

AUTUMN/WINTER 2011

Seasons



meridian

NEW ZEALAND DAIRY
INDUSTRY AWARD WINNERS

AFTER THE EARTH MOVED,
SO DID WE

AGRIBUSINESS TEAM GETS
THEIR HANDS DIRTY

TE UKU WIND FARM
NOW COMPLETE



Award winners share their winning philosophy

Meridian is proud to sponsor the New Zealand Dairy Industry Awards (NZDIA). Ashburton's Rob and Debbie Mackle took out the Meridian Farm Environment Merit Award at the NZDIA national final held in Queenstown in May.

The 2011 NZDIA entrants and affiliates travelled from all around New Zealand to Queenstown. Before the awards, they were given a tour of Meridian's Manapouri power station. Rob Mackle says about the tour, "We were blown away by the magnitude of the engineering feat. Manapouri was well before its time. We thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality from the Meridian team, the educational experience and the opportunity to see up close what must be one of New Zealand's environmental treasures.

"While we were in Queenstown we also met some amazing people who share our passion for farming and family."

Debbie Mackle says about the Meridian Farm Environment Merit Award, "We didn't win the Canterbury award but it was one we really wanted. It's been a goal for us and the farm owner (Graham Brooker) to show that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand. Both parties have put a lot of time and effort in the past six years not only into making sure the farm is fully compliant but into continually upgrading and up-skilling to ensure it remains so. At the national judging we elaborated more on the systems we have in place and the cost savings made by fully utilising them."

Rob and Debbie say they are fully aware of the global implications of the need to supply

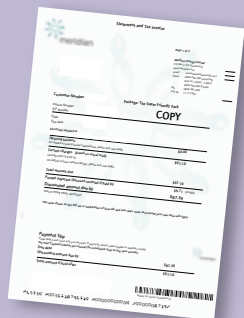


Meridian customers Rob and Debbie Mackle receiving their award from Meridian's Agribusiness Manager Natasha King

a top-quality product that is sustainable and farm and cow friendly. They make full use of their main road frontage to showcase their product and core business philosophy of "striving for excellence."

Rob has been dairying most of his life and has seen huge changes in that time. Rob says, "Education on soils, effluent, water, fertiliser and farm waste has had a positive influence on the industry."

Through our sponsorship of NZDIA, Meridian is proud to contribute to that influence, and even prouder that yet again Meridian customers have proven they're the best of the best!



Make them estimates, not guesstimates

We do our best to read your electricity meter as often as possible. However, sometimes you will get an estimated account.

If we estimate your account it will be based on your previous electricity usage with seasonal

variations taken into account. If, for example, you've just switched off your irrigation, dried off your cows or had staff move in or out of one of your houses, or have an unused pump or shed, our system won't necessarily be able to estimate accurately what the account should be. We can manually override our estimating system and tell it how many units to estimate your account on each month. Simply email agribusiness@meridian.co.nz with the details of the sites on which you'd like to set the usage.

After the Earth moved, so did the Agribusiness team

The 22 February earthquake had a huge impact on Christchurch and New Zealand as a whole. The most critical concern for us was making sure that our staff and their families were safe, followed by getting back to business.

The day after the earthquake, it became evident that the Meridian Agribusiness team wasn't going to be able to manage their customers adequately from a devastated Christchurch, so the decision was made to move the entire team to Twizel.

The Christchurch earthquake occurred on Tuesday; by Wednesday the decision had been made to relocate the team; on Friday the Twizel office was being set up to accommodate the Christchurch staff; and Sunday saw the Agribusiness team and their families arrive, all in time to start work almost as normal on Monday.

Agribusiness Manager Natasha King says, "We had basically two days to talk to the team about going, organise enough IT equipment to get them up and running, arrange holiday homes that could accommodate 13 staff and their families, and most importantly get the team's kids enrolled in schools and kindergartens in Twizel."

Twizel is located halfway between Christchurch and Queenstown, lying in the Mackenzie Basin. The team ended up staying

there for five weeks, which was a welcome relief from the turmoil they knew the people who were still in Christchurch were facing.

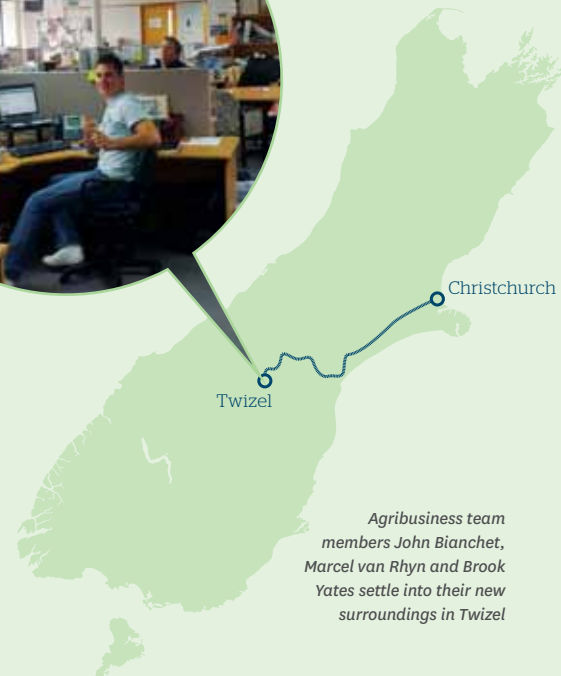
Agribusiness Account Manager Mark Ashton says, "Going to Twizel gave us an opportunity to get away from the disaster zone, and keep helping our customers. It was such a shock when we came back. I loved it down there. Being in Twizel gave us a great work/life balance as nature was right there on our doorstep."

