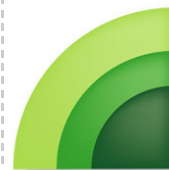




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Innovation featured at Fieldays

Story by Alison Kay

Photographs by Trefor Ward

Fieldays opening day: 1400 sites; 1000 exhibitors; fine weather; best place to start? Kiwi's Best! This exhibition area now in its third year tempts all taste buds with its variety of produce including, fruit, vegetables, nuts, cheese, meat, oils, sweets, beverages – and cooking demonstrations by celebrity chef, Al Brown.

It is one of the most popular areas at the National Agricultural Fieldays at Mystery Creek, near Hamilton – and a perfect

spot for the *Orchardist* team to begin their search for fruitgrower stories.

This year's theme was **“Innovation for future profit”** and Fieldays' exhibitors were aiming to impress visitors with new ideas.

First to catch the attention was blueberry-rich breakfast cereal, Vogel's Super Berry. This was Vogel's first year at the Fieldays and producer Smartfoods Ltd had set out to both increase brand awareness and promote local ingredients.

Launched on the market about two months ago, Vogel's Super Berry is made

from grains soaked in crushed blueberries, supplied exclusively by Ohaupo-based Blueberry Country Ltd.

The company produces 500 tons of fruit each year from 40 varieties, each with different characteristics, and is New Zealand's largest blueberry grower.

Vogel's used the Kiwi's Best exhibition hall to also promote Crunchy Honey cereal, using honey from Clevedon and Super Natural cereal featuring oats from Otago.

Other Kiwi's Best exhibitors featured products made from limes, avocado and nuts.

Outdoors, the team visited the John Deere site, where sales rep Bill Barker admitted some surprise when he fielded an enquiry from a blueberry grower within an hour of opening.

For fruitgrowers, he noted that EZtrak mowers were fast and manoeuvrable in orchards while John Deere Gators were useful as a “mini ute”.

The zero turn and low operating costs of the EZtrak made it popular in orchards.

From top:

The New Zealand Army band performing at the opening ceremony of Fieldays 2010.

The clear evening sky over the Fieldays pavilion at the end of a very successful first day at Fieldays 2010.



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From left:

Agrissentials sales consultant Grant Fallon demonstrating just how finely ground their basalt fertiliser is.

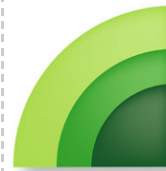
Linn Nelson President of Barnel inc, with their new Anvil Lopper.





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Gators had proved their versatility over 15 years, he said.

“Gators are still very popular. They are very useful, they can carry a passenger – which a tractor can’t – and they don’t go too fast compared to a quad bike.”

Bill noted that Fielddays attendances seemed high for a first day.

“It’s one of the better crowds that I can remember. The weather helps,” he said.

Celebrating 100 years in business, Masport Ltd showcased a range of machines from a pre-1940 hand mower up to the most modern petrol models.

Wellington regional territory manager Mike Reid said the company had been excited to be donated an early 1950s Masport Electric Lawnsprite mower – still

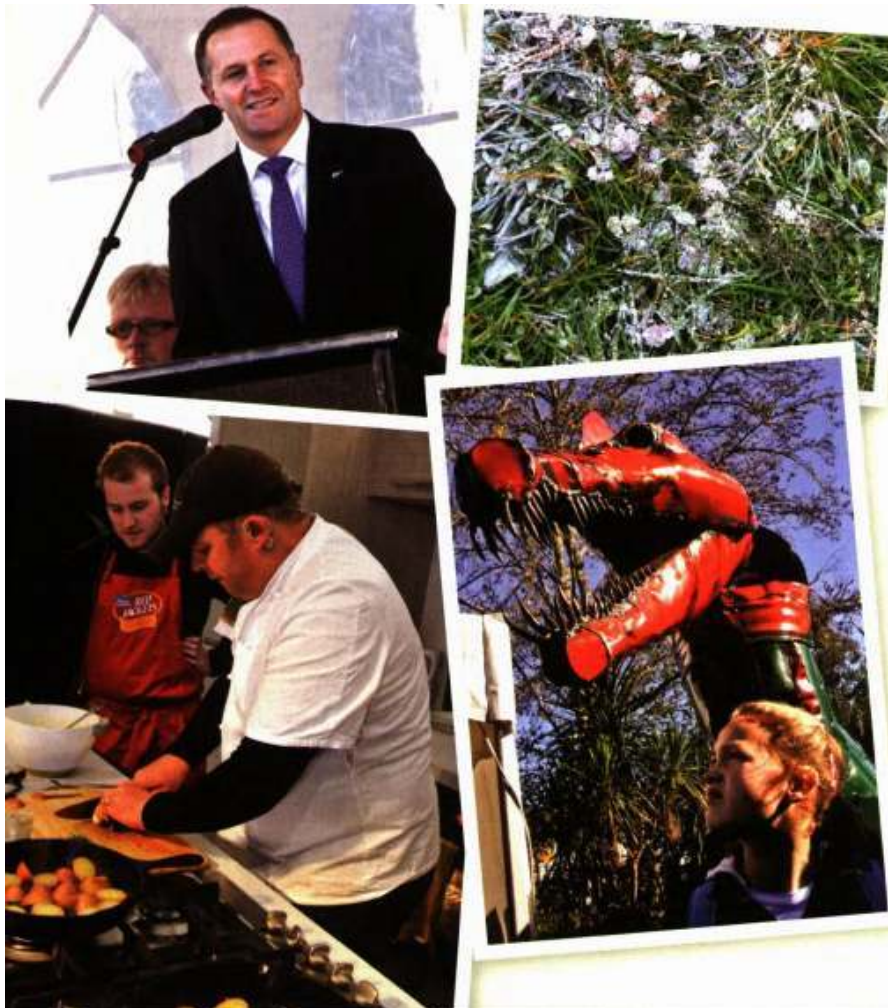
in working order and on display at the Fielddays.

