



GRAIN OF TRUTH

It has been an outstanding autumn for farmers throughout our region. Regular rainfall and warm soil temperatures means farmers are going into winter with plenty of feed on hand, high yielding forage crops and well-established cash crops

Along with the favourable climatic conditions, we have seen an upswing in returns for sheepmeat and beef and a strong milk solid payment for dairy farmers.

Trump's tariffs have created a degree of uncertainty in world markets, but within that we are seeing some opportunities emerging. For NZ exporters, there may be opportunities to grow their businesses, particularly in China where NZ exports are competing with the USA.

We were fortunate to be able to host the Hon. Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety and Associate Minister of Agriculture and for the Environment at our Ashburton site earlier this month.

It was a great opportunity to show him our cutting-edge PETKUS plant and outline our business which has grown exponentially over recent years, so that we now export to over 30 countries.

I'm particularly proud of the fact that despite this growth, Luisetti Seeds has remained a 100% family-owned company, and we are recognised internationally for the quality of our seeds.

As we head into winter, I encourage farmers and growers to keep in touch with our team of agronomists and get orders in early for agrichemicals and seed for spring sown crops.

I'm looking forward to following the Luisetti Seeds Combined Country Division 1 competition. This is grass-



Edward Luisetti, Managing Director

roots rugby at its best and a great reason for rural communities to get together on Saturday afternoons and support their local team. I hope to see you on the sideline.

Thank you for your continued support, Edward Luisetti

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Reliance proves a reliable performer in mixed-cropping operation



Geoff Maw (right) with business partner Kyle Gray. Reliance wheat is a mainstay cereal in their cropping rotation

Geoff Maw began growing Reliance on his 450ha mixed-cropping farm at Dorie before the milling wheat was even commercially available

As a host farm for the Foundation for Arable Research's Cereal Performance Trials (CPT), he was impressed with the milling wheat's performance in the trial plots and Reliance has been a mainstay cereal in his cropping rotation ever since.

The Maws grow a range of crops including seed crops such as ryegrass, white clover and brassicas and process crops including sweetcorn, potatoes and cereals.

Geoff says Reliance is a perfect fit in their crop rotation. Sown in mid to late May, the early maturing wheat is able to be harvested early, which gives the Maws a bigger window for sowing subsequent crops, typically white clover.

"It's in and out of the ground quickly," says Geoff.

The timing for harvesting Reliance also fits in nicely with the other crops they grow.

"It sits in a window slot with our other crops."

In terms of the timing of sowing and harvesting, Geoff says milling wheats better suit their operation than feed wheats.

True to its name, Reliance is a reliable performer on the Maws' lighter sandy soils and Geoff says the wheat, which is irrigated, consistently yields around 11.5t/ha.

As with all their arable crops, the Maws keep a close eye on their Reliance crops for signs of disease and follow the advice of their Luisetti Seeds agronomist Andrew Airey.

"We've learnt how to grow it and treat it reasonably well and we've never had any quality issues with it," says Geoff.

Reliance milling wheat is a large grain, high yielding variety. It has a large seed which equips it well for challenging finishing conditions. While Reliance responds well to moisture, it will also finish well in drier conditions. It has good tolerance to seedling and adult stripe rust and BYDV and medium tolerance to Septoria leaf blotch and mildew. It is susceptible to leaf rust. Autumn crops require three fungicide applications.

Talk to your Luisetti Seeds agronomist about how Reliance could fit your cropping rotation



Winter active Intimidator™ oats are an ideal catch crop and can be sown in combination with a forage legume

Capturing the benefits of catch crops

Catch crops sown in the wake of winter forage crops give farmers the ability to turn residual soil nitrogen (N) into high quality dry matter while reducing the risk of nitrate leaching

The Catch Crops for Cleaner Freshwater project has highlighted the value of catch crops, such as Intimidator™ forage oats, for reducing nitrogen (N) leaching by up to 60% and sediment run-off by around 40%.

Catch crops can also improve soil function by increasing soil organic matter, remediating soil structure, improving aeration, water infiltration and water storage. They also encourage earthworms and other soil fauna.

For best results, crops should be established as soon as possible after winter grazing when soil temperatures are above 4 degrees. Oats are ideal because they are winter active, and can be grown in combination with Italian or tetraploid hybrid ryegrass or forage legumes.

Plant & Food Senior soil scientist Dr Brendon Malcolm, who leads the Catch

Crops for Cleaner Freshwater project, has trialled catch crops at both plot and farm scale.

He says timing is critical with catch crops and research has shown that sowing oats immediately after grazing has the greatest impact on reducing N losses. With every month that sowing is delayed, there is a notable reduction in efficacy.

Methods of establishment will vary depending on the climate and soil conditions, and while direct-drilling or shallow cultivation will suit drier soil conditions, more innovative tillage-drill combinations may be required on wetter soils.

