

# Newsletter

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## Chairman's report

During this financial year, the Foundation for Arable Research sought a mandate from arable farmers, by referendum, to collect a commodity levy on arable crops for research and extension under the Commodities Levy Act. It is gratifying that once again farmers overwhelmingly supported a positive result for continuing the levy. At the same time a referendum of maize growers successfully voted on a change in the way their levy was collected, from seed sold rather than saleable crop. This change effectively brings maize silage as well as maize grain under FAR's area of interest and means all sectors of the maize industry are paying for research. This is a much more equitable arrangement that maize grain growers have sought for a number of years.

The FAR staff put a huge amount of work into the preparation and consultation process leading up to the referendum. This was particularly crucial in the maize silage areas where a large effort was made to contact as many growers as possible in areas that traditionally FAR has had no involvement.

There is no doubt that as FAR has matured as an organisation, the very important focus on on-farm research has expanded to include a greater emphasis on environmental issues. This has been a natural progression as pressure increases from the greater public and also the regulatory authorities on questioning not only how arable farmers use their land, but how they manage their inputs. The

reality is that this pressure is more likely to increase over time, which will mean that more of our levy funds are required to be used in this area. It is not money unwisely spent. There are good examples already of FAR funded work being used successfully to defend arable farmer practice, especially in the use of nitrogen. The requirement FAR must meet is to continue to also deliver high quality research that puts extra dollars on the bottom lines of each crop we grow.

It is important that we continue to try and develop collaborative research with other groups, especially other farmer levy groups, to leverage a greater pool of funding, avoid duplication and take the opportunities that are offered to utilise associated research which can benefit our industry. It would be fair to say that to date we have been somewhat disappointed with the response by some other organisations to our approaches. FAR will continue to attempt to put proposals forward for consideration and I am sure over time our persistence will return dividends to arable farmers.

During this financial year we have had a number of staff changes. Jacqui Johnstone, who was the first employee of FAR after Nick Pyke, left us in October last year. Jacqui contributed a huge amount to FAR and its successful growth. We wish her well with her future endeavors. Anton Nicholls, FAR Agronomist and Joanne DeFilippi, Maize Co-ordinator also resigned and have both continued involvement in

the arable industry. Rachel Greenwood - Communications Manager, Andrea Pearson - Maize Research Co-ordinator, and Richard Chynoweth, David Geary and Mike Parker, Project Managers have all joined the FAR team. My thanks also goes to the rest of the team, Nick Pyke, Nick Poole, Tabitha Armour, Tracey Harris and Melanie Bond for all the work they have undertaken during a very busy year.

At a board level there have been no changes during the year and I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the board members for their work. A crucial aspect of how we govern the Foundation for Arable Research is the Arable Research Groups (ARGs) spread across the country. It is important that we maintain good representation on these groups and I encourage anyone with an interest to please make yourself known and become involved. There is no doubt that as arable returns drop, participation at many levels of FAR can decline. It is doubly important to have good feedback and grower input during these periods.

Let us hope that the coming season gives us a good harvest and the economic environment to restore some confidence and profitability back into the arable sector.

Stuart Wright  
Chairman



## FAR board

The FAR board is made up of elected members, one from each of six regions, and up to four appointed members selected by the board to provide those skills required. The board is responsible for the strategic direction of FAR and approves the overall areas of research investment and the split of investment to these general areas; however the individual projects are determined by the research committees.

## Research investments

FAR invests in approximately 100 individual research or extension projects in any one year. These projects are based on what arable farmers in New Zealand consider to be research that will deliver benefits to farmers. The process is that ideas can come from farmers, industry or researchers by discussing their ideas with Arable Research Group members, Research Committee members, FAR board members or FAR staff. Ideas will be considered at a regional level by the Arable Research Group and then by the Research Committees. FAR has Research

Committees based on crops – Maize, Pulses, Herbage and Cereals. Proposals and projects that are recommended for funding will be developed by FAR staff, usually in conjunction with the researchers, to be a funded project if they meet the requirements as set out by FAR (risk assessment, cost, strategic fit etc). This process is designed to enable research and extension ideas to come from farmers as well as from industry and researchers. Currently most of the ideas come from farmers, some from researchers and a few from the wider industry.



For further information on becoming a member of the group, please contact Rachel at the FAR office.

## Competition corner

Thank you to Dave Chapman of Chapmans Kawasaki, Rakaia for sponsoring our September competition corner.



