

Inside this issue:

CEO Update	1
GM - Profit Update	2
Asset Manager Update	2
GM - People & Production Update	3
Animal Health	5
BST Leader Update	5
Balance Update	6
Out & About at BEL	6
ASB Economic Update	7
BEL People	8
Sam Barry Racing	9
Operations Team Updates	10
Community Support	11
Lee Astridge—No8 HR	11
Payroll and Business Services Update	12
Farm Work Plan	13
BEL Group Contacts	14
News and Events	15

BEL GROUP CEO UPDATE

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

It is that time of year again..... I want to thank you for all of the work, effort and results you have put into and achieved at BEL Group this year. Thank you to your families for the support they give you to do what you do! Enjoy your Christmas and New Year celebrations and I am looking forward to what 2016 will bring in BEL Group.

2015 IT'S BEEN A ROLLER COASTER

Reflecting on 2015 it has been a bit of a roller coaster. First we plummeted down that first dip with Milk Price tanking, then it recovers a little, then we get a strong El Nino forecast and then we get a bit more rain! This year has been particularly challenging for our planning, budgeting and forecasting processes. On-farm you are doing a great job of working with these changes, focusing on what you can control and sticking to plans made. This gives the business increased confidence in such volatile times.

BEL GROUP – OUR PEOPLE, OUR BUSINESS, OUR COMMUNITY GROWING TOGETHER

How do we do this every day in BEL Group? This is a question that we continually challenge ourselves with at a Board and a Senior Management level.

Growing Our People

Over 2015 we have seen a lot of work taking place to live out this vision. We started with our

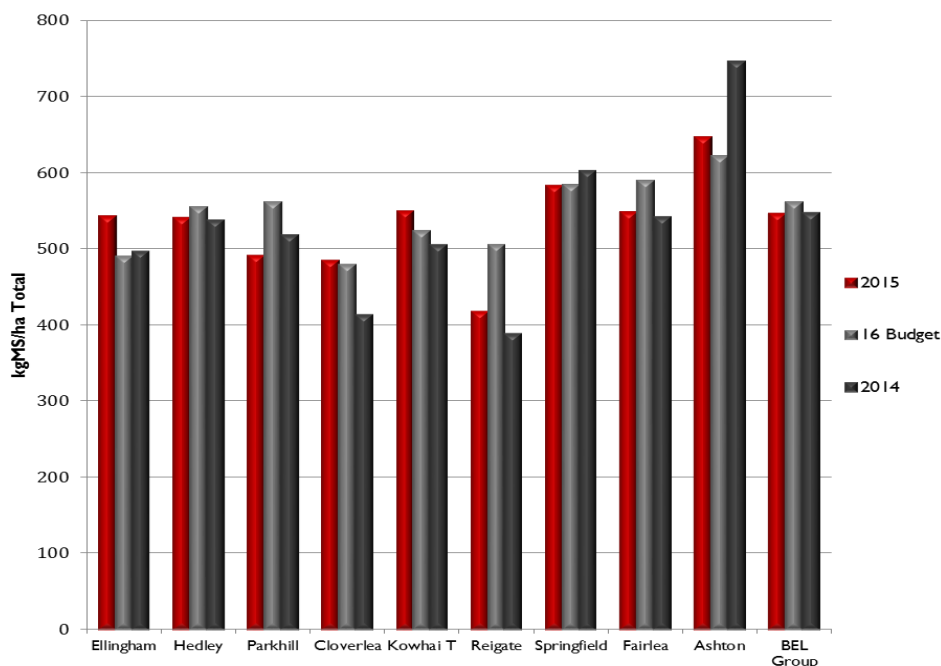
new management structure on 1st June 2015 and we have set ourselves some tough goals around how we grow our people this season.

A primary focus is on our Keeping On Track performance - 100% for September/October meetings. But we have also been looking at how we take action on the feedback and development opportunities identified in your KOT. Nicola Whittle is collating summaries and working out training programmes based on these.

We are also working hard on our “new initiatives” under our five concepts of taking care of the small things, family business, knowing what we are thinking, feeling and saying, valuing our differences and no bad apples.

Our “No Bad Apples” is a tough one to match with our focus on “Growing People”. Where do we support second chances, where do we work with you to overcome problems, and where do we ‘cut you loose’? This has been tested on several occasions this year. BEL Group values require us to be responsible, deliver results on time, and to standard, and to work together. If you are challenging these values you are challenging your time with BEL Group. Responding responsibly to the issues we encounter means that we take responsibility for the part we play in issues and hold individuals accountable for the part they have played. If you do not front up to your mistakes honestly you make it really hard for us to work with you responsibly. The golden rule needs to be “tell your manager”, no matter how big or small the trouble you think you might cause for you or someone else - just tell your manager.

YTD MILK PRODUCTION BY FARM
KGMS/HA



If we know, we can deal with it.
At BEL Group you will be judged on how you handle your mistake, not what your mistake is.

Growing our Business

BEL Group as a business has increased in business scale and value by around 50% over the last 5 years. A year like this one requires us to hunker down, focus on our operational performance and efficiencies. We grow differently. This year we have seen a real commitment to on-farm cost control by everyone. Carrying this forward as milk price goes through its next up cycle is the real gain, as this will result in better profit margins which allow greater investment back into our business infrastructure and resources.

Growing our Community

We have continued to support our community through sponsorships this year. Examples include the cycle track at Takapau, Ross Shield rugby, National One Day Eventing Championships held at Silver Fern Farms, and the A'Deane's Bush pest control programme. We have a local sponsorship budget of \$20,000 so we are making a real investment into our community groups.

One of the changes we are looking to make for 2016 is investing into young people wanting to grow a career in Agriculture. We are developing a scholarship programme to support someone into university level study in agriculture with an internship at BEL Group to follow.

ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board met in November with the main agenda topic being "Diversification". We are challenging ourselves about the BEL Group business, how we might take more control of the volatility of our business income and how we could use diversification to do this.

We had three presentations from different perspectives around the Goat Milk Market which provided for interesting discussions and challenges to our thinking.

We have also confirmed the process for managing the retirement of Deane and Diane Purdue from our Board. Deane and Diane have been with BEL Group since 2009 and were foundation members of our Advisory Board, which had its first meeting in October 2010. They have contributed an enormous amount of wisdom, experience and support to the BEL Business, for which Andrea and I will be eternally appreciative.

The current plan is for Deane and Diane to support a transition to a new board member through the February and April meetings in 2016.

The Advisory Board is now seeking a new person to join them. They are hopeful this person will be formally appointed by April 2016.

