



GRAIN OF TRUTH

Spring marks the beginning of another year in the farming calendar with lambing and calving underway and the ground being prepared for spring-sown crops

There is a real sense of optimism in the rural sector with strong returns for milk solids and red meat, all of which flow through to other parts of the industry.

Sheep and beef farmers have seen a significant turn around in the past 12 months and commentators suggest these strong prices look set to continue.

Arable growers are also looking forward to a better season with increased crop options and prices for spring.

It was a proper winter with plenty of rain and more latterly – frosts – so once the weather warms up, we can look forward to some great growing conditions.

I'm particularly looking forward to the October launch of a national campaign and trademark to raise consumer awareness of our local grain industry.

As well as a trademark that will appear on products produced from locally

grown wheat, this campaign will share stories of grain producers and highlight the benefits of our home-grown grains.

Ultimately, this campaign aims to increase domestic consumption and production of our locally grown grains. You can read more about this initiative in this issue of Grain of Truth.

Also included in this issue is our Luisetti Seeds Paddock of the Year winners. Unusually, the winning paddock was a high-octane pasture mix we call Super Charger and it certainly lived up to its name, super-charging growth rates in yearling bulls.

Luisetti Seeds continues to be the principal sponsor of Canterbury Country Rugby, recognising the important role rugby plays in rural communities.

Once again, Luisetti Seeds Division One Combined Competition delivered some of this country's best grass-roots rugby and made for an exciting competition over the winter months.



Edward Luisetti, Managing Director

I would like to congratulate the winning teams and all those players and supporters who turn up every Saturday to enjoy our national game.

Please enjoy this issue of Grain of Truth. As well as news, we have some great information about the benefits of legume-based sheep systems and some timely crop and forage management tips.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact any of our great team for any agronomic advice.

Contents

+ Luisetti Seeds Paddock of the Year winners3

+ Campaign to raise consumer awareness of NZ grown grain4

+ Spring sowing options5

+ Legumes drive sheep and beef systems6

+ Luisetti Seeds welcomes back Shane King7

+ Supporting Canterbury Country rugby8



Digital copy download

Acknowledgements

Content:
Sandra Taylor

Photography:
John McCaw
(unless otherwise stated)

Graphic design:
Joseph Ku

Meet our agronomists luisettiseeds.co.nz/local-luisetti-agent/



John McCaw
PRODUCTION MANAGER
CENTRAL/MID CANTERBURY
027 280 4082
john.mccaw@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Andrew Johnston
FARM SYSTEMS
NORTH CANTERBURY
027 433 4876
andrew.johnston@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Simon Fleetwood
GRAIN TRADING MANAGER
MID/SOUTH CANTERBURY
027 466 0030
simon.fleetwood@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Jono Young
CEREAL & PULSE MANAGER
027 404 0540
jono.young@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Jack Harnett
AGRONOMIST
MID/SOUTH CANTERBURY
027 807 2854
jack.harnett@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Joanna Ford
AGRONOMIST
LOWER NORTH/MID CANTERBURY
027 223 0965
jo.ford@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Kerry Thomas
AGRONOMIST
CENTRAL/MID CANTERBURY
027 439 6104
kerry.thomas@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Michael Stanley
AGRONOMIST
NORTH CANTERBURY
027 569 6967
michael.stanley@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Nick Jenkins
AGRONOMIST
CENTRAL CANTERBURY
027 441 1106
nick.jenkins@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Stephen Booth
AGRONOMIST
SOUTH CANTERBURY/OTAGO
027 555 8595
stephen.booth@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Andrew Airey
AGRONOMIST
MID/NORTH CANTERBURY
027 255 8766
andrew.airey@luisettiseeds.co.nz



Caleb Pomare-Edwards
AGRONOMIST
CENTRAL/NORTH CANTERBURY
027 723 1931
caleb.pomare-edwards@luisettiseeds.co.nz

 **LUISETTI**
QUALITY SINCE 1932
luisettiseeds.co.nz
admin@luisettiseeds.co.nz

Rangiora
20 Ashley Street
PO Box 77, Rangiora 7440
+64 3 313 7176

Ashburton
188 Dobson Street
Ashburton 7700
+64 3 308 9103

Find us on social media



Luisetti Seeds Paddock of the Year winners



Caleb Pomare-Edwards presents the Luisetti Seeds Paddock of the Year trophy to Matthew Munro and Elizabeth Thomson

Winning the 2025 Luisetti Seeds Paddock of the Year was quite a surprise for North Canterbury couple Matthew Munro and Elizabeth Thomson

Their Super Charger pasture had already rewarded them with high livestock growth rates, so winning the trophy was the icing on the cake.

