensuring animals reach target weight prior to mating or slaughter.

### Nitrogen fertiliser use

There's a time and place for the application of nitrogen. What's important to remember is that following any increase in growth there is a slowing or 'slump' in growth as soil life recovers. The timing of this will vary in different situations, however it does mean that to minimise any shortfall after the first grazing, an increase in grazing intervals should be made.

At this time of the season clover is becoming increasingly apparent. Nitrogen applied now may be counterproductive if grasses become sufficiently long that clover is shaded.

The use of CalciZest in spring provides clover with sufficient calcium for the stems to be long and sufficiently strong for leaf to reach above grasses to utilise sunlight to best effect.

Although bloat can be an issue at just about any time in spring and summer, the likelihood is greatly reduced after a CalciZest application.

The reason for this is that bloat is associated with potassium uptake by plants at the expense of calcium and magnesium.

Potassium is not tightly held in the soil and therefore is readily available to plants when the soil is moist.

Where clover stems are solid at the time of grazing due to ideal levels of calcium availability, potassium levels are lower and the incidence of bloat is less.

Pest and disease is a natural selection process and damage by clover flea and weevil is markedly less in situations where there is plenty of freely available and rapidly cycling calcium. Plants are stronger, and pests look for easier pickings.

Although not ideal in all situations, the 30-day grazing interval by the end of December is still a sound target, with surplus feed best saved as high-quality hay in January.

**Farmer Workshops – invitation to attend**



**LINCOLN**  
UNIVERSITY  
TE WHARE WĀNAKA O AORAKI

**Theme: Regenerative Agriculture**  
**10.30 - 2.00pm – Lunch included. No charge**

Fairlie Alexandra Gore	Wednesday 24 October Wednesday 31 October Thursday 1 November	Culverden Lincoln Uni.	Wednesday 28 November Thursday 29 November
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Workshop Programme:  
Research Programme and Farm Management  
Soils, Nutrients and Visual Soil Assessment  
Pastures and Grazing  
"Clover as Kingmaker" – Farmer Experience

Facilitator:  
Rod McMillan  
Peter Burton/Gary Wallon  
Dr. Alistair Black/Dr Tom Maxwell  
Guy Martin

RSVP to: [rodmcmillan@xtra.co.nz](mailto:rodmcmillan@xtra.co.nz) or 0274 995 840 (Research Associate)  
or [heather.stevenson@lincoln.ac.nz](mailto:heather.stevenson@lincoln.ac.nz) (Manager Conferences)

**Extension Programme – Agribusiness & Commerce Partnering Industry**

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