Dr Malcolm says while July-sown oats can be very slow to come away, they are still capturing a significant amount of N through their root system during the high-risk period, despite the small amount of above ground foliage.

He says a high plant population is

best to capture the N and maximise dry matter production and he recommends a sowing rate of 110-120 kg seeds/ha for oats to target an optimal plant population of 300 plants per square metre.

N should only be applied to catch crops at canopy closure or when the crops are showing signs of N deficiency.

Oat crops can yield up to 12 t DM/ha at green-chop silage stage (growth stage 24). Depending on the crop, it can be grazed, taken for green-chop silage, whole-crop silage or for grain.

Luisetti Seeds agronomist Andrew Airey says Intimidator™ oats are an ideal option for farmers wanting to capture the benefits of catch crops. Its large stems make it frost tolerant, and it grows well in cool conditions.

Intimidator™ is a particularly high-yielding forage oat and grows well in combination with forage legumes such as peas.

Mr Airey encourages farmers to talk to their Luisetti Seeds agronomists about catch crop options.

Associate Minister of Agriculture visits Luisetti Seeds



The Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety and Associate Minister of Agriculture and for the Environment talks to Edward Luisetti and Operations Manager Mark Frampton

The Hon Andrew Hoggard, Minister for Biosecurity and Food Safety and Associate Minister of Agriculture and for the Environment took the opportunity to visit Luisetti Seeds' Ashburton site when he was in Mid Canterbury earlier this month

The Minister inspected the company's cutting-edge PETKUS seed processing plant and spoke to clients and staff.

Biosecurity

He said few people appreciate just how valuable forage and vegetable seeds are to New Zealand's export economy. While there had been no major biosecurity breaches since he has been Minister, recent minor incursions by fruit flies and a brown marmorated stink bug highlighted the benefit of having a General Industry Agreement (GIA) in place.

This agreement, which was instrumental in controlling the Black Grass incursion in Mid Canterbury, sets out the operational plans in the event of a biosecurity incursion.

"We want to have those plans in place in peacetime. Once a response is underway, we want to be in boots and all to stamp it out and get back on with farming."

He says there will always be incursions, but decisions need to be made and discussions had around the cost benefit of getting rid of unwanted organisms.

"We keep things tight and if the worst happens, we need to decide can we do it, can we afford to do it or can we afford not to do it."

The removal of red-tape was a theme in the Minister's address and he believed RMA reforms would be this government's lasting legacy.

These reforms would, within reason, give people the power to do what they want on their own land.

International trade

Addressing a question about international trade, Hoggard said the only upside to the current international trade-wars would be a renewed appreciation of a rules-based framework, rather than the chaos being experienced now.

"It feels like we are the only straight shooters (following the rules) we just need the rest of the world to do the same."

Palm Kernel Expeller

In response to a question about the biosecurity risks posed by PKE, Minister Hoggard says the Government took the view that because PKE imports need to comply to a health standard and is held in enclosed holds on ships, it doesn't pose a big risk.

"I haven't heard any issues with it either formally or informally."

While he appreciated that PKE was competing with grain as a supplementary feed option for dairy farmers, Hoggard suggested that a blend of both PKE and grain was becoming an increasingly popular option.

"As dairy farmers, we get addicted to the cheap stuff before going on to the good stuff."

He described his own experience of feeding PKE in the shed and then moving on to using grain once he realised the value of supplementary feeding in the milking shed.



Tractor versus six-horse team in Canterbury

This was the topic for discussion at the farm-school in Methven at the end of June in 1925

This was the topic for discussion at the farm-school in Methven at the end of June in 1925.

The arguments for and against were documented by A.H Cockayne, Director of the Fields Division of the Ministry for Agriculture, for publication in the September 1925 issue of The New Zealand Journal of Agriculture.

"An evening was devoted to an open discussion on the comparative merits of the tractor versus the six horse team for farm tillage and cropping work under Canterbury conditions.

Mr J. Brown of Lowcliffe, Mr W.W. Mulholland of Darfield and Messrs W.M.J. Dart and A.McAnulty of Methven were the main speakers, but many other farmers present gave their views, ideas, and experiences and many interesting points were brought forward.

The outstanding feature of the discussion was the general acceptance that on normal six-horse-team farms it was generally impossible to arrange a satisfactory and payable cropping programme that did not entail the overloading of the team at various times

of the year and that therefore a reserve of power was necessary.

This, it was argued, could be done only by having a spare team, by employing a contract team, or by the employment of a tractor.

He writes that the position had become seriously complicated in Canterbury through two factors – namely the spread of underground-stemmed grasses, particularly old-man twitch and creeping fog and the general unreliability of the turnip crop necessitating large acreages of autumn-sown, green-feed cereals.

