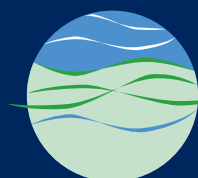


# Annual Report 2015-2016



New Zealand  
Farm Environment Trust®



We are passionate about New Zealand agriculture and horticulture and celebrate what New Zealand farmers and growers are achieving. The New Zealand Farm Environment Trust and Ballance Farm Environment Awards are built on the dedication of our nationwide army of volunteers and we drive positive change in environmental practices.

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*Trustees and Management of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust.  
Left to right: Hew Dalrymple, Joanne van Polanen, Simon Saunders, Andrea Hanna,  
Jim Hitchcock, David Natzke, David Cameron, Clare Rosser and Warwick Catto.*



## Our Vision

To ensure New Zealand farmers remain recognised as global leaders in the sustainable management of their natural resources.



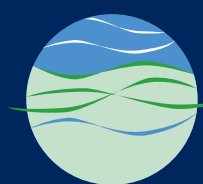
## Purpose

To promote sustainable farming practices that protect and enhance the environment.



## Objectives

1. The Ballance Farm Environment Awards continues to be the flagship activity of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust
2. To continue to strengthen and leverage off the success of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust has 4 key priorities
  - National Showcase and Gordon Stephenson Trophy
  - Communication
  - Partnerships and Networks
  - Leadership.



New Zealand  
Farm Environment Trust®

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Chairman  
**Simon Saunders**



Last year's recipients of the Gordon Stephenson trophy, John and Catherine Ford have been wonderful ambassadors for the primary sector. They passed on the Gordon Stephenson Trophy to Richard and Dianne Kidd from the Auckland region at this year's highly successful National Showcase at Waitangi.

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## From the Chairman

The relevance of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust (NZFET) and the Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA) could not be greater.

Farmers are facing many well documented challenges including both volatile markets and climate. The other big issue facing farmers is how they manage water quality and nutrient losses. These issues are being thrust into the spotlight as many Regional Councils are working through how they are going to meet their obligations under the Government's National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management.

During these challenging times it is critical that the farmer's voice is heard. The Ballance Farm Environment Awards are continually doing this through entrants and award winning farmers showcasing what they are achieving; sharing their knowledge, ideas and skills that will drive better environmental, economic and social outcomes for New Zealand's most important sector.

A strong viable BFEA programme sits at the heart of our strategy. To ensure the BFEA programme is successful for the next 10 years as it has been for the past 10, the board initiated a full review of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards. This review carried out by an independent review team identified many opportunities to strengthen the BFEA programme, to get more farmers involved and to make sure those farmers who enter the awards are enriched by the experience.

Reflecting back the BFEA programme has had another very successful year. Coverage of our entrants and award winning farmers continues to grow through all forms of media. BFEA evenings and Fieldays are well attended and often a highlight of the regions agriculture calendar. Last year's recipients of the Gordon Stephenson Trophy, John and Catherine Ford have been wonderful ambassadors for the primary sector. They passed on the Gordon Stephenson Trophy to Richard and Dianne Kidd from the Auckland region at this year's highly successful National Showcase at Waitangi.

The NZFE Trust and BFEA have a very committed group of sponsors, partners and Regional Councils who continue to invest their people and resources as they truly believe in a sustainable, profitable primary sector. We are continually grateful for their ongoing support.





2016 Gordon Stephenson Trophy winners Richard and Dianne Kidd from Auckland.



To our Regional teams, volunteers, staff and Trustees. Your ongoing dedication and hard work is what keeps driving this organisation along – thank you. You all can be proud of what has been achieved over the last 12 months and we look forward to working together to deliver another outstanding BFEA programme over the next 12 months.

I would like to thank Bruce Wills who stepped down as a Trustee earlier this year for his contribution to both the Trust and the East Coast region.

I would also like to acknowledge retiring Trustees, Jim Hitchcock and David Cameron. Jim and David have made significant contributions to both the Trust and their respective regional awards programmes over a long period of time. I cannot thank them enough for the energy and time they have dedicated to the Trust and the wise council they have provided me.

On behalf the Board, I would like to acknowledge David Natzke, the Trust's General Manager who is stepping down after 10 years in the role. David has led this organisation with a huge amount of professionalism, commitment, dedication and skill. Under his watch we have seen the BFEA grow and evolve into the highly regarded programme it is today. David will leave a strong legacy and an organisation in great heart. David can be very proud of the contribution he has made to the New Zealand primary sector over the last 10 years. We wish you well in your future endeavours.

**Simon Saunders**  
Chairman



Reflecting back the BFEA programme has had another very successful year. Coverage of our entrants and award winning farmers continues to grow through all forms of media. BFEA evenings and Fielddays are well attended and often a highlight of the regions agriculture calendar.



General Manager  
**David Natzke**



“We really are privileged to have a cast of hundreds who make a significant contribution to the work of the NZFE Trust and the awards programme. Most of these people make a voluntary contribution and their reason for doing so is because in their mind, it is the right thing to do.”

