



MEDIA RELEASE

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**Importing fertiliser for personal use is risky business,
warns the Fertiliser Quality Council**

The Fertiliser Quality Council of New Zealand (FQC) is urging anyone contemplating importing fertiliser themselves to think again. The organisation, which is responsible for Fertmark, the fertiliser auditing programme that verifies products so users can be certain they know what they are spreading on their pasture, says importing fertiliser for individual on-farm use is fraught with risk.

Anders Crofoot, Chairman of the FQC, explains that the temptation to import fertiliser for private farm use is often driven by cost. However, he warns farmers and growers not to be fooled by 'cheap' ticket prices displayed online.

“The cost of overseas products might well be cheaper on the surface but importing fertiliser is a very risky business. There are no guarantees about product quality and no guarantee that what you are paying for is what you will receive. Farmers and growers who go down this route either on their own or in a small collective, must accept in good faith that what they are ordering is what they will receive and that all documentation is genuine. The reality, of course, is that they cannot be sure of this information.

“They have to ask themselves whether it is worth saving a few bucks only to take on huge risks? What if the shipment doesn't arrive? What if the product is damaged, arrives wet or as a powder? What if it is completely different from the pre-purchase sample they received?”

Mr Crofoot says in some of these cases there would be no come back. “Scrupulous suppliers will fix any issues but others won't. It's that simple.”

Add to this the fact that once someone buys a fertiliser product from overseas, that product is their responsibility from the point of purchase. This means that should anything untoward happen to the product in transit, then the responsibility falls on the owner.

The FQC reports that around 80% of fertiliser products in New Zealand are tested by internationally recognised auditors - Quality Consultants of New Zealand (QCONZ) – against the Fertmark programme standards. This means the majority of products spread on New Zealand soil are verified. However, that still leaves 20% of fertiliser products in use in New Zealand going untested.

“Farmers and growers who think it’s a good idea to import their own are adding to this percentage of untested products. Only by purchasing their fertiliser from the domestic market, from reputable suppliers and agents, can fertiliser products be proven to be legitimate and where possible - Fertmark approved.

Fertmark is a voluntary fertiliser verification scheme. The FQC encourages fertiliser manufacturers and importers to apply for Fertmark verification. An application form can be downloaded from the FQC website – www.fqc.co.nz.

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