

As General Manager of Agriculture New Zealand, I try to keep in touch with the 'grass roots' of our business: delivering quality training to the agriculture sector.

Agrichemicals is my area of expertise and until recently I regularly delivered Growsafe and Approved Handler Courses.

This training has now been labelled 'compliance' and no longer attracts a government subsidy. The volume of delivery being done in this area has reduced dramatically because it is now user-pays. I continue to be involved in the area of agrichemical compliance as a Test Certifier for the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA – ex ERMA) issuing Approved Handler and Growsafe Certificates via our Farmsafe on-line and home-pack renewal service.

I occasionally watch the TV show 'Undercover Boss' which demonstrates how easy it is, as a Manager, to lose touch with the challenges and realities of work at the coal face so when an opportunity arises, if possible, I'll get involved.

This week I had the privilege of spending two days with a group of Youth Guarantee Students in the Manawatu. These are 16 and 17 year old youngsters who enrolled in a one year agriculture programme with Agriculture New Zealand in February. School wasn't working for them so they opted into an alternative programme to continue their learning. These two days renewed my appreciation of the great job our tutors and workplace trainers do in developing our young people as they embark on a career in agriculture. Those of you who take on the role of guide, mentor, teacher, life coach and a multitude of other roles know the amazing job you do.

As I was only with these youngsters for 2 days, it would be unrealistic to expect that I will have had an influence in shaping their future, however it was easy to identify the potential that lies within each one and recognise that with appropriate nurturing and mentoring each of these youngsters can aspire to a great future. You, in your role as a workplace trainer can and do significantly influence and shape their futures. For that I thank you.

A couple of the students are still looking for work placements, so if you are in the Manawatu and could take a youngster under your wing and provide them with an opportunity to develop

their practical skills we'd love to hear from you. Phone us on 0800 475 455 to discuss what is involved.

**Colin Spence**  
**General Manager – Agriculture New Zealand**

## Feedback

**Your feedback on our programmes is vital to their continued success.**

Included in this newsletter is a Workplace Trainer Feedback Form. We would appreciate if you could take a few moments to complete this and return it to National Office. Your comments will contribute to the next review we do of our Rural Skills and Destination Dairy Programmes.

If you would prefer to provide your feedback over the phone, this can be organised. Phone 0800 475 455 to request a telephone survey. Our operators will take your name and phone number and ask for a preferred time to contact you.

**Audrey Spence**  
**Quality and Academic Manager**

## Farewell Pete

Peter O'Flaherty was farewelled in style at Agriculture New Zealand's recent conference in Palmerston North in June. Pete retired after 36 years continuous service. By all accounts, retirement is proving to be as busy as work was!



George Gould (PGW Managing Director) and Peter O'Flaherty

## Take on a Challenge. Live the Dream!

Hayley Parker was a city girl living in Auckland, with dreams of farming and – one day – working on a sheep muster on horse back.

When she told her parents she wanted to do the Future Farming training programme through Agriculture New Zealand, they were a bit taken aback.

“I had no farming background. It was one of those dreams you have when you’re a kid, but it never seemed possible.” But I got more interested in it and found out what sort of courses there were out there.”

Hayley did a Gateway programme in Year 13 – and then found out about the Future Farming training programme. “When I left school, I didn’t want to be stuck in a classroom all day – I wanted to do the practical work.”

Hayley spent the next year working four out of five days on Aratiatia Station in Taupo, which is jointly run by Agriculture New Zealand and Landcorp Farming Ltd. The programme is a one year introduction to drystock farm skills, designed for school leavers and for those looking for a career in agriculture.

Students from a diverse range of backgrounds and ages are trained in a wide range of on-farm skills. Up to 14 students are selected each year and they will spend one day a week in class and four days a week on farm engaged in practical, hands-on learning. Students gain skills such as how to use equipment safely, feed budgeting, pasture analysis and stock health. “We

got all sorts of experience from tractor work, chainsaw skills, stock work; vaccinating, crutching, drenching and fencing – everything really.”