## From the General Manager

In the face of somewhat challenging times over the past 12 months for those in the agriculture sector, the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust (NZFET) and the Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA) have succeeded in promoting the best of New Zealand agriculture and horticulture by way of the Awards programme.

While entry numbers were down this year on previous years, the enthusiasm and commitment demonstrated by everyone involved with the BFEA programme has ensured that the Ballance Farm Environment Awards maintain their recognition as one of the premier award programmes in New Zealand.

All entrants were showcased at regional awards evenings, including the Auckland region for the first time, and Supreme Winners were showcased at that National Showcase held for the first time in the Northland region at Waitangi.

We really are privileged to have a cast of hundreds who make a significant contribution to the work of the NZFET and the BFEA programme. Most of these people make a voluntary contribution and their reason for doing so is because in their mind, it is the right thing to do.

I would like to make special mention of the partners of the NZFET and sponsors of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards, without your support we could not continue to do what we do.

This is my last contribution to an Annual Report as I am stepping down from the role of General Manager as of 31 October 2016. The last 10 years have been great; there has been a lot of development work done so as to position the NZFET and the BFEA as highly respected businesses. I have had the privilege to work with a whole host of very talented, dedicated and visionary people and your support has been invaluable. For me there will only ever be highlights and I've always said the BFEA are a lot like Hotel California (the Eagles hit): You can check-out any time you like, but you can never leave.

Thanks for the privilege.

**David Natzke**  
General Manager

# From the Treasurer

I am pleased to report on the financial results of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust (NZFET) for the year ended 30 June 2016. These accounts carry an unconditional independent audit certificate.

The NZFET recorded a \$36,249.68 deficit for the 2016 year. Revenue for the year increased through existing partner contributions to support the NZFET and regional sponsorship to support the Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA). The NZFET continues to seek one more sponsor to fund the delivery of the BFEA programme. This last year one award was funded using BFEA reserves and in partnership with the QEII National Trust.

Regional Coordinators continue to have excellent management of their BFEA budgets and budget for ticket sales and promotional activities along with the core business of running the BFEA programme. The addition of the Auckland region in 2016 is reflected in an increase in expenses associated with the BFEA.

I would like to thank the large number of volunteers, partners and sponsors who support the NZFET and BFEA both financially and in kind.

The NZFET's financial business has again been professionally managed by General Manager David Natzke and assisted by Executive Administrator Clare Rosser. I am sincerely grateful for the support of David Natzke who will shortly step down from the role of General Manager. It has been a pleasure working with David and I wish to acknowledge the considerable national growth of the BFEA and the financial and managerial stability he has provided during his tenure. David has been influential in positioning the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust to be recognised as a leader in promoting environmental leadership and encouraging the uptake of good management practices in all fields of agriculture.

I would also like to thank the NZFET's bankers Rabobank, accountants - BDO Waikato Limited and auditors, Staples Rodway.

**Joanne van Polanen**

Treasurer



Treasurer

**Joanne van Polanen**



“David [Natzke] has been influential in positioning the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust to be recognised as a leader in promoting environmental leadership and encouraging the uptake of good management practices in all fields of agriculture.”



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National Judging  
Coordinator  
**Andrea Hanna**



“One of the valuable assets for the Ballance Farm Environment Awards Programme is the pool of judges that make themselves available each year. We are privileged to have a high caliber of sponsor representatives, rural professionals and farmers to call on.”

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## From the National Judging Coordinator

I would like to thank the dedicated team of Regional Judging Coordinators for their time, energy and commitment to the Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA) programme. They continue to do a great job of organising the judges, facilitating the judging process, overseeing the reporting back to entrants, and Fielddays.

One of the valuable assets for the BFEA programme is the pool of judges that make themselves available each year. We are privileged to have a high caliber of sponsor representatives, rural professionals and farmers to call on. We make good use of the expertise available from within the judging pool. Their different skill sets certainly add value to the entrants' experience.

Judges training is also an ongoing process. We endeavor to keep our judges abreast of current issues and developments. It is also about judges being aware of sources of information, networks and opportunities that are available to educate, enhance and add value to the entrants experience with the BFEA. Again this year we are working on increasing the quality of the feedback given to entrants. It is important for us as an organisation to recognise that the lasting experience for the entrant is most often determined by the quality and depth of the feedback given.

The lines of communication have opened between the regions, which is definitely a positive sign for great teamwork going forward. Regions are able to share ideas through the cloud storage programme and store files in a central system. As a succession plan and for storage of archives we see this as a valuable improvement.

Our annual meeting of Judging Coordinators at the National Showcase this year was well attended with excellent participation from the regions. Everyone is excited to get on with next years' BFEA programme and we look forward to finding and promoting the great sustainable practices from our entrants and BFEA winners for 2017.

