



Media release

29 March 2006

### **Now is the season for farmers to consider copper nutrient needs**

Autumn is the ideal time of year to boost levels of copper in pasture says Ballance Agri-Nutrients Head of Agro-Sciences Warwick Catto.

“Farmers should consider applying copper as part of their nutrient management to boost growth rates in stock now. Inadequate levels of copper in livestock can lead to poor fertility or growth rates in animals and more broken bones in severe cases. Problems arising from lack of copper in the pasture can seriously affect deer and cattle, particularly in the East Coast and the Wairarapa.

“Recent research by Ballance Agri-Nutrients into the application of copper suggests that some farmers are not using high enough quantities to achieve a benefit. The research indicates farmers should apply up to 10 kilogrammes per hectare of copper sulphate – most farmers are currently only using approximately six kilogrammes which with serious copper problems is not likely to be sufficient.”

Warwick Catto says copper is usually applied in fertiliser and can also be sprayed if that suits the farm practice better, however users need to be careful with their application.

“Copper is toxic so it is important that you consult with an animal health advisor and a Ballance Agri-Nutrients specialist for specific advice. If farmers suspect that their stock is copper deficient, pasture analysis can help the diagnosis of the cause and assess whether the animals have a low level of copper in their diet or whether there are other interfering factors such as molybdenum involved.”

**ENDS**