

## Introducing the new chief



Conor English

Federated Farmers of New Zealand welcomes Conor English to the position of chief executive officer.

Mr English started his career as a sheep, cattle, crop and forestry farmer. He has a very good understanding of

the role and goals of Federated Farmers and already has established relationships with many of our stakeholders. The agricultural sector has ongoing challenges and the Federation looks forward to making progress with Mr English's contribution.

Prior to this appointment Mr English was Commercial Director and second-in-charge of The Property Group, a consultancy with 80 staff. He is the former chief executive officer of the New Zealand Property Institute and has had roles in other lobby groups and in the Beehive.

Mr English says: "This is an exciting time. New Zealand grows grass to feed the world and there are plenty of challenges to ensure we continue to do that successfully. I am looking forward to helping build on the excellent work of the Federation."

Mr English commenced his appointment on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008.

## NAIT news

### RECAP

Last year Meat & Fibre delegates passed a resolution supporting, in principle, the electronic identification and traceability of cattle. No detailed information was available at that time, but it appeared a reasonable and worthwhile idea based on biosecurity and market assurance issues.

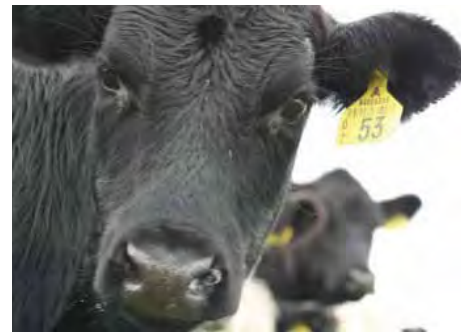
In July 2008 the Meat & Fibre executive received the National Animal Identification and Tracing's Biosecurity Discussion Document giving the first detail of the proposal and were asked for submissions by 1 August 2008.

A number of issues are of concern:

1. The financial analysis doesn't stack up. Costs outweigh the benefits. Some of the assumptions regarding on farm benefits are wildly optimistic.
2. The scope of the NAIT document has grown enormously and now suggests inclusion of sheep. There are also onerous on-farm compliance requirements.
3. There is reference to the NAIT database being used for other purposes including the emission trading scheme.

This is a very different proposal to what was outlined 12 months ago. Farmers would be burdened with yet more cost and compliance for little proven benefit. The NAIT concept

has taken on a life of its own and farmers are again faced with more rules, regulations and costs with no apparent commercial gain.



### ACTION TAKEN

Meetings and discussions were held with the NAIT Governance Group and their funding organisations (Meat & Wool New Zealand, Dairy NZ, DINZ, MIA, and DCANZ) to seek further information and clarification. Most of these groups share Federated Farmers concerns and many are also talking with NAIT. At this stage Federated Farmers awaits clarification on issues raised with NAIT before forming its final view. The close off for the Federated Farmers submission has been delayed until this information has been supplied.

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### MEAT & FIBRE'S POSITION

There are some positives around electronic identification and traceability. However, Federated Farmers remains unconvinced over the commercial drivers and overall benefits and see little reason to support the NAIT proposal in its current form. Federated Farmers is also concerned about use of collected data for other purposes. The Federation is not convinced that enough consideration has been given to a more cost effective alignment within existing capabilities and structures like the Animal Health Board. Members can be assured that Federated Farmers will continue to pursue the above issues to ensure that the interests of Meat & Fibre producers are protected.

### HAVE YOUR SAY

If you wish to have your say about the issue, the easiest way is to use the Feds blog. You can also find it in the "Our Work/Have Your Say/Is NAIT on right track?" part of the Federated Farmers website [www.fedfarm.org.nz](http://www.fedfarm.org.nz)

*Extract from The Rambull  
The newsletter from Federated Farmers  
Meat & Fibre Section*

# LOCAL VOICE

## PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER



HAURAKI-COROMANDEL

OCTOBER 2008

## Feilday a success

We continue to struggle with the constant barrage of rules and regulation changes to farming. We win some and alter others, but the real satisfaction lies in knowing that we are making a difference in the struggle for sustainable farming.