Justine Kidd - CEO

GM - PROFIT UPDATE

At the end of November we were pretty much at our budgeted milk production. This is 52% of our total budgeted milk now in the vat. Production for November itself was 6.5% down on budget, however the milk produced above budget to the end of September has meant we are 2.4% below budget (40,000kgMS).

PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUDGET

With the improvement in Milk Price we were paid 60cents

more for our milk to the end of October than we had originally budgeted. This is significant and means that we are not having to draw down on seasonal finance that was arranged, creating further savings in interest costs.

At the end of October our income was 24% up on budget, largely due to milk price, but also with improvements in Fonterra Dividend payment, Ballance Dividend and our Net Stock Income which is being driven by higher cull cow prices than budgeted.

Our Expenditure is tracking well against budget. We do have some areas with different timing to budget due to seasonal impacts; our maize planting delay and silage making and related purchases have also happened in November/December when budgeted for in October/November. Allowing for these timing issues our YE forecast on expenditure is right on budget.

At the end of November our break-even milk price YTD was \$2.42/kgMS and On-Farm operating costs \$1.69/kgMS. Both of these are tracking towards the achievement of our KPI of \$5.60/kgMS and \$3.50/kgMS. This is a good outcome with around 50% of our budget now actual.

NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET

We are now into budgeting for next season, which starts June 1st.

Farm Managers have worked through the first drafts of their Farm Management plans and these are being reviewed before Christmas. We will start entering these as financial budgets in late January.

Farm Managers will then review the budget in February and we will finalise during March for presentation at our April board meeting.

Justine Kidd (for Rachael Riddell, GM - Profit)

ASSET MANAGER UPDATE

As always November was our compliance inspection month. Annual inspections were completed by Qconz for the Fonterra Annual Dairy Checks and by HBRC for compliance with our effluent consents.

Both inspections went relatively well on most farms, with a few areas identified for us to improve our actions. Both Qconz and HBRC acknowledged there had been noticeable improvements in several areas. It was good to be working in a positive way with these organisations and we have had follow-up briefings with both since the on-farm inspections. I would stress though that we need to be demonstrating "good practice" every day, so we do need to maintain our performance after the inspections.

Another area of focus has been the follow-up work from the October housing inspections. Trevor has been working on some of those issues, and electrical work identified has been booked in with Isaac's Electrical.

Preparation for capex work in the coming seasons has also been a focus for the past couple of months, with all Farm Managers being consulted for their thoughts on what should be planned for their farms in the medium term. Gathering information on costings for those items identified is now well underway and should be ready for inclusion in the budgets shortly.

Recent progress on projects has included: the two new Longrow houses now being lived in, although there is still some landscaping and fencing to be done. The new house at Reigate has received its final sign-off from the District Council.

Installation of the new domestic water system at Springfield was completed in late November and as I write this we are just awaiting the outcome of the test results to confirm that the water meets the required standard. Once this is done we will be live with this system.



Springfield's new drinking water system - now installed.

Paul Phippen - Asset Manager

GM - PEOPLE & PRODUCTION UPDATE

Our People and Leadership goal is to "create a team of performance orientated people who take responsibility for achieving results". Fundamental to this is our ability as a business to set clear expectations for everyone, provide people with the right resources to achieve in their roles, and then recognise and reward people for the work, effort and commitment they demonstrate in their work and for the results that they achieve.

Our business had a number of strategies supporting this goal including:

- Job Targets – Good/Better/Best
- Training programme including our on-farm skills training, Development Programme, Team Leadership Training for Managers and our Senior Leadership Team.
- Keeping on Track Meetings and Annual Performance & Remuneration Reviews.
- BEL Group Handbook setting out our policies and procedures.
- Our SHED programme focused on making sure you are 'Safe Home Every Day' including our BEL Mobile plan for all staff.
- Our Annual Work plan, Farm Management Plans and Operating Budgets.
- BEL Recognition including our Being Your Best Awards, BEL Group Awards.
- Attracting people to BEL Group with 'Refer a Friend' Scheme.
- Farm Manager Meetings, monthly BBQs to stay in touch, our June Season Kick Off and Christmas Parties.
- Our 5 Game Changing Ideas, with a series of initiatives to support:
 - Making our 'family business' a 'family business'
 - Taking care of the little things every time
 - Value what every person brings to BEL Group

- Knowing what our people are thinking, saying and feeling
- No 'bad apples'

As our business has grown, this year we made changes to our management structure to support the delivery of these initiatives to our business. Many of you have met Nicola Whittle who joined us as Business Services Team Leader in August to support the implementation of these strategies. Nicola has made great headway with our development programme and AG ITO participants, working with our managers in developing more meaningful Keeping on Track meetings, providing recruitment support and organising the very successful 'Bring the Kids to Work Day' held at Ashton in October. We have just kicked off a new project focused on BEL Housing and you will see more from the project team in the New Year on this. We will continue to come up with ideas and welcome yours too.

Lee Astridge also continues her management and leadership development programme, joining us in December and scheduled back with us in February. A word of warning... if you don't behave (or contribute enough) check out the consequences on our Facebook page from the last Farm Managers training session!

Jude Jamieson is making a real difference in leading a cultural shift with our SHED workplace safety programme. I thank you all on farm in supporting her with engagement in the programme as she moves us towards achieving our ACC accreditation in the early New Year. It's a significant piece of work and is not possible without everyone in the business getting on board. It's great to see the change in behaviour and practice and how seriously you are all taking our focus on getting everyone home safe every day.

We continue our focus on compliance and now is a timely reminder for all with some recent events relating to milking procedures, stock policies and effluent consent requirements that we must focus on our compliance and policy requirements every day. This needs to occur at a practical level – keep your eyes open, check and double check and ensure that procedures are followed in relation to the records. Make sure your compliance & policy requirements form part of your daily catch up and weekly team meetings.

Another reminder regarding the BEL Awards planned for May; please make sure you are talking as a team or individual with your Manager about your plan to win a category!

We also have a **NEW TEAM AWARD** this year focused on **Workplace Safety** - Jude is just finalising the details but as an early heads up the criteria is likely to include:

- Incident reporting (frequency, quality of information provided, and corrective actions taken)
- Attendance at SHED meetings
- An Innovation or improvement that can be shown to have made a difference to the safety of their team at work

Lastly, the Business Services Office will officially close over Christmas. We will close at midday on the 24th of December and reopen on January 5th. Justine and Toni can be contacted over this period on their mobile phones should you need urgent assistance.

Enjoy your time off and I encourage you to plan your next leave whilst you're away..... It's always great to have something special to look forward to!

