

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

Mid-winter Minders

Prevent Pugging Paddocks

Record Prices for Farm Sales

Winter Warmers for Horses



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Mid-winter Minders

If you are planning to head to the snow this winter or escape to a tropical island it is important to make early arrangements for someone to look after your property and livestock.

Have a clear list of instructions and important information ready and take the time to walk the property with them and cover any issues that might arise.

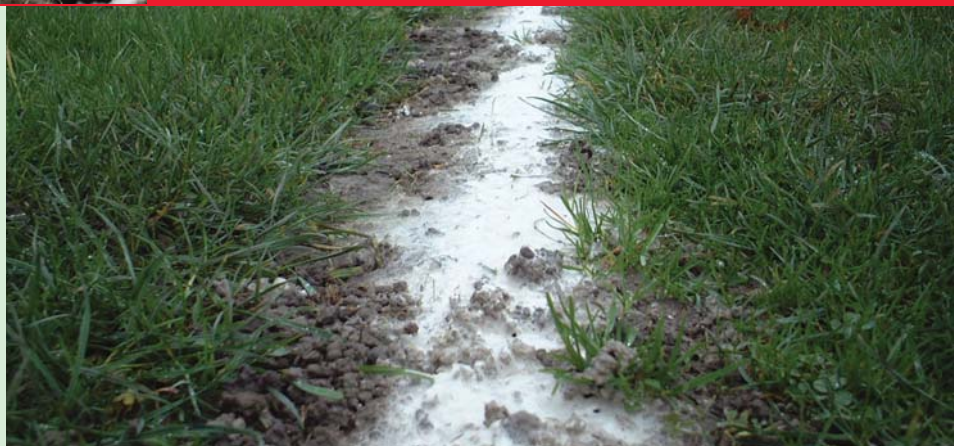
Make sure the person looking after your property can locate the following;

- A farm map with the grazing round clearly marked.
- The main power fence control and earth pegs.
- Spare standards, fencing pliers, wire joiners, wire, insulators, rammer, spade and a sledgehammer.
- Spare gate and netting.
- Main water control to turn the supply off.
- Various parts in the pump house which need attention (add the contact number for the water pump company just in case!)
- Some treatment advice for common livestock problems.
- Your local Vet's number - daytime and after hours mobile.

Security has now become a major issue for anyone going away this winter. Make sure your neighbours know that you are away and a minder is in charge. Ask your neighbours to keep an eye out for anything out of the ordinary such as panicking stock or suspicious vehicles.

Most burglars work business hours and are opportunists. Do not leave farm tools or ladders lying around. They are very keen on re-selling fuel, ATV's, ride-on mowers, chainsaws, sprays and drenches.

Be aware of health and safety issues and your responsibilities under the law. You should have a Safety Policy to give to anyone coming on to the farm. This lists hazards that could not be eliminated so have been isolated and protected. Make sure the checklist is up to date.



Prevent Pugging Paddocks

Soils are a farmer's most valuable resource so every effort should be made to keep them in good physical and biological health. Moist and wet soils are less able to support the weight of grazing stock than dry soils. Treading on moist soils can lead to compaction and animal hooves cause pugging damage.

Pugging reduces a soil's performance because its structure has changed. Pugging damage increases the soil's density but decreases its porosity, drainage and aeration. Damaged soils stay wetter much longer and because wet soils are more easily pugged this compounds the pugging problem. A pugged surface can result in a compacted layer about 5-10 cm down, impeding plant growth and drainage.

The best way to avoid this is to prevent pugging. This can be achieved by moving stock to a hard pad or sacrifice area when pugging damage is likely to occur. Alternatively you can drain any wet areas. A pugged soil may need cultivation to aid its recovery and could possibly require a fallow period without any crop or pasture on it. Damaged and re-sown sacrifice paddocks will produce less than their potential even after cultivation until the soil structure fully recovers.