“We really didn’t know much about the competition, says Elizabeth, Caleb had mentioned he was entering the paddock and we didn’t take a lot of notice, but then we won.”

They credit their agronomist Caleb Pomare-Edwards for doing all the work in both recommending the mix and ensuring it performed to meet their requirements.

The couple farm 660ha north of Amberley, running Murray Grey and Texel studs as well as commercial deer.

Elizabeth says the Murray Grey cattle are a big focus for them as they breed bulls for the dairy industry.

They need high quality forages to

grow the R1 bulls out so they are ready for mating the following year and Super Charger pasture has ticked all the boxes in driving high liveweight gains in the yearling bulls, particularly over spring.

In October last year their R1 bulls were on the mix for one month and the top bulls were gaining an impressive 3.29kg/day while the average were growing at 2.46kg/day.

The winning paddock was sown in spring 2023 out of pasture. Elizabeth said they had intended to sow lucerne, but damaging winds had brought down trees in the paddock which meant logging vehicles would be driving over the crop.

Rather than risk the damage, they followed Caleb’s advice and sowed the less expensive Super Charger mix and Elizabeth says they could not be more pleased with the results.

“We’ve used it for bulls, lambs, hoggets and ewes pre-mating to give them a bit of flush. I think everything has been in there.”

They have had no animal health issues with the high-octane forage and while stock can take a few days to adjust, once they get used to the feed, they love it.

Caleb says the Super Charger mix is made up of Charger chicory at 7kg/ha, Kakariki white clover at 2kg/ha, Optimise white clover at 2kg/ha and Testa Rossa red clover at 5kg/ha. This makes for a total of 16kg/ha.

Elizabeth says the paddock has been very low maintenance and while they did spell it for a few weeks over winter, she says it was looking good and would be ready for grazing again in early spring.



Whopper: A national campaign and trademark will raise consumer awareness of local grain production

Campaign to raise consumer awareness of NZ grown grain

A national campaign and trademark to raise consumer awareness of local grain production will be launched in Auckland in early October

The New Zealand Grown Grain Initiative is backed by the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR), Eat NZ and the Arable Food Industry Council (AFIC) and aims to increase domestic production and consumption of locally grown grains. This initiative introduces a new trademark that can be used on packaging, labelling, and promotional material for products containing at least 80 percent New Zealand-grown grain.

Edward Luisetti, who sits on the board of AFIC, says the campaign aims to reduce New Zealand’s reliance on imported wheat and promote a more resilient and sustainable food system. “This means supporting arable farmers, encouraging local milling as well as raising consumer awareness

of the benefits of our home-grown grains.” He says the campaign will help educate consumers about the benefits of locally grown grains and encourage them to support their local industry. It will also highlight the importance of traceability and provenance in grain production. There’s a focus on linking locally produced grains to a food identity story, similar to wine or produce at farmers markets. “Ultimately, we want to make arable farming more profitable by boosting local production. This would also improve food security and reduce our vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions.” The initiative will support the development of local milling

infrastructure, including facilities for cleaning and processing grain. “We aim to create a more sustainable and resilient local food system. This will lead to reduced transportation costs and emissions associated with grain, while boosting jobs and opportunities for our local grain supply chain.” While the initial target is the milling wheat industry, there are plans afoot to look to introduce the logo to other NZ grain products such as oat milk, beer and rolled oats.

Spring sowing options



Luisetti Seeds agronomist Caleb Pomare-Edwards provides some advice on spring sowing options

