

# TE AWA - BRIAN WILSON

**In** the early years, Colin Wilson was a firm believer in lime. Like many farmers of that time, he used to make dry mixes of straight lime and superphosphate with a hand shovel and spread that with an old hopper spreader, but he knew his efforts were not quite the answer.

Brian still recalls he and his brothers travelling in the cab of their truck with their father when he collected his lime. While Colin and Joe talked, the Wilson boys spent their time exploring the works and the large lime piles. When their sense of adventure was exhausted, they would go back to their father only to find that he and Joe were still talking! Colin and Joe were firm friends and Joe spent many hours convincing Colin that a complete product would avoid all that labour and counteract the acidity of the superphosphate at the same time. In speech notes of Colin's retained by the family from the Hatuma Jubilee celebrations, he states on his initial use of the product, "the results were spectacular" and so began in 1962, a long and unshakeable family belief in the wonderful and natural attributes of this fertiliser to be later called Dicalcic Phosphate.

When the Te Awa block was purchased, Colin received a lot of advice from other farmers and specialists telling him that he would have to stick a lot of phosphate on to correct the problems that were originally on the farm. But instead they applied a 70/30 mix of Dicalcic Phosphate and lime at 5cwt, using the DC3 'plane. The results were better than expected and from then on the combination of Dicalcic Phosphate and lime were used as the farm's total fertiliser.

Brian recalls that his father never doubted Joe Topp and the value of Dicalcic Phosphate and he came to firmly believe that the product made their farms.

"In the less technically-advanced days we had to shovel hundreds of tonnes of Dicalcic into our pot spreader. Although this was a chore, the Dicalcic Phosphate was never abrasive and it was wonderful to handle.

**It's** really basic - the earthworms aerate the soil and if you get a handful of super and throw it on some earthworms, they will die, but with the Dicalcic it doesn't harm them, so that fact alone has to be good for the environment," says Brian.

"The experts talk about the amount of phosphate on the ground - we talk about the amount of phosphate available to the plant.

There has been nothing that has given us to believe that we have been short of trace elements throughout our farm's history. We're committed to Dicalcic because it shows in our stock performance. Our wool weights have been great, no ill thrift with cleaner sheep and fewer dags. It certainly makes the pasture hold on longer with healthier stock and lower costs.

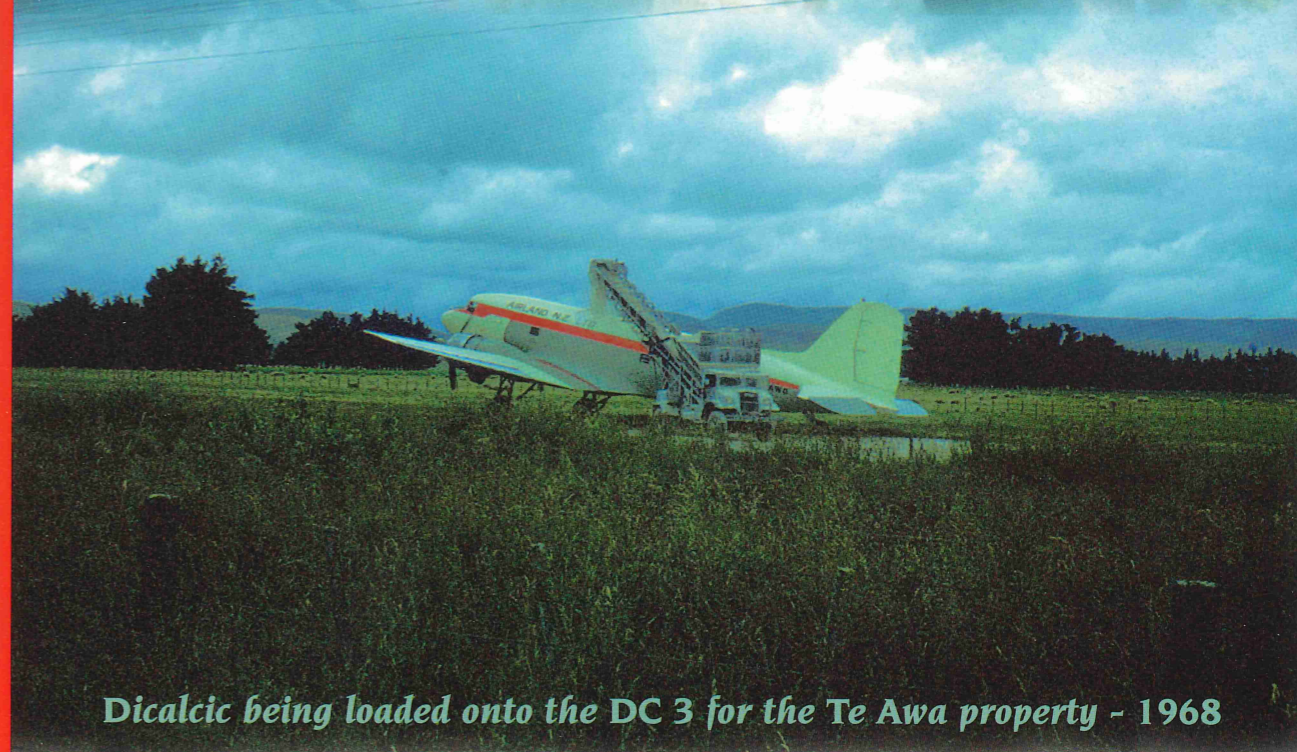
We have never doubted that we are getting benefits from this product and to this day the results are still encouraging. When I want to do my topdressing I don't worry about soil tests and consultants - it really is peace of mind. Even in this day and age with the difficulties faced in farming I am totally at ease with what I use. I don't debate it anymore - after all these years I am absolutely convinced of the environmental benefits and the product performance," said Brian.

Brian came onto the farm in 1968 with a 100% mortgage and now has the property in a sound financial position. He believes they would have "gone bust" ages ago if the Dicalcic Phosphate hadn't been as reliable as Joe claimed. "A traditional and basic farming system has allowed Hamish and I enough time to operate 2 bulldozers and a digger as a successful contracting business."

Hamish is also a Dicalcic convert. Having extensive experience on several New Zealand properties, including the South Island, he has not the slightest doubt about its benefits and he'll continue to use it at Te Awa - the third generation farmer to do so there.



*Hamish, Christine & Brian*



*Dicalcic being loaded onto the DC 3 for the Te Awa property - 1968*



*Colin Wilson at Hatuma's Jubilee Celebrations - 1982*