



Media release

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Wainuioru Station showcases irrigation system

The results of irrigation ingenuity will be showcased at Brancepeth Station, a Wainuioru sheep and beef farm today.

Brancepeth Station, struck by three severe droughts in the last 10 years, has implemented a unique irrigation system to irrigate a 42 hectare area of land to assist it in producing dry matter during the summer months. The project has been run in consultation with a number of supporting bodies including local councils and engineering specialists.

The results Brancepeth Station has achieved over the last 12 months will be demonstrated to farmers attending the station on Tuesday 11 April. The property, located near Masterton, will be open to all farmers in the area interested in learning about the advantages of using irrigation.

The owners of Brancepeth Station set up the irrigation system primarily because of the property's susceptibility to drought. The irrigation system works by pumping water from a dam, constructed on the farm two years ago, using a hydraulic pump which is driven by a diesel motor. The dam's capacity is 135,000m³ and provides enough water to irrigate 600m³ for 70 days. The dam captures rainwater that falls on the land during the wetter months and although some of this is lost through evaporation sufficient water is retained to keep the dam supplied.

Although it's still early days Brancepeth Station has already achieved some pleasing preliminary results, says Ballance Technical Sales Representative Shaun Bicknell.

"During the very hot summer months the results show that the irrigated land on the property was able to produce 100kgs of dry matter per hectare on average, per day compared to the control where no growth was recorded during much of the warmer weather. By monitoring pasture growth and dry matter yields on the irrigated land and comparing it to the non-irrigated land, you can quantify the benefit.

"The production of dry matter is essential for the running of a sheep and beef farm. By knowing how much additional grass or feed you are growing you can tell how many more stock you can carry, or how much quicker you can finish stock."

Ballance Agri-Nutrients is pleased to be one of the sponsors of this project.

"Ballance has a strong emphasis on innovation in its own approach to business, and is keen to see others also investigating novel ways of improving farm production," says Shaun.

By supporting the monitoring phase of this project, Ballance is helping those involved to accurately assess the benefits they are getting from the irrigation. The first complete set of results will be available at today's field day.

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