

# Learning the 'LessN'

## Donaghys LessN® monthly update

OCTOBER 2010

Welcome to the October edition of *Learning the LessN*. Last month I commented that with spring upon us we should be in for some more settled weather. How wrong could I have been! With heavy snow in Southland, torrential rain and winds in the North Island and even snow in the Taranaki the weather has again had a huge impact on farmers. Lets hope things can improve quickly.

The cold and wet weather has certainly had an impact on milk production with most areas reporting drops on seasonal averages. Applications of spring fertiliser and nitrogen have also been pushed back and it also looks like another late start for spring cropping and silage harvesting.

The LessN Roadshow has continued in late September with another seven fielddays being held in the South Waikato, Taranaki

and Manawatu. While the weather didn't play its part it was still good to see a great turnout of farmers and industry participants attending to hear the latest information on LessN and the positive impact it is having on farms. The South Island LessN fielddays have been delayed due to the poor weather but it is hoped that these will happen in November.

All the best for the month ahead.

*Nigel Johnston, Biotechnology Manager, Donaghys*



## Donaghys LessN® - Farmer of the month



**Iain McGregor**  
Otorohanga

Iain McGregor sharemilks on a 120ha Otorohanga dairy farm milking 370 cows.

Iain has been using the 'LessN system' for the last two seasons and has been

very impressed with the results. Even though he has reduced his nitrogen use in half by using LessN, he has been able to maintain pasture production meaning a big saving on his urea bill.

Another aspect of LessN that has impressed Iain has been the speed of the nitrogen response when the urea is sprayed on with LessN. As there is no lag time compared to applying solid urea, pasture is able to respond quicker to the

nitrogen as it is going straight into the grass.

Iain has also noticed a reduction in urine patches due to the pastures not being high in nitrogen at the time of grazing. This has enabled the cows to graze the paddocks more evenly.

"Once you set up a system for dissolving and applying, it is just as fast as spreading urea" comments Iain. He currently uses a Cassotti broadcast kit for application.

## Research Update - LessN showing promising results on kale crops

While the main application of LessN is for use on pasture, Donaghys is undertaking an extensive research program on other important agricultural crops to evaluate the performance of LessN on these crops. The results of these trials to date are showing encouraging results, with the performance of LessN on brassica crops in particular looking strong.

The opportunity to apply the 'LessN system' (40kg/ha dissolved urea plus 3L/ha LessN) on crops can offer several advantages to farmers. As the management of these crops already include applications of other liquid products (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides etc) the incorporation of LessN and dissolved urea into a spray mix with these other products reduces the need for separate applications of solid urea.

Included in the LessN research on brassicas, were four trials which assessed the performance of LessN on kale. With kale being a significant forage crop grown on many New Zealand farms any advantages that LessN can provide on dry matter (DM) yield and financial savings will be welcomed by farmers.

### KALE TRIAL RESULTS

**Table 1. Average kale dry matter yields (tonnes/ha) from four Donaghys trials conducted at Riversdale, Ruapuna, Mt. Somers and Ashburton in 2009/10.**

Treatment	Dry matter yield (t/ha)	Dry matter increase over Spray 40	%increase over Spray40
Control	10.42	-	-
Urea 40 Spray	11.05	-	-
Urea 40 Spray + LN	11.90	850 kgDM/ha	8
Urea 40 Spray +LN + WS	12.10	1,050 kgDM/ha	10

The results of the trials showed that the addition of LessN (LN) to dissolved urea provided an 8% increase in total yield, while a 10% increase was seen when Donaghys Wetter Sticker (WS) was also included in the mix.

*These trials are pre commercial evaluation trials only and should not be seen as a recommendation by Donaghys at this stage. Further trials are being conducted this spring to scientifically validate the use of LessN on kale.*



# Donaghys LessN® - News Update

## LessN gaining great coverage in the Rural Press

In the last month LessN has featured twice in leading rural magazines as part of on-farm articles. In both articles the farmers featured have revealed how LessN is playing an integral part in their farming operations and how it has helped them increase productivity on their farms.

The first article which was seen in the September edition of the Dairy Exporter (page 43) featured Taranaki farmer Gary Fredrickson who currently sharemilks for the Parininihi Ki Waitotara (PKW) Maori Incorporation, Taranaki's biggest milk supplier. Gary, who has been a recent finalist in the Taranaki Sharemilker of the Year competition, farms 153ha with his wife Sandra, milking 475 Friesian/Friesian-cross cows.

