

Proposal for Regional
Councils and the
Ballance Agri-Nutrient
Farm Environment
Awards

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Introduction

The Farm Environment Awards were established in 1993 as a joint initiative between the Waikato Conservation Board and Environment Waikato. In 1995 an independent Trust was set up to administer the awards. Trust members include representatives from EW, Doc, Conservation Boards, Federated Farmers, Dexcel, AgResearch, Waipac, Forest and Bird, and Farm Forestry Association.

Since then the Awards have been run annually in the Waikato and have significantly promoted sustainable farming practices throughout the region.

The Waikato region had 41 farms entered in their 2001 competition and over the last 9 years over 300 farmers have entered the Awards.

Objectives Of The Farm Environment Awards

The key objectives of the Awards are to encourage sustainable land management and to display to farmers that profitability need not compromise and, in the best examples, can restore and enhance environmental values.

Through feedback and profiling winners, the Awards encourage other farmers to be more proactive in their resource management by providing them with role models for sustainable land management.

The Awards look at whole farm systems and strongly promote the positive. Every entrant is given feedback from the specialist judges.

Judges look for farms where water runs clean, soil structure supports healthy pastures, crops and stock, effluent is well managed, indigenous plants and animals of value are protected and the business is profitable.

Judges also look for farmers with a clear vision of where they are going, how they plan to get there and why they are doing certain things. They are judged on how they are progressing and what they have learned with regard to sustainable land management, rather than how long they have been farming.

It recognises farmers who are working to enhance and develop their farm into a sustainable operation. Farm management plans must be physically sustainable from which real financial sustainability can be derived. Farmers are judged on their ability to optimise pasture production, utilisation and conversion without adversely impacting on the environment, landscape and other natural features such as water resources.

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Looking To A National Competition

Due to the success of the Waikato competition, the Farm Environment Trust, who owns the Awards, in partnership with Ballance Agri-nutrients wants to develop this competition into a high profile nationwide competition. A National Trust, representing all regions and sponsors, is being developed over the next eighteen months. Until that time the Awards will be administered by the Waikato Farm Environment Award Trust.

A national body means there will be more people working to develop and promote sustainable practices at ground level. It will further raise awareness that environmentally sustainable farming practices are good business.

Discussions are now taking place with New Zealand's twelve regional councils, and three unitary authorities to gain their support and involvement.

It is hoped that in 2002 a regional competition will run in five regions of New Zealand, and that all twelve Regional Councils will be on board by 2005.

Ballance Agri-Nutrients (formerly BOP Fertiliser) have signed an agreement with the Trust to become the principal and naming right sponsor to the Farm Environment Awards.

The regional Supreme Winners will be judged by national judges and will have the opportunity to win awards for the below categories at the national level. Again, a national Supreme Winner will be chosen.

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How The Farm Environment Awards Will Run

It is envisaged the regional competitions will be organised in conjunction with the local Regional Councils and will be managed by committees of locals. The winners of these regional competitions will go through to a National Final Awards Evening.

Half day judging at both the regional and national levels, focussing on positive feedback to the entrant, ensures that value is added to the farmers' operation.

In each region entrants will be judged and an Award presented for each of the following six categories:

Habitat

Best Dairy Farm

Best Non-Livestock Farm

Nutrient Management

Best Drystock Farm

Business Relationships

A regional Supreme Winner, chosen from the finalists in that region, will go forward to represent their region at the National Final.

The regional Supreme Winners will be judged by national judges and will have the opportunity to win awards for the above categories at the national level.