Hayley, now 20 years old, is working on Landcorp’s Goudies Station – a sheep, beef and deer genetics farm which borders the Kiangaroa forest on Goudies Road accessed from Reporoa. “I am really happy. What I’m doing is what I love.” A dream of mine is to do a big muster on horse back with a good team of dogs.” Agriculture New Zealand’s qualified tutors provide theory and practical tuition while Landcorp’s staff provide on-going supervision and guidance as students develop their farming skills. “You get thrown in the deep end,” says Hayley.

“You’re not eased into it – in a good way. It’s good experience and there are always plenty of people you can ask for help.” Programme coordinator Mark Goss says the Future Farmer programme is a catalyst to step up, take on a challenge and get into learning.

“Our reputation as a high quality training programme means we interview a wide range of students from all over NZ, but what we are looking for is the desire to succeed in farming.”

At the end of the year, the students who meet Landcorp’s criteria are given the opportunity to apply for farm trainee positions with Landcorp. Given Landcorp’s scale and geographical spread, the opportunities for successful graduates of the Future Farmer programme are endless.

**By Sheryl Brown**



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## Nelson Young Fruit Grower of the Year

Kevin Withington, a former student of the Agriculture New Zealand Fruit Production course run from our Nelson region, is certainly going places. This article over to the right was recently published in the Waimea Weekly celebrating his achievement of being awarded the 2011 Young Fruit Grower of the Year. This is a significant achievement and we are proud to have assisted him on his pathway.

Martin White  
Tutor Supervisor

## Fruit Production Cadets' Certificate Presentation

Seven Agriculture New Zealand Fruit Production Cadets received their National Certificates before their industry peers at the Pip fruit New Zealand Growers and Consultants Technical Seminar on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

Certificates were presented by Kevin Withington, the New Zealand Young Fruit Grower of the Year winner for 2011 (and an ex Agriculture New Zealand Fruit Production Cadet!). Kevin related, "the Cadetship was an Excellent Platform to launch a career in Orchardng. Our industry needs skilled young people to become future industry leaders ". Having gone through the training himself he acknowledged features of the Fruit Production Programme: the time and effort the cadets put in; the good networks that were able to be developed; and the full industry support of cadets.

Agriculture New Zealand Course Tutor Martin White said, "The qualification was at an Advanced Trade Level, most cadets taking three and a half years to complete. This intake the cadets come from larger orchards on the Waimea Plains and Mariri Area. They are key staff for their businesses, being practical, organised, and have a passion for quality fruit production. They enjoy the variety of fruit growing, the horticulture skills, the people skills, plus the challenge of exporting. Kevin has made us proud and we are certainly proud of these graduating cadets who have so much potential"

This Week

Waimea Weekly

## Richmond man NZ's top young grower

Winning is something Kevin Withington is becoming all too familiar with.

In June Kevin won the regional Nelson Young Fruit Grower of the Year Award which took him to the Young Grower of the Year Competition held at the Horticulture New Zealand Conference in Rotorua last week. Up against some tough competition the young crop manager from Hoddys Orchard, Richmond once again showed his ability and skill, successfully winning the Young Fruit Grower of the Year title.

This was not the first time Kevin had entered the competition, last year he won the regional event but was unsuccessful in the National event. Having now won he says he will not be entering as a competitor again as it is quite stressful, especially when you have a young family.

"It's a really good event and I hope to take more of a leadership role and mentor some of the other young guys that are around and also lift the profile of the whole competition for the region as well.

"I think the whole region will benefit from a bit more of a collaborative mentality, you know not being so, 'Oh I don't want to tell them how to do anything' and just sort of getting people to work together a wee bit more.

"I learnt truckloads from this experience and even if you don't place in the competition just the sheer preparation that you've gone through to try and up skill for the events means you've learnt a lot along the way as well as having the experience of doing it."

Kevin also won an award for "Best Speech" something he believes secured the overall win for him. "I think that really cemented the win for me in the Young Fruit Grower of the Year, the competition was so close, there was about half a mark between me and Chris Treneman from Hawkes Bay I think



New Zealand Young Grower of the Year and Richmond man Kevin Withington with his award. Photo: Barbara Gillham.

the speech just sealed the deal."

Kevin has worked at Hoddys Orchard for approximately 10 years and has slowly worked his way up through the ranks to his current position as Crop Manager, a job he says he loves.