Congratulations to Natasha Williamson who was the winner of our photo competition.



Tash pictured in her Kawasaki branded jacket.

Well done to almost 100 arable kids who successfully completed our amazing maize competition.

Congratulations go to Olivia Ward and Vanessa Lowe who were the lucky recipients of motorcycle helmets, again proudly presented by Chapmans Kawasaki, Rakaia.



Good luck with this month's competition which has been proudly sponsored by National Bank.

## Competition corner IS THIS YOU?

If this is you, you'll be delighted to know that you've won our photo competition. Just contact Rachel Greenwood at the FAR office on 03 325 6353 to find out how to claim your prize!



## New look website - www.far.org.nz

Earlier this year, you may remember completing our website survey form. The aim of the survey was to find out how you, the end user, felt that the website could be improved.

Feedback clearly identified three areas which required attention; 1. visual appeal, 2. page download size and 3. overall navigation. You'll be pleased to know that we have acted on your suggestions and plan to launch our new look website at the end of December.

### Important note to FAR levy payers and subscribers:

In addition to re-designing the site, we have also improved the security for our

members' by switching to personalised user names and passwords. To avoid any technical hitches over the festive break, the user name and password will remain to be the same; however in order to continue accessing the site beyond 31st January 2007, you will be required to create your own personalised user name and password by visiting the subscription page and following the simple step by step instructions.

If you have any queries regarding these changes, or should come across any technical hitches, please don't hesitate to contact Rachel at the FAR office on 03 325 6353 or 021 960 058.



## Recipe brought to you by Champion Flour and the Edmonds Cookbook

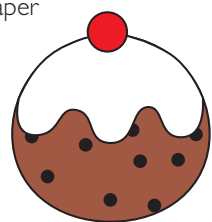
# Rich Christmas Cake

- 1 1/3 cups orange juice
- 1/3 cup dark rum or brandy
- 2 tablespoons grated orange rind
- 500g currants
- 500g raisins
- 2 cups sultanas
- 2 cups chopped dates
- 150g crystallised ginger, chopped
- 150g packet mixed peel
- 150g packet glacéd cherries, halved
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 1/4 teaspoon almond essence
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
- 1 cup blanched almonds

- 2 1/2 cups Champion high grade flour
- 1/2 teaspoon Edmonds baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 250g butter
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons treacle
- 5 eggs

In a saucepan, bring to the boil orange juice, rum and orange rind. Remove from heat and add dried fruit. Cover and leave fruit to soak overnight. Stir essences, lemon

rind and almonds into saucepan. Sift flour, soda and spices into a bowl. Cream butter, sugar and treacle until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold in sifted ingredients alternately with fruit mixture. Line a deep, square 23cm tin with two layers of brown paper followed by one layer of baking paper. Spoon mixture into tin. Bake at 150°C for 4 hours or until an inserted skewer comes out clean when tested. Leave in tin until cold. Wrap in foil. Store in a cool place.





# Record numbers turn out to the FAR Arable Site Major Open Day

More than 350 growers and industry took time out of their busy schedules to be part of the FAR Arable Site Major Open Day on 7th December.

This major event on the FAR calendar invites growers and industry personnel to come and view FAR research trials whilst also having the opportunity to listen to top speakers on varying industry related topics.

This year we were delighted to have Tom Wolf from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada who is an expert in spray nozzle technologies. Using a small scale spray boom demonstration he illustrated some of the key features of conventional flat fan nozzles and the plethora of newer air induction nozzles. In his address to growers he made the point that any spray nozzle can be used successfully at water volumes between 80 -100 l/ha provided the correct pressures are employed. Whilst he accepted that for some contact herbicide use in think canopies, water rates might need to be higher, his research work indicated that for most operations no more than 100 l/ha was necessary. Though air induction nozzles were primarily introduced with drift reduction in mind, he said that his research had shown no disadvantage to these nozzle types in terms of efficacy, provided water rates were in the range suggested and the pressures were optimal. One area that he thought growers should review

was the pressure settings adopted for air induction jets, since he felt that a number of operators might be using the nozzles at pressures below the optimum. However he pointed out that firstly growers needed to know what pressures their sprayers were capable of achieving, since with air induction nozzles it is the higher pressure nozzles that give greater drift reduction.

