



BALLANCE FARM ENVIRONMENT AWARDS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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The 2017 BFEA Alumni Conference

14 July 2017

The overarching theme of the Alumni Conference was CHANGE, that the rate of change is speeding up, challenging our ability to keep up. We also placed a major emphasis on CONNECTIONS and COMMUNICATION.

And WOW!!! What an amazing, whirlwind conference it ended up being . And what an amazing insight the BFEA Alumni had into the Southland region with its varied opportunities and challenges. Southland is a region of oysters and blue cod, deer and dry-stock, and a rapidly expanding dairy industry. With 2.3% of the population producing 15% of NZ's tradable products, this is a region on the move. Each sector has brought with them a whole range of different issues from different perspectives.

Conference Snapshots:

Mark Hotton – Cycle Southland (General Manager), Former Editor of Southland Times : "Traditional media will be gone in 5 years". "Sometimes it feels like we are 'Shouting in a forest' – It's important to plan your social media interaction. Understand who you are speaking as, why you are speaking, what it is you want to say and when you need to say it".

Zane Moss – Fish and Game: "Build connections". "Understand Fish and Game's perspective". "Get in touch locally". "There are \$\$\$ available for environment initiatives in some regions".

Anita Dawe – Environment Southland: "Rules don't always create change". It was very interesting to hear Anita's perspective

Suzanne Hanning – Dairy Farmer: "If you're not being constructive, you're moving backwards". "DIY takes forever", "Bring in the experts to help"

Richard & Dianne Kidd – 2016 BFEA National Winners: "We can't afford complacency". "Overseas producers are driven by rewards and incentives". "Consumers are paying for environmental improvements through green loans.

Cocktail Party: What an incredible group of Supreme Winners in the room, along with a Who's Who of NZ Agriculture. A great evening for networking.

Clint Rissman – Environment Southland (Principal Scientist): Passionate Soil Scientist who has simplified a very complex subject. Excited by the National Science Challenge and getting science into the hands of farmers. If you get the chance to hear what Clint is up to ,wherever you are in NZ, take it. He's doing cool stuff.

Alumni - Trust Meeting: We could have done with more time, but it was a great start to more open communication. "There is a strategy to bring to life and we need grass roots to provide the finger prints". Discussion around having an Alumni Member on the Board.
Please Note: Minutes of the meeting will be sent out separately to all BFEA Alumni Members via email.

Tom Campbell – Southland Regional Development Council: "The biggest challenge was trying to get farmers engaged". There is so much learning that we can apply to our own regions.

Jocelyn O'Donnell – HW Richardson Group: "A business has to work for ALL the people involved". A firm believer in the virtues of Southland. This family have added huge value to Southland. Jocelyn provided an inspiring and moving story.

The BFEA National Showcase: The culmination of our few days in Southland. Yet another great night with many opportunities for meeting others and being introduced to

the 2017 crop of regional Supreme Winners. Our congratulations to all, especially to Peter and Nicola Carver from Taranaki, recipients of the 2017 Gordon Stephenson Trophy.

Finally, a big thankyou to the Organising Committee, especially Grant Weller, who's inside knowledge and great connections made it possible for the Alumni Conference attendees to understand what is "Unique and Special Southland"

Next Year we'll be in Wellington. See you all there!!!!

***Keep warm and safe
The BFEA Alumni Committee***



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