**Andrea Hanna**  
National Judging Coordinator



# Financial Overview

New Zealand Farm Environment Trust

For the year ended 30 June 2016

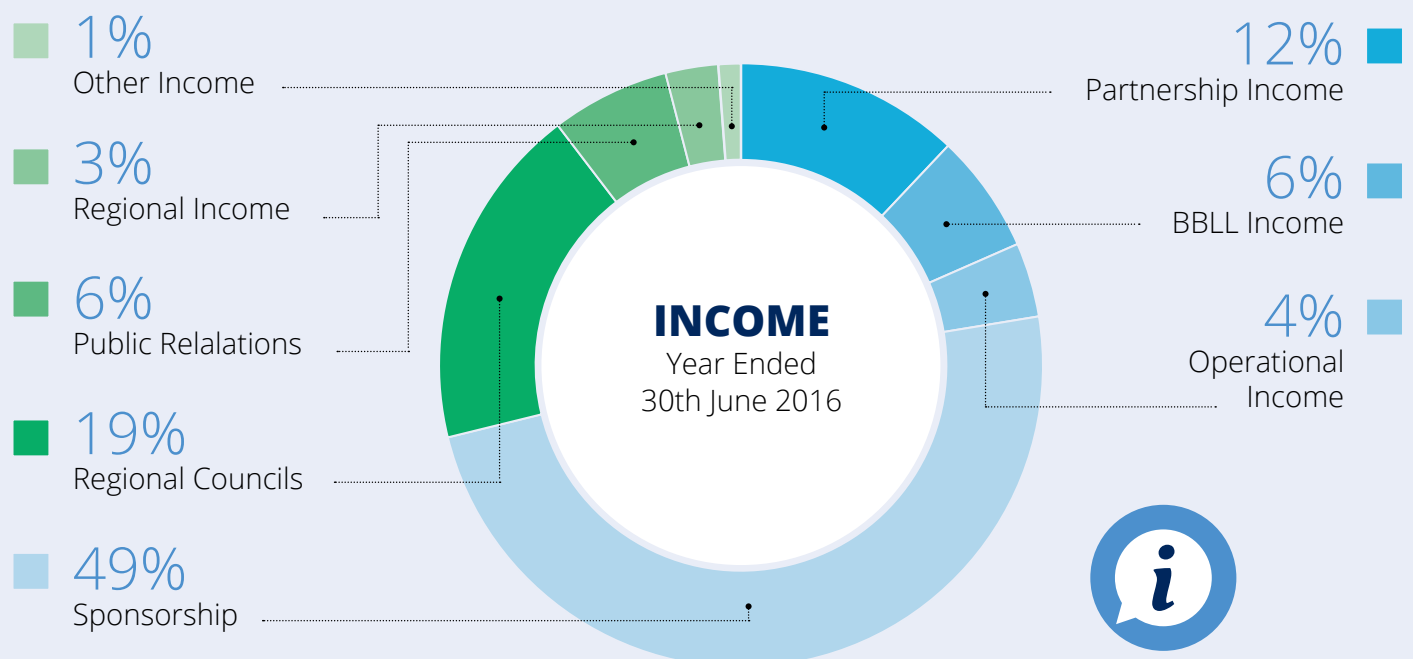
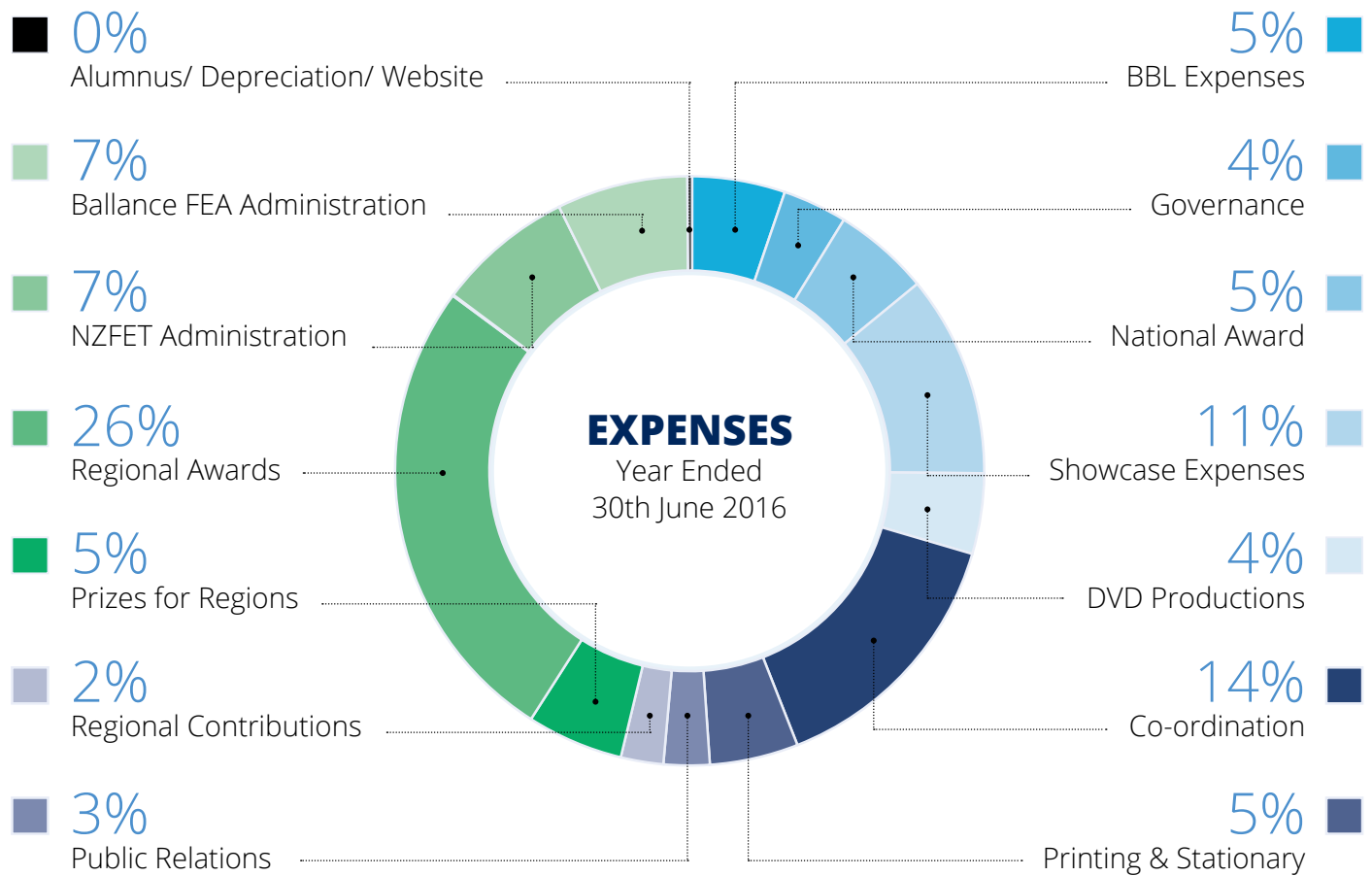
	2016	2015
<b>Revenue</b>		
<b>Revenue from providing goods and services</b>		
Partnership Income	120,000	120,000
BBLL Income	63,657	48,056
Operational Income	39,722	87,702
Sponsorship	486,000	479,000
Regional Councils	184,000	148,000
Public Relations	63,314	27,944
Regional Income	28,152	26,743
Other Income	12,000	23,270
<b>Total Revenue from providing goods and services</b>	<b>996,844</b>	<b>960,715</b>
	2016	2015
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Costs related to providing goods and services</b>		
Alumnus	1,019	14,541
BBLL Expenses	53,890	39,642
Governance	37,048	50,185
National Award	55,429	44,771
Showcase Expenses	116,075	99,225
DVD Productions	46,338	41,580
Co-ordination	151,900	178,858
Printing & Stationery	51,012	38,864
Public Relations	26,454	28,587
Regional Contributions	24,463	26,000
Prizes for Regions	55,500	49,000
Regional Awards	273,427	212,725
Website	632	1,953
National Award Expenses	-	16,463
Showcase Expenses	-	49,612
<b>Total Costs related to providing goods and services</b>	<b>893,186</b>	<b>892,006</b>
<b>Other expenses</b>		
Ballance FEA Administration	78,591	101,073
NZFET Administration	75,377	107,123
Depreciation	1,279	1,916
<b>Total Other expenses</b>	<b>155,247</b>	<b>210,112</b>



