



Media release

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New training course teaches farmers fundamentals of fertiliser spreading

A new online training course, specifically designed for farmers who spread their own fertiliser, provides instruction on the important areas of: how fertiliser can be best applied; how farm productivity can be maximised and what health and safety spreading requirements must be met.

The web-based programme, initiated by the Fertiliser Quality Council (FQC) in partnership with Federated Farmers, also includes guidance on good farm practice around minimising the environmental impacts when spreading fertiliser – for example, keeping the spreader hopper covered when moving fertiliser, avoiding waterways and not spreading in windy conditions.

The training tool, the *Fertiliser Spreading Training Course*, is split into six interactive modules – *Introduction*, *Environmental Impact I*, *Environmental Impact II*, *Agronomy*, *Wash-down and Records*, and *Spreader Calibration*. Each module must be completed before a course certificate is issued. This can be printed and displayed, and added to the farm's audit file.

Commenting on the development of the training tool, Anders Crofoot (FQC Chairman), says the programme is for the farmer who doesn't use a spreading company accredited to the industry's Spreadmark* scheme and who wishes to improve their knowledge of good spreading practice or comply with industry schemes.

He foresees that farmers and growers will increasingly be required to provide proof of accurate fertiliser spreading – especially by food processors keen to certify that their suppliers exercise good management practices (GMP).

“As consumer demand for traceability, transparency and provenance continues to rise around the world, more and more food processors from the milk, meat and cropping industries will adopt GMP incentive schemes, such as Synlait’s *Lead with Pride* programme – which rewards suppliers who meet a set of stewardship standards,” he says.

“The new *Fertiliser Spreading Training Course* will certify farmers in the fundamentals of fertiliser spreading and may also enable them to take advantage of GMP schemes where they exist.

The *Fertiliser Spreading Training Course* was devised by Quality Consultants of New Zealand (QCONZ) and supported by Beef + Lamb, the Waikato Regional Council and Environment Canterbury. It costs \$55 and can be accessed at www.qconz.co.nz/spreadmarktrainingcourse.

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Notes:

**The Spreadmark fertiliser placement scheme was established in 1994 to ensure that fertiliser was distributed on the land where it would be of the most agricultural benefit. Spreadmark is the only quality assurance and best-practice benchmark for the ground and aerial spreading industries in New Zealand. Spreadmark accredited companies undergo specific driver training and have their vehicles tested and calibrated regularly. They are also required to undergo a company audit to ensure they can best meet the needs of their customers.*

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