

## Communication is the key

As a member I feel I have tangible interests relating to farming and it is important to me to find out if my interests are being addressed by Federated Farmers. Communication with members is a high priority for Federated Farmers and there are various avenues available to members to keep abreast of what's happening:

- the 0800 phone line (0800 327 646)
- the website ([www.fedfarm.org.nz](http://www.fedfarm.org.nz)) or
- contact someone listed in this newsletter.

Don't be too quick to complain if you are not hearing about current issues, it is all too easy to miss a newspaper article or news items on the radio.

Waikato Federated Farmer's Hamilton office keeps myself, and all Federated Farmers' staff and delegates, chairpersons, provincial presidents and many farmers busy on your behalf. Many of whom juggle their own businesses to attend a large number of meetings in order to make a difference now and for the future of farming.

Meetings are held regularly in the Hamilton boardroom where the chairman and delegates from our provincial branches (representing the various industry groups) are updated on what is happening and to discuss the

best action or position to take on various issues. You can be assured that all issues, big and small, are dealt with, even though at times progress may appear slow. Waikato Federated Farmers is a pro-active province and helps to bring about beneficial changes for farming, and we also take action to stop bureaucracy affecting the day to day running of your businesses and livelihoods. This all happens behind the scenes and not all WINS are high profile.

At our meetings we invite various chief executives, directors and business entities, who have an affect on farming businesses through their decision making, to explain their reasoning, quantify any proposed changes and generally inform those present on the issues.

Finally we value members (of all ages and generations) input, it is important that we represent your views now and into the future.

**Gaylene Bamford**  
- Waikato Regional  
Assistant



## Introducing Paul Le Mière

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as team leader for the local policy team in the north island, with responsibility for the Waikato local policy work. I started with Federated Farmers in September having come from Jersey in the Channel Islands, where I was the Director of Agriculture and Rural Economy for the Island's government. I worked in government for 10 years and previous to that was a lecturer at the University of Reading on Crop physiology, where I did my PhD.

Most of the issues local policy staff have dealt with this year relate to ongoing District and Regional Planning processes and



councils' responsibilities under the Resource Management Act. They range from bylaw changes, rates submissions to substantial changes of plans such as Variation 6 – water allocation.

In every instance we have lobbied hard and (generally) effectively to ensure that policies and plans do not unnecessarily or unjustifiably impede farming businesses. As you can appreciate this keeps both Federated Farmers policy staff and the elected members very busy. Whilst I am very lucky to be able to draw on the wealth of collective experience and knowledge found in Federated Farmers' local policy team my role would be impossible without the support and enthusiasm I receive from the members of the province.

I would like to especially thank Stew, Gaylene and the elected committee members for all the hard work they have done this year and for the help they have given me to settle in. I have had a very interesting first few months and I look forward to seeing what the New Year brings us.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

**Paul Le Mière - Team Leader,**  
**Local Policy – North Island**

## PROVINCIAL CONTACT LIST



### WAIKATO

#### Provincial President:

Stewart Wadey, 07 888 1808

#### Vice President:

Walter Scott, 07 889 7144

#### Meat & Fibre Chairman:

Andre de Hann, 07 873 8631

#### Grain & Seed Chairman:

Syd Fraser-Jones, 07 887 5780

#### Dairy Chairman:

John Bluett, 07 825 9709

#### Sharemilkers Section Chairman:

Jeff Bolstad, 07 884 4127

#### Sharemilkers' Section Executive:

Malcolm Piggott, 07 888 0000

#### Sharemilkers Employers' Section Chairman:

Tony Wilding, 07 883 4802

#### Rural Women of NZ:

Anne Rawson, 07 878 1070

#### Waikato/BOP Young Farmers' Chairman:

Chris Irons, 07 878 5227

#### Waikato Hauraki/Coromandel

Rural Support Trust: 0800 787 254

#### Regional Assistant:

Gaylene Bamford, 07 858 0820

## WAIKATO RURAL SUPPORT NETWORK

For all rural people experiencing stress for whatever reason, the phone number is:

**0800 RURAL HELP or**  
**0800 787 254**



# LOCAL VOICE

## PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2008

### WAIKATO

## Improving weather

At last the weather is coming right for the new cropping season which is well underway. It is apparent now that a much larger acreage of maize for silage is being planted; perhaps as much as between one third and a half more will be the final figure. Most of this increase is on-farm by first time farmer maize growers.