PRODUCTIVE PERFORMANCE

Restricted pasture growth and milk production occurs as a result of dry summers and irrigation restrictions. These events are unpredictable and vary in their timing, severity and duration. The impact of these events on milk solids production and farm profit can be minimized by the early implementation of proven strategies.

Our plan is to make timely decisions based on the best available information. Some recent work with the Dairy Support team attests to this – resulting in a comprehensive feed budget to support management of feed through summer on our support blocks to ensure we are well set up for wintering with the predicted El Nino ahead.

Our Summer Management Objectives:

(In order of priority)

1. To milk a large proportion of cows through until the autumn.
2. To protect next season's production and reproduction by getting all mixed-age cows to body condition score 5.0 (BCS) and ALL first and second calvers at 5.5 BCS by 20th July.
3. To achieve maximum, profitable milk solids production for the rest of the current season.

Our Strategies to Deliver our Objectives

1. The delivery of a dairy farm summer decision matrix with defined trigger points i.e. cow condition, pasture cover, supplements available to action key decisions at specific times or dates.
2. Keep as many cows milking as practicable to make use of a recovery in pasture growth from autumn rains.
3. Feed supplements once significant autumn rains arrive.
4. Dry off cows on BCS criteria and calving date, in time for them all to get to BCS 5.0 at calving and for first calvers 5.5 BCS.
5. Have a no rain/irrigation, final dry-off date, when the focus shifts from the current season's production to setting the farm up for the following season.

These key strategies need actions that we adhere to. At our most recent managers meeting we went over these again.



If it grows, moves or moos - MEASURE it.
You cannot manage what you don't MEASURE!

Ten summer dairy herd management recommendations that we live by:

- We do not buy in feed to feed out in the summer, or use supplement that is set aside for the autumn or winter.
 - Response to supplements fed in the summer is poor and least economic.
 - Some of the response would go to live weight
- We ignore daily tanker returns.
 - No benefits are derived from worrying about something that you cannot control
- We do not alter grazing rotations.
 - We aim for 40-day rotations by 31st December. Never less.
- We reduce stocking rate on the milking area.
 - Dropping calves occurs on the 15th December
 - We collect pregnancy testing information in January
- We completely graze out the farm.
 - Throughout the summer we go around the farm, then when we think we have a low grass cover, we go around the farm again
- We dry-off low producers.
 - As the feed supply drops off we then reduce our feed demand
 - We get rid of culls
 - We then dry-off low producing animals
- We consider once a day.
 - This is already in our plan; never an emotional decision
- We dry-off thin cows.
 - As we get into February and March we dry-off the lighter parts of the herd
 - This is a staged exercise, with both young animals and at-risk animals first to be dried off
- We feed out when it rains.
 - We need silage on hand for when the autumn rains occur
 - In general we need 150kgDM per cow to feed out
- We decide on strategies for facial eczema control and improved winter feeding levels.

Your summer plan decision matrix should be discussed at all team meetings from now on.... Make your decisions early (in consultation with your Ops Manager)!

Following this plan allows us to be objective in our decision making when the environment around us may not look that great.

Our Animal Welfare

In preparing this article and looking over previous newsletters, I found this timely article written by Karen Philips from CHB Vets, which I think is particularly relevant following the recent media attention on our industry.

We have decided to use the recent exposure of bobby calf welfare as a reminder to review our own bobby calf journey from paddock to slaughterhouse to ensure that our policies, staff training, calf housing and bobby calf purchasers all support excellent calf care and management. These audits will occur prior to Autumn Calving in March and Spring Calving in July.

I wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year period with your family and friends.

Toni Goodlass - GM People & Production

ANIMAL HEALTH - STOCKMANSHIP

Dairy farms vary widely in size and design but the interaction between people and cattle is quite similar. These fundamental interactions are independent of the size of the farm. Anyone can work with cattle but it takes commitment, to understand and communicate with cattle, to be a stockman.

Stockmanship is the knowledgeable and skilful handling of animals in a safe, efficient, effective and low stress manner with the goal of improving profitability and improving animal welfare. Positive interactions between cattle and people are vital for animal welfare, and job satisfaction for those working with cattle. Good stockmanship helps everyone to do their job quietly, smoothly, easily, and with all parties happy and healthy at the end of it.

Stockmanship is the key to successful herd management. Good stockmanship is proven to be an important part of improving the health and well-being of livestock – with obvious business benefits. In a study using interventions designed to improve the attitude and behaviour of people interacting with the stock, an average increase of 4 – 5% in milk yield, milk protein and milk fat was shown. What would this mean to your farm?

Virtually everyone and anyone can improve their stockmanship to some degree with just a few simple changes. Even small changes in the way you do things can show big results.

- Understanding and empathising with cattle behaviour allows a stockman to see the world from the cow's perspective and therefore understand how and why they act like they do.
- Knowing how a cow will act in a certain situation allows the stockman to use that behaviour to achieve what they want.
- Knowledge of the normal behaviour and function of stock is essential to be able to recognise abnormal and intervene early to avoid production losses.
- Watching the stock at every interaction will allow the stockman to quickly pick out unusual behaviour.
- Train your staff to always watch and take note if something appears different to normal.

Cows have a huge ability to learn, which can be put to use in a positive manner to make handling easier. The daily routines that cows go through show examples of that learning. By making these routines a positive experience the cows will be relaxed and calm and able to produce their best. Training can start as calves and building up a good, sound human-animal relationship from a young age will make life simpler and better for all.

Karen Phillips, BVSc, MANZCVS

BST LEADER - UPDATE



Christmas is once again upon us and the Business Service Team is getting into the Christmas Spirit with the tree up and they're busy wrapping presents in preparation for the staff parties. We have invited all the 'BEL Kids' to make a decoration and come and hang it on our tree.

The BEL Group 'family tree', with all the staff photos, is complete and looks fantastic. We have had a lot of positive feedback from all whom have seen it and welcome you all to come and have a look.



DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The development programme met again in November for a BBQ dinner and training session lead by Doug & Mike on Stocking Rates & Calving Dates. The team was well-prepared for the training, asked a lot of questions and learnt a lot of valuable information.

We are currently working on each of the team member's Individual Performance Plans to map out their career path. The next session will be with Lee Astridge in December around people for performance. In January the team will be doing a Finance Workshop.

TRAINING

The staff currently doing Level 4 PITO qualifications are working hard to complete their papers with a focus on Animal Health, Fertiliser & Soil Analysis over the last few months. We had a study night in November where mentors from PITO and BEL Group came along to Longrow for a BBQ and study session together. This was great and gave the staff an opportunity to discuss with their mentor any areas they were struggling with. The evening was successful and we will have another one in the New Year.

