

# Muir

## Cam & Gail

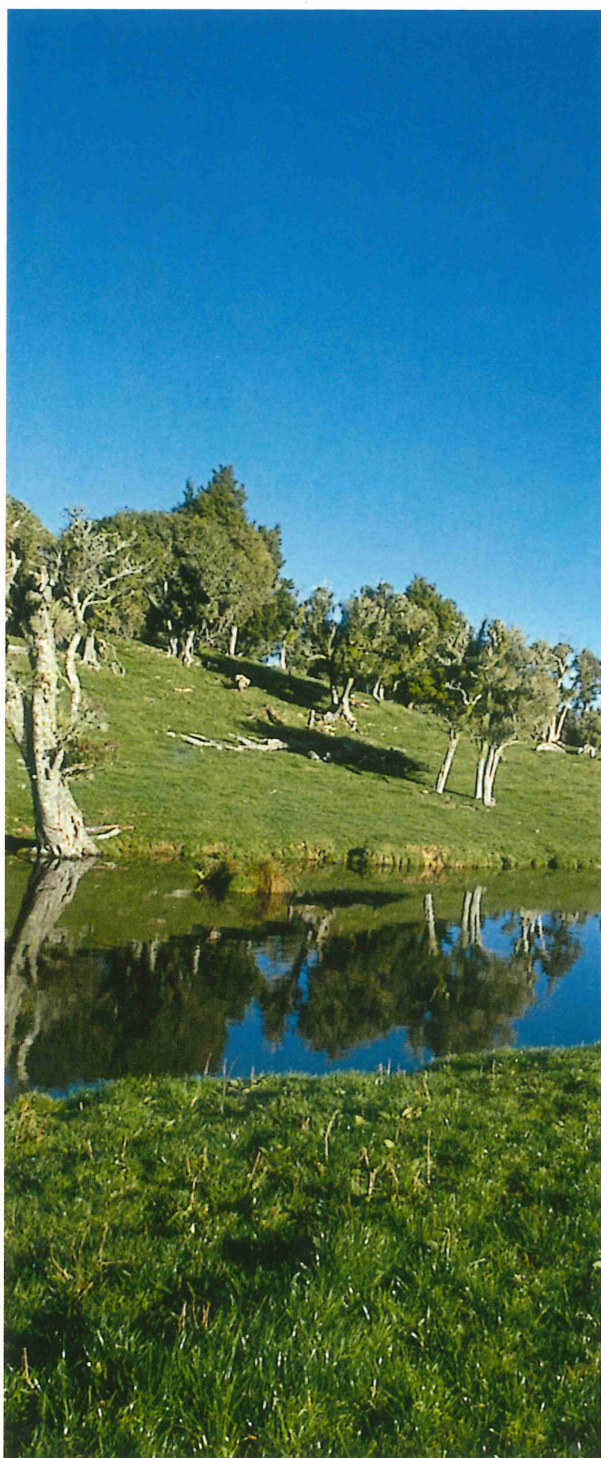
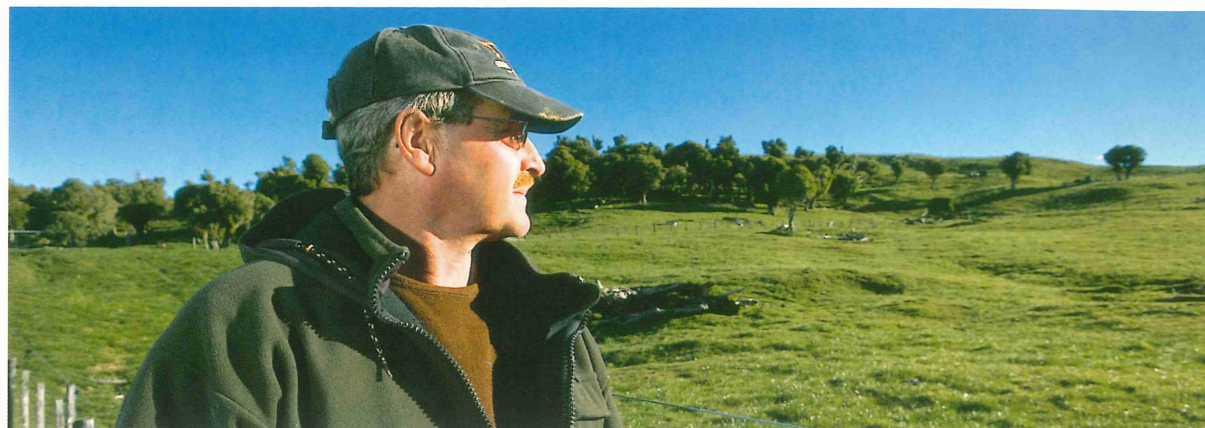
TAUPO – 450HA