The area for maize grain is not apparent yet as this crop can serve a double purpose. This is in a good year when not required for silage, can be left to mature and then harvested for grain.

Prices for grain and grain products have fluctuated wildly in the wake of the fiscal meltdown. World crops are not showing huge surpluses as predicted, and in some areas crops have been well under estimate.

The Australian grain growing season started with high hopes, increased acreage, all of which their industry badly needed after the ravages of the last drought. Their old foe the drought has set in and the latest reports have downgraded their crop tonnages by millions.

In some areas crops that had little chance of heading, have been cut, baled and will be sold for stock food; thus avoiding a complete loss.



The present world supply of emergency grain stands at about thirty days, so different from a decade or more ago when the emergency supply was three hundred days.

The Waikato Grain & Seed industry section has had a busy year; we have accomplished a lot thanks to the dedication of the committee and the participation from our President, Stew Wadey.

The Waikato Grain & Seed Industry Section wishes all farmers a good growing season and a Happy Christmas.

**Syd Fraser-Jones - Waikato Grain & Seed**  
**Chairman**

## Challenging times ahead



Since becoming Waikato Federated Farmers President many issues that I have been lobbying for on your behalf have presented challenges, but we are still working to achieve sensible and sustainable outcomes on these issues. I wish to bring to your attention my executive team, who are listed at the back of this newsletter. I am very appreciative of their skilled support and collective knowledge, which I find invaluable, and I am privileged to have them at my disposal.

It is an accepted observation that the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), that was passed into New Zealand Statute, was interpreted as a dubious democratic process. That ETS legislation is viewed with serious concern by many of our Waikato members and the ETS will be keeping me occupied for awhile yet.

We broke our balance sheet with the hearing process of Water Allocation – Variation 6. The Hearing Commissioners findings were basically status quo, which the Waikato Regional Councillors accepted, and will be adopted in the regulatory Regional Plan. The Agricultural Working Group, which we are part of, have until 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2009 to lodge an appeal in the Environment Court. This is to secure adequate water resources to be legally available as of right for farmers within the Waikato Regional Council constituency.

This is the time to suggest to your neighbours, who are not members, of the Federation to join us. As you are aware our funding is received from subscriptions. Only so much can be done with constrained funding, especially when lobbying against such serious variations, which will affect salt of the earth family farmers' profitability, not to mention their acknowledged contribution to our regional and national economy.

The RMA system is certainly not a level

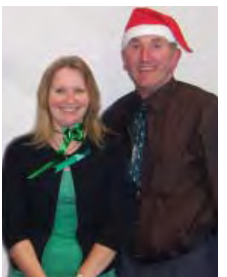
playing field in regard to the costs incurred to protect your farming businesses. The system we operate in now is so bureaucratic that I believe it cannot be enduring. Therefore, I suggest that we start the Central Government lobby process to seek a Local Government Review. We now await our new Government edicts under John Key, on such things as fast tracking the RMA.

My Federation work calendar already goes well into 2009, with the known issues as mentioned. We do have huge challenges coming our way, but if we stick together and work together as a coordinated agricultural industry the entire world will see us lead New Zealand to prosperity. Our country depends on farmers more than ever right now.

On behalf of your district teams throughout the Waikato, the Waikato Regional Executive and Regional Assistant

Gaylene Bamford, we all sincerely wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and hope the New Year treats you all well.

**Stew Wadey -**  
**Waikato President**



**THE NEXT BEST**  
**THING TO A**  
**CHRISTMAS BONUS**

**TAX**  
**REFUNDS**  
**.CONZ**

**Chances are your**  
**staff could be due**  
**a tax refund**

They can get a free no-obligation tax refund assessment online in 10 minutes\*

[www.taxrefunds.co.nz](http://www.taxrefunds.co.nz)

\*For 80% of people

## Brighter future for wool

### Wool Partners

It looks like strong wool is at last getting some much needed attention. Wool Partners have sprung into life and is under the chairmanship of Theresa Gattung and CEO Iain Abercrombie.