He has now been accepted for the Horticulture New Zealand leadership programme, an intensive four day course held at Lincoln University, which only 12 people from throughout New Zealand are selected for each year.

"It's a very intensive workshop, which I am really looking forward to," says Kevin.

Courtesy of Waimea Weekly



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# EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS

## An amendment to the Employment Relations Act 2000 enforceable from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2011

### Question and Answer Sheet

**1. Do all employees need an Employment Agreement including part-time and casual staff?**

Yes. As of 1 July all employers must keep a copy of all their employees' employment agreements or signed terms and conditions of employment, no matter when they were employed or the nature of their employment.

**2. Do employees that were employed before October 2000 need an employment agreement?**

Yes. The amendment applies to all employment relationships. This means that all employers must keep a copy of all their employees' signed employment agreements or signed terms and conditions of employment, no matter when they were employed.

**3. Do employers have to keep a record of an employees terms and conditions and does it have to be signed?**

Yes. From 1 July 2011 employers are required to retain a signed copy of the employment agreement or current signed terms and conditions of employment.

**4. If an employee hasn't agreed to their employment agreement or terms and conditions, is the intended agreement still enforceable?**

No, as this remains an intended agreement. An intended agreement cannot be treated as the parties' employment agreement if the employee has not signed, or agreed to, the terms and conditions in the intended agreement.

**5. If an employee does not sign their employment agreement, and does nothing to specifically indicate they do not agree to it, what should an employer do?**

The employer should:

- i. enter into good faith negotiations with the employee to reach agreement
- ii. if agreement cannot be reached, the employer should record what happened and the outcome of the negotiations
- iii. keep a copy of the intended agreement on file along with the current terms and conditions of employment, signed or unsigned.

**6. Does an employer need to draw up a new employment agreement each time the parties agree to a change of terms and conditions?**

No. Changes or updates can be made to an existing employment agreement, provided both parties have agreed on the change/s and both parties have indicated agreement by signing or initialling the changes.

**7. Does an employer need to give their employee a copy of the current signed employment agreement or signed terms and conditions of employee if the employee requests a copy?**

Yes. The employer must be able to provide the employee with a copy of their employment agreement or terms and conditions if the employee requests one.

**8. If an offer of employment is accepted does an employer have to retain a copy of the intended agreement?**

Yes, the employer must retain a copy of the intended employment agreement even if the employee has not signed it or agreed to the specified terms and conditions

**9. What happens if the employer does not keep a copy of the signed employment agreement or a copy of the intended employment agreement?**

From July 1 2011, labour inspectors will be able to seek a penalty against an employer who is in breach of legislation relating to employment agreements.

This includes the requirement for all employers to retain a copy of the intended and current employment agreement or terms and conditions of employment, whether signed or unsigned.

Employers will be given seven working days notice to fix the breach. Where the breach is not remedied the inspector can take a penalty action to the Employment Relations Authority.

To build an employment agreement or to find out more about recent changes to the Employment Relations and Holidays Acts visit [www.dol.govt.nz](http://www.dol.govt.nz)

# PREPARING YOUR FARM FOR AN EMERGENCY

## How do you stay in business in the event of an emergency?

## How do you access data about your staff, customers and suppliers in order to keep operating and maintain business continuity?

It is essential to plan to protect a business from the impact of an emergency.

Emergencies include fires, earthquakes, floods, storms and pandemic illnesses. Each of these emergencies has occurred in New Zealand, and each of these emergencies has the potential to have a devastating effect on a business.

The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 requires an employer to plan for an emergency situation. Employers must have procedures in place to deal with emergencies and ensure that employees are well informed about these procedures. Emergency procedures need to be specific to a workplace and directly relate to the work being performed. For example, a workplace that has hazardous substances on site requires specific procedures in place for managing any risks arising from hazardous substances as well as general emergency procedures.

Employers should keep backup files of all essential information in case they cannot re-enter the workplace after an emergency to retrieve documentation. This was a lesson learned from the earthquakes in Canterbury when some employers did not have staff contact details in order to check their immediate safety and wellbeing, and businesses were unable to resume normal work because they could not access their paperwork.

