

DUNLEE - EWAN WILSON

Ewan's father, Allan, had been using 2cwt. of superphosphate for over twenty years plus periodical dressings of half a ton of lime per acre. Allan found this combination produced an abundance of grass which then necessitated expanding stock numbers.

The initial result was an increase in production with things going well, but after a few years stock health problems appeared, with more drenching required, higher deaths, lower lambing percentages and lower lamb weights, reduction in wool weight, more dags and generally more work.

Finally we bought a potspreeder from Hatuma Lime and a tractor with a front end loader which 'mechanized' everything and made the handling easier." These days Dicalcic Phosphate is applied at 375kgs per hectare and lime is applied at 2.5 tonnes per hectare to all paddocks during crop rotation.

Joe Topp described Allan as one of the "handful of self-reliant farmers who knew the benefits to be gained from using the company's products". He was extremely grateful to Allan for his continuous support over the

people look at, you've got to look at it in terms of growing the right kind of grass and creating a suitable environment for the humus makers to keep the soil balanced," he claims.

"We have had horses arrive at our farm tense and jumpy, but after a few months their temperament changes and they seem a lot more content. We even have visitors to the farm that comment, "how do you get their coats so shiny?"

"We are able to draft off the mothers earlier and still get heavier weights, and when finishing we are able to fatten lambs easily at around the 20kg-plus mark, including lambs that are bought in and traded. This year we will kill 3000 around the 20kg plus mark, (with 1000 of our own and 2000 traded)." There has been a quote that has become very regular over the years of shearing made by shearers while they lean over the catching pen at Dunlee: "Well the sheep aren't getting any smaller are they Ewan?"



Jonathan, Ewan & Trish



Dunlee Horses

Allan Wilson

Allan and Joe Topp had known each other well through the years that they had played chess together. Joe convinced him to change to Dicalcic Phosphate in 1961 and immediately the health of the stock completely altered. Forty years on, and no straight superphosphate has been applied since.

"There used to be two of us shovelling the Dicalcic from our truck into a blower topdresser that held 1-ton," recalls Ewan. "We did this for about ten years and to help break the monotony of the job, we had time trials to fill the hopper.

years and the enthusiastic way that he was willing to pass on his knowledge and experience of Dicalcic Phosphate. Allan also convened and chaired several meetings of interested farmers to protest against the injustice of the transport subsidy regulations towards Dicalcic Phosphate. His time and efforts were finally rewarded in the 1976 budget.

Ewan believes that Dicalcic needs to be measured in terms of stock performance and animal health. "I'd rather have six inches of palatable grass than one foot of the other. It's not about grass growth, which most

Stock graze pastures evenly, without leaving clumps. Even the horses that are selective grazers do the same. Two years ago we put some salt blocks out for the horses, but they are still sitting in the same place today!"

Ewan sees the advantages of Dicalcic Phosphate in animal health and per animal performance. "Our animal health bill is minimal compared with the average, our drenching programme reduced and we have generally less dags and bearing problems. We have a clover predominant pasture yet I can't remember when the last cattle beast died of bloat."

It was the stock health and overall performance of the farm that contributed most to Ewan winning Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year in 1972.

Ewan's son Jonathan works for a contracting neighbour doing hay-baling, agricultural work and silage and spends the winter months on the farm. He is adamant that the Dicalcic Phosphate and lime philosophy of the previous generations is the right one and he too will be following that trend.