### Fielday - 'Stock in streams'

Hauraki-Coromandel Federated Farmers held a really successful fieldday on the practicalities of fencing hill country to exclude stock from streams. Having Environment Waikato staff on hand to discuss issues and problems was beneficial for all who attended. Low farm profitability is a wake-up call as to some of the financial issues facing farmers at present. Questions are being raised as to how farmers are to fund fencing and watering for the coming seasons, when profits in farming are at an all time low. One Environment Waikato policy staff member had never been on a Coromandel hill country farm before and went away with a better understanding of the issues facing farmers over the fencing of stock.

The message portrayed was that fencing hill country posed many problems. These included the costs of fencing, fencing tough contour land, the subsequent maintenance of fences, getting water to stock and weed control.

Set stocking sheep and cattle created few issues, but farmers need to be more vigilant with rotational grazing or break grazing and when cattle erode stream banks or stream

edges. A higher priority of care is needed to be given to streams when they enter highly populated areas.

We thank George and Marie Foster for making their farm available for the fieldday. What great views they have from their property and what a great example of the difficulties faced by our Coromandel sheep and cattle farmers.

### Foreign Investors Profit

There is also strong concern that the Commerce Commission is regulating Fonterra to provide milk to competitors to support the internal market. Most of these companies have a degree of foreign ownership, which means that those profits will be heading overseas instead of staying in the New Zealand market.

### Emission Trading Scheme (ETS)

I had a radio interview with David Carter, National Party spokesman for agriculture, on our Coromandel station. We discussed research funding, local and national bureaucracy, the RMA and milk supply regulation. His answers were carefully worded political statements. We ended before the ETS was even discussed, but Federated Farmers needs to push all major parties to exclude animal emissions from the scheme. The election is a great time to pressure parties into publically stating their policy position on the ETS and whether or not they will be exempting stock from the scheme. Being the only country in the world to charge for animal emissions, and the fact that it could mean the ruin for farmers, shows no sense. An average farm could pay (on projected figures) \$30,000-\$50,000 for the scheme after 2013. Farmers do not have the ability to pay such large sums in their budgets at present.

### Thames Coromandel District Council Annual Plan submissions - rates

We made a submission on the land or capital rating, we stood to loose interest profits going from the general rate to the Uniform Annual General Charge UAGC and loosing our differential on farming. Nigel Billings, Federated Farmers senior policy advisor, and member Mike Morrison presented a great case. We now have capital rating and have retained our 0.6 differential, but lost the interest going to the UAGC.

### Feedback

Having meetings in different areas has helped us keep in touch with ordinary members who do not travel far. It is gratifying, as President, to have members feeding back information and doing their own submissions on a wide variety of issues. Our small region is working well.

One member asked me the other day why they should pay their sub? We handle so many issues that you forget many of the gains, but our province has had many wins and nationally the gains, or part gains, are numerous. Two major issues among the many hundred are, the National Animal Identification Scheme (NAIT), which will cost farmers substantial money and the Emission Trading Scheme that, if implemented, will ruin farmers' budgets. We need Federated Farmers to help us fight our battles or we will be regulated and priced out of farming.

### Membership

In our province and nationally our numbers have decrease with farm amalgamations. We need strength of numbers to be an effective lobby group and are missing not having a field rep on the ground.

*John Sanford - Hauraki-Coromandel President*



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HAURAKI-COROMANDEL

**Hauraki-Coromandel Federated Farmers**  
publishes regular newsletters to keep our members informed

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For comments on this newsletter or if you wish to join Federated Farmers phone: 0800 327 646

## Weather extremes hard on dairying

The last six months, in our province, have been particularly difficult for dairy farming, due to the weather extremes suffered by many farmers. Firstly recovering from very dry conditions and then becoming very wet. Recently it has settled into a more normal pattern.

