



# ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2012

CLUTHA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD  
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## Chairman's Annual Report

How many times have we heard, 'the times are changing'?

Whether we like it or not, it is reality and we must learn to move with it and adjust, still holding to our principles and focus as best we can. Otherwise the world will simply pass us by leaving us bitter and twisted and ageing.



*Dave supporting the probiotics calf trial in September.*

The Agricultural Development Board is no exception to this evolution of change and indeed we are in the midst of it as we are under restructure, partly from within, but primarily from the District Council. Since the year 2000 the Ag. Board has had a contract with the District Council through the District Development Board to deliver on particular goals. In recent years this has provided us with around 40% of our funding, from which we have been able to leverage the other 60% from other sources. The Council have indicated that the current contract which ends in June 2013 will not be renewed.

This will obviously mean major changes to the CADB and also Enterprise Clutha, who work alongside us in Development House. However, the CADB have two representatives in myself and Dick Sharpin sitting on a new trust Establishment Committee that has been created to mould a way to the future.

Among many other things, the CADB's future depends on the continued support of its members and also its ability to introduce new members. The better our membership the better our chances of leveraging funds in order to do the types of things in this newsletter. The CADB is non-political, so should be non-offensive to any prospective member. For a subscription of \$30 anyone can join and thus become more aware and connected with your community.

That aside, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the CADB's exceptional executive, its members and above all its staff, Malcolm Deverson and Graeme Pringle for their perseverance, attendance, knowledge, advice, support and camaraderie during a difficult year.

Myself, executive members and staff are always happy to receive calls, comments, queries and suggestions from anyone. After all we serve on the board voluntarily and we are keen to serve you for the well being of our community.

Almost our whole community is either directly or indirectly involved or makes their living on the back of primary industry, so that said, I wish you all well looking forward.

Dave Inder

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 10 April 2012

South Otago Town & Country Club, Balclutha

### 6.00 pm Annual General Meeting

#### A review of the 2011 year

Election of the Executive – note two members are to retire by rotation and are standing again; there are two other available places to fill; nominations for the Executive are to be in the hands of the secretary before the meeting; please contact the Projects Manager for a nomination form.

### 6.45 pm Guest Speaker

#### Professor Charles (Charley) Lamb, new C.E.O. of Telford, a Division of Lincoln University

Prof Lamb has worked in freezing works and restaurants and flown C130s and Strikemasters for the air force. He studied at the University of Canterbury and has spent 30 years lecturing at Lincoln University, specialising in statistical economics, whilst also running a market research company. He was the inaugural winner of Lincoln's Special Achievement Award for Excellence in Teaching and has publications and research in the fields of motorcycle related research, market structure analysis, consumer demand for organic food and wine consumption behaviour, amongst others. He has a passion for aviation and motorbikes.

### 7.45 pm Dinner (optional and own cost)

*Please RSVP to all events above to help with our arrangements to:*

**Malcolm Deverson (Projects Manager)**

Ph. 03 418 3188

Fax. 03 418 4201

Email. cadb@ihug.co.nz

## Executive to April 2012

Dave Inder, dairy farmer, forestry interests, Pareta

Ronald Alderton, sheep & beef farmer, Waitahuna, Otago winner Ballance Farm Environment awards 2010

Grant Bradfield, organic sheep & beef farmer, Owaka valley

Denis Greer, sheep & beef farmer, Lovells Flat

Murray Harris, Land & Forest Consulting, Dunedin, tutor Telford

Dick Sharpin, stock agent, dairy farming interests, Clydevale

John Whiteside, sheep & cropping farmer, Waiwera South

Andre Prassinios, businessman, interest in probiotics & biological farming, links to Lincoln University (Co-opted)

Jill Borland, Clutha District Development Board Manager (Co-opted)



*The vintage machinery was popular on the Milton 4Ms trip in May.*

# Project Manager's Report

1 January – 31 December 2011

It has been a difficult financial year for the Board but we believe we have provided some interesting events and opportunities for the farming community, alongside our considerations and planning around some key farming issues for the Clutha District. We appreciate the support given by the Clutha District Council this year under our current contract which runs until June 2013. We have been told that these financial arrangements will end at this time. A new structure is envisaged to deliver economic development goals for our council. It is the current Ag. Board intention to continue 'business as usual' and uncover ways to make it possible to continue providing the activities, such as those outlined here, that has made us unique as a farming district in New Zealand.



Rianda Ross and Malcolm Deverson hunt for green thistle beetles on the Ross's Caberfeidh property.

## Thistle beetle hunting by the Californian thistle Action Group

After a barren application run of project applications in 2010, it was pleasing to be successful with our February 2011 application to the MAF Sustainable Farming Fund - L11-172 "Green thistle beetle monitoring to spread the biological attack on Californian thistles." This project aims to investigate the relative success of our 46 CalTAG releases of the green thistle beetle (*Cassida rubiginosa*) in SFF 05/010 (2005-09).

