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Ballance grows its safety record

Ballance Agri-Nutrients has joined the elite group of employers on the top tier of the ACC Workplace Safety Management Practices programme following an ACC audit.

The farmer-owned co-operative has been awarded ACC Tertiary Accreditation across its superphosphate manufacturing sites at Mount Maunganui, Whangarei and Awarua, including distribution and sales as well as its Super Air topdressing division, covering about 600 staff throughout New Zealand.

The ACC scheme is designed to reward employers who build safer workplaces. In exchange for putting in place systems and processes that promote injury prevention, the programme gives employers discounts on their standard ACC WorkPlace Cover levies.

ACC Chief Executive Dr Jan White praised Ballance for achieving the accreditation across such a wide range of sites and activities.

'It takes significant commitment and leadership for a nationwide manufacturing and distribution company such as Ballance to reach a common standard of excellence across such a varied and diverse workforce.'

Ballance Chief Executive Larry Bilodeau puts it down to enthusiastic buy-in by staff.

He says the whole organisation has made a tremendous positive shift in attitude towards health and safety over the past five years.

'We have provided the encouragement and the mechanisms, but each member of staff had to make the personal commitment. We are thrilled to record such a significant milestone because we place a huge emphasis on health and safety in the workplace.'

'It is to our employees' credit that they have made the effort to ensure our working environment remains a safe place for themselves and their work colleagues, as well as for all of our contractors and customers and the communities in which we work.'

'We are starting to see the benefits of the efforts being put in by all in the team.'

'A special mention must go to everyone at Super Air for their continued efforts to maintain such a high level of safety – at the end of October they had gone 810 days without a lost-time injury.'

The whole South Island operations of the company – its service centres and its Awarua superphosphate manufacturing site – has achieved a whole year Lost Time Injury free.

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While the accreditation demonstrates Ballance's commitment to health and safety procedures and practices, it also now entitles the company to a 20 percent discount in ACC levies for the next two years.

'Gaining tertiary accreditation is really just a stepping stone for us,' says Ballance Health and Safety Co-ordinator Gina Espagne. 'It is reward for our efforts in getting to this stage, but we must go on from here. Achieving a good safety record is no accident.'