The New Zealand Farm Environment Trust is a Charitable Trust incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 and a registered charity under the Charities Act 2005.

The summarised figures on these pages have been extracted from the full unmodified audited financial statements of The New Zealand Farm Environment Trust as audited by Staples Rodway. The full accounts can be found online at [www.nzfetrust.org.nz](http://www.nzfetrust.org.nz) and will be available at the AGM.

# Financial Overview Continued



View all 2016 financial reports online:  
[www.nzfetrust.org.nz](http://www.nzfetrust.org.nz)

# Our Vision

## New Zealand Farm Environment Trust

The Vision of the New Zealand Farm Environment Trust is to ensure that New Zealand farmers remain recognised as global leaders in the sustainable management of their natural resources. And its purpose is to promote sustainable farming practices that protect and enhance the environment.

Through feedback and profiling winners, the Ballance Farm Environment Awards encourage other farmers to be more proactive in their resource management by providing them with role models for sustainable land management.

The awards look at whole farm systems and strongly promote the positive. Every entrant is given feedback from specialist judges.

The key question the Ballance Farm Environment Awards asks is:

*“Can what is being done now, still be working successfully in 100 years?”*

## Supreme Winners

A Supreme Winner will be selected from each of the 11 regions - Supreme Winners will be chosen from the group of finalists.

## National Award – Gordon Stephenson Trophy

The recipient of the Gordon Stephenson Trophy will be selected from the 11 regional Supreme Winners and will be announced at the 2017 National Sustainability Showcase.



“Through feedback and profiling winners, the Ballance Farm Environment Awards encourage other farmers to be more proactive in their resource management by providing them with role models for sustainable land management.”



If you have any other questions about the awards process, please contact us either by emailing [admin@bfea.org.nz](mailto:admin@bfea.org.nz), by phoning 07 829 4442, or by visiting our website at [www.bfea.org.nz](http://www.bfea.org.nz).



