

SPRING 2010

Seasons



meridian

PRICE CERTAINTY WITH A FIXED
ENERGY PLAN

SPRAY IRRIGATION
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

WAIMATE STRAWBERRY FARE

REWARDING YOU THIS SEASON





Spray irrigation performance evaluation

A yearly performance evaluation of your irrigation system could save you money and save on your water allocation.

A simple five-step guide has been produced to help farmers check the performance of their irrigation systems. It covers the same basic principles that many irrigation evaluation professionals use, and helps to record the performance values of a system. These can then be compared with its design to see if it's doing what it should.

The guide recommends doing a yearly evaluation to ensure your system is performing at its best.

Checking your irrigation system will also help you to identify areas for improvement, to potentially leading to better efficiency, more production and more profit. Simple activities like adjusting pump pressures, fixing leaking connections and unblocking nozzles can potentially save you thousands of dollars, particularly where water is being pumped up from deep below the surface.

A copy of the free guide, funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Sustainable Farming Fund, DairyNZ, Meridian, PGGW and EECA is available by emailing seasons@meridianenergy.co.nz, or you can call our Agribusiness Team on **0800 496 777** to have one of the team come out and perform the evaluation with you.

Meridian helps to keep rural homes warm

The ENERGYWISE™ funded Warm Up New Zealand: Heat Smart programme is now being brought to the rural sector, with the support of Meridian.

It's a well known fact that warm, dry homes go a long way to making happy, healthy families.

QUICK INSULATION FACTS:

- A fully insulated house uses about half the heating of a non-insulated house.
- Insulation keeps you warm and reduces moisture, mould and bacteria.
- Insulation should be at least 120mm thick. If yours isn't, you may be able to apply for a top-up under the programme.

GreenStuf® (Autex) insulation products are made from 100% polyester fibre. With no chemical additives these products are environmentally friendly, non-toxic and non-allergenic. A high percentage of the polyester fibre is made from recycled PET plastic and the products are recyclable at the end of their lives. They are exceptionally durable and won't slump, settle or disintegrate over time and are backed with a 50-year durability warranty.

ENERGYWISE™ can fund up to \$1,300 including GST towards the cost of adequate insulation when installed by an accredited installer. If you are a Farmlands shareholder, contact your local Farmlands store to discuss your free home appraisal, or alternatively visit warmruralnz.co.nz or phone **0800 86 86 88**.

Price Certainty

At Meridian, we have a number of electricity pricing plans to meet your needs. One of them is our Fixed Energy Plan, which allows you to fix the energy charges for your electricity supply for an agreed term.

What is a Fixed Energy Plan?

A Fixed Energy Plan provides you with some price certainty for the electricity you use. It allows you to lock in your energy charges for the agreed term so you will be exempt from any energy price increases during that period.

What is included in my Fixed Energy rate?

The rate you pay for your electricity supply can be made up of several components, including Meridian's charges for the energy you use, distribution/lines company charges and applicable government or regulatory charges. It is Meridian's energy charges that are locked in for the agreed term when you sign up to a Fixed Energy Plan. You will still be subject to any changes in the distribution/lines company charges and government or regulatory charges.

How does this plan differ from a Fixed Rate Plan?

The Fixed Rate Plan locks in all of the costs associated with the supply of electricity to you, not just the energy component. Because of this the Fixed Energy Plan is usually priced more competitively than the Fixed Rate Plan.



Is it possible for my Fixed Energy rates to change throughout the duration of the plan?

The rate you are billed may be adjusted to reflect any changes in distribution/lines company charges or any other government or regulatory charges incurred by Meridian for your supply of electricity. Meridian's energy charge component will not change during your contract.

How will I know if any of my charges are going to change?

Meridian will communicate with you in writing at least 30 days in advance about any change in those rates that are not locked in.

What is the duration of a Fixed Energy Plan?

Usually two or three years. Please contact us on 0800 496 777 for details of our current offers.

Are there any fees involved?

There are no fees for signing up or switching to a Fixed Energy Plan, although exit fees may apply.

Can I still receive a prompt payment discount with a Fixed Energy Plan?

Yes – if you pay your bill in full and by the due date.

What happens when my Fixed Energy Plan comes to an end?

Meridian will communicate the available options to you before your term ends.

How do I sign up?

To find out if the Fixed Energy Plan is available in your area, call us on 0800 496 777 between 7.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays.

WAIMATE STRAWBERRY FARE

Meridian helps celebrate annual harvest



Strawberries have been grown in the Waimate (South Canterbury) area since 1880. They are an important part of the local economy, and the town takes pride in annually celebrating the luscious little red berry.

Today 'The Fare' is hailed as the largest annual event in Waimate, with visitor numbers swelling to around 14,000. On the day, strawberries and ice cream sell by the hundreds and punnets by the thousands. Stallholders from the local area

and around the country offer an amazing array of items, from arts and crafts to clothing, jewellery, plants and gardening accessories.

