

# Newsletter

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## FAR Cost of Production benchmarking database

## CoP

Cost of Production

Would you like to know how your costs of production rank against other farmers?

If so, you need to be involved in the FAR Cost of Production (CoP) benchmarking database.

If you're not already part of this exercise, that's not a problem, it's easy to become involved. All you need to do is simply complete a FAR Cost of Production form - a copy has been mailed to you. Further copies can be accessed via the FAR website, visit [www.far.org.nz/forms-and-downloads](http://www.far.org.nz/forms-and-downloads)

Results to date have been encouraging and feedback from farmers involved has been extremely positive.

**Murray Bassett** says the report gave him a great comparison on how his costs stacked up against other farmers. *"As a result of this project, I am trying to reduce my number of passes in order to reduce my costs. It has really made me think about how I do things."*

**Neville Chalmers** says it's been an interesting exercise being able to benchmark against other farms. *"It was great to see that we're heading in the right direction. As a participant of the project I was*

*given a full breakdown of how our farm costs compared to others. A workshop with other participants with open discussion about the database results helped in understanding how the results had come together and what farmers should be doing to reduce their costs. A real eye opener and thought provoking exercise. Very worthwhile project."*

**James Halford** says it is very worthwhile being involved and interesting to see where he is at with his costs. *"It was good to see our costs were in the lower quartile but we need to keep benchmarking against other farmers to ensure this remains to be the case. A very worthwhile exercise which I'm keen to be involved in in the future."*

**Brian Dillon** says it's a very worthwhile project which really gets farmers thinking. *"Looking forward to being involved in future seasons."*

So if you would like to understand your costs of production and increase business sustainability, would like to benchmark your costs of production against a wider group of farmers and would like to learn from other growers where the optimum expenditure is for different crops, cultivars, cost categories etc, then become involved now by completing the blank gross margin template. If you're not sure of some

costs, leave the box empty and we will use default values. If you have software that can easily print off gross margins/operations for particular paddocks, please do so and send them in.

Please forward gross margins for paddocks of wheat, barley, combinable peas, ryegrass seed, white clover and maize.

Should you require a form or need assistance in completing the form, please don't hesitate to contact Melanie Bates at the FAR office on 03 325 6353 or email [batesm@far.org.nz](mailto:batesm@far.org.nz)

We would like to remind all participants that any information supplied for the database will be anonymous and confidential. Outcomes from the database will be presented to growers only.

We look forward to having your participation.

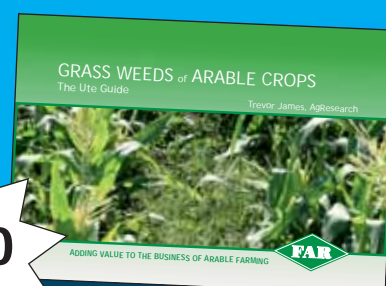


## Grass Weeds of Arable Crops - The Ute Guide

A valuable tool for all growers to use during crop scouting to enable more effective weed control for improved profitability.

Contact FAR for your copy today.

**\$5.00**  
inc GST



# Arrivals and departures

Following their successful FAR Summer Scholarships, we are delighted to welcome on board Tracey Wylie and Jennifer Linton who will both work as Trials Officers on projects where FAR have received external funding from grants. We would also like to welcome Donna Rurehe who has joined us as a part time Administration Assistant.

Tracey has recently completed a Bachelor of Commerce in Agriculture at Lincoln University majoring in Agricultural Management and Rural Valuation. Tracey will be working predominantly in the South Island with occasional visits to Australia as required. Her areas of responsibility include faba bean research, precision agriculture and crop research in Australia. Planning and assessing research trials, protocols, treatment and designs

will be a key constituent of her role, with the management process of these trials such as application of nutrients, cultivation, water and agrichemical application. External research providers will liaise with Tracey where cooperative and coordinated research is applicable.

Jenny has recently completed a Bachelor of Commerce and Management majoring in agribusiness and business management. Jennifer will also be working predominantly in the South Island, however her research will require her to make occasional visits to the North Island. Her main areas of responsibility will include support for vegetable seed, birds and oilseed rape research. Jennifer will also be involved in the Arable Ys and Arable Business Sustainability projects. Like Tracey, planning and assessing research

trials, protocols, treatment and designs will be a key constituent of her role, with the management process of trials such as application of nutrients, cultivation, water and agrichemical application.