The following is an extract from the

Dairy Exporter article: *'They have been using LessN for more than a year and said they're thrilled with the results. "We dropped urea use from 80t/season to 30t with no loss in grass growth," Gary said. The herd's conception rate was up seven percent. "We were able to use it in July over the last two seasons with gibberellins (plant hormones) to give us strong July and early August growth". He said cow health was stronger and there was more clover in the pastures than he'd ever seen since using urea. "We've now lowered our carbon footprint, giving us a very strong nutrient budget result," he said. "We've found it easy to apply and will continue to use it in the future".*

The second article which featured in the September edition of the Dairy News (page 31) profiled another Taranaki dairy farmer, Andrew Meuli. Andrew is

running a high tech operation focusing on optimum nutrition, but still sees growing grass cheaply as the most important feature of the operation.

The following is an extract from the Dairy News article: *Meuli has cut back on nitrogen fertilizer using LessN to grow more grass faster and cheaper. Being able to spray LessN gives flexibility in timing of application. Though focused on cow efficiency, Meuli is also concerned about the farm's environmental footprint and how customers overseas react to New Zealand's production system. "They want to see where the product is coming from and we need to change a few of the ways we do things. Our LessN programme is a start plus our effluent spreading. And we're fencing off and planting our waterways."*

## Local victory in LessN sponsored race

It was a popular local victory in the RD1 Hawera/Donaghys LessN Rating 70 1200 at Waverly last month when Wanna Govern took out the race. Local trainer John Boon saddled up the tough Deputy Governor 6 year old for the second win of its career and capped of a great day for Boon who also trained a winner in the previous race.

For Donaghys the chance to sponsor a race at Waverly was a great way to thank farmers in the region who have supported LessN over the last few years. Donaghys has seen a huge uptake of LessN in the Taranaki, with the Waverly area being the fastest growing usage area in New Zealand.



Wanna Govern proved to strong in the RD1 Hawera/Donaghys LessN Rating 70 1200 at Waverly last month



## Donaghys LessN<sup>®</sup> - Tip of the month

### Commonsense needed if adjusting water rates

While the recommended water rate for spraying the 'LessN system' is 200L water/ha, many farmers have been adjusting their water rates to fit in better with the size of their sprayers and paddocks. These farmers have mentioned that they are getting just as good a result with LessN at water rates as low as 125L/ha, but with most using between 150-200L/ha.

Lowering the water rate does enable more area to be covered per load, saving time and potentially money. If a farmer with a 2000L spray tank that previously sprayed at 200L water/ha dropped their rate back to 150L water/ha, they could increase the area they covered from 10ha to 13.3ha per load. This means that they could spray an extra 1-2 paddocks before having to reload.

Caution must be taken at certain times of the year, particularly in hot conditions. Lowering the water rate can



increase the chance of leaf burning when temperatures are hot, so it is advised that water rates are maintained at the 200L/ha rate if spraying in these conditions.

## Donaghys Territory Manager of the Month

### 60 Seconds with Tracey Titter

*Territory you cover for Donaghys?*

New Plymouth, Okato, Pungarehu, Opunake, Kaponga, Stratford, Inglewood, Waitara surrounds.

*How long have you worked for Donaghys?*

Just over 2 years.

*Favourite part of the job?*

Building good relationships with my current and new clients and offering a professional service.

*Interests outside of work?*

Spending time with my family and friends, swimming, working out at the gym.

*Greatest achievement outside of work?*

Raising 2 great children.

*Dream job?*

Is working with a great team, building good relationships and being successful.

*If you could change one thing about the New Zealand agricultural industry what would it be?*

Getting all farmers using the LessN system .



# Other news from Donaghys - Donaghys Dairy hygiene innovation.

Donaghys Scientific Research Group, which has delivered cutting edge research in pasture nitrogen utilisation and herbicide technology, is now also producing in-house revelations in dairy hygiene products. All designed, made and owned here in New Zealand

## Ecoflush

Donaghys new **Ecoflush** dairy acid (patent pending) introduces the use of a triple combination of **organic acids**, coupled with a polyquat sanitiser for unique, dual action cleaning and sanitising of your dairy plant. The active ingredients in Ecoflush are unaffected by iron and lime contamination in wash water and allow for an economical 1mL to 10L water dilution rate, meaning that the 200L of Ecoflush is equivalent to 300L of a regular acid sanitiser.



## Powerflush - refined.

Donaghys popular, cost effective dairy acid sanitiser, Powerflush, has had an upgrade, with the introduction of a **superior surfactant** and **improved dye**.

Powerflush will now be sporting a fetching blue/green colour and superior cleaning with no change to the price.



## That's not all folks!

### Ecoflush

- Is completely **biodegradable** and will not lead to contamination of the environment with Sulphates and Phosphates from dumped wash water.
- **Is less** corrosive to your dairy shed and plant surfaces and less harmful on the skin.
- Is effective in **cold or hot water** allowing savings in water heating costs.

**Ecoflush** – Call your Donaghys Territory Manager on 0800 942 006 to find out more.



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