Late in 2011 we have begun to hunt down our beetles, identify the best nursery sites and make plans to spread the beetles out from these sites. The project is co-funded by the FITT fund of Beef + Lamb New Zealand and we also appreciate the support of our host farmers who are looking after these beetle nurseries.

The CalTAG (Chairperson Rianda Ross) will have a meeting around midyear to plan the detail of Year Two project events and you are welcome to join us. You are also welcome to get in touch to put your name on our 'Information Group' (to get news of our progress).



www.maf.govt.nz/sff

## Probiotics to improve animal health and economics at calving

In the spring of 2011 we teamed up with a Clutha-based business and Telford Farms to run a calf trial to take an initial look at the value of using a probiotic product in dairy calf rearing operations.

We trialled the use of a generic, multi-strain probiotic in the milk for two groups of 20 calves, with two control groups also of 20 calves each. The aim was to see if the probiotic added value to the weight gain of new-born calves and as an indicative trial it served its purpose brilliantly. This trial hinted both at a positive feed-conversion advantage and an animal well-being advantage that are worth exploring on a larger scale.

There is interest from top New Zealand scientists to pursue this opportunity and we also began an application for the February 2012 round of MAF SFF for an under \$25k project to replicate the trial on two dairy farms to see if ours was a 'real' result. We are looking to DairyNZ for support in this.



Calf rearer Kim Phillips and Malcolm Deverson weighing calves at Telford Farms.

## Other Sustainable Farming Fund applications

Two other applications to MAF Sustainable Farming Fund were prepared for October 2011:

- We re-jigged our October 2010 case to look at recent innovations to manage grass grub, porina, argentine stem weevil and clover root weevil alongside AgResearch and Ballance Agri-Nutrients. These pasture raiders cause seasonal problems for most farmers, sometimes causing huge economic losses.

This comprehensive \$363 000 project was considered too rich for the fund to support. We were advised to submit a smaller proposal on grass grub education and extension in the February 2012 round and this has been done. We will need the support of farmers who have significant grass grub issues if we are successful – we will know in April.

- We also worked in with Jim Gibbs at Lincoln University on a joint-venture

SFF application "Parasite Control in Dairy Replacement Heifers in Otago and Southland" (\$181 000) which was declined.



## Work alongside Beef + Lamb New Zealand

The two large farming extension organisations, Beef + Lamb New Zealand and DairyNZ, control most of the money that gets spent on education and technology transfer and it has been a constant challenge for the Board to get money spent here in Clutha on grassroots farmers' ideas. So it was with great pleasure that we were able to begin to work closely with Beef + Lamb New Zealand when selected from seven applicants to facilitate what is now the 'Farming for Profit' programme in East & North Otago.

We also had an additional contract for Entry-Exit Farming seminars in Oamaru and Timaru (Succession planning) and these are likely to be brought into the Clutha district in the future. It has been a much-needed professional boost for Graeme to get his teeth into some core farming issues, such as selling stores, farm leasing arrangements, stock monitoring systems, summer crop options, and lucerne pastures. This contact with B+LNZ has been and will be invaluable to the Board.

We did apply for the South Otago Monitor farm facilitator's position in September but were not successful. We brought Tom Fraser's "Feedsmart" workshop, in association with Beef + Lamb New Zealand to the maximum 15 participants in Balclutha in May.



B+LNZ field day at Brendon & Paula Cross's 'Roselle' property where we discussed stock monitoring and farm lease arrangements in glorious surroundings.

## Research and development opportunities

Our major research and development thrust in 2011 revolved around our links with Lincoln University and a Clutha-based business to assess the effectiveness



of probiotic organisms inside various aspects of farming systems. It is a huge and fledgling field which we believe may provide great benefits for the Board and Clutha farmers. The Board wishes to make all this 'open-source' research with all trials and results, positive and negative, disclosed.

It is part of our projects' strategy to work in the fields that take a lot of farmers' on farm expenses – animal health and fertilizers have been identified. Work is in the early stages looking at ways to assess and clarify fertilizer products and their claims. This may be a 'can of worms' type of issue but we have begun to see if we can get any traction within the industry.

Funding in 2011 (as in 2010) has been extraordinarily difficult to achieve. The priorities that we identify and pursue for the Clutha district are not necessarily the same as those of the funders and major industry bodies. Your staff has to run a line between supporting the needs of our district and getting projects through that the funders will support – it's not a comfortable position but it's the one we are in! At least we are regularly told that we are an ideal conduit organisation to deliver on-farm action and change, sitting as we do between the research and academic institutions and farmers in the field with the skills and opportunity to put ideas into practice. So we are a strong and unique organisation in that respect.