Bill Long, our second overseas speaker who joined us from South Australia, reported on the latest ways in which Australian growers managed their volatile climate. Mr Long, who is one of a rare breed being both a farmer and researcher, talked to growers on the importance of understanding soil water holding capacity. In South Australia he said that growers were starting to use a new web based model in order to make better decisions on crop management. The Yield Prophet Model which is similar to New Zealand's Wheat Calculator gives growers information on the probability of achieving different yields with their crops. The yield predictions are based on variety chronology, weather data, soil nitrogen status, soil water status and historical weather conditions. He explained that having a better understanding of yield potential has enabled cereal growers to make better decisions on the need for applying nitrogen, particularly in seasons such as the 2006 drought. However it was not only nitrogen management that

Yield Prophet was assisting with but fungicide management, since more expensive fungicide chemistry was only applied at the key timings when soil water and resultant yield predictions looked good. He also saw the model being useful for aiding farmers in extreme droughts where it might be more appropriate to cut the crop for hay rather than letting go through for grain harvest.

Other speakers included Anton Nicholls of CropRight Independent Agronomy and David Montgomery of Agri-Business Consultants who advised growers of the importance of business strategic planning and financial benchmarking.

Mark Goodwin of HortResearch gave a detailed presentation on the effects of varroa on beekeeping, pollination and the sustainability of agriculture. He told growers that when varroa spreads through the South Island it will kill most feral colonies, reduce the number of managed colonies, increase the prices that have to be paid for managed colonies that are used for pollination and may reduce their availability. Therefore to ensure the future sustainability of honey bees and consequently some of New Zealand's key exports, HortResearch is conducting research to develop technologies to control varroa.

At the request of many growers, FAR also arranged for an expert on biofuels to come along and talk about the issues he has faced in the process of setting up his



own biofuels production plant. Paul talked about the pro's and con's of using tallow, virgin vegetable oils and waste vegetable oils as feedstocks

Chris Pennell presented a range of new devices which could assist growers in managing problem bird species.

Other presentations took place throughout the day looking at the results of ryegrass, pea, maize, clover and non-inversion trials. Practical solutions for slug control and looking ahead at fungicide strategies were also presented.

A selection of award presentations took place throughout the afternoon tea break.

Abie Horrocks of Crop & Food Research was presented with the FAR Researcher of the Year Award for the excellent work she has done on the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) project.



David Catherwood and Alex McConway both received a FAR Studentship for their outstanding work throughout the summer of 2006. David worked alongside the Pea Industry Development Group (PIDG) and Alex worked on a pollination research project.



Finally Helen Cunliffe who is a long standing member of the Active in Arable Group was presented with a certificate in recognition of her dedication to, and participation in the group.



Copies of all presentation notes are available from the FAR office. Please call 03 325 6353 to request your copy.

FAR wishes to thank the following sponsors for their continued support towards the running of the FAR Arable Site.



**Plains Irrigators Ltd**  
for Centre Pivot Sales & Service



**RAKAIA ENGINEERING**  
& Contracting Ltd

FAR wishes to thank the following sponsors for their support towards the FAR Arable Site Major Open Day



## FAR field trial - HUB

How cheap can we make wheat establishment? That's just one of the questions that FAR's Nick Poole answered at the South Canterbury, North Otago FAR Field Trial 'Hub' on 21st November.

A demonstration set up at the FAR South Canterbury, North Otago 'Hub' has looked to challenge perception on how much cultivation is required to establish a first wheat cereal crop. The demonstration has compared traditional cultivation techniques such as ploughing and cultivating with lower cost options such as direct drilling and broadcasting.

Nick Poole, FAR's Research Coordinator said that the demonstration which has been carried out with farm scale equipment at Nick and Michelle Ward's property near Temuka designed to challenge the perception as to what is possible with lower cost establishment techniques. At the field day farmers were

invited to view wheat established following ploughing, minimal tillage, direct drilling and broadcasting with some comparisons carried out on sub-soiled and non sub-soiled ground.

Initial differences between the different blocks have been relatively small but Nick Poole left growers to decide which blocks looked to be the clear winners!

Richard Chynoweth and David Geary, FAR Project Managers were also on hand at the field day. Richard focused on the results of a 3yr nitrogen trial, highlighting the gains in profitability from reducing inputs, whilst David demonstrated last year's trials, looking at new fungicide performance in barley, particularly prothiroadazole (Proline) as this looked very encouraging as regards setting new standards for disease control in barley.