# The Awards

New Zealand Farm Environment Trust



## **Ballance Agri-Nutrients Soil Management Award**

This Award focuses on the excellent management of soil structures as well as the appropriate use of nutrients. A very good understanding of nutrient cycles will need to be demonstrated. Nutrient budgeting will be understood and well documented. The impacts of nutrients on both surface and ground water will need to be well understood and well managed.



## **Beef + Lamb New Zealand Livestock Award**

This Award recognises the livestock farmer (other than dairy) who demonstrates in a practical way the choices that have been made to farm for the long term. Considerations will be made around the wise use of the land, labour and capital resource available or created. Stock will be well cared for. Stock class and type will be well suited to the land contour and soil type and managed appropriately to suit those soils.



## **Hill Laboratories Harvest Award**

The Hill Laboratories Harvest Award recognises excellence in productive and resilient pasture and crop growing systems including horticulture and viticulture. A good understanding of soil protection and pasture or crop husbandry should be demonstrated. An active weed and pest management plan would also be in evidence.



## **LIC Dairy Farm Award**

This Award recognises the Dairy Farmer who demonstrates in a practical way the choices that have been made to farm for the long term, with considerations and understanding of environmental impacts and effects. Through excellent herd recording, entrants will demonstrate high standards with regard to herd improvement, reproduction, animal health and welfare. Considerations will be made around the wise and sustainable use of the land, stock, labour and capital resource available or created.



## **Massey University Innovation Award**

The Innovation Award is given in recognition of the identification and implementation of economically and environmentally sustainable farming systems. The Award recognises farmers and farming families who develop or embrace new technologies and systems and have an established record of advancing farm practices for improved outcomes.



### **WaterForce Integrated Management Award**

This Award recognises the farmer who has developed and implemented integrated water management systems and processes for water used within their farming system. This award will take into account the design of systems and the efficiency of monitoring water usage, water saved and cost effectiveness in any land based farming system.

### **CB Norwood Distributors Agri-Business Management Award**

This Award recognises the approach that farmers take to accomplish the important management practices of operating a successful farm business. This will include the development, implementation and review of systems and processes and the degree to how these form part of the overall management of their business. This may include the use of industry professionals and networks and how they contribute to the sustainability of the business enterprise.

### **QEI National Trust in partnership with the New Zealand Farm Trust Farm Stewardship Award**

This Award is for the creation of special places on farm and may include protection and/or enhancement of cultural, historic, or unique natural or manmade features. There is also a need to demonstrate management systems that improve productivity and sustainability.



**QEI National Trust**  
Open Space New Zealand  
Ngā Kairauhi Papa

## Regional Awards

Along with the sponsored awards, there are also 11 regional awards. These awards are as follows:

- Northland Regional Council Water Quality Enhancement Award
- Auckland Council Water Quality Enhancement Award
- Bay of Plenty Regional Council Environment Award
- Waikato Regional Council Water Protection Award
- East Coast Farming for the Future Award
- Horizons Regional Council Award (For The Integration Of Trees)
- Taranaki Regional Council Sustainability Award
- Greater Wellington Regional Council Akura Conservation Centre Lifestyle Farm/Small Block Award
- Environment Canterbury Water Quality Management Award
- Otago Regional Council Water Quality Award
- Environment Southland Water Quality and Biodiversity Award

# 2016 Supreme Winners

New Zealand Farm Environment Trust



**1. NORTHLAND**

**Dennis and Rachelle O'Callaghan**  
Temataa Station,  
Doubtless Bay  
- Intensive Sheep and Beef



**2. AUCKLAND**

**Richard and Dianne Kidd**  
Whenuanui Farm,  
Helensville  
- Sheep, Beef and Forestry



**3. BAY OF PLENTY**

**BAYGOLD Limited**  
Matt Nelson and Leighton Oats,  
Te Puke  
- Kiwifruit



**4. WAIKATO**

**John Hayward and Susan O'Regan**  
Judge Valley Dairies Ltd,  
Puahue  
- Dairy



**5. EAST COAST**

**Graham and Marian Hirst**  
GD & MJ Hirst Partnership,  
Longlands  
- Horticulture



**6. HORIZONS**

**David and Adrienne Hopkins**  
Harkaway Trust,  
**Ben and Belinda Price**  
Price Trusts Partnership,  
Nukumarū  
- Dairy