Watch this space for ways to support us in research and development in 2012.

## Clutha District Farming Statistics

Our first year Clutha Agricultural Statistics Report (May 2010 and available at

<http://www.cluthadc.govt.nz/AgriculturalReport.pdf>)

was followed up in early 2011 with a further collection of data. A update was completed in June 2011 and has been available on request. We did not make a wide-spread public release of the document. There are some inconsistencies in the data from different sources. For instance, we do not have similar data across groups for things as apparently simple as the number of dairy farms and the conversions underway. We will get to the bottom of the inconsistencies and produce a next version in May 2012.

## Food & Fibre Hemp options

We harvested a crop of Food & Fibre Hemp in the Catlins in April 2011. This was largely unsuccessful on a poor piece of ground and with unseasonal conditions in February & March. So after two years of growing the Catlins Hemp Group (Chair – Grant Bradfield, Owaka) agreed on a pause.

There are two reasons: there is a

practical need to gain more certainty over harvesting, drying and marketing the crop. Also, and of huge importance, there is a case before Food Standards Australia New Zealand which may be a game-changer for this crop and its opportunities. Canada's experience is that there is lots of money to be made from this crop. The authority's own investigation was supportive of the case before them to allow low-thc hemp seeds and oils in foodstuffs. Public submissions were called for on the application for early in 2012 and it is currently with the politicians to decide on. The assessment and consultation reports are at

<http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/foodstandards/applications/application1039lowt4708.cfm>

In supporting local expertise and 'keeping in the game,' we believe the Ag. Board has positioned itself well to take advantage of any opportunities that arise here. A positive result on the FSNZ application would make our experience with the crop very valuable.



Graeme Pringle (centre) at the irrigation field day he facilitated in North Otago in October. Farm owner Ross Cleveland is at right.

## Health and Safety on farm

After seven years working with the FarmSafe brand as Otago Workshops' Co-ordinators, we called a halt to our relationship in October. We have found it increasingly difficult to involve farmers within the new funding arrangements.

Of course a high level of uptake of FarmSafe workshops in Clutha & Otago generally since 2004 has been making it difficult to get course numbers together. From 2004-2010 CADB has run approx. 415 workshops involving approx. 3700 Otago farmers (a farmer doing three workshops counts as three here). 180 of these workshops were in the Clutha District; 30% were for the required Chemical Handlers Certificate, 37% were Awareness & Plans workshops, and 33% were on a variety of two days of skills training (ATVs, Chainsaws & Tractors mostly).

On-farm health & safety will remain a priority for the Board. New national practices appear to mean that government money is spent on regulation and DOL enforcement rather than education. We are keen to help on the education side and are reviewing how to deliver the training that farmers need.



Alliance Group livestock manager Murray Behrent gave farmers a practical insight into lamb quality on the Lowery farm at the Rabobank, Shand Thomson, Milburn Lime sponsored event in May.

## Milton Mine, Mutton, Minds and Mill Tour

The Clutha Sheep Council instigated a bus trip around some innovative businesses in the wider Milton area in May. Approx. 60 farmers and farming professionals were hosted at the Milburn Lime works by Roger Mahan who showed off his operation and his vintage farm machinery. At Bruce Lowery's we looked at top lamb performance and Rick Cameron explained something of his philosophies and on-going farm experiments. We also went through the Qualityarns factory in Milton. This looked an innovative and positive niche business and it was very disappointing to hear of its closure later in the year.

This trip, the fourth annual such outing focussing on the strengths of a particular district in Clutha, was made possible with support from Milburn Lime Ltd, Rabobank, Shand Thomson and Beef + Lamb New Zealand. While another such trip is being planned for 2012, any further Clutha Sheep Council activity is dependent on some 'new blood' coming forward to give the group renewed energy and ideas. What is the next 'step change' that we could work on locally to take the sheep industry forward, as the Ag. Board has done in the past with genetics and benchmarking programmes?

## Other networking opportunities

In the reporting period the Ag Board has also continued or begun associations with:

- DairyNZ and the Otago Regional Council through the Dairy Leaders' Team meetings.
- Ballance Farm Environment Awards Otago organising committee.
- MAF Sustainable Farming Fund through our advisor Claire Scott in Christchurch – visit here & taken to a recent water filtration & wetland project in January.
- A local Biological Farming discussion group – are some open science projects possible here to test ideas and products that may be of value to all farmers?
- Federated Farmers, with a meeting to discuss possible working links, in June.
- Careers New Zealand.
- Silver Fern Farms, who ran an Ecoli test with us on our trial calves.
- Local deer farmers at an August

meeting to discuss anecdotal evidence of probiotics impact on cases of ill-thrift – more needs to be done here.