Donna's role is to manage levy issues and offer general administrative support to the FAR staff, including reception and telephone enquiries, cleaning and updating of the FAR database, assisting with mailouts to growers and offering support at FAR field days and conferences.

We said goodbye to Ingrid Platt who has been with FAR for the past year working on oilseed rape research. We would like to wish Ingrid well with her future plans.



Tracey



Jen



Donna

## New channel to benefit farmers

The Country Channel is a Sky subscription channel, targeting the rural sector, broadcasting on Sky Channel 99.

The Channel runs a six hour programme block each day and includes local and overseas material. The key local programme - FARMGATE is scheduled to screen at the most appealing times for farmers, 7.30am, 1.30pm and 7.30 pm.



FARMGATE includes the following daily segments:

- News, Weather (Presented by Mark Leishman)
- The ASB Financial & Market Report
- A look behind the news - 'NEWSMAKERS' with Jon Stewart

Plus these weekly segments:

- Federated Farmers report
- Extended Weather outlook
- The Bull Pen (Phillipa Stevenson chews the cud with other rural journalists)

The Country Channel is supported by a sophisticated website, which is updated daily.

The Country Channel screened 'Free to Air' in the month of October and is now subject to a \$14.50 per month subscription, (which is tax deductible for farmers).

After one month the Channel has achieved remarkable uptake, with a subscription level of approximately 10,000.

# Pasture Renewal website launched

A new website which highlights the value of more frequent pasture renewal to New Zealand farmers has been launched by the Pasture Renewal Charitable Trust (PRCT). The address is [www.pasturerenewal.org.nz](http://www.pasturerenewal.org.nz)

"We've pulled together resources (on the website) that benefit farmers in their knowledge of why frequent pasture renewal is a sound investment. The two calculators available on-line mean the potential viability of renewing individual paddocks can be determined – the key thing is to have realistic figures to input into the model," says Trust chairman Murray Willocks.

One calculator is designed for the dairy industry in association with Dairy NZ. The other is designed for sheep, beef and deer farmers in consultation with industry personnel.

"More frequent pasture renewal is the most effective way significant production gains can be incorporated into a farming system. Increased pasture productivity is in the interests of farmers and the whole economy. An investment in a renewal

rate of 10-12% annually in the dairy sector and 8-10% annually in sheep and beef would significantly increase profits and production efficiencies," says Mr Willocks.

Currently the national rate of pasture renewal (across all farming sectors) is 3-4% annually.

In addition to the calculators, the website contains articles from farmers who undertake annual pasture renewal programmes, links to the sponsors' websites, a comprehensive literature review on pasture renewal in New Zealand and other resources.

Mr Willocks says, "We have been careful not to outline a generic approach on how to undertake pasture renewal on a property. There are so many variables from farm to farm and region to region. And our research tells us farmers like to make their renewal decisions in discussion with trusted advisors who know their farming operations and goals first hand. So we are leaving the "how to do it advice" up to rural retailers, seed company representatives, consultants and contractors.

"Right now the potential to earn more across the entire pastoral sector is huge. With pasture production providing the foundation for 35% of New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP), there is a "win-win" for all players involved in the pasture renewal process," says Mr Willocks.

The Trust, which comprises 17 agribusiness organisations, began a campaign in 2007 to work co-operatively to promote the benefits of increased rates of pasture renewal.

For further information please contact Nicola Holmes  
PRCT Project Manager  
03 4651 278/ 027 232 7578

Murray Willocks  
PRCT Chairman  
03 318 8514/ 021 617 930



## Cereal harvest 2009

The wet weather through the country has certainly slowed harvest down in the last half of February with some crops sprouting. Combined with frost and hail earlier in the season it hasn't been the easiest of seasons. The low rainfall and warmer summer temperatures increased the importance of irrigation. At the FAR arable site in Mid Canterbury, irrigation improved yields by 4t/ha in the autumn sown feed wheat trials.

When this year's harvest is compared with the 4 year mean, irrigated crops have performed about average. For example, at the Norwood milling wheat trial the average yield was 0.4 t/ha above the 4 year mean at 10.4 t/ha and at Wakanui 0.6 t/ha above the 4 year mean at 12.1 t/ha. Dryland crops in Canterbury have not fared as well. For example, at Methven the yield was 2.5 t/ha down on the 4 year mean at 8.1 t/ha.

