

welcome to



call of the country



Welcome to the

Professionals Call of the Country

This publication offers relevant articles to those of you who are part of, or interested in, the rural and lifestyle sector of the New Zealand property market. We hope you enjoy this edition and the many to follow.

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Family Safety on the Land

While urban workplaces are regulated to reduce the risk of injury, the farm environment is difficult to regulate, as it is both a place of work and a home. The impact of the injury can result in severe financial stress or even the loss of the farm. Farmers need to take careful management and practical controls to reduce the risk of injury. In this article we look at family prevention actions.

The farm is a place that combines work and home for many families. This means children can be exposed to hazards and potentially dangerous situations 24 hours a day.

Whether you have children living on, or visiting your farm, you can reduce the number of significant hazards they are exposed to, and the potential for harm on your farm by following these tips:

- Teach children to stay away from hazardous farm machinery and equipment at all times.
- Teach children that idle equipment and machinery is also hazardous and out-of-bounds to them.
- Leave any equipment that might fall, such as front-end loaders, in the resting or down position.
- When self-propelled machinery is parked, lock brakes and remove keys from the ignition.
- Always leave a tractor power take off (PTO) in neutral.
- When starting and reversing machinery, ask "where are the children?"
- Keep machinery in good repair, particularly protective shields, ROPS, and seat belts.
- Fence farm ponds and manure pits.
- Place fixed ladders out of reach, or fit with a special barrier; store portable ladders away from danger areas.
- Lock up or shield dangerous machinery, electrical boxes and wiring. Keep out of reach of children.
- Store chemicals and pesticides in a locked area out of sight and reach of children.
- Place warning decals on all grain bins, wagons and trucks.
- Maintain lights and reflectors for all equipment used on roads.
- Devote a day to family safety. Teach kids basic farm safety rules.

For more information on farm safety visit www.acc.co.nz or www.farmwise.co.nz.

Source: Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) website

Dairy Farm Prices Drive National Farm Median to New Record



Strong dairy farm sales and prices kicked the rural real estate market up to the next level during November.

As the dairy sector entered its traditional farm sales period, dairy sales peaked sharply up from 53 sales in the three months to October 2007 to 91 for the three months to November, up also on the November 2006 sales of 77 and just ahead of the 90 sales recorded in the three months to November 2005.

The dairy median was up sharply from \$2,639,000 to \$3,350,000, close to the August 2007 record of \$3,450,000, and this helped the national farm median price to reach a new record of \$1,500,000 for the three months to November 2007 compared with the October 2007 figure of \$1,305,000 and the November 2006 median of \$1,000,000.

According to REINZ National Councillor and rural spokesperson for the Institute, Mr Peter McDonald, the rise in dairy land prices was as the Institute had predicted in September when the selling season was about to begin.

"The record dairy payouts can be expected to send dairy farm prices to new record levels in the coming months as both existing farmers and new investors compete for properties to increase their exposure to a sector where everyone currently wants to be invested."

"There is a very strong demand in Southland for existing dairy farms and farms suitable for conversion to dairying. There has also been a dramatic shift in prices paid for these classes of land with farms suitable for conversion selling in the vicinity of \$25,000 to \$37,000 per hectare and existing dairy units selling in the range of \$35 to \$50 per kg/milk fat production", comments Graeme Hegan, Professionals rural specialist from Invercargill.

"Farm listings are in short supply, partly because of the strong demand, with a number of sheep farms either being sold for conversion or converted for dairying by the existing sheep/beef or arable farmers," Mr Hegan adds.

However, dairying didn't have everything to itself during November, with grazing properties also experiencing a good increase in demand with sales up from 252 in the three months to October to 291 for the period to November 2007, with the median price reflecting good demand, up from the October median of \$1,100,000 to \$1,200,000.

Arable farm sales were little changed at 34 to November compared with 33 to October, but the median price was up from \$1,640,000 to \$1,762,126.

Finishing property sales were up from 123 to October to 133 to November with the median price up from \$1,940,000 to \$2,041,446.

Horticulture property sales were unchanged at 51 for November, but the median slipped a little from \$1,085,000 to \$930,000.

The lifestyle market was also looking livelier in November, with sales up from 1672 for the three months to October to 1798 for the three months to November 2007, reflecting the same trend in the latest residential property market figures.