Other areas focused on included the herbicide control of volunteer ryegrass



in wheat plus the use of nitrogen stabilisers in cereal crops.

Following the in-field presentations, successful arable grower and dairy farmer Alan Pye talked about his view on the NZ arable industry today. A barbeque dinner and drinks, kindly sponsored by Ballance agri-nutrients and PGG Wrightson closed the day.



# Levy rates for 2007

In accordance with the Commodity Levies (Arable Crops) Order 2000, the Foundation for Arable Research has determined the rate of the levies for 2007 to be:

- Herbage and amenity seed - 0.8% of assessed value;
- All other grain and seed crops (cereals, pulses, brassicas etc) - 0.8% of sale value.
- Specialist vegetable seeds (such as hybrid

brassicas, carrot, onion, celery, beet), 0.8% of an assessed value in relation to value and seed.

These levy rates will be reviewed again in 12 months time. New levy return forms for 2007 will be delivered to merchants in December/January.

The deduction of the 5% commission is optional. Some companies are choosing not to deduct this commission and look on that as their contribution to research.

We are very appreciative of their support.

Please note: United Wheatgrowers wheat insurance levy is collected at the same time as the FAR levy. Their rate for 2007 is \$3.25 + GST per tonne. This is the same rate as the 2006 year.

Any queries, please contact FAR:

Ph: 03 325 6353

Fax: 03 325 6354

Email: far@far.org.nz

## Change to the herbage seed levy

Previously the FAR levy on herbage seed has been forwarded by the Seed Testing Stations to the FAR levy collection agency for all seed lines that are tested as a first test. For seed lines that are traded without a test, the levy was paid by either the farmer or the wholesaler.

Under the new levy order the herbage seed levy is now deducted at the first point of sale by either the seed merchant or in the case of farmer to farmer transactions, by the farmer, in the same manner as that for cereals, pulses and other crops.

The seed merchant has the option of deducting a commission of 5% of the levy value to cover the costs associated with forwarding the levy.

## Summary of new levy orders

The new levy orders for arable crops and maize came into effect from the 1st of September 2006. The LEVY ORDER affects all parties who are responsible for forwarding or paying levies. The following are key points.

### Arable crops harvested after the 1st September 2006:

- The levy is to be paid by the farmer on all quantities of arable crops that are sold or used in an on farm enterprise.
- The levy is payable on all arable crops

that are harvested with either a moving or stationary combine harvester. This includes the range of vegetable seeds such as onion, brassicas, radish etc.

- The levy will be deducted and forwarded by the wholesaler (seed company, processor) if the sale is made to a wholesaler. If the sale is made to another farmer or the grain or seed is used in an on farm enterprise the farmer is responsible for paying the levy.
- The herbage seed levy will be deducted at the first point of sale. Previously the

herbage seed levy was deducted by the seed testing station.

- The levy rate is 0.8% of the first sale price.
- Companies growing vegetable seeds will receive further information in relation to the deduction along with levy forms in December or early January. Please contact FAR to receive this information.
- The new levy forms will be circulated in late December or early January.

## Slugs receive VIP visit!

On 13th October, Minister of Agriculture, Hon Jim Anderton paid us a visit to find out more about Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a project currently being managed by FAR in conjunction with Crop and Food Research.

This project, funded by MAF Sustainable Farming Fund (MAF SFF) and co-funded by FAR, aims to provide growers with an alternative management system for controlling slug populations in arable crops.

The Minister was given the opportunity to come face to face with these pests whilst paying a visit to an on-farm trial at the Macartney's farm in Tai Tapu.

Slugs are a major constraint to a number of components of farming systems. Slugs can severely damage new crops and pasture resulting in the increased cost of re-drilling, reduced yields and the economic and environmental costs of application of

control systems. Slugs can also cause significant losses in developing crops and in mature crops. These losses / costs are estimated nationally to be equivalent to \$12/ha across 390,000 broad-acre cropped hectares (\$4.7 million pa). In addition, slugs constrain the establishment systems (no-tillage) that can be used, the range of crops (canola, clover) that can be grown and the opportunity for low pesticide / organic farming systems, all of which have environmental and economic implications.

Nick Pyke explained that in the short term, information on the species and numbers of slugs present in a range of crop environments and the pest ecology has allowed farmers to employ targeted control practices. In the long term an understanding of the predators present and why and what they do in different habitats will enable farmers to manage



and control slug pest populations. In the past, NZ has relied heavily on insecticides to control soil active pests and widespread use of insecticides may have reduced predator populations.