In other regions, autumn wheat yields taken for the cultivar performance trials illustrated that Southland yields (recorded at Balfour) were about average at 10 t/ha, whereas in Southern North Island, yields were 1.2 t/ha above average.

Overall, a season where irrigation proved its worth, particularly with spring sown crops.

## Competition corner

Well done to **Gemma Duncan** and **Max Luisetti** who were the lucky winners of our 'Arable Kids Corner' competition. They each received a cool-bag, a mag-lite, a drinks bottle and a cap.

We look forward to receiving entries for this month's competition. GOOD LUCK!



# Taking Care of Business workshops welcomed by growers



**Do you have a strategic plan for your business?**

**What are your plans for succession?**

**Are you a good employer?**

**Do you know what your health and safety requirements are as an employer?**

'Taking Care of Business' is the first in a series of workshops which will take place over the next two years which aim to assist you in these areas plus many other areas of your business.

Series one, with almost 200 growers in attendance, has focussed on succession

planning and strategic planning. Series two commences in May focussing on the importance of financial planning and employment, getting the best out of people. Topics for phase two will be decided at a pilot workshop in June which will be rolled out throughout the country in 2010.

These workshops are part of the Arable Business Sustainability project, a project coordinated by FAR, strongly supported by the MAF Sustainable Farming Fund (MAF SFF). The outcomes expected from this project will enable you to be better equipped to cope with both the external and internal pressures of your business through improved understanding and better planning. It is also expected that you will be better positioned to make strategic business decisions such as the investment you have in land, plant and equipment in relation to labour, time management etc.

An invitation along with a registration form and programme can be accessed via the FAR website at [www.far.org.nz](http://www.far.org.nz).

Please note, these workshops are specifically designed for growers, we will not accept registrations for industry personnel.

Limited spaces available, early registration is recommended.



## Polite reminder FAR Compulsory Annual Return Declaration

If you grow arable crops (excluding maize) and have not yet completed the FAR Annual Declaration form, this is a polite note to remind you to do so. It is a legal requirement to complete and return this form under the FAR Arable Commodity Levies Order Clauses 13 and 19. If you fail to confirm by the closing date of 31st October each year, you may be audited for compliance purposes.

Please note, **it is a legal requirement to complete and return this form; if we do not receive your completed form, you may be audited.**

If you have misplaced your original form, a further copy can be requested from the FAR office 03 325 6353 or can be downloaded at [www.far.org.nz](http://www.far.org.nz).

## Hot cross buns

4 cups flour  
1 tsp salt  
2 tsp mixed spice  
¼ cup brown sugar  
1 ½ tsp yeast  
1 cup milk, warmed  
100g butter, softened  
2 eggs  
1 cup mixed dried fruit



For crosses:  
½ cup flour  
1 Tbsp butter  
¼ tsp baking powder  
Milk

Blend flour, salt, spices and brown sugar. Stir yeast and milk together, and leave to stand for 15 minutes in a warm place (mixture should be frothy). Beat eggs and softened butter into the yeast mix, then add to blender with dry ingredients. Add dried fruit and blend until mixture is a dough consistency. Place dough into a greased bowl and cover, leaving in a warm area for 1 hour (dough should have doubled in size). Turn onto a floured board and divide into 16 portions, rolling into balls and placing on a greased oven tray. Allow about 1cm between each bun. Cover with a tea towel and leave in a warm place for 30 minutes until risen. Brush each bun with milk and add crosses to each bun. Bake at 190 degrees Celsius for 20 - 25 minutes. Brush with sugar glaze before taking the tray out and cooling.

# “Interest groups”, go from strength to strength

## Arable Y's

Our most recently formed group, Arable Ys is now well established and is strongly supported by a large group of under 35's in the Canterbury region.

The first meeting of the year is due to take place at the Hotel Ashburton on Wednesday 25 March.

Topics to be covered include: understanding trial results, cereal performance trial results and general agronomy trends finishing with a presentation on how to grow the most profitable crop. There will be time to socialise at the end of each meeting.

The group is planning an overseas study tour to Australia in September 2009.



Should you be interested in attending, contact the FAR office on 03 325 6353.

We would like to thank ATS for its continued support towards this group.



## Women in Arable

Now in its 8th year, Women in Arable is going strong with close to 90 members.

After a break for harvest and the holiday season, Women in Arable resumed their monthly meetings in March at the Hotel Ashburton.

Topics that were covered for the first session of Women in Arable included: understanding trial results, cereal performance trial results, general agronomy trends and also a discussion regarding the 2009 programme.