**7. TARANAKI**

**Roger Landers and Matthew Kelbrick**  
PKW Farms LP (Farm 2),  
Ohangai  
- Dairy



**8. GREATER WELLINGTON**

**Daniel and Reidun Nicholson**  
Tokaroa Farm Ltd,  
Martinborough  
- Sheep and Beef



**9. CANTERBURY**

**Joe and Suz Wyborn**  
Grantlea Dairy No1,  
Geraldine  
- Dairy



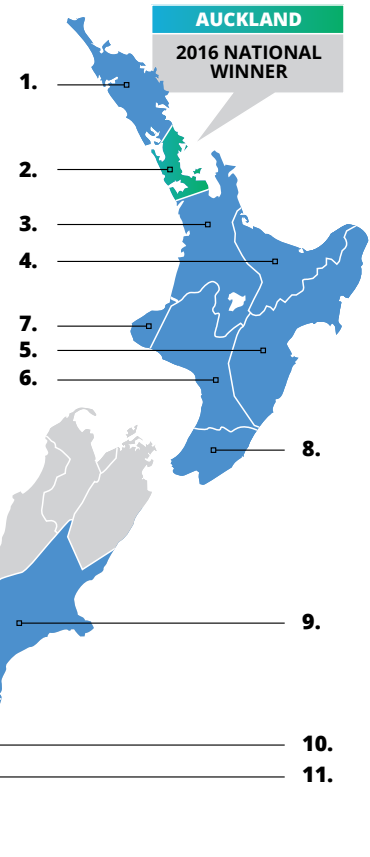
**10. OTAGO**

**Brendon and Paula Cross**  
Roselle Farm,  
Portobello  
- Sheep and Beef



**11. SOUTHLAND**

**Shane Gibbons and Bridget Speight**  
Whare Creek,  
Redcliff  
- Sheep, Beef and Dairy Support



2016  
SUPREME WINNERS

# 2016 Sustainability Showcase

22.06.16 | Waitangi, Northland | National Finalists



*Richard and Dianne Kidd with the Hon Nathan Guy.*



*Dennis and Rachelle O'Callaghan with Sam Franklin, Design and Sales of WaterForce.*



*Graham and Marian Hirst with Professor Mike Hedley of Massey University.*



*John Hayward and Susan O'Regan with Murray King, Chairman of LIC.*



*Brendon and Paula Cross with Mike Jebson, CEO of QEII National Trust.*



*Richard and Dianne Kidd with Sam McIvor, CEO of Beef + Lamb New Zealand.*



*Joe and Suz Wyborn with Bart Challis, GM Commercial of Hill Laboratories.*



*Roger Landers and Matt Kelbrick with Eric Morrison, Director of Co-op Affairs, Northland of Fonterra.*



*David and Adrienne Hopkins & Ben and Belinda Price with Rob Lamb, Category Manager of PGG Wrightson Ltd.*



*Dan and Reidun Nicholson with David Peacocke, Chairman of Ballance Agri-Nutrients.*



*Shane Gibbons and Bridget Speight with Hayley Moynihan, General Manager of Rabobank.*



*Leighton Oats and Matt Nelson with Gary Watt, Retail Manager, Norwood Farm Machinery.*



# 2016 Sustainability Showcase

22.06.16 | Waitangi, Northland | Out & About



Photo courtesy of Waitangi Treaty Grounds.





# 2016 Sustainability Showcase

22.06.16 | Waitangi, Northland | Out & About





*Craig and Suzanne Johnsen.*

## Testimonials

**N**orthland dairy farmers Craig and Suzanne Johnsen met some “awesome people” during their involvement with the Ballance Farm Environment Awards (BFEA).

Craig says entering the 2016 Northland BFEA allowed them to highlight the work they were doing in and around the wider community.

The judging process also provided them with a valuable opportunity to benchmark their operation against other dairy businesses and find out what they could do in future to make further improvements.

Sue says the experience was inspirational and they enjoyed mixing with the other entrants.

Craig and Sue say they would certainly encourage other farmers to enter the BFEA “because there is always something to learn and improve on the farm”.

### **Craig and Suzanne Johnsen**

*Entrants, 2016 Northland Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



“It was great to chat with the others involved in the BFEA. We got a lot out of the experience and I’d recommend it to anyone.”

*Brian and Pirkko Gallagher.*



**E**ntering the Auckland Ballance Farm Environment Awards gave Patumahoe dairy farmers Brian and Pirkko Gallagher a chance to showcase some of the good work they’d been doing on their farm.

Brian says the BFEA offered a valuable outside perspective of their farming operation.

Brian says he was impressed with the standard of the other finalists in the Auckland BFEA. “It was great to chat with the others involved in the BFEA. We got a lot out of the experience and I’d recommend it to anyone. It’s not just about planting trees; it’s also about how you run your business and what you do in your community.”

Brian says he would definitely recommend the BFEA to farmers and horticulturists who are in the early stages of their farming journey because they can learn so much from it.

“Be bold and be ambitious, and give it a go.”

### **Brian and Pirkko Gallagher**

*Entrants, 2016 Auckland Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



**W**aitomo farmers Warren and Cindy Clayton-Greene take great pride in their 870ha hill- country property, Glenview Station.

Judges said Glenview Station is “getting the balance between economic production and the environment right”. They described Glenview as a very impressive business, and a role model for other hill-country farms.

“We’ve always felt we were heading in the right direction, but it was great to know the judges thought so as well,” says Warren.

Warren and Cindy enjoyed showing the judges around the farm during the judging process.

“It was nice to get their feedback and their comments were very positive.”

### **Warren and Cindy Clayton-Greene**

*Entrants, 2016 Waikato Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



*Warren and Cindy Clayton-Greene.*

**F**arming in an environmentally sensitive catchment can be tough, but the Birchall family is working hard to meet the challenge. Shane and his wife June run their 530-cow operation, Waionehu Farm Limited, with their son Daniel and daughter Megan. Shane and Megan are also involved in several local committees that focus on environmental issues.

