



Media release

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Waikato farmers demonstrate commitment to sustainability at Ballance Farm Environment Awards

The Waikato farmers who won the region's Ballance Farm Environment Awards this year are 'industry leaders in sustainable farming', and Ballance Agri-Nutrients Chief Executive Larry Bilodeau urges other farmers in the area to take the opportunity to learn from their practices.

'The balancing act of profitability and sustainability is borne out time and again as Awards participants demonstrate that business success can be achieved without compromising environmental sustainability. So to the Jefferis family, we congratulate you as industry leaders,' says Mr Bilodeau.

The Jefferis family of the North Waikato was announced as the supreme winner of this year's Waikato Ballance Farm Environment Awards at the awards ceremony held in Cambridge last night. Father and son team Bob and David Jefferis, along with David's wife Lyndi, run a multi-faceted livestock and cropping operation on 485 ha just east of Te Kauwhata.

Ballance Farm Environment Award judges described the business as 'a well managed, intensive-run family farm, with excellent succession plans in place'.

A public field day will be held on the Jefferis farm on 1 May, and Mr Bilodeau encourages farmers to attend the field day to see first hand the winning sustainable farming initiatives in their region.

'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 says that this year, Awards entrants have been expected to go above and beyond previous years' efforts as the industry enters a new era of sustainable farm management, with pressures from the draft Climate Change Policy recently distributed by the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry placing extra demands on farmers to commit to sustainable practices now and in the future.

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

As a key sponsor of the awards, Ballance reaffirms its support for 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,' says Mr Bilodeau.

All land-based farmers are eligible to enter the awards, which are held in eight regions throughout the country every year.

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