

MEDIA RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Leading companies join forces on pasture renewal

Four major agricultural service companies have combined in a national education and expert consultancy campaign to increase knowledge on the benefits of successful pasture renewal.

Wrightson, Nufarm, Ballance Agri-Nutrients and Merial have formed a joint-venture called "Pasture Partners™" to develop tailored pasture renewal programs for all farm types, for the long term benefit of New Zealand's farming industry.

Phil Abraham, Wrightson General Manager, Rural Supplies and Marketing says, "Wrightson is proud to be part of the Pasture Partners™ initiative, and encouraging farmers to adopt best practice in pasture renewal."

"There is nothing radical or complicated about the Pasture Partners™ initiative. It is about highlighting the economic benefits of forage cropping and pasture renewal and demonstrating the value in taking a programmed approach to pasture renewal. What is unique about Pasture Partners™ approach is the program was put together by a collection of industry experts to provide comprehensive and compelling advice as to how farmers can profit from implementing long-term pasture renewal practices. "

It is estimated 252,000 ha or 3% of our total national pastures are currently resown annually throughout the country. The Pasture Partners™ members are aiming to increase this by 25% over a 3 to 5 year time frame. This equates to an annual increase of 63,000 ha to be resown annually. From this will come a significant increase in production with the benefits flowing right through the farming sector.

In a report prepared for the Pasture Partners campaign, Rex Webby, AgResearch Scientist, Farm Systems says "on average a well run pasture renewal programme can demonstrate clear economic benefits within two years of implementation." In his study he found average net benefits in the order of \$417 per ha for dairy farms, \$457 per ha for lamb finishing and \$113 per ha for deer finishing all within two years.

The first stage of the education campaign involves a series of free seminars around the country outlining the benefits of the programmed approach to pasture renewal.

The seminars will take place in Hamilton on 21 July, Rotorua on 22 July, Gore on 27 July, Ashburton 29 July and in Feilding on 26 August.

Farmers are invited to attend the seminars to hear from four experts who will outline the steps and pitfalls in undertaking a pasture renewal programme.

A special feature of these seminars will be a presentation from well known economist and investment manager, Dr Gareth Morgan whose topic will be "*Optimising On-farm and Off-farm investment*".

Further information on the seminars is available via advertisements in the rural media or on Wrightson's web site, www.wrightson.co.nz

Ends.

For further information:

Peter Horrocks – Wrightson – Project Manager – 0274 924 966

Murray Lane – Wrightson Seeds Technical Extension Agronomist - 027 201 4597

Paul Addison – Nufarm Technical Specialist – 027 494 9002

Terry Youngman – Ballance – Manager – Channel Integration – 027 494 9826

Dr LAB Wilson – Merial – Technical Product Manager – 021 416 984