

NZ GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION

Fuelled by Science, Tempered by Experience

GRASSLAND NEWS

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From the President

David Stevens

Another great conference at Masterton was a testament to the continued relevance of the NZGA to the farming, agribusiness and science communities. A big thank you to the local organising committee under the chairmanship of John Dalziel. The workshop session that Jeff Morton organised provided a great opportunity for conference-goers to get into deeper discussion with presenters and local farmers on implementing new technologies. The field day farmers demonstrated the passion and innovation of the region and were quite inspiring.

Another thank you to Emily and Anders Crofoot for the pre-conference trip to Castlepoint Station. It was well received by attendees and provided an insight to the types of on-farm research that Emily and Anders have sponsored and participated in to help the region understand the impacts of new pastures and fertiliser regimes on hill country farming.

A welcome to our new vice president, Graham Kerr. Graham has been on the Executive for 7 years and is a great promoter of the NZGA. Aaron Meikle, who was seconded to the Executive last year, has been duly elected as a full time Executive member, and Warren King and Laurie Copland were re-elected for new 3 year terms. We are pleased to have Errol Thom back to replace David Swain as editor. He was also awarded Life membership to the Association.

Next up is the Hill Country Symposium. The planning for this is well underway. Beef + Lamb NZ is on board as the major sponsor, and has made a major commitment to bring farmers from around the country to engage in this important future-focussed event. The programme is nearly finalised and has a wide array of topics, and a talented mix of science and experience. Registrations will be limited so look out for the opening of registrations in late January. Herstatt Ullrich and his team are well underway for the annual conference in Timaru next November. The call for papers is out and the themes chosen this year will be relevant and thought-provoking.

For those of you that were unaware, my partner Marie, is the Executive Officer. There have been a range of processes that have been in place over the past 7 years that will continue to ensure that my influence on the finances and management of the NZGA affairs are appropriately handled. For example, I am prevented from taking a role on our audit committee, and the vice president and one other executive member are taking my place in dealings with the Executive Officer contracting and review processes. I am looking forward to a full and productive 85th year of the NZGA.

Merry Christmas.

EO Update

NZGA Membership

Welcome to any new members who have joined recently. With a very successful 2015 Conference in Masterton now over it is time to catch up on the NZGA memberships and other office duties.

The 2015 Journal has been posted out to all members - if you haven't received yours it is likely to be a wrong address in our system or an oversight when posting out over 700 books. Please let us know change of address or email details prior to shifting if possible.

ResearchGate - Authors are welcome to upload their NZGA papers to this platform for wider dissemination. If you are not already a user of ResearchGate it is worth having a look at it.

Hill Country Symposium - Tuesday 12 - Wednesday 13 April, Millennium Hotel, Rotorua.

Keep an eye on the newsletters in the new year for notification of the opening of registrations in late January. We will put a draft programme on the website once its is nearer its final form.

The organisers are planning some interactive sessions as well as the more traditional paper presentation format. Many of the papers will be in the short thumbnail form to allow as much time as possible for discussion.



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Hill Country Symposium 2016

The hill country is fast becoming the key finishing platform for the sheep and beef industries as flat land is lost to other enterprises, but over the past 25 years, however, there has been dwindling support for this farming sector.

The Hill Country Symposium (HCS) is a joint effort by the NZ Grassland Association (NZGA), the NZ Society of Animal Production (NZSAP) and the NZ Grassland Trust (NZGT), which will bring together outstanding farmers, industry leaders, scientists, agribusiness and others, to review existing knowledge; learn from leading farmers and practitioners, and set direction for the future of this land. The HCS seeks to raise the profile of New Zealand's iconic hill country and set the direction for changes that are required to ensure profitable and resilient farming continues.

The Symposium is structured around having keynote presenters providing insight into the past, present and future of hill country, from people and farming systems to soils, plants and animals.

The response for papers has given the Local Organising

committee a bit of a headache as so many authors wanted to provide information for the Symposium. However, we will fit them in and have plenty of time for discussion.

The development of discussion will be a facilitated process to enable all participants to have an input at the end of every session, and again on the final day when we will be formulating up ideas to take into the future. These ideas will help shape future investigations to meet the needs of hill country farming and the communities it supports. The discussion will enable Beef + Lamb NZ, our major sponsor, and other agencies such as MPI and regional councils, to assess the needs and direction that hill country farming may take.

We will be documenting the discussions and outcomes from the Symposium, so that record is provided as a resource for potential direction. This is going to be an exciting opportunity to contribute to thinking about the future of our hill country. We are looking forward to hosting you in Rotorua, 12th and 13th April.

See you there!