He said their side-throwing utility mower was a popular model with olive and grape growers and those with smaller orchard blocks.

New kiwifruit varieties on offer

Innovation at Zespri meant grower tastings of new trial varieties on the same day the Zespri board was to announce its new cultivar decisions at a meeting in Mt Maunganui.

Communications advisor Megan Heffield said nobody at the Zespri site knew which cultivars would be offered to growers but reactions to the tastings had matched other grower feedback around the country.



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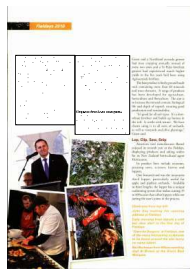
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"Any new cultivar has to bring value to New Zealand growers," Megan said. "These ones in particular will do that. There is an early Gold variety and a later Gold, which will give Zespri a larger selling window. There is also an earlier, sweeter Green which is expected to be popular in the Asian market and extends the Green season."

Innovation didn't just relate to new varieties, Megan said.

"We have a holistic view of innovation. We focus on increasing yields on existing plants rather than increasing the planting area. We also consider sustainability, pest management and marketing issues."

She said visitors to Zespri's public exhibition area had been surprised to learn new cultivars could be grafted onto old vines, meaning plants were only out of production for a year.

Meantime, growers enjoyed visiting Zespri's hospitality area. They could meet key staff, have questions answered, meet other growers, listen to addresses from company leaders each day – and enjoy lunch.

"Everyone loves the sausages!" Megan said.

Organic fertiliser company

Kiwifruit and avocado growers are also among the happy customers of Agrissentials sales consultant Grant Fallon.

The organic fertiliser company works with nature to improve pasture and crops.

Grant said a Northland avocado grower had trees cropping annually instead of every two years and a Te Puke kiwifruit grower had experienced much higher yields in the five years he'd been using Agrissentials fertiliser.

The base product is finely ground basalt rock containing more than 60 minerals and trace elements. A range of products has been developed for agriculture, horticulture and floriculture. The aim is to increase the mineral content, biological life and depth of topsoil, ensuring good production and sustainability.

"It's good for all soil types. It's a slow-release fertiliser and builds up humus in the soil. It works with nature. We have clients using it in all sorts of orchards, as well as vineyards and olive plantings," Grant said.

Lop, Clip, Saw, Snip

American tool manufacturer Barnel enjoyed its seventh year at the Fieldays, displaying products and taking orders for its New Zealand horticultural agent Horticulture.

Its product lines include secateurs, pruning saws, scissors, knives and loppers.

One featured tool was the innovative Anvil lopper, particularly useful for apple and pipfruit orchards. Available in three lengths, the lopper has a unique cushioning system that makes cutting 35 to 40% easier than other loppers while not jarring the user's joints in the process.

Clockwise from top left:

John Key making his opening address at Fieldays

Early morning frost signals a cold but clear start to the first day of Fieldays.

'There be Dragons' at Fieldays, one of the many interesting sculptures to be found around the site (sorry no name taken).

Ben Buchanan from Wilcox assisting chef Al Brown at the Kiwi's Best Marquee.



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“We are always developing new tools. The newest H-series lopper is specifically for horticulture, especially kiwifruit vines,” said Banel international marketing and sales vice president Karl Zeller.

He said the Portland, Oregon company enjoyed being at the Fieldays for the interest in its products and because of the high number of international visitors.

Last year their display was visited by leaders from the Hong Kong Government parks and recreation department. As a result, Banel tools are now used throughout Hong Kong Disneyland.

The company exhibits at other significant agricultural and horticultural shows around the world, including the World Ag Expo in California, EIMA agricultural show in Italy, GAFA garden show in Germany and Gardenex in Japan.

Rural publications highlighted

Another Fieldays’ first-timer was *Orchardist* and *Grower* publisher Format Print. Based in Wellington for more than 40 years, Format publishes a range of magazines, including Rod & Rifle, Young Country, Dairy Exporter and Scope.

Its commercial printing clients include ANZ, BNZ, Vodafone and Telecom, said Format’s Ben Sutton-Davis.

The company was offering magazine subscriptions, promoting its printing services and tempting visitors with delicious miniature pavlovas topped with kiwifruit.

Ben said staff had been pleased with the interest shown – and people had loved the pavlovas.

The final Fieldays visitor total this year was 122,349, well up on 2009, thanks to fine weather each day. Exhibitors reported excellent feedback from visitors and significantly improved trade compared with previous years. Organisers said the post-Fieldays’ exhibitor survey would reveal actual sales generated at the event.

Next year’s theme is “**Breaking Barriers for Productivity**”, a challenge to provide solutions to obstacles that stifle productivity. 🍷



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Clockwise from top left:

(L) Soloman Eagles aged 8 and (R) Cullam Eagles aged 11 from Waitangi Farms in Taumarunui on a John Deere Gator at the John Deere stand.

Ben Sutton-Davis displaying copies of the Orchardist and Grower magazines at the Format Print stand.