After five weeks in Twizel, a temporary office was fitted out in Christchurch for the team to return to. Eight weeks later, Meridian's new Moorhouse Avenue office was ready to move into, so the team is now, three months after the earthquake, back in a permanent office.

Despite missing friends and family who were in Christchurch, overall the team say getting

away to Twizel was a great experience, and if they needed to they would pack up and go again.

Many customers who made contact with the team after the earthquake wouldn't have known the team had been displaced from their Christchurch homes and office. The team is pleased they were able to continue providing great service during what was a tough time for everyone. If customers experienced any kind of delay in contacting the team after the earthquake, the team wants to thank them for their patience.



Agribusiness team members John Bianchet, Marcel van Rhyn and Brook Yates settle into their new surroundings in Twizel

Te Uku
wind farm



We're farmers too: *the construction of our new Te Uku wind farm is complete*

Te Uku wind farm became fully operational on 10 March 2011 when the last of 28 wind turbines was commissioned. When operating at full capacity, the 28 wind turbines can generate up to 64.4 megawatts of electricity, enough to power around 30,000 average New Zealand homes.

Meridian's Te Uku Senior Project Manager Robert Batters says, "The team has done a great job completing the construction and commissioning the turbines at Te Uku two weeks earlier than planned."

A full service has also been completed on all 28 wind turbines now that they have been generating electricity for more than 500 hours. A small team of technicians will remain on site undertaking regular inspections of the wind turbines and associated electrical equipment.

The construction of Te Uku wind farm began in November 2009. It's a joint alliance between Meridian Energy and community trust-owned electricity lines company WEL Networks. Te Uku is located in the North Island, close to Raglan.

In the next *Seasons*, we'll be looking at how wind farming and farming work side by side at the Te Uku wind farm site.

Rewarding *you* this season



All Meridian rural customers are automatically entered into our quarterly prize draws and 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.

The Autumn and Winter *Seasons* have been combined owing to the earthquake in Christchurch putting some things on hold, so we're giving away two prizes this issue, one for Autumn and one for Winter. You can win a MY SKY year-long subscription or a two-night Air New Zealand Deluxe Mystery Break™ for you and a friend. Prizes will be drawn on 1 September 2011.



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

The Meridian Agribusiness team gets their hands dirty

Always keen to increase their understanding of their customers' farming businesses, the Agribusiness team recently made the trip from their Christchurch office to Moana, on the rugged West Coast, to have a go at milking. Not all of the team had grown up on farms, so for some it was a whole new experience.

While half of the team got lost and ended up in Kumara, eventually the team were all present and accounted for at Landcorp's Weka Complex, where they were sent to work in four different 60-bail rotary sheds.

Landcorp's Dairy Operations Manager (and 2009 NZDIA Farm Manager of the

Year), Shane Kelly, said this about the Agribusiness team: "I was surprised they were as good as they were. My team and I were expecting a bunch of townies to show up who would be scared of cows, but these guys were keen as to try everything."

Meridian Agribusiness Manager Natasha King says she was heartened by how motivated and enthusiastic her team was about getting out and working on the farm. As a former dairy farmer herself, Natasha says, "It was great to see my staff in the shed, having fun while working hard to keep up with the platform."

While Natasha has ensured her team has the theory behind them through completing AgITO training, she says their customers can be confident the Agribusiness team has



Meridian's Brook Yates, Natasha King and Mark Ashton in one of the Weka sheds

practical experience at milking as well. She says, "I think they gained a real understanding of dairy farmers, and how important electricity is to their operations."

Who knows, perhaps there's a sea change in the air for the team. Shane Kelly added, "Any of those guys could make a career change if they wanted to, we're always on the lookout for good people."

New guides to managing farm dairy effluent

The Farm Dairy Effluent Design Code of Practice and the Farm Dairy Effluent Design Standards are part of an initiative to set industry-agreed standards for the design and installation of effluent management systems.

The new code and standards were recently released by DairyNZ with the aim of guiding designers through the process of developing effective farm dairy effluent systems.

The accompanying farmer guide, Planning the Right System for Your Farm, outlines the process of designing and building a system based on the new code. The standards enable farmers and others to measure the effectiveness of farm dairy effluent systems in New Zealand. The documents are available to download at dairynz.co.nz/effluentcode

Thanks to DairyNZ for providing this content.



Living Legends takes the field to the forest

Our biggest year of rugby is well underway, and the community conservation project Living Legends is also building momentum.

