



### GENERAL MANAGER'S UPDATE

Well I can no longer play the “new boy” card. After 10 months in my role I’m really enjoying working across the primary sector and learning more about the inspiring experiences of New Zealand’s farmers and growers. One of the highlights for me has been the opportunity to get around the country to meet our entrants and partners at a range of events celebrating sustainable farming and growing.



One of the themes that has stuck out for me is the passion that farmers and growers have for their stories to be told more effectively. This is an area that the Trust will be putting more energy into over the year ahead.

Most Ballance Farm Environment Awards entrants tell us that they get involved in the awards programme to receive feedback which they use to improve their business, and because they are passionate about the need to showcase sustainable farming. As I follow some of the media debate about the effects of farming upon the environment it’s clear to me that the awards programme and the work of the Trust is more important than ever.

At this time of year I’d like to acknowledge the efforts of our partners, particularly those involved in the regional teams, who are gently encouraging potential entrants to get involved in the awards programme over the year ahead.

*James*

**2018 Ballance Farm Environment Awards**  
 Entries now open!  
[www.bfea.org.nz](http://www.bfea.org.nz)

The Ballance Farm Environment Awards promote farming and growing practices that protect and enhance the farm environment.

Follow us on Twitter @nzfeatrust

**Get your entry in to the 2018 Ballance Farm Environment Awards** (media release)



## REGIONAL FEATURE

### WAIKATO

The 2017 awards programme attracted a diverse range of entrants to the Waikato programme including an extensive hill country farming in the central King Country and gentle rolling Waikato dairy pastoral land close to Hamilton. The finalists portrayed an array of skills and attributes which demonstrated outstanding achievement in farm sustainability. A total of 16 judges had the privilege of reviewing the farms in detail with Charlie and Helen Lea taking out the supreme award. The Leas held a successful field day on a stunning autumn day which was attended by several hundred people.

The challenge for the committee over the coming 12 months is to expand our thinking to think about what is happening in the environmental space over the next 5-10 years. The opportunity to support farmers by celebrating good farm practices and promoting sustainable land management is immense and the Waikato awards team is looking forward to the challenges and opportunities that come our way.



*Charlie and Helen Lea at their field day in April*

## ALUMNI IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### **TRACY BROWN, CHAIR BALANCE FARM ENVIRONMENT AWARDS ALUMNI**

My association with the NZ Farm Environment Trust began in 2001 when our property 'Tiroroa' (which means extensive view or 'view to the future') was awarded the Waikato Regional Council 'Habitat Enhancement Award'. We then went on to win the Waikato Supreme Award in 2010.

Over twenty years ago, I had just arrived in the Waikato having previously been the Economist at the NZ Meat & Wool Boards Economic Service in Wellington to marry my dairy farming husband Wynn. A visit to a property near Hamilton provided some inspiration as to what was possible, but I quickly realized sustainability is about a lot more than just planting a few trees! Winning the Waikato Award and the youngest of our four children starting school, coincided with a position becoming available as the Waikato Regional Coordinator,



which I filled for around four years. Dairy was getting a 'bad wrap' at the time (much like it is now), I was frustrated and wanted to help the dairy industry to become more sustainable.

Winning an award in the Ballance Farm Environment Awards opened the door, helped me see the potential as to where I could make a difference and gave me the mandate to step up and create positive change. I was asked to take part in the Escalator AWDT Leadership and Governance Programme for Women in the Agri-Sector which I completed in 2015. I now have several roles including Chair of the Ballance Farm Environment Awards Alumni, Chair of the DairyNZ Dairy Environment Leaders Programme, Farmer Delegate to DELG (the Dairy Environment Leadership Group), and a Dairy Women's Network Trustee. And so I can 'keep things real' and stay connected to my community I also Chair the Matamata Intermediate Board of Trustees. My most recent role is being asked to go on the 'Dairy Industry Strategy' Refresh Working Group to work with DairyNZ and all the organisations who are party to the strategy to review what's working well and where we need to be heading as an industry in the future.

*Having recently been nominated for the rural category in the Women of Influence awards 2017, the NZ Farm Environment Trust would like to wish Tracy well for the awards that will be announced in September.*

### KEY PARTNER UPDATE

## BALLANCE AGRI-NUTRIENTS

*Why did Ballance get involved in BFEA?*

There is a great alignment with our Purpose – *“Together, creating the best soil and feed on earth”* – and the passion we know our farmers have for leaving something better for generations to come. The Awards showcase the very best in evolving farming practice in New Zealand that is key to adding value to the economic engine that has powered this country for more than a century – and ensuring that we have a healthy, sustainable sector into the future.

*How is the Ballance team engaging in the awards programme?*

Our people throughout the country take pride in the Awards, from actively encouraging entrants to supporting farmers and growers through the process. We also have nutrient specialists and scientists involved in judging at a regional or national level and we take every opportunity to work with the Trust to spread the word on the awards and share the wonderful stories of our winners with other farmers and New Zealand as whole.

*What are you looking forward to in 2017/18?*

With the farming landscape changing rapidly, with new regulations and consumer expectations, there has never been a louder call for integrated sustainability in farm systems. We see huge opportunity through our work with the Trust, BFEA partners and Alumni, to continue positively shaping a mindset around sustainable food production, and connecting Kiwis with this evolution of farming in New Zealand and the value it creates.

