



Media release

9 October 2006

Horizons Nutrient Management Award winners host field day

Nutrient management will be the hot topic at a field day being held at Jeff and Janice Williams' 120 hectare dairy farm in Palmerston North tomorrow [10 October 2006].

The Williams were named the recipients of this year's Ballance Nutrient Management Award at the annual Ballance Farm Environment Awards for the Horizons region. Interested farmers in the area are invited to attend the field day to gain an insight into the importance of nutrient management.

There will be a number of speakers on the day, addressing the topic of nutrient management, including farm owner Jeff Williams and Ballance Agri-Nutrients Technical Advisor Aaron Stafford.

Aaron Stafford says there is increasing pressure on farmers to farm more sustainably. Part of this is to improve management of valuable nutrients and soil fertility, so that plant utilisation of nutrients is increased and there is less wastage, which represents an economic and environmental loss.

"Every farm has different nutrient requirements depending on how it is managed. Tools such as Overseer (nutrient budgeting software) make it easier to account for these farm-specific factors, allowing more accurate fertiliser recommendations to be developed. It's important farmers understand both the economic and environmental benefits of improving nutrient management.

"The Williams' farm provides an ideal setting for a nutrient management field day as it is a great case study of sustainable farming in an intensive farming system. They are doing everything they can to protect the environment and at the same time driving the performance of their business."

The Williams' property was recognised at this year's Ballance Farm Environment Awards for the sustainable farming practices they have put in place over the last eight years. They have a total of 440 Friesian cows running on the milking platform of 110ha, producing an average of 620kg milk solids per cow. The Williams have experimented with running up to five cows/ha, and also milking three times per day.

The field day will be held at the Williams' property on Tuesday October 10 from 11am until 2.30pm.

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