The Department of Labour and the Environmental Protection Authority have designed a set of simple forms to help you identify and manage your emergency procedures. The templates cover:

- Fire
- Chemical spills
- LPG gas leaks
- CPR
- First Aid
- Natural Disasters

There's space for you to write down:

- Essential phone numbers
- Warden names and contact details
- First aiders' names
- Fire fighting equipment locations
- Who to report incidents to

There's a set that most workplaces can use [www.epa.govt.nz/publications/erma-flip-chart.pdf](http://www.epa.govt.nz/publications/erma-flip-chart.pdf) and a specialised set of forms for farms [www.epa.govt.nz/Publications/Emergency-flip-chart-farms.pdf](http://www.epa.govt.nz/Publications/Emergency-flip-chart-farms.pdf). Simply:

- Download and print as many templates as you need
- Together with your employees, work out the most appropriate procedures and who should have responsibilities
- Ensure that all employees know about your emergency procedures, including where you will keep this information, and where emergency equipment is stored.

For further information to help you prepare emergency procedures, crisis management and continuity planning for your business visit the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management at [www.civildefence.govt.nz/memwebsite.nsf/wpg\\_URL/Being-Prepared-How-to-be-prepared-in-your-business-Index?OpenDocument](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/memwebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Being-Prepared-How-to-be-prepared-in-your-business-Index?OpenDocument) and Business.govt.nz [www.business.govt.nz/managing/implementing-health-and-safety/crisis-management](http://www.business.govt.nz/managing/implementing-health-and-safety/crisis-management)



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# INTRODUCTION TO RURAL SKILLS COURSE

## Christchurch

Our 2011 intake of trainees are a positive, motivated group of youngsters. They have been more positive and want to make themselves more employable. The guys have worked well in the classroom on Mondays learning the 'WHY' we do things (theory) part of the course. A couple of the guys have completed the compulsory level 2 Certificate in Agriculture and some of the others are not that far from finishing.

Of the group of 14 trainees that started off in January all but two have moved into fulltime employment on farms. The other two trainees have moved on to further training with another provider. We now have a new group. Trainees can move on and off this course throughout the year.



## Class at 1<sup>st</sup> August

The trainees have done well with all the disruptions we have had here in Christchurch this year, with the earthquakes and more recently snow. Trainees have been very good at returning back out to the farms to help the farmers as they know how important it is to still feed the stock and milk the cows no matter what. We have also had to shift our classroom from the PGW Wool store to the Hornby Rugby Club Rooms as PGW Wool moved back into their office.

This course offering is different to most of the other Introduction to Rural Skills courses run around New Zealand as we have a wide range of ages, a good gender mix and a range of different funding sources. Our streams of funding come through Telford SAC, Training for Work, Youth Training and STAR.

Finally I would like to thank all Farmers / Sponsors for their help in the practical learning trainees receive on their farms for four days a week. We couldn't do without you and your partners.

Thanks also for the support you provide our learners who need that extra bit of assistance. We and the industry need people like you. Thanks.

**Bill Haley (Course Tutor)**



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# Rural Skills Agriculture, Pukekohe

## Student Field Visit

Tom Leonard & Pierre de Villiers

Tom organized a field trip for students to visit three very different and interesting dairy farms with different dairy sheds, contours, soil types and feeding systems.

Tom Reports: We left the class room facilities at Pukekohe at around 10am to visit the first farm. This was a Balle Brothers farm milking 1200 cows in a 60



bail rotary, they feed huge amounts of surplus and/or “non-marketable” vegetables supplements to the animals on feed pads. The vegetables fed were carrots, potatoes, onions and pumpkin. An interesting question was raised by one of the students concerning “taints” in the milk, particularly in respect of feeding onions. James (farm manager-old time student) replied that they feed the onions at least six hours prior to milking to avoid “tainting” the milk.



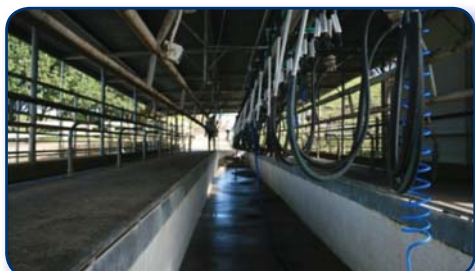
Students’ listening intently as James Wallace explains the management aspects of the farm.



