

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Greens' acknowledgement is good news for farmers**

Former Green Party co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons will hit a strong vein of support with farmers for her initiative to showcase good farming practices, predicts industry leader Larry Bilodeau, Chief Executive at Ballance Agri-Nutrients.

As the Greens' agriculture spokesperson, the Coromandel-based MP has launched an account of her own investigation into good farming practices, saying there are plenty of good farmers pioneering new ideas to make farming more sustainable, and she's keen to tell New Zealand about them.

'This will come as a welcome boost to many farming families throughout New Zealand,' adds Mr Bilodeau.

'As Ms Fitzsimons has found, the majority of Kiwi farmers do care passionately about their land and the legacy they will leave. They will find it heartening, as we do, to hear her say that too often the focus gravitates to the issues of conflict, such as pollution or bad farming practice.'

Mr Bilodeau says Ballance has long been an advocate for sustainable farming and is well aware of the advances being made by dedicated farmers through its role as principal sponsor of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

'Her findings back up our own; that New Zealand farmers have never been flat-footed when it comes to identifying significant ways in which they can reduce their carbon footprint. We have seen hundreds of examples of on-farm innovation and ingenuity as sponsor of the BFEA, and we have caught the enthusiasm of the farmers involved.'

Industry initiatives such as the Clean Streams Accord and the Code of Practice for Nutrient Management have contributed greatly to the overall improvement of land use skills, he says, and the industry had responded accordingly.

'We have invested in major up-skilling of our on-farm fertiliser reps and embraced new technologies such as Nutrient Management Plans and the Overseer nutrient budgeting software.

'Our research and development programme also reflects our environmental commitment, with our nitrification inhibitor product, DCn, now recognised by the wider industry as an effective way to reduce nitrate leaching and nitrous oxide emissions.

'There is widespread acknowledgement that the way forward for farming involves sustainability, and we are proud to be part of that drive.

'This initiative by the Greens will help bring that message home to people in the urban areas across this country. As an industry, our farmers are already on the right course.'