China Grassland Association visit

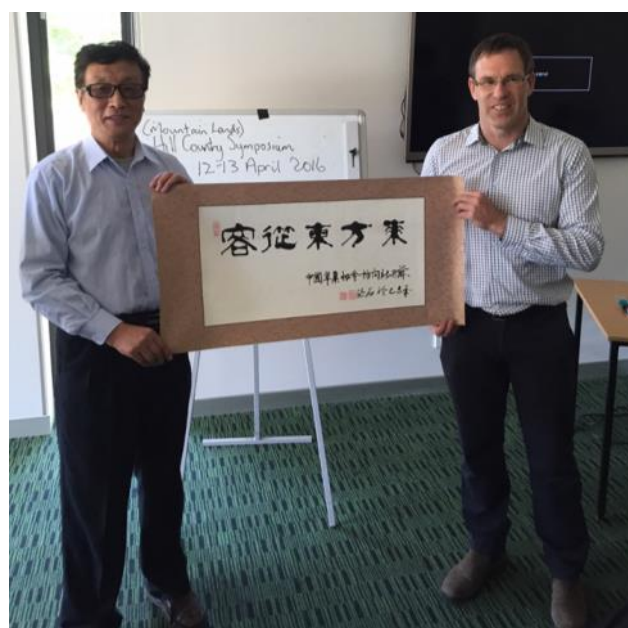
David Stevens

The China Grassland Association is relatively young, being formed in 2010. A recent Chinese delegation to New Zealand visited under the umbrella of the China Grassland Association and Alan Stewart (past-president) and myself were able to visit with them, courtesy of PGG Wrightson contacts.

The China Grassland Association has the role of fostering relationships and promotion of business related to forages and forage harvesting both within China and internationally. They hold a Grassland conference and an Alfalfa conference in alternating years and are keen to foster a closer relationship with other Grassland Associations around the world.

Alan and I were able to describe the farming systems of New Zealand and our role in helping foster the interaction between science and practice. The China Association is strongly focussed on harvesting forages, rather than grazing forages, so it required a quick introduction to matching supply and demand of grazing animals to enable further discussion.

We will be maintaining contact with the delegation when they return to China and hopefully foster a growing relationship into the future.



Caption: Two presidents: China and New Zealand Grassland Associations. The banner describes their home region in China, that it marks their tour of New Zealand and Australia, and is signed by the China Grassland Association President.

Call for papers - Timaru 2016

Abstracts are due to the Editor, Errol Thom, by **Friday 12 February (email: eandlthom@gmail.com)**.

The Conference will be returning to Caroline Bay from Wednesday 2 Nov to Friday 4 Nov.

The theme is **'Land of diversity and opportunity'**. The region has seen plenty of change since NZGA was last here in 1984, not the least of which is the growth in irrigation and dairying. Reading through [the papers presented](#) at the conference shows signs of the changes that were to come.

Some of the topics presented included aphid resistant lucerne, leaching of nitrate from sheep grazed pastures, red clover performance, hill country management including chemical topping, dairying with border dykes and irrigation efficiency.

The topics that the Local organising committee have challenged the research and farming community with for

2016 include:

1. Forages to optimise water use
2. Techniques to protect water and the environment
3. Smarter nutrient use
4. Building resilient farming systems
5. Innovative technology #farminginthecloud
6. Improving feed conversion efficiency
7. Biosecurity: weeds, pests and politicians
8. Underground science: soils to roots
9. Hot topics, cool solutions - the latest grassland science

The abstract submission form can be downloaded from the NZGA website [here](#).

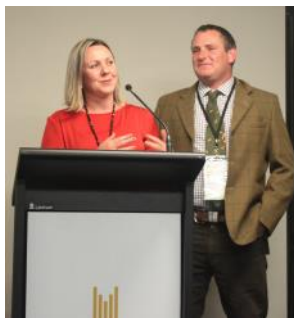
NZ Grassland Trust Winners

The awards this year went to the following recipients

Farmer Awards



Holmes and Miles Warren



Matt and Lynley Wyeth

Regional Award



Gavin Sheath with Chris Garland and Alec Mackay

Ray Brougham Trophy



The regional award was given to Chris Garland, Baker and Associates, Masterton, in recognition of his commitment and contribution to extension and consultancy services in the Southern North Island region.

The Ray Brougham trophy went to Dr Alec Mackay for his contribution to soil science and the research and development of hill farming systems.

NZGA Life members

This year we had a great opportunity to gather together the Life Members of the Association who were in attendance at Masterton.

From left to right they are Maurice Yorke, Jeff Morton, Gavin Sheath, Errol Thom, Derek Woodfield and Dick Lucas. To prove they are still very active members this year Jeff organised the workshops at the conference, Errol has taken on the role of editor for both the Hill Country Symposium and next years Journal, Gavin chairs NZ Grassland Trust and Dick gave a paper on sub clover. And of course they were all keen participants at the conference.

Currently the NZGA are compiling the list of all current and past Life Members for the Journal.