The Minister was also updated on a number of other MAF SFF funded projects including Clover, Seed Crop Isolation Distances (SCID), Irrigation Efficiency, the Pea Industry Development Group (PIDG) and Nitrogen Managers.

# FAR summer scholarships snapped up

In our aim to encourage more students into the agricultural science and research arena, we are delighted to welcome on board Jamie Davidson and Rachael McCloy who will both be working closely with the FAR technical team throughout the summer months.

Jamie has just completed a B. Agr. Sci. at Lincoln University where he concentrated mostly in the areas of soil and plant science. Jamie applied for the summer scholarship in order to complement his studies.

Jamie says "the best part of the role is being able to cover a whole range of agricultural topics, which are at the forefront of researching solutions for important industry issues. The Pea Industry Development Group (PIDG) project that I am working on has already revealed some important results for farmers and will potentially see changes made on the majority of properties.

"The opportunity to work with scientists from Plant Research and Crop & Food Research will enable me to apply

my studies in varying practical situations which is invaluable for my continuation in the area of agricultural research I am interested in. By working for FAR I am involved with a wider range of research contributors which was a big influence in my choice to apply for this scholarship".

Brought up on a mixed sheep, beef and cropping farm in Methven, Rachael is undoubtedly a New Zealand country girl. Rachael has just completed a Bachelor of Science with Honours at Canterbury University majoring in Cell and Molecular Biology.

Rachael says "my particular area of research at FAR will be looking at pollination, covering isolation distances, pollinator preferences and alternative pollinators to honey bees. This knowledge will assist growers in understanding what leads to successful pollination, as well as find alternative means of pollination in the face of the varroa mite biosecurity issue.

FAR is a fantastic organisation to

be involved with; the research undertaken here is both interesting and vital to the continual improvement of arable farming in New Zealand".

In addition to the FAR Summer Scholarships, an exciting opportunity also exists for a FAR Postgraduate Scholarship.

The scholarship valued at \$7,000 is open to full-time students at Lincoln University whom are eligible to proceed to, or are undertaking postgraduate research, which will assist with increasing knowledge within the New Zealand arable farming sector.

For further information on these opportunities, please contact Rachel Greenwood at the FAR office on 03 325 6353.



## Mailing address changes

As you may already be aware, New Zealand Post is introducing a number of changes to improve the quality of addressing. These changes are part of a wider programme designed to ensure they continue to process and deliver your mail in the most effective way in the future.

These changes include:

- Postcodes replaced.
- All postcodes will be new – there will be no overlap between the old and new postcodes.
- Postcodes will still be 4 digits.

- All rural delivery areas and box/bag lobbies will have their own postcode.
- Minimal changes to address presentation.

### Rural Address changes:

Unit & Building name  
Street number & name  
RD + Rural Delivery number  
Maltown & Postcode

### Example:

AB Sample  
56 Maple Boulevard  
RD 2  
Wanaka 9382

FAR does not currently have road names or numbers for most rural addresses on its database. It would therefore be much appreciated if you could contact the FAR office to confirm your new Postcode plus provide a road name/number.

Email: [far@far.org.nz](mailto:far@far.org.nz)

Fax: 03 325 6354

Phone: 03 325 6353

## Dates for your diary

For information on forthcoming events, please visit the FAR website events page at [www.far.org.nz/Events](http://www.far.org.nz/Events) or contact the FAR office on 03 325 6353.

If you are holding an industry event that you would like FAR to promote, please email details to Rachel Greenwood at [greenwoodr@far.org.nz](mailto:greenwoodr@far.org.nz).

## Members of the board

STUART WRIGHT (Chairman)  
North South Island  
03 318 3897

JIM MACARTNEY (Deputy Chairman)  
Herbage Seed Subsection FF  
03 329 6734

COLIN JACKSON  
Northern North Island  
07 873 8561

RUSSELL FLEMING  
Southern North Island  
06 324 8641

DAVID GRANT  
Mid Canterbury  
03 302 8580

COLIN HURST  
South Canterbury/North Otago  
03 689 5898

HOWARD CLARKE  
South Otago/Southland  
03 236 9825

JOHN WRIGHT  
United Wheatgrowers  
03 302 8111

KERRY DOWIE  
Appointed Industry Representative  
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