

## Plant upgrade good news for NZ market

Crop protection company Nufarm has invested heavily in its New Zealand manufacturing plant in recent months, boosting both productivity and its ability to develop new products.

A major benefit of the upgrade is that Nufarm can now test chemicals with greater accuracy, according to commercial manager Steve Chaney.

This allows the company to apply even more rigorous testing to make sure imported base chemicals are free from contaminants and products will achieve the expected results in the field.

“This places us in a good position to develop new formulations and enhance existing ones,” says Chaney.

The company was founded in 1918 and has been at its present site in Otahuhu since 1922.

The crop protection plant was built over 25 years ago and has had several minor upgrades over the intervening years to keep up with new manufacturing technology. Apart from improved quality control at every step of the manufacturing process, Nufarm’s investment in laboratory equipment boosts its R&D capacity.

Its scientists now have new analytical equipment as well as access to a pilot plant that can prepare larger batches of new formulations.

Scientists do their initial research on a small batch, but then have to mix progressively larger batches, typically of 10, 100 and 1000 litres, to test if the formulation remains stable.

Once the product is manufactured, a series of validation batches have to pass scrutiny before the product can be released to market.

“You need to do a lot of chemistry, and then a statistical analysis of the chemistry,” says Chaney.

“Where 20 years ago, analysis to one part per million was the standard, we now analyse chemicals for components as small as one part per billion or even one per trillion.”

He says the NZ plant plays a leading role in Nufarm’s global product development programme.

Many Nufarm products are developed and initially manufactured in NZ.

Currently the plant is Nufarm’s primary source of horticulture chemicals in Australasia, while some of its products are also exported to the Pacific Islands and the USA.

All the Roundup Transorb and other Nufarm glyphosates used in NZ are manufactured here.

This gives Nufarm great flexibility to respond quickly to market demand and also to adapt the way the products are packaged to suit local conditions.

“For our New Zealand customers, the improved plant brings even greater guarantees of product purity and efficacy, plus the prospect of new and improved formulations in future,” says Chaney.



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