



The BHU Future Farming Centre

Permanent Agriculture and Horticulture: Science and Extension

28 August 2013

New sustainable agriculture eNewsletter launched to improve kiwi farmers' and growers' lives and businesses.

The Future Farming Centre has just launched its new, free, sustainable agriculture, extension publication "The FFC Bulletin" <http://www.bhu.org.nz/future-farming-centre/information/bulletin> to provide concise, farmer and grower friendly information to help reduce costs, increase profits, make the job easier and improve their environmental sustainability.

Dr Charles Merfield, Head of the Future Farming Centre, said that "NZ lacks an authoritative publication covering the sustainable farming space that is aimed squarely at helping producers. Most kiwi farmers and growers understand that they will have to change their production practices to meet agriculture's new multifunctional roles, however, they are struggling to find truly independent, authoritative, science based information to help them".

Dr Merfield continued "There is a lot of pseudo-science in the sustainable ag sphere, and producers are really struggling to separate real-science from fruitlooperly. The FFC has deep experience and expertise in both real-world farming and science so it is very well placed to be able to sort the scientific wheat from the chaff of ignorance."

"Unfortunately some of the other publications in NZ that purport to be about sustainable and organic agriculture are more about alternative lifestyles, health and home gardening, which are both a major turn-off and little help for commercial farmers and growers wanting to improve the both the environmental and financial sustainability of their operations."

"Also, a number of publications in the sustainability space also have an axe to grind, often a very big axe indeed, and they are not afraid to wade into a whole bunch of political issues, thus muddying the water and making it hard to tell where the politics stop and the information starts."

"It is also increasingly difficult to find truly impartial agricultural scientists as more and more research institutions such as CRIs and Universities are dependent on funding from commercial entities, such as fertiliser companies, to make ends meet, so despite the best intentions to avoid their funding skewing their science, the research shows that biases do occur, even if just at the unconscious level."

Dr Merfield concluded "The FFC Bulletin is clearly different:

- It is only about practical, sustainable, commercial ag and hort, not lifestyle blocks or home gardens;
- It leaves the politics to others;
- The FFC is part of a charitable trust founded on a public good remit, and retains its independence from commercial interests, so the information it provides is as unbiased as you can get;
- It takes the best international science and translates it into short, easy to read, valuable knowledge for farmers and growers.

In short, it is just pure, good old fashioned, extension, i.e., providing farmers and growers with the knowledge they need to improve their lives and their businesses.



Issues that are covered in the first issue of The FFC Bulletin are:

Make Soil Organisms Work for You: Mythbusting practices that do and don't work.

100% non-chemical control of Tomato Potato Psyllid (TPP) in field crops

"Sort and Treat" parasite control for lambs

The grape and post collection at the BHU

FFC news - FFC's NZ and international research collaborations.

End

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The BHU Future Farming Centre (FFC) is dedicated to the science and extension of permanent and whole-system agricultures and horticultures, such as organic agriculture, ecological agriculture and agroecology, for the benefit of all farmers and growers.