- Pugging has been a problem due to the wet winter, but using a hybrid ryegrass (such as Frenzy & Forge) to stitch up pugged paddocks can get those paddocks back into production quickly, growing high quality feed.
- Planning winter forage crops early saves time and money. Rectifying soil nutrient problems prior to sowing is important to get the crop off to the best start. Factors to consider include paddock history and herbicide withholding periods. Variety selection is based on stock class, but other factors to think about include soil type, slope, location of waterways and critical source areas, access to shelter and stand-off areas, and placement of water troughs and supplementary feed. Talk to a Luisetti Seeds agronomist for the best winter forages for your farm system
- Spring sown cereal silage mixes are an ideal way to fill up the silage pit or bale for feed reserves. Some options are:
 - Intimidator™ oats and Max forage peas. They are a great option for paddocks coming out of winter forage crops. The resulting crop can be cut for high-quality, high protein whole crop silage.
 - A combination of Fortitude or Buttress barley & Max forage peas can be cut for silage or cut and fed directly to cattle particularly dairy cows as a high ME, high protein feed to help drive production in that early summer period. These crops can yield 12-14tDM/ha with minimal inputs. The addition of vetch to the mix as another legume option can be used to boost protein and nitrogen fixation.
 - Intimidator™ oats and a two-year grass. The oats can be cut for supplementary feed and the grass will come away so the paddock can then be part of the grazing rotation.
- Buttress feed barley is ideal for farmers looking to refill their silos next summer. It can be sown from July through until October.
- Consider sowing a herb & legume mix with the likes of Charger chicory, Tuatara plantain, Kakariki white clover & Testa Rossa red clover to drive lamb growth rates and capitalise on the strong returns expected for sheep meat season.
- Summer brassica are also another great option for finishing lambs or growing out replacements. Options include Raphno, rape, and kale. Varieties like Kea kale can be used as a multi graze option for flushing ewes in the autumn or Pallaton Raphno to protect against summer dry areas & grazing flexibility (graze as early as 50 days).
- Green globe and Barkant summer turnips are a great option for finishing lambs. Barkant, in particular, is a 60-day turnip yet it’s the highest yielding summer bulb turnip available. It allows farmers to finish lambs within a small area, taking pressure off the rest of the farm.

Mark Zino with agronomist Andrew Johnston looking at subterranean clover



Legumes drive sheep and beef systems

Legumes come into their own over spring and summer, helping to drive lactation, pre and post-weaning growth rates and build condition back on ewes in readiness for mating in autumn

For the Zino family in North Canterbury, legumes are the engine driving their sheep, beef and deer operation with their whole farm system being geared around these high-protein forages.

Mark Zino says they are striving to run a low cost, high profit business by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their land and growing the right legume in the right place.

"We aim to have large volumes of legumes growing between August and April and this includes lucerne, subterranean clover and red and white clovers. These are grown along with chicory and some Italian ryegrass.

Their farm is divided into management units, with lucerne and brassicas grown under irrigation and on the lighter soil of their river flats, while subterranean clover flourishes on their medium stoney silt loam soils which makes up the bulk of their dryland sheep and beef area.

Mark says these free-draining soils are ideal for lucerne and sub clover which thrives under the correct management.

On their heavier ground, the Zinos are establishing red and white clover mixes which are used for growing lambs.

"We don't use this land for winter, it's too wet, but it is valuable for finishing lambs for the rest of the year."

Fast growing lambs

The Zinos aim to grow their lambs at over 350gms/day for 100 days and sell 80-90% of their lamb crop prime at weaning at 20kgCW.

They can only do this by feeding legumes, particularly sub clover, which drives lactation and these high pre-weaning growth rates.

"For us, sub clover is a high-quality feed which helps to get a ewe milking well early in lactation and keeps her milking well. We get high lamb survival and high lamb growth rates as the ewes maintain peak lactation for longer," says Mark.

Sub clover also provides high quality feed for lambs on their mothers.

To help maximise sub clover production, ewes are used to clean up pastures over summer and autumn.

This ensures the clover gets enough light in spring.

Mark says thanks to reasonably reliable rainfall, they can grow a lot of feed in autumn, but they are particularly careful not to overgraze the young sub clover plants.

"The key is to have pastures where the young sub plants can get light and moisture so they can establish over the autumn and winter. This helps build pasture covers for lambing in mid-August."

Drawing on science

Luisetti Seeds agronomist Andrew Johnston has been working with the Zino family for 40 years and has drawn on the research carried out on Lincoln University's Dryland Research Unit, led by Professor Derrick Moot, to help the family transition to a farm system driven by legumes.

"The braver we got about reducing our reliance on ryegrass, the more success we had."

He says when setting the system, they looked at the type of country, the period when the Zinos required the most feed and found the most suitable legume to fit both the type of country and feed demand.

Andrew says as well feeding brassicas, the Zinos do use short rotation ryegrasses for wintering hoggets.

He says it is possible to add an annual legume, such as Persian clover or sub clover, to the short rotation ryegrass and this increases the ME of every mouthful of forage eaten. A high ME feed is particularly important for multiple-bearing in-lamb ewes as their intake is limited due to their reduced stomach size.

Lucerne



Lucerne: Spring and early summer are the ideal times to establish lucerne

Lucerne's ability to make efficient use of water to grow high quality forage is making it an increasingly popular plant, particularly in dryland farming systems.