TRADING DAIRY HEIFERS / QUARANTINE FOR EXPORT / LAMB FATTENING / WINTER 6000 S/U

*Application: 750kg/ha + SOA in autumn / 450kg/ha in spring*

*(Special mixes incorporating No. 4 10% salt / haymix + extra dicalcic, cropfine and trace elements)*





Over the last four years, Cam and Gail Muir have experienced a different side to farming; one that achieves production, without the need for extra hidden costs. By using a “smart” fertiliser that respects the soil-life, not one that overloads it, it’s helping them reach goals in the most effective and cost-efficient way possible – the key to any farming enterprise.

“I’d been disgruntled with the old fertiliser I’d been using for a long time,” says Cam. “We did a dairy conversion in 1995, and back then the farm had a good clover base. But when we had to raise the soil from a P level of 20 to 55, the pasture started to become sparse. By the third year I was asking a lot of hard fertiliser questions, which nobody could answer. By the fifth year the pasture had become completely open, with massive root pulling and stock health problems. So during that year we decided to change, and eventually we bought this place.

We were looking for a product that would be good for the soil, the plant, animal, and ultimately us. I’d heard about dicalcic when I was farming in Wairoa, however, Hatuma isn’t a hard-sell company so it tended to get pushed aside. It wasn’t until I talked to the local representative here in Taupo, Peter Williams, that we learnt more about it. We liked the way it sounded like a long-term fertiliser instead of a quick acting, acid-based one.

The results started coming through within the first six months. The colour changed in the pasture, evenness of grazing, the stock stayed content, palatability improved – basically everything I’ve ever read in a Hatuma Update came true. And these changes are ongoing. We don’t get huge surges of growth compared to the acid fertilisers, but it’s much more consistent, which initially is only a confidence thing. It doesn’t matter how short the pasture gets, the stock do well off it, and that quality is far more important than quantity.

Being non-acidic, the dicalcic doesn’t promote browntop. After fifty odd years, Taupo still has a browntop problem and you have to ask why. When we arrived on the farm the thatch on the surface was like a telephone book. I couldn’t rip it apart. We used Thatch Busta initially to break it down, while the dicalcic makes sure it doesn’t return.

I’m my own worst enemy when it comes to overstocking paddocks, especially when I bring in stock for quarantine. We only use 20 units of nitrogen once a year in autumn. When we were dairying we were told to put on 80kg every 6 weeks to keep up the growth and we ended up with nothing. Nitrogen has now become a strategic tool only. We’re very aware of the issues surrounding the lake quality; in a free draining environment and with the issues surrounding the lake, the more people begin to be aware of dicalcic’s non water-solubility, the more they’ll start to use it.

Stock health generally is very good. Through our past regime of acidic fertilisers, we know you get associated problems with them. But you don’t with dicalcic. Lambs do very well here and we only drench more out of habit. Lamb weights don’t mean a lot – it’s the margin you make on them that’s important.

There’re more earthworms, the clover is bigger, the pasture balance is better, and the regrowth is fine. Clover has improved over the whole farm and we never have problems growing it on the northerly faces. When the soil temperature increases the pasture responds incredibly; last year we made 700 rounds and 500T of pit silage. I don’t have the need for soil tests because I’m confident everything is working well.

During a field day we hosted, reps from the superphosphate industry couldn’t understand why we use it because their experts have always said it’s an expensive way of putting on P. But they aren’t seeing the complete business of farming. Lime and super separately isn’t balanced enough, and it’s definitely less cost effective. The true cost to us is the bottom line and dicalcic is the complete package.

I’m much more relaxed with the fertiliser regime. The dicalcic keeps the farm alive and in a more sustainable system.”



View from the top of the farm over looking Kinloch

