

Cultivating decisions that lead to success

Over the past 60 years science and research in the world has been concentrating on production, and has been very good at it. The innovation of farmers world-wide has seen yields of produce double, treble and quadruple. The consequence of this has been the huge removal of soil nutrients with only minimal nutrient replacement for example superphosphate and urea.

The real issue, here is, with this huge focus on production, science has neglected the cause of the problems and concentrated on the effect. The ramification of this chemical agriculture system has now created sustainability and environmental issues.

It is difficult for anyone to make decisions that simultaneously consider the social, financial and environmental soundness all necessary for sustainability. Some decisions may be economically sound, but are implemented at the expense of the environment or the people involved.

Other decisions may be environmentally sound but economically unfeasible or harmful to human welfare.

Not every decision can benefit all three aspects everywhere all of the time, at times making decisions can be very complex and difficult particularly when you make them without adequate information or in stressful conditions with conflicting advice and opinions.

It's a given now that we have to be profitable, sustainable and environmentally sound and to look beyond just productivity. We didn't intentionally decide to operate this way. But were seduced by what chemicals and nitrogen fertilisers could do to increase yields to pay the bills that inevitable got larger.

We were producing a lot of product, but we weren't consistently profitable, we were always at the mercy of blaming something or someone else, eg the weather, Government, economy, inflation, NZ dollar, US dollar, commodity prices, farm expenses, too much rainfall, not enough

rainfall. We weren't resilient; we were locked into a high cost system with chemicals, chasing production with high inputs and a big percentage of the financial return going elsewhere and not coming back to the farm and mining the soils nutrients.

Again we didn't do this intentionally, but sadly we knew of no other way, this was our understanding of science and best practise at the time, promoted by the need to survive financially.

The sad thing is we know how to turn it around, we know what has to be done, but some don't want to do it.

Farmers must back their own judgement. There are too many people and businesses FARMING the FARMERS, the decisions made and advice given today and over the past 40 years has created the problem we face today.

It's time for new thinking

We cannot solve the problems of today with the same thinking that created them in the first place.
(Albert Einstein)

Farmers have a tremendous body of knowledge, but what we can bring to the table as we begin to collaborate and build confidence with the farmer, is our knowledge of biological farming and soil fertility problems, by filling in the gaps in the fertility programmes to solve the social, financial and environmental issues with sound proven science.

We are promoting synergistic outcomes, connecting people that are already practising our balanced soil fertility programmes and that are profitable and productive with others who need reassuring or haven't considered a different approach.

There are dairy farmers already that are producing up to 20 kgs/DM /Ha per day more feed from pastures and applying 200 to 250 kgs of urea less, than some conventional operations. These farmers have a lower requirement for water from irrigation and are not using mineral additives in drinking water and feed rations, and have minimal vet bills.

One of the crops that I grow

is daikon radish for seed, I've only needed to spray once in the last five-to-seven years with an insecticide since changing our farming system, prior to this it was normal to spray with a robust fungicide and insecticide programme every 10 to 12 days. We have grown high yielding wheat, potatoes and kale crops without chemicals similarly.

This is not rocket science but a choice between a high chemicals input system, or a biological approach with a balanced soil fertility programme. We need a new paradigm in our thinking.

Headaches are not caused by lack of aspirin in the body.

A continuation of the present production system would be continuing the economic roller coaster ride.

It's absolutely possible to meet all sustainable and environmental and the negative health outcomes, with increased productivity and profit with a biological approach; plenty of farmers are doing this already.

By Don Hart-Advertising feature

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