Most farms are down in production with the average for the district, approximately minus 10 percent.

The cost of production has risen alarmingly, (DairyNZ figures in Waikato average \$2.80). With the recent announcement of a reduced payout next year 2008/09 season, from \$7.00 to \$6.60, farmers need to look very closely at expenditure. With a reduction in commodity prices and the global financial crisis the payout could be reduced further.



Recently I have been involved in the review for the Strategic Framework for New Zealand's Future Dairy Farming and Industry. Most people can relate this to the well published four percent productivity gain targeted when the framework came out in 2005. Actual productivity gain in the last three years is 1.5 percent average. It is clear that to achieve four percent there is a lot of work to be done.

The Strategic Framework covers all aspects of dairy farming. The Federated Farmers Dairy executive is working closely with DairyNZ on the review.

Environment Waikato resumed helicopter dairy effluent monitoring from 1<sup>st</sup> September. There are still an alarming number of dairy farms who are non-compliant. Education is still the key here and we are continuing to work with all interested parties to reduce non-compliance in the future. Our farm at Mangawhero Road was inspected on the 1<sup>st</sup> September by helicopter. We received a letter from Environment Waikato stating that we were compliant. It was brilliant to receive this letter and is a step in the right direction.

Currently Fonterra is holding meetings around the country and I would expect a good turn out given the current economic climate and the San Lu crisis.

**Kevin Robinson - Hauraki-Coromandel Dairy Chairman**

## Prices showing some improvement

It has been a particularly difficult year for sheep and beef farmers with sheep numbers reducing significantly and confidence within the industry at an all time low. It has been good to see early season prices for sheep and beef have risen, due to a more favourable exchange rate and a shortage of killable stock.



Federated Farmers have just launched the T150 campaign. This campaign sets a goal of \$150 a lamb for the sheep meat and wool industries to work towards over the next five



years. The inadequate returns sheep farmers have been receiving for their stock can't continue or more farmers will stop farming sheep. While there have been different proposals and discussions on ownership and structure in the meat processing sector of late there is no clear focus of what the industry should be aiming for over the next five years, the T150 campaign will provide that.

Wallace Meats in Thames have upgraded the sheep chain, but until they source a good market for lambs they will continue to kill large numbers of ewes again this year.

It appears that some meat companies are planning to discount ram lambs, already buyers for the Auckland Supermarket chains do not want ram lambs next year.

**Mike Morrison - Hauraki-Coromandel Meat & Fibre Chairman**

## Entries open soon for NZDI Awards

It is now that time of year when we are looking for people to enter the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards. If you are interested or know of anyone that would be interested please encourage them to enter. Entries open on 1st November 2008 and close on 9th January 2009.

Auckland Hauraki New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards convenors this year are: Dan and Sarah Murdock  
Phone: 07 888 1542 or 021 399 551.

### Categories:

- **New Zealand Dairy Trainee of the Year** - You need to be 18 years or over as at 31<sup>st</sup> December, employed on a dairy farm and must currently be enrolled towards achieving or have completed within the last two years, a National Certificate in Agriculture Level 4 (Dairy) and agree to the conditions of entry. Should an entrant meet the criteria to enter either the Farm manager or Sharemilker of the Year Competition, they are ineligible to



enter the Dairy Trainee of the Year.

- **New Zealand Farm Manager of the Year**
- **New Zealand Sharemilker of the Year**

Entry forms, conditions and more information is available on the website:

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

### Dates to keep free:

- **Launch Day: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008** - more information will be sent out later as a flyer.
- **Awards Dinner: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**Jeff Alley - Hauraki-Coromandel Sharemilkers' Section Representative**

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## Are you employees covered?

### FACT SHEET 2008/81

### PRE-EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

#### BACKGROUND

The following is a checklist to ensure Employers comply with their legal obligations when employing staff. This checklist includes suggestions on what should be done before offering a job, before the Employee starts work, getting the Employee started and health and safety precautions.

