



MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Awards entrants challenged as farming enters new era of sustainability**

This year's Ballance Farm Environment Awards entrants were expected to go above and beyond previous year's efforts as the farming industry enters a new era of sustainable farm management.

The Ballance Farm Environment Awards have now concluded, and have been held in eight regions throughout New Zealand over the past few months, showcasing best practice environmental management and sustainable farming.

Chief Executive of Ballance Agri-Nutrients, key sponsor of the Farm Environment Awards, Larry Bilodeau, said that awareness of the importance of farming with the environment in mind has grown considerably since the Awards first began in 1993, and will only increase looking forward.

'Methods that were considered innovative two or three years ago are now considered normal practice, hence making it more important than ever before to stretch our thinking to come up with novel ways to look after our environment, while of course considering the impacts this will have on our bottom line.'

He said that external pressures, such as the draft Climate Change Policy recently distributed by the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, are placing extra demands on farmers to commit to sustainable practices now and in the future.

'The Government has given us all a challenge to self-regulate, and we must rise to this challenge if we want to maintain independence in our practices,' said Mr Bilodeau.

'Never before has it been more important that we demonstrate to urban New Zealand, the Government, and the rest of the world that New Zealand farming is sustainable -- that we take care of the environment and run successful farming businesses. The Farm Environment Awards are helping to demonstrate this, and all of the 140 entrants nation-wide are proof of it.'

As the key sponsor of the Farm Environment Awards, Ballance continues to back its most visible commitment to sustainability.

'Assisting farmers to farm sustainably fits clearly with Ballance's core values, and we are extremely proud to continue sponsorship of these awards,' said Mr Bilodeau.

He said the awards play a vital role in the agricultural industry because of their capacity to increase industry knowledge and act as a showcase for farmers' commitment to sustainable practices.

Mr Bilodeau said that the Ballance Farm Environment Awards are 'just the tip of the iceberg' of Ballance's own commitment to sustainability, with the organisation recently employing eight additional staff to help its dairy shareholders to meet nutrient budgeting obligations under the Clean Streams Accord.

Ballance regularly invests capital in its manufacturing plants to reduce their environmental footprint, and the company's research and development also has a strong focus on minimising the environmental impacts of its products and their use.

**ENDS**