The lifestyle median price was up from \$428,000 to \$450,000, a good increase on the November 2006 median of \$410,000.

Auckland region lifestyle property prices firmed from \$754,150 to October to \$770,000 to November, with Canterbury the other area to show good gains with the median up from \$366,000 to \$450,000.

Statistics courtesy of: Real Estate Institute

Lifestyle Block Trees

The reasons for planting trees on a lifestyle block can be summarised into three general groups:

Care Trees are trees that help look after your property.

Money Trees are trees that you aim to sell in the future to provide some revenue.

Look Trees are trees that are selected because they will improve or enhance the appearance of your property.

Care Trees

The description of Care Trees is one that embraces any type of tree that looks after your property. So why should you go to all the trouble of planting trees on your lifestyle block? Some of the benefits of Care Trees are that they:

- Provide shelter for your animals
- May provide food for your animals
- Reduce soil erosion
- Stabilise stream banks
- Improve the microclimate for growing plants
- Improve pasture yields
- Keep dogs happy!

There is always a need to provide shelter from the wind, to shield unwanted views, or to define a boundary. The main benefit of planting trees for a wind barrier is to provide shelter for your stock. Shelter belts will reduce the wind speed by as much as 50% as far as eight times the height of the shelterbelt. To ensure that you get the maximum benefit from your shelter belt, it should be designed specifically for your location and weather conditions. You may need to use a consultant to plan a shelter system to meet your specific needs as there are several principles to consider, such as orientation, length and permeability.

What trees are best?

In general, trees selected for shelter purposes should be moderately fast-growing, tolerant to wind, able to withstand trimming and relatively disease-resistant. Some trees to consider are Radiata Pine, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Blackwood, Willows and Poplars.

Money Trees

Establishing a woodlot involves replacing unproductive areas of land with a small forest of trees suitable for harvesting as timber. When woodlots are established on erosion-prone land they can make a substantial contribution to farm income. Of course they will still provide shelter and enhance the appearance of your property. Like multi species shelterbelts, they will prove attractive habitats for birds and small animals.

Deciding the size, location and what species to plant in the woodlot are vital to its economic viability. Small woodlots, say up to 5ha, can be managed by the land owner but larger forests will require contractors for planting, pruning and thinning operations.

Deciding where to plant a woodlot means looking well ahead to think about issues like access when it comes time to harvest the trees. You may need to investigate whether there are the local bylaws regarding boundary and roadside plantings? Will the woodlot be also required to provide shelter for stock? Can you easily fence off the woodlot from your stock? Do you need to consider issues like power lines, underground cables, drains, wetlands, nearby neighbours and any other such issues that might impact on your woodlot?

What species are best?

Common choices, outside of Radiata Pine, include Macrocarpa, Eucalyptus, Cedar, Tasmanian blackwood, Acacia, Black Walnut, Cypress and Douglas Fir.

Look Trees

An attractive option is to have a border of Native trees around the boundaries of your property. Plants should be spaced to a density of 1.5m. Taller trees like beech, kowhai, or totara should be planted at the rear; bushy trees that grow to a medium height like Pittosporum can be sited in the centre with low growing plants such as Hebe and the native grasses are planted in the front. These are look trees and not one recommended for economical use of your land.

It is worth taking the trouble to get the right tree for your own lifestyle block, as you are making a decision for the long term 'maybe 40 years' so you have to get it right. When you do, every time you look at those beautiful trees, you will have a great sense of pride from doing something wonderful to enhance your property.

What are some good options?

Cottonwood, Shore ribbonwood, Flax, Corokia, Taupata, Ramarama, Akapuka, Matipou, Five Finger, Akeake, Manuka, Lacebark and Broadleaf.

This article is only an overview of what species of trees can be used to shelter your property, beautify it or provide some revenue. You will need to get expert advice on what trees to plant for a particular purpose in a specific location. This may be available from a forestry consultant, a tree supplier or your local garden centre.

Article courtesy of: www.goodground.co.nz

Moving In Moving On



1111 Branhholm Lochiel Road, Branholm, Southland

An estimated 1930s family homestead nestled amongst established English trees on 23.6 acres. Three large bedrooms plus an office, two separate living areas and sleepout. An established horse training property it also boasts premium superb well draining land, plus modern loose boxes and older sheds being utilised for feed and tack rooms.

Sold by negotiation for \$500,000 + GST by MacPherson Realty Ltd.