This new company, put together by Meat and Wool NZ (and has purchased Wools of NZ who owns the Fernmark quality brand), is now buying wool through its subsidiary Wool Grower Holdings. Sales people are in the USA, UK, France, Germany, and China with many contacts.

Farmers are confidently hoping that this will bring some unity and a stronger marketing team for wool. The new company is approaching other wool dealerships to join forces and also approaching farmers to become shareholders.

### Silver Fern Farms

The deal between PGGWrightson and Silver Fern Farms is OFF. Silver Fern Farms will carry on and has launched a new contract

supply program for the coming season which looks quite attractive. If you are able to commit some of your lamb chop to it. An amalgamation of meat processors could still be on the cards. Lamb is in short supply so even with the economic difficulties the world is experiencing we should see marked improvements in returns for lamb this season. Beef has come down from recent 'highs', but should still see a better return than last year.

### Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)

The big issue now is to grapple with the ETS.



I am hopeful that Federated Farmers can put up a credible argument for government to modify the scheme to at least compare with our trading partners. I am sure that a lot of effort will go into this. As it stands now, the ETS would be disastrous for farming and forestry.

### Animal Identification.

Traceability is very important to the consumers of our product. The National Animal Identification and Tracing (NAIT) has been working on animal ID, but there are some doubts as to how extensive this should be. The government has offered \$1.5m to set up a database, but some farmers are anxious that the database is too big and expensive. NAIT will get back to us on prices for each database transaction and also the size of the database. So there is still some more discussion to ensure the system isn't too expensive.

**André de Haan - Waikato Meat & Fibre  
Chairman**

## World financial crisis hits dairying

The world financial crisis will have a major impact on our industry with the commodity prices for dairy dropping rapidly, due to credit availability and consumer demand. This will probably mean a lower final payout for this season and an even lower one the following season.



With farm costs for the 2007/08 year at \$3.75kg/m solids we will have to get our farm costs lower to survive this downturn. Also, the cash reserves from last season, if used wisely, will get most farmers through. To help bring our costs under control presently, putting away the cheque book for a couple of months should bring our input suppliers back to reality (the gravy train has stopped).

Land and cow prices will take some adjustment; the banks already are short of funds to on-lend to farmers. The cost of these funds is presently 4 percent above this time last year. Also, dairy farmers will carry a high cashflow load for the industry, as credit is not available on the world financial market.

### National Animal Identification & Tracing (NAIT)

Federated Farmers' submission on NAIT is basically to reject the present proposal. The main issues we have are with the costing/cost benefit; who controls it, who has use of the information and is it a total biosecurity protection without sheep in it? And, will it cover both biosecurity and product security?

If it is rejected the dairy industry will look seriously at its own product security system and biosecurity. Presently 96 percent of cows are recorded on 'Minda' or 'Maestro' systems. A lot more consultation and discussion between government departments, industry and farmers is required to end up with a more cost effective protection system.

### Environment Waikato (EW)

EW has released a report on the status of soil and water in the Waikato Region. The dairy industry did not fair too well in this report. There are major issues, both farming and the community will have to deal with to maintain or improve the status of these assets.

Now with the government giving co-management of the Waikato River to both EW and Tainui a more consultative and collaborative approach is needed in dealing with the issues exposed in the report.

One issue is the non-compliance by dairy farmers of the permitted activity rule for effluent disposal. Recently EW carried out two helicopter flights monitoring 200 dairy farms. The level of non-compliant farms

was still high. On their second flight EW took Fonterra staff and myself up to show us what they were seeing from the air.

An issue that showed up, is that farmers who operate under the permitted activity rule using a pond system are still discharging to land or waterways. If you are using a pond system under the permitted activity rule no discharge should occur. Most ponds are designed to hold three months dairy shed effluent, which means more regular pumping out is required. Also where application to land is by irrigator the permitted activity rule allows us to apply 25mls per application. If we still want to be able to operate under a permitted activity scenario then we will have to improve our performance, otherwise we will be back with a consent process.

Because it is the end of the year, hopefully this Christmas, January, February and March will be a wet one. I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a productive New Year.