On-farm training in November included Effluent Training which was run by Paul Phippen and Water Skills Training taken by Doug Dolan. Lamé Cow Training was also completed across all farms with the help of BEL Vet Hamish Quinlivan. We had a great staff turn-out to the training sessions which was fantastic to see.



Effluent training was held in November.

Lee Astridge will be visiting in December to spend time with the Senior Managers, Managers and the Development Programme crew to develop our people skills.

We have motorbike and tractor skills training coming up early next year.

HOUSING

The design team met for the first time in November to discuss market place rentals. More research needs to be done on this project and members of the design team will be asking staff for their feedback and thoughts before we meet for our next meeting in late January to discuss next steps.

Nicola Whittle - BST Leader

BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

SOIL ACIDIFICATION, CAUSES OF...

Soil pH is a measure of soil acidity. As soils become more acid, grass and clover productivity declines. Once soil pH drops below 5.8 the availability of organic nitrogen to grasses, and molybdenum to clovers, is reduced. As pH drops below 5.5 the amount of toxic aluminium and manganese in the soil increases, and roots do not grow into the soil. Plants growing in low pH soils will be more susceptible to dry conditions.

What causes soil acidification?

There are two unavoidable processes, essential to productive pastoral agriculture, which contribute to acidification:

1. Photosynthesis -

Plants grow by fixing carbon from the atmosphere (CO_2). Organic acids containing hydrogen ions accumulate in plants during this process. When the plant takes up a cation (e.g. K, Ca, Mg) from the soil, they release a hydrogen ion to the soil and it becomes more acid. The opposite process occurs when a plant takes up an anion (e.g. phosphate, sulphate, nitrate), hydroxyl (OH^-) or bicarbonate (HCO_3^-) ions, are excreted by the plant to replace the absorbed anion and the soil pH is raised.

Acidification of soil from acid additions during photosynthesis in an average NZ pasture (10-15 t DM/ha/yr), is likely to require 100-150 kg lime/ha/yr to neutralize and maintain soil pH.

There are two factors that modify this effect:

- Increasing the legume content of the pasture will increase acidification.

Legumes that rely completely on N fixation as their source of N, absorb neutral nitrogen gas (N_2) instead of the anion nitrate (NO_3^-) and hence do not excrete hydroxyl or bicarbonate ions to counter acidification. The more legume in the sward the more acidification. Also, grasses take up more cations than anions and so excrete more acid into the soil. As legume N stimulates grass growth, this will also increase the amount of soil acidity.

- If excreta is distributed unevenly in stock camps, stock camps will see an increased soil pH while the rest of the pasture is acidified. This is because the plant material released in excreta, contains a quantity of alkalinity equivalent to the quantity of acidity that has been imparted to the soil.

2. Nitrogen fixation -

Most of the N fixed by legumes is consumed by grazing stock and excreted as urea. This urea is quickly converted to ammonia in the soil followed by nitrification to produce nitrate and hydrogen ions. If the nitrate anion is taken up by the plants then no net acidification occurs (see above). However if the nitrate ion is leached, it will remove a cation (usually Ca) with it and the hydrogen ion remains in the top soil to increase acidification.

On a sheep and beef farm where 5-25 kg N/ha/yr may be leached as nitrate, this will require about 20-100 kg lime/ha/yr to neutralise the acidification. A dairy farm leaching from 30-50 kg N/ha/yr will require 120-200 kg lime/ha/yr.

What effect does N Fertiliser have on acidification?

The application of N fertilisers does acidify the soil, the extent of which depends on the type of N fertiliser. While it is accepted that most N fertilisers (except CAN and any nitrate fertiliser e.g. Tropicote) will acidify the soil (as the ammonium ions are converted by soil bacteria to nitrate in the soil leaving H^+ ions in the topsoil), typically this is a lesser acidifying effect than the processes discussed above.

Sulphate of ammonia is the most acidifying because a large number of hydrogen ions are released as it is converted to nitrates in the soil. Urea is the least acidifying.

Some Rules of Thumb:

Ammonium sulphate requires 5 kg lime/kg N to neutralise the acidity. This equates to 112 kg lime/ha per 100kg/ha ammonium sulphate applied.

DAP requires 3.5 kg lime/kg N to neutralise the acidity. This equates to 64 kg lime/ha per 100 kg/ha DAP applied.

Urea requires 1.8 kg lime/kg N to neutralise the acidity. This equates to 82kg lime/ha per 100 kg urea applied.

James Parsons - Ballance

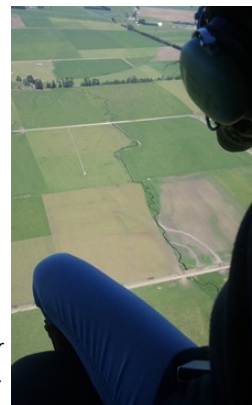
OUT & ABOUT AT BEL GROUP...



Home Sweet Home: The new house ready for inspection at Reigate.



Masters of Movember: The Parkhill team show off their united effort.



Bird's Eye View: Amanda Pottinger enjoys the view from above Ashcott Rd.

Economic Update

ASB

Dairy delivers as expected

- Dairy prices lifted modestly overnight, with the lift bang on our expectations.
- Heading into 2016, we continue to expect dairy prices to lift as NZ production falls further.
- As a result, we stick with our \$4.60/kg milk price forecast.

Summary

Our view remains that dairy prices will move higher over 2016. With NZ production weak so far this season and getting weaker, a large hole is developing in global dairy exports.

At this juncture however, dairy markets and buyers are not in a particular hurry. Demand is sluggish and buyers are looking to relatively strong production from other producers to fill the hole.

But eventually the NZ production shortfall will bite. And dairy prices will move higher. On this basis and with the price lift overnight, we stick with our 2015/16 milk price forecast of \$4.60/kg.

Comment

Overall dairy prices posted a 3.6% rise last night, breaking the run of falls at the three previous auctions. The lift was largely in line with our expectation for an increase in the 1% to 5% range. WMP posted a larger 5.3% rise, while SMP rose 3.2%.

Despite this auction price rise, we continue to see current prices out of whack with dairy fundamentals. In particular, NZ production is down 3.3% on for the season to October; we expect production to fall 6% for the season as a whole compared to last season.

With that in mind, we continue to point out that the market assumption that other producers like the EU will pick up NZ's slack is misplaced. Lost NZ exports are too big to cover.

We do note that the market is factoring in some milk powder scarceness later in the season – prices of later-dated WMP contracts are around \$250/MT higher than near-dated ones. While we agree with that pattern, the overall price level is still too low.