Known as the King of Forages, lucerne's deep tap roots will explore the soil profile to find water and this gives the plant its trademark ability to persist and produce large quantities of high-quality feed for many years.

Luisetti Seeds agronomist Andrew Johnston says spring and early summer

are the ideal times to establish lucerne stands and he recommends Takahe lucerne, because it has been bred in New Zealand for New Zealand's grazing conditions.

"Takahe has superior root density and leaf to stem ratio, so it has the ability to both persist and produce high ME feed."

Because lucerne's growing points are at the top of the plant, it should be rotationally grazed.

In a typical rotational grazing situation, stock can be run onto the crop when it is 10-15cm high – ideally at a stocking rate of 14 ewes and lambs/ha – and moved to a new paddock every three to four days.

Andrew says Takahe recovers very quickly after grazing and while the cultivar grows well in spring, its growth is excellent over summer and autumn.

This makes lucerne an ideal complementary legume to subterranean (sub) clover. Sub clover produces high quality feed in late winter and spring and then lucerne come into its own in summer and autumn.

"It's a great system for ewes and lambs."

Caucasian clover

Caucasian clover is another option farmers might want to consider if they are looking for a highly productive alternative to white clover.

While it is slow to establish (patience is required) once established, Caucasian clover will produce more dry matter than white clover and therefore fix more nitrogen.

Its leaves are three times the length of white clover leaflets, which means sheep get more drymatter in every mouthful.

Caucasian clover establishes particularly well on low nitrogen sites where grasses are less competitive.

This allows it to develop its deep, extensive root and rhizome system which allows Caucasian clover to be both highly productive and persistent.

While there is no difference between Caucasian and white clovers in terms of crude protein and energy values, Caucasian clover produces a lot more feed and is a lot more tolerant of temperature extremes, so it is drought tolerant.

Caucasian clover also survives better in infertile soils and tolerates some insect and nematode pests and viruses better than white clover.

Talk to your Luisetti Seeds agronomist about how legumes can benefit your farm system

Luisetti Seeds welcomes back Shane King

Luisetti Seeds is thrilled to welcome agronomist Shane King back to the team, servicing our clients in the Ellesmere district.

Shane left three years ago to work in hybrid vegetable seed production, but he rejoined us at the end of July, lured back by the variety of work offered by Luisetti Seeds and future opportunities to progress through the company.

He says he is enjoying reconnecting with his old clients and getting back to

forage seed production, grain trading and becoming more involved in his client's farm operations.

Outside of work, as well as being a father to two teenagers, Shane is the Chief Fire Officer at the Southbridge Fire Brigade and really enjoys being able to give back to his community.

"Luisetti Seeds has been great. They really support what I'm doing, particularly with call-outs during the day."



Shane can be contacted on:
027 209 9885

Supporting Canterbury Country rugby

Once again, this year's Luisetti Seeds Canterbury Country Division 1 competition was a showcase of the very best of grass-roots rugby

Our company is proud to support Canterbury Country rugby and has had a long family association with the code.

Luisetti Seeds founder, Vincent Luisetti, was playing rugby for Rangiora Borough School back in 1917 and Alf Hunnibell – who was Richard and Max Luisetti's grandfather – was secretary and treasurer of the North Canterbury Rugby Union and managed the senior team for 25 years (1925-1950). The Alf Hunnibell Memorial Cup has been presented in North Canterbury since 1960.



Rangiora Borough School Football Club Junior Team 1917. Left to right, standing: C. Pulley, C. Cunningham, A. Ivory, G. Jordan, R. Lane and N. Bell. Sitting: V. Luisetti, P. Roberts and L. Chappell.

Ellesmere Division 1 Final-Coleman Shield

Southbridge were once again the winners of this competition after defeating Darfield in what was described as a fierce battle between two proud clubs.



Mid Canterbury Division 1 Final-Watters Cup

The Ashburton Celtic Senior team won the 2025 Watters Cup, defeating the Southern Senior team in the final with a score of 25-21 on 26 July. It was a close, hard fought contest before Celtic came through and secured the victory.



North Canterbury Division 1 Final- Alf Hunnibell Memorial Cup

Glenmark-Cheviot once again took home the Alf Hunnibell Memorial Trophy after beating Ashley 37-15. This win extended their run of victories in this competition.



Principal Sponsor of
Canterbury Rugby



ARE YOU STUCK?



NO YOU IDIOT, THE COMBINE NEEDED A DRINK