



Ballance Farm Environment Awards

Promoting Sustainable Profitable Farming

30 April 2008

Media release

Drought issue to be covered at environmental field day

Coping with drought will be a hot topic at a Ballance Farm Environment Awards field day on 6 May. The field day will be held on the King Country dairy farm of 2008 Supreme award-winners Derek and Marion Kloeten.

Although the King Country and Waikato regions received good rain in late April, Phillipa Crequer, regional coordinator for the Ballance Farm Environment Awards, says it could take two years for farms to recover from the impacts of the drought.

'Animal welfare is a major issue. Many cows are well below where they should be condition-wise and this is going to have an impact on production and conception rates for the next season. Pastures are also in poor shape because many of the key grasses and clovers have died and been replaced by weeds.'

Expert speakers at the field day will examine strategies to rebuild the feed wedge and lift animal condition. Other issues to be addressed include animal health, nutrient management, pasture undersowing, supplement use and energy efficiency.

Phillipa says the Kloetens' unique and highly effective stand-off pad will also be inspected and discussed.

'Pasture management was always going to be a key topic but when I spoke to Derek recently he joked that he didn't have any pasture to manage. So we've adopted a new theme of "looking forward and making the most of what you have".'

Another key focus is the all-important issue of sustainable farming. Judges for the Waikato Ballance Farm Environment Awards described the Kloetens' farm 'as a really good all rounder that is a real achievement in terms of sustainability'.

The field day on the Mather Road farm starts at 10:30am.

For more information contact Phillipa Crequer, Waikato regional coordinator for the Ballance Farm Environment Awards, phone (07) 855 5179 or email Waikato@bfea.org.nz

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