There has also been Clutha Agricultural Development Board attendance at the following events:

- The new Southern Dairy Expo at Clydevale in March.
- Ballance Farm Environment Awards Otago dinner & awards night in April.
- Trade and Enterprise meeting on Rugby World Cup's Otago Showcase events.
- DairyNZ & AgResearch "Advances in extension and innovation" seminar at Lincoln in April.
- ORC Pomahaka River minimum flow meetings in Clinton.
- PGGWrightson seminar "Leading Thinking in Agriculture" in Balclutha in May.
- Clutha Careers' Expo in May
- MAF Farm Monitoring discussions in June.
- Hydro on the Clutha River Chamber of commerce discussion in June.
- A Mark Bader (USA) seminar on biological farming in Gore in June.
- B+LNZ Farmer Council Field Day, Woodlands and Invercargill in June.
- ORC Owaka River catchment meeting at Hartvigsen's in June.
- "Innovation at Invermay" in July
- AgITO Otago Regional Committee meetings
- ORC Water Forum meetings in Balclutha and Owaka
- Monitor Farm days in South Otago and Eastern Southland



'Windows' in thistle leaves indicating thistle beetle feeding. We'd be keen to hear from farmers who see this in their thistles.

## The 'Three Coats' show

Malcolm visited seven Clutha schools in Terms three and four and talked to approx. 185 Year 7&8 students about agricultural careers as part of Enterprise Clutha's School Careers' programme. The importance of this work in sowing seeds in young minds to consider the opportunities in New Zealand foremost industry cannot be over-estimated. We also talked to the Diploma class at Telford in relation to farm employment.

## Rural, especially dairying employment situation

The Board called a 'round table discussion' meeting on the vital topic of rural employment in December which was well supported by agricultural industry groups, youth employment agencies and farmers. Two goals came from the meeting:

It was clear that there was a need to encourage and promote quality employment relationships. The variety of skills required, the tiring physical work, and the financial pressures on many agricultural businesses are all not making it easy to attract and retain staff, especially quality staff. The Ag. Board believes that there is an opportunity here for the Clutha district to build on our local Clydevale Clinton Quality Employers experience and make us a 'safe employment' area. There will be more on this in 2012. Are you with us on this?

The second goal was to try to maximise employment opportunities in the district. The Mayor is working with a Taskforce group to get all our under 25s into work and this would have economic and social advantages for us all. All the community depends on the arresting of our population decline – to the unemployment black hole or to other places. If this is to happen, our backbone primary industries will have to come up with many of the jobs. Can we manage farmer's needs for a good employee say one day a week, and to build whole jobs in some way?

The report on the December discussions is available to farmers who are keen to understand the issues and may have ideas for us to make progress.

## Development House

We enjoy the working relationship we have with Enterprise Clutha, the Community Co-ordinator and the Maze teenage programmes and are pleased to be the focal point that we are for many agencies and groups. There is a huge value to Balclutha especially of such a 'home base.'

The Board continues to receive enquiries on all manner of 'agricultural' topics, e.g. the Emissions Trading Scheme, farm photography, health & safety training options, DDT, CF2000 figures, Kellogg award, Beef & soil compaction, the ODPG group, bees business, lambing hoggets, axe course, pig farming, dairy language tutoring, to purchase hemp seed, to request a new rabbit board, succession planning, ragwort beetles, rosehip production, hay sugar levels. . .

## Membership of the Board

We have an extraordinarily loyal membership which stands at 196 (198 in 2010, 185 in 2009, 165 in 2008). This is nearly 20% of Clutha farmers and is a remarkable percentage for a voluntary community group. How many farmers would pay B+LNZ and DairyNZ levies if they were sent an invoice once a year? These major players work hard to provide value for your dollars. We think we do just as well for the dollars we ask for and receive. We thank all our members for your continued and much valued support.

As always we would be interested in members' views on any ways to enhance your membership. We really would like you to give us your email address (or a fax number) so that we can involve you in our communications about events and issues.

## Thanks

Graeme and I are grateful for the support of Chairman Dave who works tirelessly on the Board's behalf and the Executive who give their experience and support in our efforts. We think that we are a good team. Please get in touch with Dave or any of us if you think you could add something at Executive level. Thank you to other members too who have taken the time to ask, give feedback and attend our activities. Graeme and I enjoy working on behalf of you all.

Malcolm Deverson

Projects Manager

## CADB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Would you like to:

- Support an organization that adds capability to the agricultural community of the Clutha District
- Support grassroots training, demonstrations and pride in our rural communities
- Support the building of awareness in young people of the importance of agriculture to New Zealand

Please complete and return this form with your payment to Box 149, Balclutha and become a supporter.

Name:

Phone:

Address:

Email:

Single/partnership membership \$30 inclusive of GST  
Corporate Membership \$60 inclusive of GST

