



PASTURE RENEWAL WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A new website which highlights the value of more frequent pasture renewal to New Zealand farmers has been launched today by the Pasture Renewal Charitable Trust (PRCT). The address is www.pasturerenewal.org.nz

“We’ve pulled together resources (on the website) that benefit farmers in their knowledge of why frequent pasture renewal is a sound investment. The two calculators available on-line mean the potential viability of renewing individual paddocks can be determined – the key thing is to have realistic figures to input into the model,” says Trust chairman Murray Willocks.

One calculator is designed for the dairy industry in association with Dairy NZ. The other is designed for sheep, beef and deer farmers in consultation with industry personnel.

“More frequent pasture renewal is the most effective way significant production gains can be incorporated into a farming system. Increased pasture productivity is in the interests of farmers and the whole economy. An investment in a renewal rate of 10-12% annually in the dairy sector and 8-10% annually in sheep and beef would significantly increase profits and production efficiencies,” says Mr Willocks.

Currently the national rate of pasture renewal (across all farming sectors) is 3-4% annually.

In addition to the calculators, the website contains articles from farmers who undertake annual pasture renewal programmes, links to the sponsors' websites, a comprehensive literature review on pasture renewal in New Zealand and other resources.

Mr Willocks says, "We have been careful not to outline a generic approach on how to undertake pasture renewal on a property. There are so many variables from farm to farm and region to region. And our research tells us farmers like to make their renewal decisions in discussion with trusted advisors who know their farming operations and goals first hand. So we are leaving the "how to do it advice" up to rural retailers, seed company representatives, consultants and contractors.

"Right now the potential to earn more across the entire pastoral sector is huge. With pasture production providing the foundation for 35% of New Zealand's gross domestic product (GDP), there is a "win-win" for all players involved in the pasture renewal process," says Mr Willocks.

The Trust, which comprises 17 agribusiness organisations, began a campaign in 2007 to work co-operatively to promote the benefits of increased rates of pasture renewal.