Shane and June first entered the Bay of Plenty Ballance Farm Environment Awards about eight years ago and enjoyed the experience, so the whole family decided to enter again this year.

Shane says the judging process was thoroughly rewarding “because it makes you sit down and take a good hard look at what you are trying to achieve”.

“We also met some very interesting people, including the judges, scientists and other entrants.”

He says all farmers should consider entering the BFEA, even if they don't feel their farm or orchard is ready. “You don't have to have all your ducks in a row. Just put your hand up and give it a go.”

### **Shane, June, Daniel and Megan Birchall**

*Entrants, 2016 Bay of Plenty Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



“It makes you sit down and take a good hard look at what you are trying to achieve. Just put your hand up and give it a go”.

*Shane, June, Daniel and Megan Birchall.*





*Ivan and Sue & Lewis and Mel Knauf.*



“The judging was conducted in quite a relaxed fashion. It was more like a conversation than a question-answer session, and we enjoyed talking to the judges about what we were doing on the farm and what we were trying to achieve.”

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## Testimonials Continued

The East Coast Ballance Farm Environment Awards gave the Knauf family the perfect opportunity to benchmark their large-scale dairy and beef operation.

Lewis Knauf, who manages Wairua Farm – an 825ha (656ha effective) property in the Maraekakaho district west of Hastings, says his family wanted to show the wider community they care about the environment.

The family enjoyed being involved with the BFEA and winning four category awards proved they were on the right track as far as sustainability goes.

“I wasn’t sure what to expect at first, but the whole process was very rewarding,” Lewis says.

“The judging was conducted in quite a relaxed fashion. It was more like a conversation than a question-answer session, and we enjoyed talking to the judges about what we were doing on the farm and what we were trying to achieve.”

Lewis says the judging process highlighted a few areas they could work on in future.

“It really was well worthwhile and any farmer that is considering entering the BFEA should just do it. Don’t wait until you’ve got everything sorted on the farm because that is never going to happen. Just use it as a learning exercise to find out how you can improve your business.”

### **Ivan and Sue & Lewis and Mel Knauf**

*Entrants, 2016 East Coast Ballance Farm Environment Awards*

Wairarapa sheep and beef farmers Tim and Nicola Hewitt are proud of the environmental work on their family’s 724ha (640ha effective) property south of Pahiatua.

While they were initially reluctant to enter the Horizons Ballance Farm Environment Awards, they are glad they finally gave it a go. “We didn’t want to be seen as blowing our own trumpet,” says Tim.

“But ultimately I think farmers have a responsibility to our industry to show that we are trying to do a good job when it comes to the environment.”



He says the BFEA judging process was a stimulating experience. "Knowing that the judges, including our farming peers and past BFEA winners, are visiting the farm really makes you think hard about what you are trying to achieve.

"The whole process was very well done. The judges made us feel relaxed and we enjoyed talking to them about what we were doing on the farm."

The Hewitts were glad they entered the Horizons Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

"I think it's a good thing for our industry so the more people who support it, the better. If you are considering entering, give it a go. You've got nothing to lose."

### **Tim and Nicola Hewitt**

*Entrants, 2016 Horizons Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



*Tim and Nicola Hewitt.*



Entering the Taranaki Ballance Farm Environment Awards was a great challenge for Opunake dairy farmers Kenneth and Rachel Short.

Rachel says being involved in the BFEA was an important part of their planning process "because it made us sit down together and take a good hard look at what we had done and what we are trying to achieve".

"The judging panel offered a broad range of experience and expertise, and the judging process was conducted in a relaxed and friendly manner. I used to get very nervous about these things, but the judges are just normal everyday people who are there to help you."

"It was definitely worthwhile having those judges come onto the farm and provide us with an outside perspective of our business. Some of their ideas were very useful and we enjoyed their feedback."

Rachel says she and Kenneth would certainly like to re-enter the BFEA again in future. "I'd recommend it to anyone. The BFEA are a really good way to challenge yourself and learn more about how to improve your operation."

### **Kenneth and Rachel Short**

*Entrants, Taranaki Ballance Farm Environment Awards*

"It was definitely worthwhile having those judges come onto the farm and provide us with an outside perspective of our business. Some of their ideas were very useful and we enjoyed their feedback."

*Kenneth and Rachel Short.*





*Palliser Estate Wines of Martinborough Ltd.*



“Sustainability is a journey. It’s not like you wake up one day and go ‘hey we’re sustainable now.’ and you can stop working on any initiatives. We need to keep finding new ways of making our environment better.”

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## Testimonials Continued

Entering the Greater Wellington Ballance Farm Environment Awards was a valuable exercise for South Wairarapa viticulture business, Palliser Estate Wines of Martinborough Ltd.

Chief executive officer Pip Goodwin says the operation aims to be a leader in the production of high quality wine using the most sustainable methods possible. “The BFEA gave us a chance to be judged by our peers and find out what we could do to improve in future.”

