



Partnership to reduce emissions

A feed additive for cattle that has been shown in trials to significantly reduce methane emissions is now being developed specifically for New Zealand's pasture-based systems in a joint effort with AgResearch scientists and the dairy industry.

Royal DSM, a Netherlands-based global health and nutrition company, has developed a product called Bovaer® – otherwise known as 3-NOP – and a trial of one formulation for pasture-based systems to date has demonstrated a methane reduction of more than 30% for up to six hours after the additive is fed to cattle.

The product is designed to suppress the enzyme that triggers methane production in a cow's rumen, and is also aimed at reducing emissions from other ruminants such as sheep and deer.

The product offers a potential tool to help farmers and nations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and combat climate change.

In NZ, DSM has been working with

Fonterra and Crown Research Institute AgResearch on how best to deliver the additive to dairy cattle in pasture-fed systems as opposed to the farming systems typically operated in Europe.

"We've been working with DSM and Fonterra over the past five years looking into the development of a pasture-based model for Bovaer, investigating a number of formulations and feeding models," AgResearch principal research scientist Dr Peter Janssen says.

"Otago University has also been involved. We are learning more and further trials are being generated as we move towards a formulation suitable for New Zealand farming systems, and we expect DSM will provide updates along the way."

Fonterra has a long-standing working relationship with DSM, but says its new collaboration is based around the Bovaer product and whether it can achieve similar methane reductions in NZ's pasture-fed cattle.

Fonterra group director for farm source Richard Allen says that finding a solution

to the methane challenge requires more than just the hard graft farmers are putting in.

"We need to find a breakthrough in reducing emissions from cows and Bovaer could provide exactly that. This work with DSM is an exciting opportunity for the co-op."

Fonterra chief science and technology officer Professor Jeremy Hill says Fonterra is working closely with DSM NZ to ensure that any innovation is well-tested and can easily be distributed and used by its farmers.

DSM Nutritional Products global programme head Mark van Nieuwland says the alignment with Fonterra means DSM has a partner to potentially commercialise Bovaer in NZ and globally. He says NZ and Australia are priority markets for product development and gaining regulatory approvals, alongside Europe.

Bovaer has been featured by the World Resources Institute as one of the 10 global breakthrough technologies that could help to feed the world sustainably.

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