When a paddock becomes pugged during a wet spell then it needs to be nursed back into good health. Soils are not just dirt - they are a growing medium for plant roots, a source of essential nutrients for plants and animals and are home to a myriad of small animals, microbes and seeds.

A pugged soil should not be subjected to intensive grazing especially with heavyweight livestock. Furthermore, keep heavy vehicles off these soils when they start becoming wet.

Handy Hint

Earthworms are great for aerating soil which enables plant roots to develop as they turn over the soil continuously. Good quality soils under pasture will normally contain more than 500 earthworms per square metre, which is equivalent to more than 30 in two spades of soil. Earthworm populations may be boosted by; reducing stocking on compacted areas, improving drainage on soils prone to water logging, using irrigation on soils prone to extreme drying and applying lime and fertiliser to improve pasture growth.

Record Prices for Farm Sales

The New Zealand farm real estate market is continuing its strong growth over the last few months in stark contrast to the residential and lifestyle property market.

Brian Barrett of Professionals Waiuku comments that farmers have been "milking the golden cow!" in the current rural property market.

Farm sales reached a new record of \$1,810,000 for the three months to April 2008, up 52.1 per cent on the April 2007 median of \$1,190,000.

Dairy farm sales were again a major contributor to both strong sales and prices, in what is traditionally the 'high season' for rural property sales.

Horticultural properties were in high demand with sales up from 31 in March to 39 in April 2008. The median price was up from \$850,000 in March to \$855,000 in April 2008.

A big increase in grazing property sales also contributed to the buoyancy.

"Farms have been buying neighbouring farms in order to expand" says Barrett and going forward the rural market is "only going to get better".

Regional Highlights

Northland - The median farm price increased to \$1,650,000 in April from \$772,500 in March. The lifestyle block median rose to \$360,000 in April from \$330,000 in March.

Auckland - Median farm prices in Auckland eased to \$1,250,000 in April from \$1,327,500 in March. The median for lifestyle blocks reached \$765,000 in April from \$755,000 in March.

Waikato - In Waikato the median price rose from \$2,600,000 in March to \$2,700,000 in April. Lifestyle block median prices eased to \$419,500 from \$424,000 in March.

Bay of Plenty - The median price for a farm reached \$1,500,000 in April up from \$1,490,000 in March. The median for lifestyle blocks remained steady at \$530,000.

Gisborne - The farm median price in Gisborne dropped from \$2,250,000 in March to \$1,250,000 in April and the lifestyle block median eased from \$472,000 from \$478,500 in March.

Hawkes Bay - The median farm price eased from \$1,945,000 in March to \$1,550,000 in April and the lifestyle blocks median reached \$408,000 in April.

Taranaki - The farm price median eased to \$1,150,000 in Taranaki in April from \$1,250,000 in March. Lifestyle blocks median price rose from \$365,000 in March to \$408,000 in April.

Manawatu/Wanagnui - The median farm price went from \$1,820,000 in March to \$160,000,000 in April and the lifestyle block median rose to \$342,500 from \$340,000.

Wellington - Median prices for a Wellington farm rose to \$1,210,090 in April, up from \$1,200,000 in March. The lifestyle block median dipped to \$445,000 in April from \$452,500 in March.

Nelson/Marlborough - The median price for a farm eased to \$1,156,500 in April from \$1,476,000 in March. The median price for a lifestyle block rose to \$470,000 from 440,000 in March.

West Coast - The median farm price eased to \$2,000,000 from \$2,412,500 in March and the lifestyle block median increased to \$232,500 from \$207,500.

Canterbury - Median prices rose to \$2,002,500 in April up from \$1,650,000 in March. The median price for Canterbury lifestyle blocks reached \$497,500.

Otago - The median farm price reached \$1,967,500 in April, up from \$1,626,741 in March. Lifestyle blocks rose to \$400,000 from \$393,000 in March.