216 Postmans Road, Dairy Flat, Rodney

A modern family home set on 4 acres at the end of a private lane. Accompanying this property is a large feature pond and a fenced grazing paddock as well as a large outdoor entertaining area and swimming pool, great for guests.

Sold for \$902,500 by Classic Real Estate Ltd, Albany.



3613 State Highway 22, Glen Murray, Waikato

Captivating views from 17 acres of sloping to steep farmland, this 2 bedroom cottage is a beautifully presented home on a great lifestyle block complete with orchards and veggie gardens. Currently running Angora goats, accompanying this property is nine paddocks, stockyards, 2 tanks and troughs in each paddock.

Sold for \$440,000 exclusively by Property Link Groups Ltd, Pukekohe.



Flystrike

Flystrike is a disease where blowflies lay eggs on the skin. Maggots hatch from the eggs and eat into the skin causing sores. This is a horrible sight for even the most experienced farmer.

Of all domestic animals, sheep are most often affected, because wool (particularly dirty wool) attracts blowflies. One type of blowfly can strike even relatively clean areas on sheep. Blowflies can strike wet dirty areas on animals such as dogs, pet rabbits and even cats, especially if they are weak or have dirty matted hair, although this is uncommon.

Some facts

- Blowflies favour warm humid conditions.
- There are several species of blowfly found throughout New Zealand that cause flystrike. Along with the Aussie green blowfly (*Lucilia cuprina*), the prevalent others are green blowfly (*L. sericata*), brown blowfly (*Calliphora stygia*) and the hairy maggot fly (*Chrysomya rufifacies*).

Signs - what to look for

- You'll need to be very observant to spot the early signs of eggs on the wool or skin or small sores containing maggots.
- The sores are usually under dirty wool at the sheep's back end, in shearing cuts or on feet with footrot.
- The Australian green blowfly can strike relatively clean skin along the back or around the poll and ears.
- Sometimes the behaviour of the sheep is the first sign that it has been struck. It might seem restless, seek shade, twitch its tail, swing round to try to nibble affected areas and stamp its feet.

Treatment

- When there are sores on the skin, the maggots should be removed with meths (a horrible job).
- The sore should be treated with flystrike powder containing diazinon, available from your veterinarian or rural supplier.
- In an emergency, small flystrike wounds can be treated with flyspray.
- It's important to treat the sores when they are still small.
- Extensive and deep sores are very difficult or impossible to treat.
- In severe cases, euthanasia may be the only humane option.
- The sheep should be examined daily to make sure they don't become struck again.
- Insect repellent on the surrounding wool will help to keep the blowflies away.

Prevention

- Dirty, wet or injured skin attracts blowflies, so it's important to remove the attraction by keeping sheep clean.
- Removing dags is important, and if the wool is long, shear the sheep to prevent wool at the back end getting wet and dirty.
- Sheep should never be carrying more than a year's growth of wool and they must be shorn if they are infected.
- Cuts and sores should be treated and injured sheep kept under close observation until wounds have healed.
- Good worm control helps prevent the diarrhoea that soils the wool at the back end and helps attract blowflies.
- Blowflies favour sheltered areas so move sheep to open more exposed paddocks during the high risk periods when it's warm and humidity is high, along with anytime sheep scour and have dags. Although the Aussie Green blowfly will strike over a very wide season on any part of the sheep which is dirty or sweaty.
- Blowflies breed in dead carcasses as well as on live flesh, so it is very important that all dead animals on the farm are buried or incinerated. This includes wild animal and bird carcasses too.
- Flytraps can help attract blowflies away from stock. If enough flytraps are used early in the season, they help prevent flystrike.
- Flytraps can also be used to monitor the risk by indicating how many blowflies are around.
- These can either be purchased or made at home, and many veterinarians and agricultural advisors can advise on how to make home-made traps.
- Other control methods that can be effective in strike prevention include applying long-acting insecticide to the skin by dipping or using saturation sprays
- For the lifestyle farmer it is often more practical to use long-acting pour-on or spray-on treatments.
- Read the label carefully and follow manufacturer's instructions to the letter. Each treatment has different specifications.
- Following treatment there is a withholding time before wool can be sold.
- There are many control treatments on the market and it is important to select one suitable for your situation.
- Consult your veterinarian or other animal health professional for sound advice.