As a result, once markets come to this realisation prices, particularly for WMP, will correct higher. However, this correction may be gradual. In particular, we'll be watching for any pick up in Chinese demand; October data hint at improved demand, but we wait for November's data for a more definitive answer on this front.

On a slight tangent, last night was the first auction where Fonterra offered its Guaranteed Age at Time of Departure (Guaranteed ATOD) WMP – think of it as basically "the freshest WMP". The four contracts on offer traded at a small average premium of \$40/MT or around 2% to standard WMP. With the first sale of Guaranteed ATOD under the market's belt, markets may have more confidence about its impact on overall WMP prices. Prior to last night, markets were somewhat wary of its impact and the motives for its introduction.

Implications

With the auction result in line with our expectations, we stick with our 2015/16 milk price forecast of \$4.60/kg.

Also, this result has no implications for our OCR view; we continue to expect a cut in December followed by two further cuts in June and August 2016.

Season end milk price forecasts

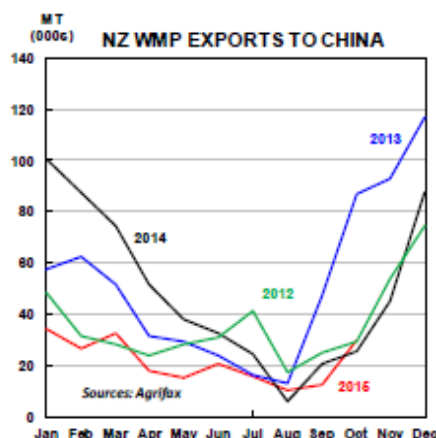
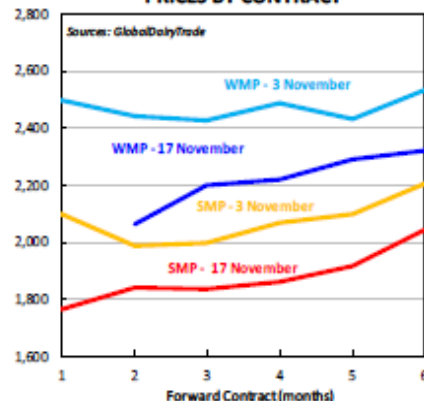
	2015/16		2016/17	Long Run
	Fonterra	ASB	ASB	ASB
Milk Price*	\$4.60	\$4.60	\$6.50	\$6.50-\$7.00

* per kg of milk solids (excluding dividend).

Auction Results

Product	% change in index since last auction	Annual % change in index	Weighted Average Price US\$/MT
Whole Milk Powder (WMP)	5.3%	5.9%	2,260
Skim Milk Powder (SMP)	3.2%	-19.6%	1,918
Butter	5.7%	1.1%	3,009
GDT Price Index	3.6%	-3.1%	n.a.

MILK POWDER WEIGHTED AVERAGE PRICES BY CONTRACT



BEL PEOPLE

Nicola Whittle

1. Position - what do you do at BEL Group?

Business Services - Team Leader

2. Time with BEL Group:

5 months

3. What were you doing before coming to BEL Group?

The last 11 years of my career have been in the Travel & Tourism Industry in South Africa. I took a year off work to move back to New Zealand and have a baby before getting back into work.

4. What are your hobbies/interests?

Travelling/Shopping/Spending time with my 4 children & family.

5. Where is your place of birth?

Waipukurau - but grew up in Vegas (Danni-Vegas)

6. What dream would you love to come true?

A holiday each year (around the world) with my family.

7. What is the craziest or worst job you have ever had?

In the UK, 6 of us lived in a 2-bedroom caravan in a shitty paddock. Each day we would head off to a factory where we prepared vegetables for packaging. Making sure we had the perfect floret of cauliflower or broccoli or there was trouble - while working in a room as cold as a fridge.

8. Which 3 people (dead or alive) would you most like to have dinner with, and why?

Super Nanny – to find out how a lady with no kids has such strong opinions on how to raise them...

Paul Henry – because he is SO wrong but SO funny!

9. Something no one at BEL Group knows about me is...

I helped out at an HIV Aids Orphanage/Pre-School twice a month in Johannesburg, making sandwiches for the children's morning tea and then spent time playing with them. We also threw them a Christmas party each year.

10. The coolest thing I have ever been part of was...

The birth of my 4 children

11. My unusual talent is...

My ability to know what people are thinking...



Peter Borges

1. Position - what do you do at BEL Group?

Farm Manager at Hedley

2. Time with BEL Group:

Farm manager since 2012.

3. What were you doing before coming to BEL Group?

Managing a small dairy farm (250 cows) in Reporoa.

4. What are your hobbies/interests?

Watching soccer games - especially my Cruzeiro team - the best in Brazil.

5. Where is your place of birth?

Minas Gerais, Brazil.

6. What dream would you love to come true?

Buy a farm in NZ and work for myself.

7. What is the craziest or worst job you have ever had?

Working in bridge construction on the border between Portugal and Spain. Some nights the wind was over 150km/h.

8. Which 3 people (dead or alive) would you most like to have dinner with, and why?

Ayrton Senna - (died in 1994) 10 time F1 Champion. We used to watch his victories on Sundays.

Fernando Henrique - ex-president of Brazil.

Mussum - a Brazilian actor/comedian.

9. Something no one at BEL Group knows about me is...

I was an accounting technician.

10. The coolest thing I have ever been part of was...

Being a father.

11. My unusual talent is...

Volleyball - I played a lot growing up in Brazil.



Welcoming a brand new arrival...

Congratulations to Holly and Adam Price. Carson Robert Price arrived on November 12th, weighing in at 7'10z.

SAM BARRY RACING - Championship Winner!

2015 Round 5 - Pukekohe Review



Round 6 - Final Fight, Hampton Downs

UDC NZV8 Ute Champion 2015!!!

The championship came down to the wire for Round 6 at Hampton Downs. Going into the weekend we had a 33 point lead over Brett Rudd and the rest of the UDC V8 Utes. This year the rules were changed so that each driver had to drop their worst round points. This meant the win was never guaranteed and we could not afford a DNF.

The weekend started off in Hamilton on the Thursday with a full day of prep on the ute to ensure it was in peak form. Friday we had 2 practice sessions and hot laps where we found some good speed from both the car and driver.

Saturday rain was anticipated however we had a dry qualifying session where we managed the 4th fastest lap time. Race 1 was held in torrential rain and we raced a conservative race cruising around fighting to stay on the wet track. The race was then red flagged and we finished in 4th.