We would like to thank the following sponsors for their continued support towards this group.



Should you wish to take part in these discussion groups, please contact the FAR office on 03 325 6353 to add you to our mailing list.

Invitations for these groups along with all other FAR events can be accessed via the events page of the FAR website.

# A word from Tony. FAR's inaugural scholar

Year 2008 had been a hectic but eventful year, with many highs and lows working towards the completion of my thesis. Now that my thesis is completed, I would like to thank FAR and its supporters for all the support and assistance over the last two years. The FAR Scholarship has been of great help financially, allowing me to focus more on my research the physiological effects of drought in perennial ryegrass and tall fescue. Data collection occurred over two summer periods that demanded a lot of time, money and complex thinking. I would have to say despite the intensity of the work involved, it has been an enjoyable process and naturally, I have learnt many new skills throughout the whole process.

The FAR Scholarship has allowed me to experience new things that students rarely encounter, including exposure with the media, the opportunity to attend governmental conferences, promote agriculture to high school students and meet key people within the industry. All these experiences have been beneficial, educational and rewarding. A big positive feature of the FAR Postgraduate Scholarship is FAR's encouragement to make you feel welcome, interaction with their staff that have supported me, advice as well as discussing current and fresh perspectives of the New Zealand agricultural industry.

Now that I have completed my Masters of Agricultural Science, what does the future hold? Very shortly, I am taking the opportunity to embark on my O.E. for a few months, as this is a much-needed break after many years of university study. Upon the completion of my travel adventures, I plan to seek full time employment in the industry I have come to enjoy.

It has been a pleasure being the FAR Scholar and again, thank you.

Tony Butler



# MAIZE CONFERENCE 2009

## Maize – a global crop in a changing world

This was the theme for the Foundation for Arable Research's (FAR) fourth maize conference which was held in Hamilton on 18th and 19th February 2009.

The conference was delivered at Mystery Creek Events Centre in Hamilton, the same venue FAR used for its very successful Maize Conference in 2006.

The programme consisted of two full days which was a mix of indoor and in-field presentations. "We were delighted to host a great range of speakers, several from overseas, who spoke on a range of relevant, practical topics on maize research and management and ways to capitalise on the changes facing the global maize industry," said Andrea Pearson, FAR's Maize Research Coordinator.

"The conference aimed to highlight the potential of maize, due to its versatility, to continue to be a major crop in the New Zealand farming environment. Sustainable maize production is foremost in producers' minds, as is the incorporation of new technologies and market opportunities. This conference covered aspects of maize production for both grain and silage. It is

important for the maize industry as a whole to evaluate new market opportunities and maintain up-to-date knowledge on all aspects of maize production if the industry is to remain competitive and sustainable."

Hon David Carter, Minister of Agriculture officially opened the conference followed by representatives from the maize industry in the US, UK, Germany and Australia who all give their viewpoint on the maize production in their respective countries.

Prof. Bob Nielsen of Purdue University in Indiana has been extremely popular with New Zealand maize growers and once again joined us to discuss how we can achieve our potential yield.

James Booker of Lincoln University undertook a study on the importance of the maize industry to the New Zealand economy; the results of this study were released at the conference. Details can be obtained from FAR.

Two field trips were incorporated into the conference. The first took place on the afternoon of 18th February and was hosted by the FAR Waikato Arable Research Site where delegates learnt about maximising yield potential. A mix of local and international speakers focussed on topics such as diseases in maize, climate change, tillage options, weed management and spray technology.

A session titled the changing world, focussing on topics such as genetic engineering, new agricultural technologies and climate change opened the second day of the conference. Delegates then had the option to learn more about trends in the livestock and food grain industries, both nationally and overseas or were able to attend a breakout session to hear more about the feed value of maize and using it to increase profit and environmental performance in dairy and beef cattle production.

The final part of the conference involved a trip to Dairy NZ's Scott Farm where a number of speakers focussed on growing and using maize on dairy farms.



A conference dinner took place at Le Grand Boutique Hotel, Hamilton with guest speaker Julia Jones, Senior Rural Manager, ANZ National Bank. Julia was a big hit in her delivery of factual information about the current state of the global economy which she managed to present with an entertaining twist!

