



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**28<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

## **Health & safety top priority for groundspreading industry**

The New Zealand Groundspread Fertilisers Association (NZGFA) is committed to stepping up its health and safety programme to make fertiliser groundspreading safer for all operators.

The NZGFA, which already runs and promotes spreader driver training as being essential to understanding the hazards involved when spreading fertilisers, recently discussed the need to help members review their health and safety policies to ensure only best-practice and robust procedures are in place.

Speaking at the Association's 60<sup>th</sup> annual conference in Nelson last week, re-elected NZGFA President, Brent Scully, said: "Health and safety is a top priority for everyone and our industry is no exception. It is simply not good enough to accept that accidents will happen. We want to help our groundspreaders to significantly reduce risk for themselves and their farmer customers.

"We advocate a closer look at prevention and this means identifying, understanding and documenting potential hazards or situations – as well as putting together firm policies around health and safety. We want our groundspreaders to ask themselves if they are doing everything possible to prevent accidents occurring. And if they aren't sure, we can help."

Mr Scully added that some of the NZGFA regional branches have already been running first-aid courses for groundspreaders. "This is a great initiative and something we encourage throughout the industry."

The increased focus on health and safety comes in the wake of the new Health & Safety at Work Act 2015, released in April this year – and was inspired by several speakers at the Association's recent annual conference.

Delegates were given practical advice from a former WorkSafe NZ special investigator, the NZ Drug Detection Agency, AgSafety NZ as well as forestry contractor and health and safety pioneer Dale Ewers – whose clear logic coupled with care for his employees has greatly helped reduce accidents in the logging industry.

Mr Scully concluded that while the industry has a respectable 60 year history, it is now entering a new era where health, safety and well-being must become part of everyday business. “The ‘she’ll be right’ mind-set is no longer acceptable,” he said.

e n d s

**Note to editors:**

NZGFA was formed in 1956 as a national association to represent fertiliser bulk spreading operators. The membership has grown over the years from the inaugural 29 North Island members to current membership of over 200 fertiliser spreading and allied companies, across seven national branches.

The NZGFA promotes best practice in fertiliser spreading and established the Spreadmark fertiliser placement quality assurance programme in 1994. The Spreadmark scheme is now governed by the Fertiliser Quality Council and operates closely with its sister scheme, Fertmark. The two schemes operate to ensure that high quality fertiliser is manufactured, mixed and spread in a way that precision agriculture is fostered and the environment is protected.