Visitors can enjoy tasty snacks with an international flavour, including Indian, Swiss, Turkish, French and Chinese; and sample fine wines, cheeses and many other culinary delights. Local volunteers help with car parking, setting up and cleaning up. The Fare raises funds for school and community projects.

Meridian supports this event as a way of giving back to communities linked to the Waitaki Valley and our South Island hydro generation.

This year's Waimate Strawberry Fare is on **Saturday 11 December 2010**, at Seddon Square and Bolland Park, Waimate, from 10.30am.

Kids prize giveaway

*Kids show what's great about
life in rural New Zealand*



You may have seen the competition in the winter issue of *Seasons* asking

kids to send in photos showing what they love about rural life. Check out our top three photos. *Well done kids, your solar kits are on the way to you!*

Electricity Commission change

From 1 November 2010 the Electricity Commission will be replaced by the new Independent Crown Entity called the Electricity Authority.

The objective of the Electricity Authority will be to promote competition, reliable

supply and the efficient operation of the electricity market for the long-term benefit of consumers.

If you have any questions about the Electricity Commission and its activities, please visit www.electricitycommission.govt.nz.



Rewarding you this season

All rural Meridian customers are automatically entered into our quarterly prize draw, so that means you could be our next winner.

You get one entry for each month you've been a Meridian customer – the longer you stay with Meridian, the more chances you get to win.

This season, you can win one of 20 powerboards with a built-in power meter that measures your appliances' energy use and calculates their running costs.

Prizes will be drawn on **1 December 2010**.

Full details and terms and conditions are on our website meridianenergy.co.nz/yourfarm.

Enjoy a bit of DIY?

Here are some great tips for you to take control of your own account

Sign up to mymeridian.co.nz and select 'online' as your billing preference. With My Meridian, you can:

- **Securely view your bill information**
- **View old bills and your transaction history**
- **Download PDF versions of your bills**
- **Graph your bill history and compare it with last year and the weather temperatures that month**
- **Enter a meter reading**
- **Update your account details and your customer profile**

- **Set up new services like changing your bill delivery preference**
- **Make an enquiry**
- **Pick up friendly tips and hints.**

If you're a large user of electricity and you have a Time of Use meter (which records electricity use in half-hour intervals) you can sign up for Business Online. It enables customers to analyse their electricity usage and develop strategies for using it more cost effectively. Contact your Account Manager or call us on **0800 496 777** to find out how Business Online could work for your business.

Want us to email your bill instead of sending a paper copy each month? Email your name and customer number to agribusiness@meridianenergy.co.nz and we'll set you up for email billing.

If you want your bill to be based on an actual meter reading instead of an estimate, call **0800 496 496**. Select from the options and use your touchtone phone to enter your latest meter reading.

If you want TXT or email reminders to remind you when your bill is due, just email agribusiness@meridianenergy.co.nz to get set up for it, or do it yourself at mymeridian.co.nz. If you know when you have to pay by, you won't miss out on your prompt payment discount!



We'd like to hear from you

We'd like to hear what you think about *Seasons*, and what you'd like to see in future issues.

Please let us know by writing to us at:

Seasons

Meridian Energy

PO Box 2128

Christchurch 8140

or emailing us at:

seasons@meridianenergy.co.nz

Meridian Energy free complaints resolution process

If you have a concern or complaint about your experience with Meridian, let us know straight away. We'll work with you to resolve problems quickly and fairly. You can contact us on **0800 496 777** or email us at customer.relations@meridianenergy.co.nz.

If we cannot resolve your complaint, you can contact the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner for a free and independent complaints service on **0800 22 33 40**, or visit www.egcomplaints.co.nz.

Meet the team

Introducing Partnership Manager Dave Greenwood

Meridian CRT Partnership Manager Dave Greenwood was born in Blenheim, but moved to an orchard in Paraparaumu as a young boy.

Before coming to Meridian, Dave owned the successful Café Palms on the Kapiti Coast and was an electrician. He also worked for Humes Pipelines Limited, a company that manufactures products for managing water and other utilities. During his time at Humes, he gained experience in implementing irrigation schemes and dairy conversions.

Dave's role as CRT Partnership Manager is to provide CRT and its shareholders with a direct link to Meridian. He is keen to understand CRT's business and the businesses of its shareholders to enable him to come up with electricity solutions that best suit their needs.



Since joining Meridian Dave has begun studying towards a level three Agriculture ITO certificate in rural servicing. However, he has already brought vital rural, service and electrical knowledge with him to the job.

Dave says, "As an ex-electrician I can fix a customer's toaster or I can use my knowledge of electricity to offer advice on their power requirements and explain the whole process from generation to when the lights come on in the house. I can also talk directly with the electrical contractor if there is work being done on site to help make the process as smooth as possible."

Check out *Seasons* online

Seasons is available to view on our website, meridian.co.nz. You can also view current and previous issues of our other regular publications, including *Currents*, our newsletter for residential customers that has information you might find handy for around the house.

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