

June 2017

Farm Plan Stories

The Grays

An easy process that didn't unveil any surprises - that's how the Gray family feel about their Farm Environment Management Plan, also called a FEMP.

Trading as Gray Brothers Ltd, Leicester and Margaret Gray farm in partnership with sons Callum and Phillip and their wives Sarah and Juliet.

They run Waimarino - a 1,009 ha sheep, beef and cropping business on Fairfield Road on the Ruataniwha Plains between the Tukituki and Waipawa Rivers.

The farm carries about 15,000 sheep and beef and grows a range of crops, including maize under contract, lucerne, peas, green beans, sweetcorn and carrots.

About 360ha is under pivot irrigation, with another 32ha watered by a hard hose irrigator. This is Class 1 land. 95% of the soil is Hastings silt loam; the rest is Argyll silt loam.

The Grays needed a Farm Plan for their land in the Tukituki catchment. They always appreciated the advice of Thomas Taylor, their Ravensdown account manager, so the first choice for their FEMP was Chris Tidey from Ravensdown's environmental team, also an approved provider.

"We took Chris around the property to look at the planting and fenced-off areas protecting the waterways. We still have a small amount to be fenced," says Phillip. "We had a good

discussion around the kitchen table when Chris came with the draft report, and again when he brought out the finished product."

A couple of cropping aspects were corrected from the draft to the final copy. While their cropping regime is often a moving target on Overseer from one season to the next, the report captured a moment in time.

Two aspects made completion of the Farm Plan easier for the Grays: their flat farm means there is little runoff, and they lower their stock numbers in winter.

"We leave lighter grade cattle - the rising one year olds - on the soil in winter and move the R2s to the winter feed block. The R3s leave the system anyway."

Most information was readily available in nutrient management plans and concepts such as the McCain's and now New Zealand GAP standards.

"We had to show we were continuing to fence-off creeks and drains, but overall, we were better than we thought."

The Grays agree that, apart from cost, there were no negatives from completing the report.

"You want to know you're doing things correctly," says Leicester. "We have been the

caretakers of Waimarino for 112 years and we continue to do our level best to maintain and enhance our environment for future generations."

**HEAD OFF YOUR
FARM PLAN
BEFORE MAY 2018**



HAWKE'S BAY
REGIONAL COUNCIL

**TUKI
TUKI**