"Badly twitch-infested paddocks increase very greatly the amount of cultivation necessary and seriously reduce the acreage that can be yearly dealt with by a team.

Mr J. Brown and Mr W.W. Mulholland were in complete agreement that under their particular conditions, a single six-horse team could not cope with all the work requiring to be done. In both instances a reserve unit had to be available. With Mr Brown, this was provided by the employment of a contract team where necessary

and with Mr Mulholland, the reserve power was provided by a tractor."

Amongst Cockayne's detailed account of the meeting he writes:

"The consensus of opinion at the meeting was that on the ordinary mixed farm of moderate to large size the tractor has a definite and valuable place as an auxiliary to the six-horse team."

He concludes; "The whole question as to the real position that the tractor should occupy in New Zealand farming is one that requires careful and expert investigation. In the past it has been viewed more from the standpoint of trying to prove whether or not the tractor would eliminate the farm team on mere comparison costs of operation which factor often has no bearing on the matter. The discussion at Methven appears to show clearly that both forms of power are necessary in New Zealand farming. The time has therefore arrived to determine with some degree of accuracy just where and under what conditions the tractor should supply cultivation-power."

The New Zealand Journal of Agriculture 21st September, 1925



Best practice reminder when grazing winter forage crops

Winter forage crops have grown particularly well in Canterbury this year with some outstanding yields being recorded

These crops play a valuable role in many farm systems. They offer stock a bulk of high quality feed over winter when pasture growth slows down and they are also an important part of crop and pasture rotations.

The spotlight has fallen on winter grazing practices in recent years and while farmers have responded to industry messaging, regional councils and industry-good organisations are encouraging farmers to keep up the good work.

Dr Will Halliday, Beef + Lamb New Zealand's Senior Advisor Biosecurity and Animal Welfare, says forage crops play an important role in keeping animals well-fed and healthy throughout the winter months, but it is important farmers assess and mitigate any risks associated with the practice.

"I strongly recommend farmers put together a Winter Grazing Plan which includes stock and crop management for each paddock. Ideally it should include factors such as direction of grazing, the placement of fences, troughs, supplementary feed, critical source areas, proximity to waterways, shelter, loafing areas and bad weather

contingency plans."

Dr Halliday says a Winter Grazing Plan helps with risk assessment and ensures the whole farm team knows what is required when intensively grazing forage crops this winter.

He says winter grazing practices have changed significantly over recent years as farmers have responded to the outcomes of research and industry messaging.

"Overall, farmers have been doing a great job at looking after their livestock, their soils and their waterways and we are encouraging farmers to keep up the good work this winter."

"As an industry, we want to demonstrate to regulators and the general public that when managed correctly, intensively grazed winter forage crops are a valuable tool that pose minimal risk to animal welfare and water quality."

Dr Halliday says there are a number of winter grazing resources, including Winter Grazing Plan templates, on B+LNZ's Knowledge Hub as well as winter grazing information on DairyNZ and many regional councils' websites.

"There is a lot of information and support for farmers who are grazing winter forage crops and we encourage farmers to tap into these resources or ring their regional council to get regional-specific information about their winter grazing practices."



Winter watch: Setting your crops up for spring success

As winter sets in, it's time to think strategically about what lies beneath the surface

While paddocks may look dormant, the decisions you make now will significantly influence spring growth, crop health, and yields.

Soil Health Check

Winter is the ideal time to assess soil nutrient levels and structure. Consider soil testing to determine pH levels and key nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur, and magnesium. Identifying deficiencies now can help avoid spring delays.

Luisetti Seeds stock a range of Wuxal foliar nutrient options as well as UAN

Cover Crops & Catch Crops

If you haven't already, consider sowing winter cover crops like oats and/or ryegrass. These help reduce the risk of nitrogen (N) leaching, erosion, suppress weeds, and improve soil organic matter, as well as improving on farm productivity.

Pasture Management

For livestock farmers, careful pasture management is crucial during the cooler months. Avoid overgrazing waterlogged paddocks to prevent compaction and pugging, which can have long-term impacts on root growth and productivity. Use on/off grazing or back fencing to protect vulnerable areas.

Pest and Disease Monitoring

Don't let cooler weather lull you into a false sense of security—some pests and diseases remain active in winter, especially in milder regions. Keep an eye out for slugs, grass grub, and fungal issues in cereals. Early identification can make spring treatments more effective and economical.

Luisetti Seeds stock slug bait (Metarex, Iron Max Pro), grass grub control



(Diazinon - granular & liquid), and a wide range of fungicides

Plan for Spring Now

Winter is the best time to reflect, review, and prepare. Revisit your cropping rotation plan, evaluate last season's results, and consider new innovations or seed varieties that could offer better resilience or returns. Reach out to your local agronomist for support in building a proactive plan.

FEED WHEAT

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