The project plans to plant 85,000 native trees in 17 locations throughout New Zealand during September and October.

If you are interested in taking part in one of the free plantings, register at livinglegends.co.nz

Who's your rugby legend?

Tell us your number one New Zealand rugby legend and be in to win an adventure escape to Queenstown with your family or your mates.* There are other great prizes up for grabs too.

We've already received some great nominations, including:

John Sturgeon

He comes from a third division town and he never forgot it. He's a great example of grass-roots attitude.

Jock Ross

For having the best mo around.

Andrew Mehrtens

He is a Gold Card in my Super Rugby Weetbix Cards. This means he is a legend. He is also a legend because he scored heaps and heaps of points for Canterbury, Crusaders and All Blacks.

Check out livinglegends.co.nz to nominate your legend in the Meridian People's Choice Award.

Living Legends is a joint venture between Project Crimson and The Tindall Foundation. The Department of Conservation and Meridian are proud to be major sponsors.

Living Legends is also part of the REAL New Zealand Festival, a nationwide celebration of New Zealand taking place during Rugby World Cup 2011.

* Terms and conditions apply.

Set the due date for your Meridian bills each month*

Many of our customers choose to lock in their due dates each month. Having one set date means you know when your Meridian bills will arrive in the mail, you know when the payments are due and you can pay all of them at once.

Please email agribusiness@meridian.co.nz with your customer number and preferred due date and we will set up your account so that your bills are sent and due on the same date each month.

* Meridian can only set the due dates of your non-half-hourly sites. If your preferred sending or payment due date falls on a weekend day or public holiday, it will be carried over to the next business day. Buying group members (ATS, CRT, Farmlands and RD1) cannot change the due dates of their accounts.

Congratulations! to the winners of a trip to our Manapouri power station

As part of our welcome on board to our new Farmlands customers, we gave away a trip to our Manapouri power station. Congratulations to Whitney and Wendy Griffiths, who recently had a guided tour around the hydro station, a good distance from their home in Martinborough.

Whitney and Wendy Griffiths at the Manapouri power station



Helping promote tertiary education for those entering the agriculture sector



Meridian's Partnership Manager Andrew Gardiner presenting Kelly Hughes with her award

New in 2010, the Meridian Energy/Taratahi Scholarship is awarded annually to students enrolled in the Taratahi Certificate in Agriculture.

The Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre has been preparing students for careers in agriculture for more than 90 years. Using the skills and knowledge gained at Taratahi,

graduates have the opportunity to move into rewarding careers in one of the world's leading agricultural industries.

Among Taratahi's teaching resources is a wide range of commercial farms, allowing students to gain real-life experience while studying. Meridian has partnered with Taratahi to provide the yearly scholarship to students who complete a project on a topic close to our hearts, namely the promotion of sustainable farming. Students are asked to prepare a report about how they would improve Taratahi by making it more environmentally friendly.

The inaugural winner, Kelly Hughes, provided innovative suggestions about effluent management, irrigation efficiency, balage wrap recycling and rain water collection.

Heated towel rail timers

You might be surprised to learn that without a timer, a heated towel rail costs around \$175 a year to run if left on all the time. Using a heated towel rail timer still gives you a warm, dry towel, and operating your towel rail for eight hours a day instead of 24 hours could save you up to \$115 a year.* You need an electrician to put the timer in, but it's a fast and easy job to do.

If you have heated towel rails in your home or your staff houses, have a look at energywise.govt.nz/heated-towel-rail-timers for more information on available models.

* Savings based on a standard-sized 80-watt towel rail running 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, at an average electricity cost of 25 cents per kilowatt hour.



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
PO Box 2128
Christchurch Mail Centre 8140

or emailing us at:
seasons@meridianenergy.co.nz

Meet the team

Introducing Agribusiness Partnership Manager, Peter Ayers

With four years' hands-on dairy farming experience under his belt, a Farm Management degree from Lincoln University, and having grown up on a sheep and beef farm in Canterbury, Meridian's Agribusiness customers can feel confident Peter has the experience to back him as Partnership Manager.



Pete came to Meridian after being a technical advisor in the fertiliser industry. Pete is with the rest of the Meridian Agribusiness team when he says, "The best part of my job is getting out of the office and visiting farmers." Peter is committed to delivering our rural customers excellent service until he retires one day in Nelson.

Meridian - 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 egcomplaints.co.nz

Check out *Seasons* online

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



Meridian is subject to the default Customer Compensation Scheme, which came into effect on 1 April 2011. Under the terms of the scheme, Meridian will have certain payment obligations to qualifying customers should Transpower call a Public Conservation Campaign to conserve electricity.

Meridian will provide further information to you regarding the scheme should a Public Conservation Campaign appear imminent. However, in the interim please feel free to visit the Electricity Authority website at ea.govt.nz/consumer/customer-compensation-scheme for further details.

Printed with mineral-oil free, soy-based vegetable inks on paper from well managed forests that comply with environmentally sustainable practice and principles. Please recycle.