Sunday brought race 2 and 3 with dry weather conditions. Race 2 was a reverse grid. Which had us start off P10. We raced hard and made some good clean passes to get up to 4th. Race

3's grid was a combination of the points from the previous 2 races so this left us on P5. Knowing that just getting a finish would secure the championship we put on a clean run and finished in P6.

It was really good to have so many family and friends to share the celebrations with both after the race and at the prize giving held at Hampton Downs on Sunday night.

This may have been our last ever NZ V8 ute race as we are listing the ute for sale as we look to move up to another level of racing. At the moment it's "Watch this Space" we will of course keep you informed when there is further developments. If you are interested in becoming a partner with us in whatever our next venture might be then we would love to hear from you.

Thanks to the wonderful family of sponsors and race team for the support to make this championship win possible also thanks to my supporters for turning up and cheering me on.

Sam Barry

DAIRY OPERATIONS TEAM UPDATE

WINTER MILK FARMS

Following a great spring, the winter milk farms are now mostly back on track with production on-plan at Ashton and Springfield. Fairlea is still behind but catching. All farms harvested their budgeted silage with Fairlea's and Ashton's coming off a bit late due to Rod's demand during a good spring. This has impacted current covers on Ashcott Road which means they have some work to do to get to a 40-day round by the end of the month. Springfield is in a great position after making the decision to pull the round out early.

Our focus at this time is still obviously spring mating - with bulls out there working hard. But we now need to be focused on our autumn calvers and making sure they are all at BCS 4.5 or greater by end of January as this is where we start to rectify our winter mating demons.

Apart from Ashton, all teams are at full strength and chipping away (literally). It has to be said we are all very impressed with how the Springfield team has taken the change in management in their stride and not missed a beat. Mike P's passion for killing weeds has rubbed off and I'm seeing great progress in Springfield's weed problem. Also the team has started cleaning up - with 'Toni's' paddock the highlight of her farm tour now.

Calves are due off farm now with only a small % of them needing a bit of catch-up rugby. Irrigation is in full swing on Ashcott Road so plenty to keep us busy over the silly season. If you have booked leave - enjoy your break - for the rest WEEDS, WEEDS, WEEDS.

Doug Dolan - Operations Manager Winter Milking Farms

ASHLEY CLINTON

Hi all and Merry Christmas from the Barry farm teams.

Things are slowing down here on the farms and, as I write this, we have just completed Week 8 of mating. According to Minda we have an 82% and 79% non-return rate, and our OAD herd is sitting on 85%, assuming that all the correct data has been entered. Bull management was a big focus pre-mating and the teams have done very well. To date there has only been two lame bulls. Good work team, great effort, and I hope this reflects on our PD results.

Milk production has fallen behind slightly this month due to longer rounds and pregnant cows, but overall it is still on track.

Grazing rounds are out to 35 days, and with an El-Nino weather pattern breathing down our necks, will be at 40 days by Christmas. This is something we have been talking about for some time, so with this in mind we have been deferring grass and using this to extend our round without too much impact on production. This is something we will continue to do into the summer. With a little rain, and urea due to go on, this should take us to Feb without too much trouble.

Calves will leave the dairy farms mid-December, providing they are at weight and weaned. This will be another tool to relieve the pressure of the dairy farm going into summer - not sure it will help the support blocks. Having said that, we have done a lot of work with the help of Scott Risdale, to come up with a comprehensive feed plan for the young stock blocks which should see us through to the end of the season.

Peterdale is looking good; it has this week provided Hedley with 140 tonnes of silage and is shut up for a further 35 hectares. Six hundred calves will be with us by mid-December so we're gearing up for that.

Staff have been flat out with mating and keeping up with weeds. Xmas rosters are sorted and summer holidays booked. Have a good festive season and enjoy your Christmas parties. Lastly, I would just like to welcome to the country Rav's lovely wife, it's certainly brought a smile to his face!

Anthony Williams - Operations Manager Spring Calving Farms

REIGATE & PAGET RD

Three weeks of AI mating came and went fast this year with Parkhill submitting 89%, Kowhai Terrace 86%, Reigate 85% and Cloverlea at 75%. This means the bulls have been busy with lots of cows to service. The teams have worked well to prevent lameness with very few bulls coming into the yards - so well done and keep up the good work. PD are all booked in so make sure there is enough staff rostered on to cover the day.

Cows have come back from peak production and rotations have lengthened out. We need to be at 40 days on the 31st of December, so moving a little a day will be less stressful to the cows than a big cut in area on the 30th. Keep a close eye on pasture residuals, a maximum of 1600kgdm/ha will ensure quality on the next round.

My thanks goes out to Paul Phippen for all his help and advice through the dairy and regional council inspections, cheers mate!

We all have our urea and potassium planned for December so let's use this to bank up some feed going forward into the summer.

A start has been made on weed control on all farms and a big push now before Christmas will make the festive season more relaxing.

I wish you all a very merry Christmas and happy new year.

Mike Oakly - Operations Manager Spring Calving Farms

DAIRY SUPPORT

The spring weather has finally settled down and with the sunny days we have been able to start harvesting grass silage on the Dairy Support farms. Hopefully we'll then be able to shut up and go for a second cut of silage.

We have had a change of plan with 26 hectares of maize ground at McGregor's and Indigo going into a summer crop of brassica instead. This means we will source the shortfall of maize silage externally.

All the weighing is finally up-to-date with all heifers well on track and with the bulls still out we look forward to an excellent mating result.

The Dairy Support farms are well setup with grass as we await the arrival of the calves from the dairy farms on the 15th December, and summer.

Pete Kroot - Operations Manager Dairy Support

BEL in the Community



Proud Moment: Andrea celebrates son Sam Barry's success in the V8 Ute Championship in November.



Suited and booted: Nikki Johansen ready for a spin with Sam Barry, who generously offered hot laps to any BEL staff member recently.



In the Winner's Circle: Andrea with the Arran Station National Eventing Championships BEL Group sponsored CIC1* winner, Bryce Newman & B. Midnight Blue.
Photo: Barbara Thomson.

Check it Out!



In October Jude and I met up at a workshop about healthy thinking. This is an initiative which is a joint venture between FMG and the Mental Health Foundation – the purpose of which is to ensure our farmers and rural communities Live Well and Farm Well...

It was great! Made disturbing by the fact that when they did the 'who wants to live to 90 exercise' I was one of the first to sit down when they asked the questions to see if you might! Now this was a bit of a shock to me because, although I am completely unfit and addicted to chocolate I do like to think there are people much worse off than me....but it turns out NOT....

The reason I had to sit down is because I didn't 'know my numbers.' Now this question was referring to knowing your basic health numbers: Blood pressure, cholesterol, risk of diabetes etc. etc....just the standard stuff that doctors do at any health check but I hadn't had one!

