



Media release

30 October 2008

### **Ballance adding more value for customers**

Following extensive market research, Ballance has implemented a new sales and marketing strategy, designed to improve customer focus and meet the changing needs of today's farmers.

According to this research, farmers ranked superior technical advice that adds value to their operation as the most important service aspect when referring to their fertiliser company.

'The objective of the new focus is to add demonstrative value to Ballance customers through higher levels of technical advice that will ultimately increase the farmer's bottom line,' says Ballance General Manager of Sales and Marketing, Graeme Smith.

This will be achieved by providing ongoing training to further lift the technical skill level of representatives, and implementing strategies to boost length of service to strengthen relationships between representatives and farmers.

In the past six years Ballance's team of field staff has increased by 20 – five in the past year – in order to provide more time and resources to meet the needs of individual customers.

'It's all about getting up more driveways, developing and retaining our front line staff, and ensuring that advice regarding plant nutrient management fits in with our customers' overall farming objectives to assist them to make a profit in a sustainable manner,' says Mr Smith.

Nearly all Ballance technical sales representatives are university graduates and have gone on to complete sustainable nutrient management courses, with some 70 percent of them having obtained an advanced certificate in this subject.

'Every customer has different expectations, and our new on-farm emphasis will enable us to work closely with them to maximise the benefits of our scientific tools, such as Precision Ag and crop calculators.'

Mr Smith says that customer needs have changed significantly over the past couple of years due to increased environmental legislation and the growing awareness of the need to maximise investment in fertiliser as plant nutrient costs rose.