The animals consuming (and enjoying) their ration of vegetables for the day.

The second Farm visited was a 320 cow flat 100 hectare farm with heavy clay soils and was unique as it has a Rotary Herringbone or Internal Rotary Cowshed where the cows walked over the platform, turned around and then backed into their bail.

This farm is low lying and only one metre above sea level, with the soil being a river slit clay loam. It is good Summer/Autumn country that hangs on well when it gets dry. They regrass 5ha of their property, this is 5% every year.



The “parallel, inside rotary” with cluster removers (ACR’s).



Another unique feature of this shed was its canvas “material” roof.

The third farm visited was a “hill farm” that ran down to the sea with a traditional Herringbone Cowshed milking 300 cows and this was their first year back with cows after being a drystock farm for 7 years. Soils were 50% rolling clay with a traditional Ryegrass Clover Grass mix and 50% sand hills with Kikuyu Grass requiring very different management during the season.

We had a couple of minutes to spare as this was our last farm visit, so we went for a quick walk over the farm, climbing through/over fences and enjoying the wind and fresh air. It also gave the opportunity to talk on the aspects that make “hill-dairy farming” different and discuss dairy farming on different type soils.



Students listening “intently” what Tom Leonard (host for the day) had to say as he summarize the three farms visited.



The walk gave some of the students the opportunity to show a sense of “chivalry”.

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## PROFILES

### *Please give a warm welcome to Alicia Gibbs!*

Hi Everyone,  
My name is Alicia and I am the new Regional Administrator for the Central Region, based in the National Office in Feilding.

I grew up on a sheep and beef farm near Taihape, and attended boarding school at Feilding High School. I still have a strong interest in farming, and also enjoy getting outdoors on my weekends.



Last year I finished my Bachelor of Science, majoring in Ecology, at Otago. I lived in Dunedin for just over three years and my partner and I have recently shifted from Palmerston North back to Feilding.

So far, all is going well and I am really enjoying being back in the North Island. I look forward to meeting all of you involved with Agriculture New Zealand, and am really excited about my role here. I have been lucky enough to meet some of the staff who have been here at the Tutor Training, and I can see already I am going to enjoy being part of the AgNZ Team!

Alicia Gibbs.  
Regional Administrator – Central

### *Pierre de Villiers joins AgNZ as Tutor / Supervisor*

Hi, Pierre de Villiers here and looking forward to an interesting and challenging career with Agriculture New Zealand as Tutor/Supervisor.

Even though I have been involved with dairy systems and dairy farmers since completing my degree in 1996 and have learnt a lot over time, I will be learning and adding to those experiences in New Zealand and with Agriculture New Zealand.

My family & I moved from South Africa to Sweden in 2003 on a contract from DeLaval, what was supposed to be a three year contract, after which we would return to South Africa, but it turned into a six year stay in Sweden. Sweden (and Europe) was a good experience for the family, Zelda (wife), and the two boys, Etienne (15 years) and Jacques (13 years).



My two boys & I learnt to ski on the slopes in Sweden, Zelda never really managed the downhill slopes but enjoyed cross country skiing with us! The cold and dark finally drove us from Sweden and saw us moving down to New Zealand, where we had a fantastic welcome from all the Kiwis. We still manage to maintain our skiing on the slopes of Mount Ruapehu (different skiing and snow from Europe) and I had some difficulty in finding my Kiwi ski legs, the kids adapted easier to the wetter and slower snow.

My boys & I have also joined the New Zealand scouts. I am a Scout Leader and the two boys as scouts (going onto venturers). This involvement with scouts gives the family the opportunity to explore the New Zealand outdoors on tramps and other outdoor activities. Zelda is still working for Delaval as the Marketing Manager for New Zealand and Australia and, when time allows, spends time with her horse, a love that she has fostered from growing up on a farm in South Africa and the animals that has brought myself and Zelda together in the first place.

I look forward to working along side “the AgNZ team” and learning from their knowledge and experiences.

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