Another interesting question that was asked (and no one owned up to) was 'do you txt while driving?' Yep – this question is right up there with being an alcoholic and taking drugs.... No one sat down but everyone in the room knew this was a big fat lie....and apparently that's where all the problems can start – when we lie to ourselves or are ignorant about what it takes to be healthy.

Farmstrong has a great website and a great video that we can all relate to.... I personally think that a pie with a good dollop of tomato sauce is a good healthy lunch but apparently not!!!! Check it out at www.farmstrong.org and do yourself and your loved ones a favour this Christmas.

Have a safe, healthy and happy festive season

Lee and the No8HR team

Lee Astridge - No8HR

Hey BEL Kids - can you help us out?

Our Christmas tree needs more decorations. We would love you to make us some more and come in to hang it on the tree next time you are in town.

Find Nicola Whittle while you're there for a little Christmas treat!



PAYROLL & BUSINESS SERVICES



REMINDERS:

Leave:

Please ensure that you complete leave request forms for all Days in Lieu, and Annual Leave that you wish to take.

Change of Details:

There is a 'Change of Details' form on the website (or available from the Business Services office), that should be filled out whenever any of your personal, address, contact (phone/e-mail) or bank details change.

PAYROLL ENQUIRIES:

Please firstly talk to your Farm Manager or Operations Manager with any queries regarding payroll.

All **Longrow** Dairies (Cloverlea, Kowhai Terrace, Parkhill and Reigate) payroll queries can be directed to: **Kelly on 021 0816 3455, 9am – 3pm.**

All **BEL** Group (Ashton, Ellingham, Fairlea, Hedley and Springfield, Dairy Support, Engineering) payroll queries can be directed to: **Nikki on 027 360 1022.**

Upcoming Statutory (Public) Holiday Days

- * **Friday 25th December** - Christmas Day
- * **Saturday 26th December** - Boxing Day (Stat observed on Monday the 28th)
- * **Friday 1st January** – New Year's Day
- * **Saturday 2nd of January** – Day after New Year's Day (Stat observed on Monday the 4th)

Observation of the 'Boxing Day' and 'Day After New Year's Day' Statutory Holidays

If you work the Actual Statutory Holiday, AND the Monday when the holiday is observed, you will receive a Day in Lieu and time and a half for the hours worked on the Saturday. You will not be entitled to extra payments for both days if both days are worked.

If you are rostered off on the Saturday, you will either receive a Statutory Day for the Monday - if not worked, OR, if you have worked the Monday, a Day in Lieu, and time and a half for those hours you have worked on the Monday.

If you work on the Saturday but not the Monday, you will receive a day in lieu and time and a half for those hours you have worked on Saturday, you will not receive a Stat day for the Monday.

STATUTORY HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENTS - HOW YOUR PAYSリップ WILL LOOK:

Any person WORKING a Statutory Holiday day, is entitled to the following:

To be **paid for the hours worked on that day, plus an extra 50%** for all hours worked.

You will also **accrue an extra day of leave** (a Day in Lieu), which you can take at a later date.

(Note: These entitlements do not apply to a Casual person employed to only work on Statutory Holidays.)

The additional Day in Lieu will show up on the bottom of your payslip, and the extra 50% you are paid for the hours physically worked, will show up like this on your payslip:

	Qty	Rate	Total
Gross House Rent			200.00
Salary			1,788.46
P/Hol 50% Loading			90.39
Gross			2,078.85

Any person NOT WORKING a Statutory Holiday day, but who would normally work, or be rostered on for that day, is entitled to the following:

To be **paid for the Statutory Holiday day**, at their average daily rate.

Your Salary Payslip will look like this:

	Qty	Rate	Total
Salary			1,538.46
P/Hol Taken 1 Day			
Gross			1,538.46
Tax Code M 047-09*			257.68
Net Pay			1,280.78

Your Wage Payslip will look like this:

	Qty	Rate	Total
Wages	155.25	16.750	2,600.44
P/Hol Taken 1 Day	1.00	200.710	200.71
Gross			2,801.15
Tax Code M 097-191-4**			622.74

Nikki Johansen - Finance and Payroll

ON FARM WORKPLAN

ACTIVITY	DECEMBER	JANUARY
EFFLUENT (RECORD USE OF APPLICATION IN EFFLUENT DIARY)	Effluent Irrigation Scheduled - pond stirrer rotated.	Effluent Irrigation Scheduled - pond stirrer rotated.
FARM BUILDING MAINTANANCE	Dairy shed water blasted.	Quality assure changes diarised.
FINANCIAL	Ops Manager Review/Farm Management plans. Farm Budget Update. Farm Management plans drafted OM/GM.	Farm Budget Update. Farm Management plans drafted OM/GM.
HOUSE AND SECTIONS	Lawns mowed weekly. Wash house exterior and clean gutters.	Lawns mowed fortnightly. Check smoke alarms.
MILK AND COLOSTRUM SUPPLY	Review Dairy Routines.	
PEOPLE		KOT. Discuss plans for next season. Plan annual leave for April and May. Review vacancies for coming season.
RAINFALL & SOIL TEMP	Daily soil temp and rainfall.	Daily soil temp and rainfall.
REPAIRS AND MAINTANANCE	Check water system supplies on hand. Water maps completed. Fencing gear organised.	Hazard review farm general. Fencing. Tanker tracks/driveways graded. Irrigation tracks filled.
STOCK RECORDS	Record Natural Mating Daily. Cull cows recorded weekly into Daily Update. Natural Mating Records Daily.	Cull cows recorded weekly into Daily Update. Natural Mating Records Daily. 1st Round PD. Cull cows recorded weekly into Daily Update. Natural Mating Records Daily.
SUPPLEMENT AND FEEDING	Review Silage volumes on farm. Draft autumn feed plans. Draft winter feed plans.	Feeding priority animals. Review autumn feed plans.
WEEDS (FLUSH GEAR WKLY WHEN IN USE)	Gorse / Blackberry. Organise crops for next year. Spot spray.	Spot spray.
EVENTS/MEETINGS/REVIEWS	Farm manager's meeting. On-Farm Plan Update/ Advisory Board. Christmas parties.	Farm manager's meeting. On-Farm Plan Update. SLT. DOT.
CALVING	Clean calf sheds. Weaning. Calves off farm 15th December.	
MASTITIS & SCC	Manual teat spray.	Manual teat spray. If SCC <150 no teat spray.
MINERALS	Stop all minerals.	Zinc in troughs (10th).
TREATMENTS	Circulation of DCT Plan.	
REPRODUCTION	Bulls In Herds, check bulls daily. Bull MUST remain in the paddock during milking. Bulls out of Heifer herds.	1st PD @ 6wks from PSM (Spring). All Bulls removed from herds by 15th January & bulls off farm. RECORDS!!
SEASONAL RISK	Bloat, Ryegrass staggers & heat stress.	Ryegrass staggers, facial eczema and heat stress.
STOCK MONITORING	Old Cows/High SCC/Repeat Mastitis discuss w GM for possible cull. Monitor LW of heifers at grazing. All calves off farm 15th December.	Monitor LW of heifers at grazing. BCS profile.

