



CARBON FARMING NEWS

ISSUE 3, AUGUST 2009

Welcome to the Carbon Farming Group newsletter.

Like many in the farming sector we are still waiting on the outcome of the ETS review, which was expected to have been announced in March this year – now some are saying by the end of this month. This delay hasn't stopped the Carbon Farming Group from getting on with things, and we recently supported the production of Information Sheets on the various issues related to Carbon Farming. More about these later in the Newsletter. We are also updating our website to provide information on these and other topics. Give us your feedback and tell us which carbon issues you'd like to know more about.

ETS REVIEW



The result of the ETS review has not been released but there have been some preliminary minor announcements with regards to forestry. These are detailed in the latest MAF Sustainable Forestry Bulletin, Issue 7, click [here](#) to read a copy. In summary the Government has amended the Climate Change Response Act 2002, to allow for the extension of timeframes for the reporting and surrendering of units for deforestation, and applying for the less than 50 hectare deforestation exemption.



INFORMATION SHEETS

The Carbon Farming Group in partnership with the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) has produced a series of very useful information sheets. The Info Sheets are available on the Carbon Farming Group website ([click here](#)). The Info Sheets were also available at a series of recent workshops held up and down the country as part of the SFF project. The topics covered by the "two pager" info sheets include:

- An introduction to greenhouse gasses and livestock
- Soil Carbon
- International Agreements
- New Zealand Carbon Programs
- Carbon Trading
- Managing Farm Emissions.

Plans are underway to produce around 13 Info Sheets including case studies of various farm types found in New Zealand. We want your feedback on these – let us know whether we've covered the topics you're interested in.

WEBSITE UPDATES



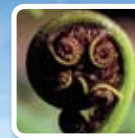
Checkout the recent updates to the Carbon Farming Group website including:

- Twelve Carbon Farming Info sheets
- A copy of the SFF project "Balancing Carbon on Farm" presentation at this years Field Days.

CFG VISITS...

CFG trustees meet quarterly face to face and hold monthly internet conferencing meetings. Our quarterly meetings are held at different locations, arranged by each trustee, to help us increase our collective knowledge of different farming practices.

In the last year, we've met at a sheep and beef farm on Motutapu Island in the Hauraki Gulf; Hinewai Reserve near Akaroa and a "Soils First" dairy support farm near Thames. Each of these locations has their own way of dealing with issues around farming, carbon, profitability and climate change. In this and future issues of our newsletter, we'll profile some of the places we visit highlighting how farmers are managing these key issues. Our first profile in this issue is the "Soils First" dairy support farm.



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MAX PURNELL AND HIS "SOILS FIRST" FARM

Max Purnell owns and runs his farm using what he calls a "Soils First" approach. The unit is an atypical 79ha dairy farm, currently used as a dry stock unit for dairy support i.e. 1 and 2 year dairy or beef cattle for supplying into dairy farms or local trade beef market. The only milking undertaken is to feed calf stock. Max uses an alternative pasture management system to encourage the build up of soil biomass and natural resilience by allowing a diversity of species in the pasture to grow through their full life cycle.



Max Purnell (right) explains his "rolling fallow" grazing regime to CFG board Chairman Rick Braddock.

Grazing techniques are based on quick movement through taller sward i.e. 3,000 to 4000kg DM/ha. Paddock management employs a rolling fallow approach to enable pasture to reach through to maturity. Visually the paddocks look "messy" when compared to conventional pasture management.



(The resulting pasture showing a variety of species)

The actual area set aside each year for the rolling fallow system was dependant on the economic performance of the farm. Few chemicals are used and very little traditional fertilisers are applied. No information was available to determine the economic effect of this grazing regime.

Max is convinced that by allowing the pasture to grow taller above the soil, the below ground organic matter is also increasing.

The overall result of this "Soil Up" program is:

- Improved soil structure
- Significantly higher biomass (therefore carbon)
- Improved stock health
- Better water retention, for resilience during drought periods
- Less fertiliser use
- Minimal chemical weed control

If you have any questions about climate change and the rural sector or have ideas/suggestions that you'd like to share please contact us on 0800 123 733 or info@carbonfarming.org.nz

Best Regards,

Clayton Wallwork

Carbon Farming Group Trustee



NEXT ISSUE...

We'll provide an update on progress with the ETS announcement and profile another New Zealand Farm

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