

Fish and Game find the perfect dairy farm

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FEDERATED FARMERS dairy section held its annual conference in the central plateau this year with an emphasis on the environment and the business of farming.

On the day before the actual conference began, many delegates went on a tour organised by the federation. This included a visit to Landcorp's Rangitikei station to see a new dairy development.

But interestingly they invited friends/enemies Fish and Game to speak at their conference and also take the delegates to what they regard as a 'model' dairy farm. This was the farm of Mike and Lisa Parnwell's farm near Reporoa and is in the Upper Waikato catchment. It was chance for delegates to hear at first hand the Fish and Game message.

John Meikle of Fish and Game waxed lyrical about the farm and the way it met the standards of an ideal dairy farm.

"Not all dairy farms have streams or waterfowl areas. In this particular case the back part of the farm borders a significant spawning stream for trout and also a significant habitat for both games birds and other indigenous species of bird," he says.

"Mike (the farmer) has taken the step of taking quite a wide riparian area in this case 15m where the stock is excluded and grass has grown long and so no nutrients from the farm go into the stream."

Meikle also praised the riparian area being right

dairy farming.

Parnwell has been on his farm for 10 seasons. He initially share-milked on the property and now leases it from the previous owners estate. He runs

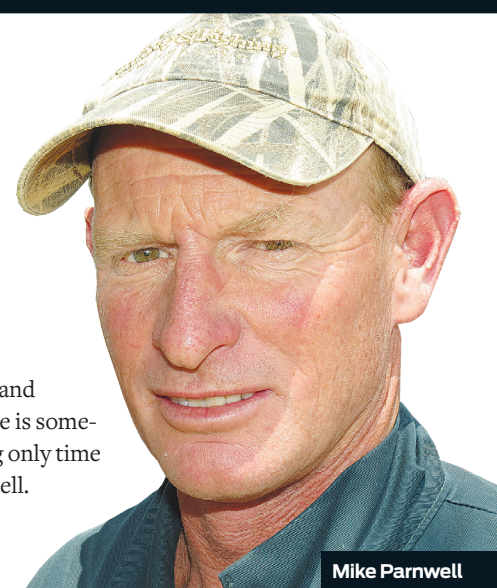
240 cows on 102ha effective and uses a cow house for feeding and for providing shade and shelter depending on the season.

He says it was natural to carry out the riparian

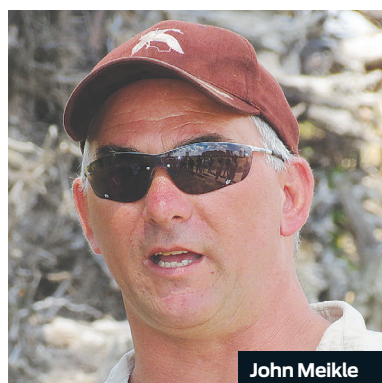
planting which has enhanced the farm.

As for the delegates – they were impressed with the Parnwell's farm, just whether it will enhance farmers' relationship with

Fish and Game is something only time will tell.



Mike Parnwell



John Meikle

beside the race which he says protects the stream from anything in the race. He also praised farmer Mike Parnwell for his low stocking rate which he says puts less nutrient stress on the property

Meikle says Fish and Game are not anti-dairy-ing but they want smart

Events look at survival tactics

SEVENTY DAIRY farmers from 30 farms have agreed to share knowledge and host events as part of DairyNZ's 'Tactics for Tight Times' campaign to help farmers survive the present tough season and build resilience.

Chief executive Tim Mackle says the declaration of drought on the east coast of the South Island highlights the need for extra support for farmers.

"The milk price hit a six-year low in December, and dry conditions are forcing many farmers to make tough decisions, especially as they look to next season.

"A dry summer and the low milk price [mean] judgement calls become more complex as farmers balance the profitability of keeping cows milking, keeping condition on them and using supplementary feed."

DairyNZ is looking to research, data and lessons learned from similar seasons to help farmers decide about animal health and wellbeing, pasture cover, feed, production, stock health and financial management.

The first round of events on the host farms will be in late February and March, giving an economic outlook for dairy and advising on survival tactics tailored to farmers' regions.

dairynz.co.nz/tactics.

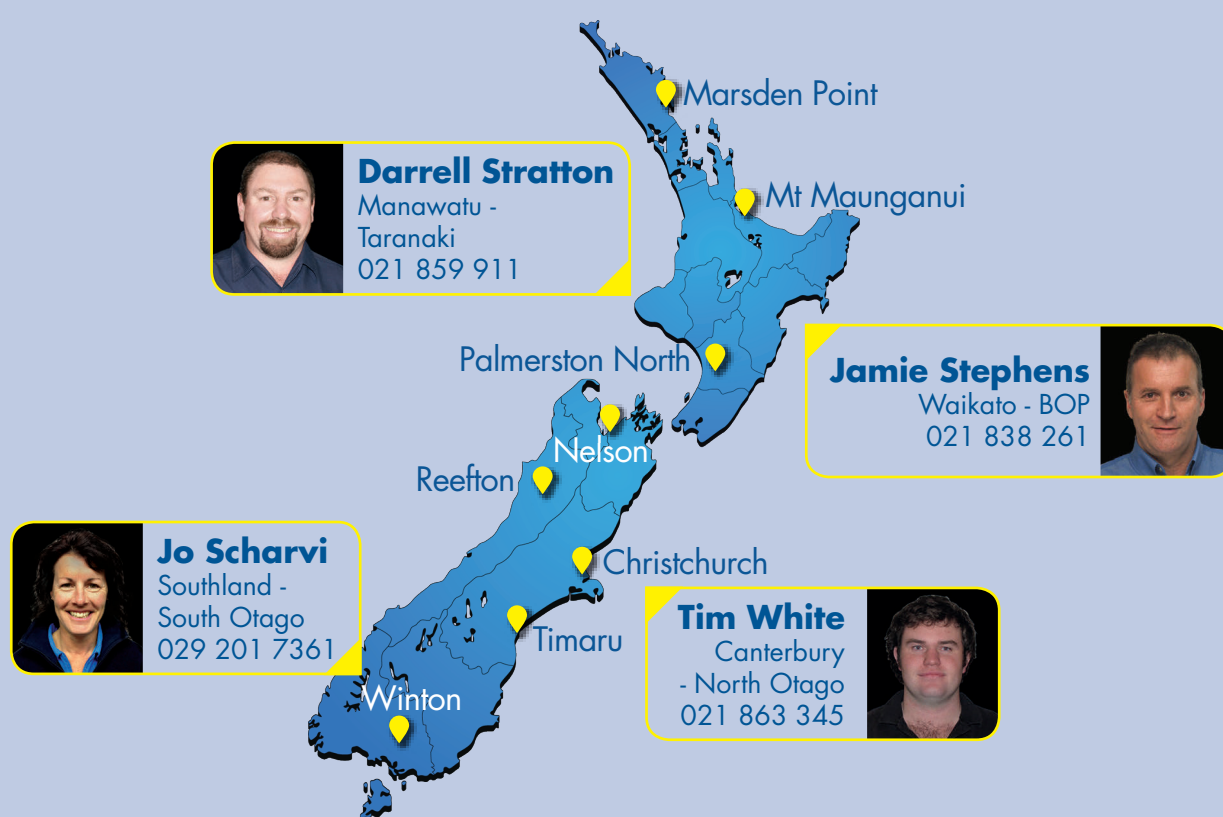
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