#### BEFORE OFFERING THE JOB:

- Applicant fills out a job application form
- Check that the applicant is entitled to work in New Zealand
- Check references
- Check the applicant's driving licence (if required) and criminal record (if required)
- Request a pre-employment health test (if required).

#### BEFORE EMPLOYEE STARTS WORK:

- Provide the successful applicant with a letter offering the job
- Provide the Employee with a written employment agreement
- Clarify in writing the amount he/she is to be paid, the rent, bond for their accommodation (if any) and terms of bonuses (may all be in agreement)
- Employee signs and returns one written agreement
- Complete all work required on the accommodation
- Inform other applicants that their application was unsuccessful.

#### GETTING THE EMPLOYEE STARTED:

- Employee completes tax code declaration IR330
- Employee provides bank account details (if required)
- Employer to set up a wage and time and holiday record
- Employee is shown how to record hours of work (if relevant)
- Employer to go over job description to ensure Employee understands the job requirements:
  - Purpose of position
  - To whom he is to report
  - Who reports to the Employee (if any)
  - Hours of work (including breaks)
  - Expectations of routine work
- Inform Employee of smoking policy (if relevant)
- Inform Employee of sick and bereavement leave entitlements
- Inform Employee of annual leave entitlements
- Discuss Employee's training needs
- Show Employee all farm policies and/or farm manual
- Complete farm tour

- Introduce Employee to other Employees and their families
- Appoint a person to support Employee through their first few weeks (i.e. farm manager or colleague)
- Communicate expectations to Employee clearly regarding:
  - Dress standards
  - Definition of foul language, bullying, etc
  - Treatment of stock
- Inform Employee with whom he can raise concerns
- Complete a property inspection with the Employee
- Lodge the bond (if taken) with Tenancy Services
- Transfer power and phone to Employee's name.



#### HEALTH AND SAFETY:

- Ensure Employee knows all farm health and safety policies
- Show Employee all workplace hazards
- Show Employee all fire extinguisher locations
- Show Employee the location of first aid kits
- Ensure Employee knows what to do in an emergency
- Ensure Employee knows who to inform if an accident occurs
- Ensure Employee knows contact details for emergency services
- Provide or check that Employee has all safety equipment for the job
- Check that Employee can safely use common machinery (i.e. ATV, chainsaws, etc).

### FACT SHEET 2008/80

### ENDING EMPLOYMENT CHECKLIST

#### BACKGROUND

The following is a checklist to ensure Employers comply with their legal obligations when an Employee ends their employment by whatever means, whether by resignation, dismissal or the end of a fixed term contract.

#### UPON ENDING EMPLOYMENT

- Confirm the final day of employment and the final day in accommodation in

writing;

- Complete accommodation inspection report;
- Complete bond return form (if relevant);
- Provide a Certificate of Service (normally by letter);
- Calculate final wage and holiday pay; inform Employee of amount, any deductions and date of payment;
- Check that all property is returned to the Employer;
- Provide a reference (if Employer wishes to but is under no legal obligation to do so).

#### CONTACT

Federated Farmers of New Zealand fact sheets are produced for our members by the Federation as a quick and easy reference guide to general information on topics of interest. If you wish to reproduce the information please ensure that you provide appropriate acknowledgement of the Federation as the source. To either seek further advise on information on the material contained in this fact sheet or to order a contract or agreement ring 0800 327 646. The information contained within these fact sheets should not be relied upon in lieu of legal advice. If you require specialised legal advice, please contact Federated Farmers' team of employment lawyers and OSH specialists.

## Employment Seminars

11 November 2008, 1.00pm  
War Memorial Hall, Orchard Road,  
Ngatea

or  
12 November 2008, 10:00am  
RSA, Studholme Street, Morrinsville

**\$30.00 per person**

**For more information or to register  
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