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Media Release

Limestone producers step into the limelight

Limestone producers around the country have formed a new national organisation to represent their interests and get farmers re-focused on the critical need for lime on New Zealand pasture.

Shaun Cleverley, who's GM for Palmer Resources which operates three limestone sites in Canterbury, is the inaugural Chair of the NZ Limestone Producers Association which will work as a division of the Aggregate and Quarrying Association, AQA.

He says it makes sense for the lime industry to pool resources and work together.

"The driving force is that 70-80% of our ad spend is on promoting the use of Aglime, rather than our particular product over a competitor's. Our industry's opportunity is to now have a body to produce and coordinate a lot of the content and science which many of us have been doing alone, often simultaneously."

Limestone quarries produce towards 10% of all quarried materials in New Zealand. Shaun Cleverley says production and sales have been reasonably consistent in recent years but farming has become more intensified which requires more inputs including Aglime.

"What we are certainly not seeing is an increase matching that intensification."

He says that there is a direct correlation between grass or crop growth and the need for Agricultural Lime.

"Every farm will have an element of pH correction required, relative to their production."

Part of the new organisation's pitch is that lime is a natural product, sourced from the earth.

"We are not necessarily competing with other products, but if the soil has the correct pH, this can have a considerable effect on fertiliser efficiency and in some cases this may lead to a reduction in the required fertiliser inputs."

There was much research showing the contribution and importance of lime to New Zealand farming but it sits in a lot of different spaces.

Among the first actions of the NZ Limestone Producers Association is to take an Honours student to help bring together all publications into one place. Greer Manderson's grandfather Jim started Northland's Avoca lime business and her dad Bryce still runs it.

Having just completed Honours at Lincoln to a BSc (Biological and Environmental Sciences) at Canterbury University, Greer says lime has become neglected as a soil conditioner and nutrient. She devoted some of her honours study on the contribution lime plays in New Zealand soils.

The Limestone Producers Association will be based at the AQA/Straterra office in Wellington and largely make use of existing staff. Shaun Cleverley says those bringing together the new body investigated a number of ways to operate it and the fit with the AQA made great sense.

The initial committee of the NZ Limestone Producers Association are:

- Shaun Cleverley, Palmer Resources, Chair, Canterbury
- Craig Hendry, Ravensdown Dunedin.
- Keith Squires, Avoca Lime, Northland
- Matt Webster, Webster Hydrated Lime, Hawkes Bay
- Steve Smith, AB Lime, Southland

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