



Media release

27 June 2006

### **Fertiliser industry makes major commitment to sustainable farming**

As a major step to advancing the cause of sustainable farming, the fertiliser industry has accepted the undertaking to offer every New Zealand farmer the opportunity to operate a nutrient budget by the end of 2007.

This commitment was revealed by the CEO of Ballance Agri-Nutrients, Larry Bilodeau, at an Environment Waikato Sustainable Agriculture workshop in Hamilton last week.

Mr Bilodeau who is also a board member of the Fertiliser Manufacturers Research Association said this was a major industry undertaking.

Initially, the industry had invested in developing the various measurement tools needed, and training its field representatives to undertake the necessary analysis.

It was now in a position to go to the next stage, which was to get the country's estimated 70,000 farmers using nutrient budgets.

Mr Bilodeau also told the conference that central and regional decision makers should be switching their focus away from the level of fertiliser applied to farms.

"What really affects the environment is the nutrients left behind in the soil at the end of the production cycle, or which migrate through leaching," he said.

"The tools exist to measure these, and while controlling the levels of fertiliser applied may make people feel good, they were being given a false sense of security.

"The answer is nutrient management and nutrient budgeting."

Mr Bilodeau told the workshop that farmers and the fertiliser industry were given insufficient credit for their commitment to sustainable farming and their investment in finding answers to the challenges of balancing production and environmental protection.

Mr Bilodeau said that a number of multiple agricultural industry initiatives were underway, while the fertiliser industry itself was committed to assisting farmers meet their environmental obligations.

He urged central and regional government decision makers to "work together" with agriculture rather than working independently trying to tackle the same issues.

“We have the same end goals, only our approaches are different.”

**ENDS**