



Media release

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### **Ten years, ten tonnes, ten winners**

Ballance Agri-Nutrients has wrapped up its celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the merger between Bay of Plenty Co-operative Fertiliser Company and SouthFert with a \$27,000 giveaway of 10 t of superten to 10 lucky customers.

'We've given away 10 t of superten to 10 customers, but they are not the only winners,' says South Island Sales Manager, Garth Dawson.

'The entire local farming community has benefited from the commitments made to Lower South Island farmers as part of the merger with Bay of Plenty Co-operative Fertiliser (now Ballance) ten years ago.

'We promised SouthFert shareholders higher rebates, investment in the region, increased share value, membership to a stronger co-operative and an improved distribution network; and we have delivered on all of this,' says Mr Dawson.

Since 1997 Ballance has invested more than \$20 million in its Awarua plant in Invercargill, including \$8.5 million on upgrading the manufacturing plant and a further \$5 million on environmental improvements to the site. The manufacturing plant has had no environmental breaches in more than three years, and won the Environment Southland Corporate Environmental Award in 2005.

Former SouthFert shareholders now benefit from membership of a significantly stronger co-operative. In 1997, SouthFert had 5,000 shareholders and approximately \$33 million equity. Today, Ballance has nearly 18,000 shareholders and \$275 million equity.

Average rebate returns to shareholders have been consistently high, and since 2002 have varied between \$18.58 and \$24.20.

Ballance shareholders and promotion winners Terry and Simon McAtamney have been with the co-operative 'since the SouthFert days', and have been very pleased with the rebates they have received over the past decade.

Happy with the service levels back then, Simon says things have really just been 'business as usual' for the last 10 years.

'The service has always been good, and the technical sales representatives are approachable and knowledgeable.'

He also commends the company's approach to working with the community.

'The amount of time, effort and money Ballance donates to the local farming community through initiatives such as the Ballance Farm Environment Awards is really impressive.'

Simon says that over the next ten years he would like to see Ballance continue research into the most relevant fertiliser use for specific farming environments.

'I'd like to see further research into optimum products and applications for maximum gains on-farm.'

Over the past ten years Ballance has introduced a range of new products to the market such as pasturemag, pasturezeal and bioshield grass grub, and has also undertaken significant research into minimising nitrate leaching, resulting in the introduction of nitrification inhibitor product, DCn, to the market.

**ENDS**