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Benefits Of Regional Councils Becoming Involved In The Farm Environment Awards

Displays that Regional Councils see their role as educators and supporters of farmers achieving sound sustainable farming practices

Provides an excellent balance with Councils' regulatory role

Aligns Councils with a positive event

Entrants and winners provide resource for Councils to utilise for extension purposes

Opportunity to share best practices between Councils

With Council staff involved in judging, they gain knowledge and networking opportunities with other judges from the agricultural sector

Equally important is the discussion between judges and entrants about their farm and the information that flows both ways

The discussion that takes place between the judges and entrants enable the judges to make their decisions

Opportunity to highlight some of the excellent environmental initiatives that are happening on farm and show Councils' support for these

Helps raise the profile of environmentally sustainable farming through:

- More interest from national media
- More people working to develop and promote sustainable practices at ground level

Profiling your regional winners as leading farmers will increase acceptance and awareness of environmental sustainability as 'main stream' making Councils' job an easier one

Opportunity for the Council to educate and heighten awareness of environmental issues and build networks with corporate sponsors involved in the Awards

Provides Councils with a vehicle to build relationships with farmers and to influence the way they perceive and view sustainable farming

Regional and National Award Functions give Council staff and Councillors opportunity to socialise and get alongside farmers

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Corporate Sponsorship Packages

We have three tiers of corporate sponsorship:

Tier One – Naming rights to the Awards

Ballance Agri-Nutrients have purchased the naming rights to the Awards and the Awards will be known as Ballance Agri-nutrients Farm Environment Awards

Tier Two – Associate naming rights to the Regional Award and National Award Functions

Tier Three – Naming rights to the six Award categories

Habitat	Best Dairy Farm
Best Drystock Farm	Best Non-livestock Farm
Business Relationships	
Nutrient Management (already purchased by Ballance Agri-Nutrients)	

Costs To Be Met By Corporate Sponsors

Corporate sponsors' investment will cover the following costs, which total approximately \$330,000 (based on six regions being involved in year one):

Logo design

All printing costs including

- Letterhead
- Winners' certificates
- Awards Function entry tickets

Trophies

National publications

Entry channels

- 0800 number
- Website
- Printed entry form

National advertising

National PR

National Convenor's fee

National judging costs

Regional Convenors' briefing

Regional Judges' briefing

Editing of entrants' feedback sheets

Regional Supreme Winners' airfares to National Final

National Final Awards function

Travel costs for promotion of National winners – speaking engagements etc

Cash contribution to each region (\$9,000 each)

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Regional Councils' Involvement

As shown all costs for the National competition including infrastructure, national judging, the National Final Awards function, National Convenor etc has been met by national sponsors

The national body is also making cash contribution of \$9,000 to each region to assist the organising committee with regional costs

The involvement of Regional Councils in the Ballance Agri-nutrients Farm Environment Awards is seen as an essential ingredient. It gives the Awards robustness and credibility in the market place

We seek the involvement of Regional Councils at a grass roots level – the regional level. It is at this level that the Awards really work. Here we see local farmers being approached and encouraged to enter the Awards by the organising committee, by Regional Council staff and by sponsors' representatives. It is here that the synergy of the team really works to heighten the profile of sustainable farming.

It is suggested that within 18 months an independent body is set up to administer the Awards with Regional Councils support and funding. This structure is advantageous to the Regional Councils because it enables transparency for both the finances and administration of the Awards.

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Regional Councils Will Receive In Return

In return for your support the Regional Council will receive:

- a) Naming rights to the Regional Awards Function (please note that the Tier Two sponsor will have associate naming rights to the Regional Awards Function).

Using Waikato region as an example, the Awards Function would be known as:

Environment Waikato Farm Environment Awards Function in association with *(Tier Two sponsor's name)*

- b) Speaking rights at the Regional Awards Function
- c) The right to have specialist judges involved in the judging – numbers and skills to be discussed
- d) Two complimentary tickets to the Regional Awards Function
- e) The naming rights will appear on:
Tickets to the Regional Awards Function
The audio-visual presentation at the Regional Awards Function
- f) During the Award function, your association with the award will be promoted
- e) Your Council logo will appear on the Winners' Certificates and any regional publication promoting the Awards Function
- f) Signage at the Regional Awards Function

For further information regarding this proposal and The Ballance Agri-Nutrients Farm Environment Awards please contact:

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