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Sustainability equals profitability

Ballance Agri-Nutrients Chief Executive Larry Bilodeau is encouraging all farmers to 'get in behind' the 2009 Ballance Farm Environment Awards and show urban New Zealand that the ongoing stewardship of land and other natural resources is in excellent hands.

'Our national economy largely relies on an ongoing profitable sustainable agriculture sector, so the importance of these awards and what we all stand to learn from them must not be overlooked,' says Mr Bilodeau.

He says that through their involvement in the farm environment awards more and more farmers are signaling that they are protecting the environment because they want to, not because they have to.

'With the increasing pressure on farmers to operate in a sustainable manner, participation in the farm environment awards is an ideal opportunity to learn about balancing profitability and sustainability to ensure that business success can be achieved without compromising environmental sustainability.

'As always, we encourage as many entrants as possible, but equally as important is farmer participation in the field days associated with these awards.'

Now more than a decade in the running (the Waikato Conservation Board and Environment Waikato collaborated to run the first Farm Environment Award in 1993), the awards are a vital demonstration of the commitment and enthusiasm of our rural communities to protect and enhance the environment through sustainable farming.

As the 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. Entries for the Bay of Plenty region, Canterbury and Wellington are all currently open. Entries for Waikato, Horizons, Southland and Otago open on 1 October, and Northland entries open on 27 October. For more information visit www.bfea.org.nz

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