**John Bluett - Waikato Dairy Chairman**



## Watch your speed

Cars continue to speed past school buses, but the wheels of power turn slowly.



Rural Women New Zealand has been advocating strongly for lights and signs, along with a national education campaign and better enforcement of the road code – that is the 'three Es' education, enforcement and engineering.

During August Rural Women New Zealand had meetings with the Bus & Coach Association, the Minister of Transport Safety, the National Manager of Road Policing and the Ministry of Education. We received a sympathetic hearing, but no specific undertakings for change.

Many schools in rural areas are sited in 100kph zones and at present there is an ad hoc approach where communities can apply to the relevant authorities for a reduced speed zone outside schools, which may or may not be approved.

We commend the recent pilot programme introduced by Whangarei District Council which has seen large 40kph signs with flashing lights erected outside four local schools. We

spoke to one of those, Kamo School, which reports a very good response to the signs with traffic slowing down markedly.

We encourage councils and the NZ Transport Agency to erect such signs outside all schools. We can educate our children on road safety, but the fact remains that children are unpredictable and find it hard to judge speed and distance. The statistics speak for themselves: If a person is hit by a vehicle at 20kph they have a 5 percent risk of dying, whereas a person hit at 70kph has a 99 percent chance of being fatally injured.

There are so many people calling for the same solutions:

- flashing lights to be installed on school buses, front and back, to alert drivers that a school bus has stopped for passengers; **and**
- bold 20kph signs on school buses to remind drivers of the road code rule.

So what's more important? The cost benefit of traffic getting from A to B in the shortest possible time or keeping our school children safe?

Rural Women New Zealand says there's 'no contest' and we are keen to work with the School Trustees' Association and the New Zealand Principals' Federation to lobby for prompt action on these solutions.



## New look website for the Federation

The new and improved Federated Farmers website is up and running and will soon be a one-stop shop for members. Shortly members will be able to purchase and pay for items through the website as well as find possible employees for their farms. Both functions farmers have asked for.

A working group, comprising provincial presidents and Strategic Communications staff, worked in the development of the new website with the purpose of providing members a more functional and easier to use website. Feedback collected from members and staff drove the changes for the website.

Communications Advisor, Kara Tait says that the new website was an ideal place to showcase the Federation's new branding while also providing a more professional image for Federated Farmers.

Among the many new features on the website are 'Have your Say' and 'Polls'.

To date, the 'Have your say' feature has

been extremely popular with members having the chance to air their opinions on topics such as, debating control in the meat industry and whether or not NAIT is on the right track.



The online polls, viewed in the members section, allow members to vote on various topics such as what they see as the biggest issue facing farmers. It also shows the results and gives an indication of how other members feel.



We have all come out of calving pretty well by all account and we are all busy with mating and making silage. With the extended day-light hours most young farmers clubs have a team entered into a business house competition; whether it be in touch rugby, five aside football and/or cricket, or numerous other options. These are good for relieving stress and relaxing, and often refreshing to mind.

Coming up we have the National Bank Young Farmer Competitions running in districts and encourage anyone between 16 and 31 to come along and have a go at the competition. You will learn something, no matter what skill level you have. We're also encouraging Agito students to come along as well. However, you do not have to be a member to enter.

The district final dates are:

- Waipa/Waitomo Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December, Otorohanga
- Waikato/Piako Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January, Matamata
- Bay of Plenty Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January, Rotorua.

For further information contact -  
Bevan Proffit 07 877 8911  
Chris Irons 07 878 5227

Or visit our website:

www.youngfarmercontest.co.nz  
Email: contest@youngfarmers.co.nz

The feedback from both staff and Federation members has been positive so far with both parties excited about the future enhancements in the not too distant future. The new look website went live in July 2008.

Phase two, of the website development project, will allow members the ability to pay their membership fees, purchase contracts or agreements, as well as access rural job vacancies across the country. It is planned that phase two will roll out in the next six months.

Phase three will allow members to update their details online in a more streamlined manner. The release date for phase three is to be confirmed.

While there are a number of new features on the website, the website address is still the same. Visit [www.fedfarm.org.nz](http://www.fedfarm.org.nz) for a look at the new and improved site.