



Ballance
Farm Environment Awards®
 Promoting Sustainable Profitable Farming

AUCKLAND

2016 SUPREME AWARD WINNERS



ALSO WINNERS OF:

- Farm Stewardship Award in partnership with the QEII National Trust and The New Zealand Farm Environment Trust
- Beef + Lamb New Zealand Livestock Award

Whenuanui Farm, Richard and Dianne Kidd

Whenuanui is a 376ha flat to easy rolling property just south of Helensville that is clearly cherished by the Kidd family and described by the award judges as “a show piece farm on the edge of Auckland city”.

As close as 45 minutes by car from downtown Auckland, this 4820su beef breeding and sheep breeding and finishing operation is run on 331ha (effective). A pine woodlot is established on 18.5ha and there is 15.3ha of fenced regenerating bush.

The judges noted the extensive use of summer and winter cropping and wrote: “Richard and Dianne have been very pragmatic in their approach to protecting the environment for future generations on the farm. All waterways have been fenced. Shade, shelter and trough water is available to stock in every paddock. They have created biodiversity corridors from upper catchment areas which link to their bush. Mixed plantings including natives such as kauri,

rimu and pohutakawa have been carried out over many years in bush remnants. Wetland margins have also been planted with natives. Wildlife is evident with kereru and kaka seen during visit.”

QUICK FACTS

Type: Sheep, beef, forestry
District: Helensville
Total area: 376ha
Stock units: 4820
Rainfall: 1000-1200mm
Elevation: 0-91 MASL

Richard came to the original 275ha farm in 1978 to help out his aunt and uncle, Robert and Jess McCown. Dianne moved there in 1979, when the Kidds were married. The couple looked after the day-to-day operation of the place, gradually working their way into ownership so that since 1992, when Robert and Jess died within a short space of each other, the Kidds have been farming Whenuanui in their own right. Says Richard: “Initially we were on a limited budget with not a lot of financial control, but even back then we got things underway and always had an end goal in mind.” Dianne explains: “What we have done has been a blend of practical stock management, a love

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Richard and Dianne Kidd – Continued...



of planting, and our vision for the place.” The award judges recognised Richard and Dianne’s strength as a couple and described Whenuanui as “well thought out and planned”. They wrote: “It is a key strength, their vision and their ability to plan and execute to achieve their goals.” Dianne has maintained an off-farm career in education then finance and more recently has taken on directorships. The couple’s commitment to their community and agriculture is amply demonstrated by their longstanding and deep involvement in areas such as health, sport and education.

They have three adult sons; David, Hamish and Geoffery who share their parents’ respect for the wish of the late Robert and Jess, that the property remains large enough to be an economic unit. This wish has been part of the motivation behind the Kidds stretching to purchase adjoining properties as they came available through the years, despite the price being elevated by proximity to the city.

The property is also enjoyed by manager Jeffrey Brady, his wife Tracey and children Riley (8) and Taylor (6). Jeffrey has been on Whenuanui for 16 years; he and Tracey were married there. “We appreciate Jeffrey’s genuine and deep interest in the place,” says Richard.

Jeffrey oversees day-to-day stock management and does the tractor work.

Richard takes care of maintenance and administration but also helps on the farm as required, such as during the intensive stock feeding periods in winter. A range of crops are grown including, in summer, maize (for silage), rape, chicory with red clover, plantain and Pasja.

The Kidds have a longstanding lease to graze their 300 Angus breeding cows in the neighbouring Woodhill Forest from June until September. The cows thrive on the roughage there, with some supplementary hay. The trees provide shelter, especially valuable for calving, and having the heaviest stock off the farm during winter protects the soil.

Lambing percentage for the Coopworth flock last year was 162 percent, and an impressive 129 percent for hoggets. All lambs are sold prime to Countdown supermarkets under the “Kaipara Lamb” brand. This was established with nearby farmers last year to highlight their high quality product with

minimal stress to lambs due to proximity to abattoir, and their sustainable farming systems.



JUDGES’ COMMENTS

- **Achieving impressive stock and financial performance while working hand in hand with environment**
- **Waterways fenced with several large areas of raupo acting as sediment traps; shade and shelter in every paddock**
- **Great role models for drystock farming; good farmers and environmental champions; well-regarded within local community and wider NZ**
- **Outstanding use of soils, cropping and winter stock policies to minimise environmental impacts.**





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2016 FINALISTS

Star Valley Farms, **Kelly and Cherie Graham, Brett and Gaye Melling**

Kelly and Cherie have been sheep and beef farming in the Warkworth area since 2005 when they leased the 300ha (220ha effective) Telecom block surrounding the satellite station.

In 2006 they took on another uncommon lease, for the 60ha of pasture in a residential farm park about 25 minutes away, near Dairy Flat. Their next step into farming was more traditional however; in 2007 they went into their Star Valley Landholdings partnership with Cherie's parents Brett and Gaye Melling and purchased the 76ha (60ha effective) property across the road from

the satellite block. About five years ago Kelly began working off-farm also, as a stock buyer. The award judges paid tribute to Kelly and Cherie and said their "physical commitment to the farming business and the environment in particular was quite outstanding". The Mellings live on the purchased property. Kelly, Cherie and daughters Tahlia (12) and Charlize (10) live on the satellite block.

Contour on all three blocks is mainly rolling. Last year they wintered 350 cattle, 1200 ewes and around 300 lambs. Only sheep are run on the farm park and the other two blocks, which conveniently have an adjoining boundary, have sheep and cattle. Weaner cattle are bought in, all stock is sold finished and extra store lambs are purchased as feed and pricing allows.



FIELD DAY

2016 Supreme Winner's Field Day Information:

- When:** Friday 06 May 2016.
- At:** Richard and Dianne Kidd, Whenuanui Farm.
- Time:** From 10.30am.
- Where:** 2191 State Highway 16, Helensville. See adjacent map.

FOR DETAILS, CONTACT:

Name: Clare Rosser
Auckland Regional Coordinator
Ballance Farm Environment Awards

Phone: 07 829 4442 or 027 218 3711

Email: auckland@bfea.org.nz



Ballance Farm Environment Awards

The Ballance Farm Environment Awards recognises and celebrates good farm practices which promotes sustainable land management through an annual awards programme which is now run in 11 regions throughout New Zealand. Find out more by visiting: www.bfea.org.nz



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