She says being involved in the BFEA was a positive experience for the operation, which is always looking for ways to evolve. “Sustainability is a journey. It’s not like you wake up one day and go ‘hey we’re sustainable now’ and you can stop working on any initiatives. We need to keep finding new ways of making our environment better.”

As a winery, the operation differs significantly to the sheep, beef and dairying businesses involved in the BFEA. But Pip says the Palliser Estate team enjoyed mixing with people from a range of different industries on BFEA night. “It was inspiring to see what others are doing to improve sustainability on their farms and orchards. It doesn’t matter what industry you are in: we are all selling product offshore and doing our best to show our customers that our products are produced in an environmentally-friendly way.”

She encourages other viticulture, horticulture and agricultural operations to enter the BFEA. “It’s a great opportunity to learn something that will help you improve your business in the long term.”

### **Palliser Estate Wines of Martinborough Ltd**

*Entrant, 2016 Greater Wellington Ballance Farm Environment Awards*

South Canterbury dairy farmers John and Cara Gregan say the Ballance Farm Environment Awards are a positive event for the dairy industry because they highlight good examples of sustainable agriculture.

The Gregans first entered the Canterbury BFEA about 15 years ago when they were still farming sheep and beef on the original family farm. “We are the third generation to farm here. The foundation was laid by my father and grandfather and it’s nice to have their efforts recognised” John says.

"The home farm has a good history of tree plantings, but our first experience with the BFEA taught us more about the value of riparian planting and planting for run-off control."

Cara says they put a lot of preparation into their 2016 entry, presenting plenty of information to the judges. The judges made them feel relaxed and gave them good feedback on the business. "It's easy to think your operation is going well, but a lot of things can go wrong when you are dealing with livestock-based systems, so it's important to keep reviewing what you are doing."

"We would certainly encourage others to enter the BFEA because you learn so much about your business as you go through the process. It's a good time to stop and look at your operation and decide what you want to achieve going forward."

### **John and Cara Gregan**

*Entrants, Canterbury Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



*John and Cara Gregan.*



"It's easy to think your operation is going well, but a lot of things can go wrong when you are dealing with livestock-based systems, so it's important to keep reviewing what you are doing."

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*Marty and Lynette Deans.*

Otago farmer Marty Deans entered the Ballance Farm Environment Awards because he wanted to benchmark the operation he manages and learn more about improving sustainability.

He and wife Lynette live on Barewood Station, a 6300ha sheep and beef property between Middlemarch and Outram. Barewood is one of eight farms owned and operated by Tom and Heather Sturgess, Lone Star Farms.

Marty was encouraged to enter Barewood in the 2016 Otago BFEA. "I'm not normally the type to enter competitions, but I could see the benefits of being involved with this one. It was a very good process and I learnt a lot from it. You get to meet a range of like-minded people and you make some great contacts in the industry."

Marty was impressed with the calibre of the judges and the professionalism of the report he received after the judging process. "We had eight different judges come onto the farm on two different occasions and they asked totally different questions. But it wasn't a scary process, more like a general chat over a cup of tea. The feedback given was excellent and one of the best things was that I was able to ask them questions as well."

[Article continued over page >](#)



## Testimonials Continued

"The advice in the report was very useful and the whole thing makes you take a good hard look at what you are doing to improve sustainability."

Marty's suggestion to anyone considering entering the BFEA is to take a quick look at the entry form to find out what is required. "Then you'll realise it's not that scary at all. The hardest part is ticking the boxes: the rest is very enjoyable and highly educational. It's a great experience and I'd recommend it to anyone."

### **Marty and Lynette Deans**

*Entrant, 2016 Otago Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



"I think the BFEA are a great way to showcase the positive things that are happening out there. They are also excellent for helping farmers learn more about how to improve their individual operations."

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*Vince and Bella Aynsley.*



Vince and Bella Aynsley entered the Southland Ballance Farm Environment Awards because they felt they had a good news story to tell about their industry. "We don't consider ourselves to be top farmers, but we always try to do the best we can," says Vince.

"I'm a bit sick of all the negative press that farming gets. The vast majority of us are doing a good job considering the financial and environmental limitations we face. Opening up the farm to five expert judges from all walks of life gave us a very valuable outside view of the operation," he says.

"Like most farmers, I tend to plod away largely on my own and that can make you very inward thinking. But having those judges take a good hard look at your business for free is hugely beneficial."

Vince says he and Bella learnt a lot from the experience. "It certainly made me aware of the need to document more about the farm's management, rather than just carrying things around in my head all the time. If something happened to me, I'd want Bella or whoever took over to have the 'big picture' information that will help them manage the place efficiently."

Vince would definitely recommend the BFEA to other farmers. "I think the BFEA are a great way to showcase the positive things that are happening out there. They are also excellent for helping farmers learn more about how to improve their individual operations."

### **Vince and Bella Aynsley**

*Entrants, 2016 Southland Ballance Farm Environment Awards*



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The New Zealand Farm Environment Trust , which is an independent entity, seeks to promote leadership in environmental excellence and encourage the uptake of management practices which both protect and enhance the environment and add value to farming businesses and communities.

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