Sponsors of the conference included: Pioneer Brand Products, Case IH, Nufarm, New Holland, Landpower, Corson Grain, Allied Grain, Environment Waikato, Rorisons RMD, Alltech, TAG and Rural Supplies, John Austin Ltd, Hill Laboratories, PGG Wrightson Grain, Plant & Food Research, Ballance, Dairy NZ, Agmardt, HSR Seeds and Agrecovery. Nick Pyke, FAR's Chief Executive comments, "On behalf of FAR I'd like to extend my thanks to all our sponsors for their continued support. This is extremely important in the running of our Maize conferences and as such, allowed us to create a very valuable and motivating conference for New Zealand Maize Growers."

We would like to acknowledge our sponsors:



## FAR Arable Sites

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

### CHERTSEY ARABLE RESEARCH SITE



### WAIKATO ARABLE RESEARCH SITE



# Dates for your diary

Thursday 9 April 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Croydon Hotel, Main Queenstown Highway, Gore

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Thursday 16 April 2009

## **Land Use Capability (LUC) Awareness Workshops**

Location: Whangarei

More info: Russell Knutson on 07 957 8325 or russell.knutson@maf.govt.nz

Friday 17 April 2009

## **Land Use Capability (LUC) Awareness Workshops**

Location: Rotorua

More info: Russell Knutson on 07 957 8325 or russell.knutson@maf.govt.nz

Tuesday 28 to Thursday 28 April 2009

## **EcoForum Conference & Exhibition**

Location: Australian Technology Park, Sydney

More info: <http://www.ecoforum.net.au/2009/registration.asp>

Monday 11 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Dannevirke

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Tuesday 12 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Hamilton

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Wednesday 13 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Gisborne

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Monday 18 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Christchurch

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Tuesday 19 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Ashburton

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Wednesday 20 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Timaru

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Monday 25 to Wednesday 27 May 2009

## **ISF World Seed Congress 2009**

Location: Kervansaray Lara Hotel, Antalya, Turkey

More info: [www.worldseed2009.com/](http://www.worldseed2009.com/)

Wednesday 27 to Thursday 28 May 2009

## **Biofuels International Expo & Conference**

Location: Beurs van Berlage

More info: Pierre-Gomis Diallo 00 44 208 648

7092 or [pierre@biofuels-news.com](mailto:pierre@biofuels-news.com)

Thursday 28 May 2009

## **Taking Care of Business Workshop**

(Registration required)

Location: Gore

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

Wednesday 10 to Saturday 13 June 2009

## **Mystery Creek Agricultural Field Days 2009**

Location: Mystery Creek, Hamilton

More info: [www.fielddays.co.nz/](http://www.fielddays.co.nz/)

Monday 10 August to Friday 14 2009

## **The 14th Australasian Plant Breeding and 11th Society for the advancement in Breeding Research in Asia and Oceania Conference**

Location: Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns

More info: [www.plantbreeding09.com.au](http://www.plantbreeding09.com.au)

Tuesday 11 to Thursday 13 August 2009

## **New Zealand Plant Protection Society Conference 2009**

Location: Hutton Theatre, Otago Museum Conference Centre

More info: [www.nzpps.org/conference2009.php](http://www.nzpps.org/conference2009.php)

Sunday 8 to Thursday 12 November 2009

## **Asian Seed Congress 2009**

Location: Bangkok, Thailand

More info: [www.apsaseed.org/](http://www.apsaseed.org/)

Sunday 26 to Thursday 30 September 2010

## **The 17th Australian Weeds Conference**

Location: Christchurch

More info: [www.17awc.org](http://www.17awc.org)

Wednesday 21 to Friday 23 October 2009

## **Getting to know Groundwater & Surfacewater**

Location: Novotel Rotorua Lakeside, Lake End Tutanekai Street, Rotorua

More info: [cgs@groundwater.com.au](mailto:cgs@groundwater.com.au)

Wednesday 11 to Friday 13 November 2009

## **Royal New Zealand Show 2009**

Location: Canterbury Agricultural Park, Christchurch

More info: Canterbury A&P Association 03 343 3033

Thursday 3 December 2009

## **Combinable Crops 2009**

Location: FAR Arable Research Site, 2km north of Chertsey, SH1

More info: FAR office 03 325 6353

## Members of the board

STUART WRIGHT (Chairman)

North South Island

03 318 3897

JOHN WRIGHT (Deputy Chairman)

United Wheatgrowers

03 302 8111

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

BARRY McCARTER

Appointed Industry Representative

09 307 0000

Dr MIKE DUNBIER

Appointed Industry Representative

03 358 6479

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