Southland - The median price eased to \$2,377,500 in April from \$2,690,500 in March. The median price on lifestyle blocks also fell from \$288,500 in March to \$275,000 in April.

Information from Real Estate Institute New Zealand.

Moving In Moving On



This 400 hectare property, approximately 21kms east of Dannevirke, consists of mainly easy to medium hill country and 18ha of pine trees. 57ha were retired in recent times in favour of the Queen Elizabeth II Trust as Open Space Covenant land.

The property offered excellent stock handling facilities, 4 stand woolshed, hay barn, a selling arena and a 4 bedroom home with support buildings.

The property sold for \$2,300,000 by Unique Realty Ltd.



Spring water, working cowshed, dam water, 2 excellent pumps, well tracked and patches of native bush. This property offered many choices at 25.18ha nestled in the hills overlooking Bream Bay.

Sold for \$650,000 by Glenbarry Real Estate.



This beautiful 2 bedroom home in Dairy Flat surrounded by native bush, completely private and secluded with outside stables and plenty of storage. It featured 8.4 hectares of contoured and sheltered land.

Sold for \$1,600,000 by Classic Real Estate Ltd.

Winter Warmers for Horses

The days are getting shorter, the temperature is dropping and no doubt as the Townies go into hibernation until the spring, those of us who own livestock and, specifically for this article, horses should know that this is time of the year where we get covered in mud, endure the frosts and icy water and spend many an hour in the dark caring for our beloved four legged friends.

While this is often the time of year where horses are rested, it certainly should not be a time where they are neglected. In fact it is often more important during this time to be keeping a good eye on your horses health and wellbeing. Below are some general tips to ensure your horse comes through winter ready for the new season.

Living Quarters: Whether your horse is stabled or out in the paddock over the winter time you need to ensure that they have appropriate shelter from the prevailing winds and rain and are kept in the driest paddock possible, to try and avoid foot problems and mud fever. A really important tip for this time of year is to make sure that any creeks, dams or really boggy areas are taped off.

Body Temperature: Having the appropriate shelter for your horse is usually enough to help them maintain a good body temperature throughout the winter times. Those horses used to not having covers on will certainly grow a nice winter coat to keep themselves warm. If you are covering your horse, make sure it is waterproof and fits really well. It is often better to have no cover than a heavy sodden one. For those of you continuing to ride throughout the winter it would be worth considering having your horse clipped so that he or she is never put back in the paddock wet. If you are going to clip make sure you purchase a nice, snug waterproof rug.

Hoof care: It is usually a debate as to whether to remove shoes for the winter or leave them on. This is really an individual horse decision, as some horses just do not do well without their shoes, whereas others are fine. Either way it is important that your farrier still comes on a regular basis. Even though hoof growth at this time of year is slower there are a number of problems that can occur such as abscesses, thrush and bacterial infections. A good farrier will notice these problems and treat them before they turn into something nasty.

Nutrition: This is also a very individual topic, every horse is different, but it is important to note that the grass composition at this time of year is different with energy, mineral and vitamin content. It is often necessary to increase the amount of energy that your horse is eating; hay is a good choice depending on your horses needs.



If you are concerned about how your horse's condition is looking or just wanting to optimise your nutrition regime through winter it would be worth consulting your vet and perhaps even having some blood tests run.

Teeth are important at this time of year to ensure that maximum intake of the available grass is occurring. It is generally recommended to have your horses teeth checked at least once a year and certainly if it has been longer than this, now is the perfect time to have an equine dentist do a check.

Worming is still important throughout the winter period. If you are unsure of what kind of worming your horse needs, consult with your vet for a helping hand.

General Checks: You should be checking your horses on a daily basis, or at least finding someone who can. It is important, even if you are not riding, to take the covers off; do a good general check; pick out the feet and ensure everything is ok and as it should be!

Article supplied by Dr Rebecca Penman.
Visit www.redvaleparkequine.co.nz