BEL GROUP CONTACT LIST 2015-16

NAME	POSITION	PHONE	EMAIL
Andrea Barry	Business Owner & Chair	021 759 170 Office 06 855 6596	andrea@belgroup.co.nz
Justine Kidd	BEL Group CEO	021 895 878	justine@belgroup.co.nz
Diane Rawlinson	EA to BEL Group CEO	027 553 3214	execassist@jmkconsulting.co.nz
Toni Goodlass	GM - People and Production	027 254 6814	toni@belgroup.co.nz
Rachael Riddell	Maternity Leave	021 759 178	rachael@belgroup.co.nz

BUSINESS SERVICES - All Invoices to PO Box 63, Waipukurau, 4242

Nicola Whittle	Business Service Team Leader	021 269 9307	nicola@belgroup.co.nz
Holly Price	Maternity Leave	06 858 8921	holly@belgroup.co.nz
Nikki Johansen	Finance and Payroll	06 858 8921	nikki@belgroup.co.nz
Kelly Jo Kroot	Finance and Payroll	06 8588921	kelly@belgroup.co.nz
Jude Jamieson	Workplace Safety/Admin Support	06 858 8921	jude@belgroup.co.nz
Paul Phippen	Asset Manager	0274 732 026	paul@belgroup.co.nz
Amanda Pottinger	Business Analyst	027 313 4590	amanda@belgroup.co.nz
Shane Mackie	Engineering (Deliveries to Ashton, 901 Burnside Rd, Takapau)	021 285 3011	shane@belgroup.co.nz
Hamish Quinlivan	Animal Health	021 759 784	hamish@vetabs.co.nz

DAIRY FARMS - All Invoices to PO Box 63, Waipukurau, 4242

Operations Manager - Doug Dolan		027 489 3764	doug@belgroup.co.nz
Ashton #47478	Doug Dolan	021 759 165	ashton@belgroup.co.nz
Fairlea #47477	David Mochrie	021 759 154	fairlea@belgroup.co.nz
Springfield #47426		021 759 164	springfield@belgroup.co.nz
Operations Manager - Michael Oakly		027 243 1205	mike@belgroup.co.nz
Reigate #47414	Michael Oakly	021 759 156	reigate@belgroup.co.nz
Cloverlea #47422	Phil Vallance	021 759 616	cloverlea@belgroup.co.nz
Parkhill #47421	Craig Pennell	021 759 161	parkhill@belgroup.co.nz
Kowhai Terrace #47423	Reetesh Prasad	021 759 163	kowhaiterrace@belgroup.co.nz
Operations Manager - Anthony Williams		027 627 8677	anthony@belgroup.co.nz
Hedley #47640	Peter Borges	021 759 173	hedley@belgroup.co.nz
Ellingham #47641	Daryl Spooner	021 759 174	ellingham@belgroup.co.nz

DAIRY SUPPORT - All Invoices to PO Box 63, Waipukurau, 4242

Operations Manager	Peter Kroot	021 759 172	pete@belgroup.co.nz
Ag-Works Manager	Jim Barnes	021 759 160	jim@belgroup.co.nz
Dairy Support	Paul Hopkinson	021 759 169	

NEWS AND EVENTS

LOCAL & INDUSTRY NEWS AND EVENTS

December

12th—2nd Jan	Fiesta of Lights, Hasting Showgrounds (Kenilworth Rd), 9pm-11pm every night.
24th	Christmas Eve
25th	Christmas Day
26th	Boxing Day
27th—28th	Porangahau Beach Polo 2015. Tickets available on www.eventfinda.co.nz
27th—30th	Open Air Cinema - Film Festival, Black Barn Vineyards, Havelock North. 7:30pm-11pm each night. Adults: \$20, Children:\$10.
28th	Boxing Day Observed
31st	New Year's Eve

January

1st	New Year's Day
2nd—6th	Open Air Cinema - Film Festival, Black Barn Vineyards, Havelock North. 7:30pm-11pm each night. Adults: \$20, Children:\$10.
4th	Day after New Year's Day Observed
10th	Waimarama Beach Day

February

6th	Waitangi Day
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BEL GROUP EVENTS

December

15th-16th	Lee Astridge Workshops
23rd	SHED Leader's (manager's) Meeting 10am-11.30am, Longrow.

January

6th	Farm Managers Meeting 11am-2pm.
10th	Effluent Samples Due to BS office.
13th	SHED Champs Meeting: 10am-11.30am, Longrow.
13th	Development Program—Finance W/S 1 of 2, 6:30pm-8:30pm Longrow.
26th	Tractor Skills and Maintenance Workshop.
28th	Staff BBQ at Longrow 12pm-1pm.

Geek Corner

For those of you who are interested in trying new applications for your phones...



- * **MetService App** - MetService brings personalised weather direct to your iPhone & Android smartphones with the latest forecasts, rain radar, stunning video and traffic cameras for your location right at your fingertips – even the backgrounds change according to the conditions of your location. (Cost involved.)
- * **Area calculator** - Ever needed to know how big a paddock is? Or even check old measurements that were guessed many years ago? A simple interface but can take GPS points and give you exact size of any paddock or area. (Free.)
- * **Unit Converter** - Especially when using American made gear, how often do you have to convert from hectares to acres? Inches/Feet to metric or even lbs to kg? With this app all that is done quickly and painlessly anytime you need. (Free.)

Go to: <http://farmingapps.co.nz/physical> to download these and more.



Have you joined BEL Group on Facebook? — like us now!!

WEBSITE LOG-IN

All staff are welcome to access the BEL Group website (www.belgroup.co.nz) and resources. Should you require a login and password, please contact the Business Services Office on 06 858 8921. You will need to have an email address to have this facility set up.

ACC

If you need to go on ACC for any reason it is important that you quote "BEL Group" as your employer **HOWEVER** if you work for any of the Longrow farms - Parkhill, Cloverlea, Kowhai Terrace or Reigate you will need to quote "Longrow Dairies" as your employer.

