



Dr. Greg Bryan, AgResearch.

GM ryegrass ticks all the boxes

A ROCKET-FUEL rye-grass seen as a game-changer for dairying will front the AgResearch site at Fieldays.

The genetically modified high metabolisable

energy (HME) ryegrass is seen by AgResearch scientists in a laboratory to grow 50% faster, yield more energy and nutrition for stock, better resist drought and reduce methane from animal runms by 15-23%.

Field trials began recently in the US, with the aim of showing these results can be achieved also on pasture.

The project is funded by DairyNZ and the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) Endeavour Fund.

"This enhanced ryegrass could make a huge difference to farms' production and profitability, and sustainability in the longer term," says AgResearch principal scientist Dr Greg Bryan.

"We are now working

with a university in the US Midwest to grow the ryegrass in the field and test its benefits, and by year four we will be cutting it to feed to animals to test greenhouse gas emissions and do other measurements.

"Safety of the ryegrass for animal consumption - and humans who consume products from those animals - is also central."

Farming more sustainably and preserving the environment can result from this new pasture, Bryan says.

The AgResearch Fieldays site will also show its work in the dairy sheep industry - notably the human health benefits of sheep milk, and how dairy sheep productivity

can be improved.

Funding the science is a \$6m grant from the MBIE.

NZ has 30,000 sheep for milking by 16 different producers.

"Sheep milk might still seem a novelty to many in NZ, but it's qualities are recognised worldwide and it is a sought-after commodity that can grow here," says AgResearch scientist Linda Samuels.

"Sheep milk can offer plenty of benefits for human digestion and general health. At Fieldays we will let people have a taste for themselves."

AgResearch's Fieldays stand will also display meat sensor technology that looks at texture, fat levels, succulence and flavour.

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Tougher milk cooling rules are coming

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MILKING PLANT company DeLaval New Zealand is urging farmers to think soon about milk chiller performance as new milk cooling regulations loom into sight.

By June 2018 all farmers must comply with new requirements to chill milk to 60C within six hours of starting milking or two hours of finishing.

The new rules, brought in by the Ministry for Primary Industries, are designed to align NZ standards with those of its international trading partners.

Despite a long lead-in time to the new regulations, and reasonable awareness among farmers, some appear reluctant to get their gear in order. As the rules deadline approaches, the

risk rises of milk not being up to standard and therefore it won't be picked up by the tanker, says Justin Thompson, the company's sales director for Oceania.

"There are still farms that are non-compliant despite the new rules being just a season away. Our company has a lead time of a few months to supply and installation our chillers, so the time to make a decision really is now."

It costs money to upgrade, but DeLaval says the upside can be significant efficiency gains and energy savings.

The payback time on a DeLaval compact glycol chiller is reckoned about two and a half years for an average farm, and annual savings can total \$9500 if the farm is 'bundling' products smartly.



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