



Healthy crops : Healthy animals : Healthy business

## Speech

Agcarm President Mark Christie to the 69<sup>th</sup> Agcarm Annual Conference

James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor

147 The Terrace, Wellington

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New Zealand farmers and growers have been exporting food and fibre for over 150 years. New Zealand's primary industry export revenue is estimated to reach over \$36.7 billion in the year ending June 2016.

Over this time innovation and research based science has allowed New Zealand farmers and growers to become world leaders in productivity and quality - with New Zealand well placed to help feed a growing global population.

These gains are increasingly at risk due to the Politicising of science which is leading to its marginalisation. So arguing for sensible science is one of our industries greatest challenges.

One example relates to glyphosate.

In three separate reports The World Health Organisation concluded that glyphosate is safe for our health, for the environment and even when found in food. However IARC issued a hazard classification which does not assess risk.

As a result some of our councils are being lobbied by the public and politicians to stop its use on city streets and parks. Most of the information they are relying on is incorrect and misleading.

It reminds me of one of my favourite Winston Churchill quotes: A lie gets half way around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.

Unfortunately it is even more evident in our mobile savvy world. It's now more like four times around the world before the truth can get out of bed.

Another example has to do with the EU's criteria for identifying endocrine disruptors.

What are endocrine disruptors? You may ask.

An endocrine disrupter is a natural or synthetic chemical that affects the functioning of the endocrine system. Sunlight, sugar and soy are all endocrine disruptors.

Anything captured by the EU's definition of an endocrine disruptor will be banned.

But the definition is so broad that dangerous substances could be classified alongside chemicals found in things like tea and coffee.

So again we ask that the European Commission assesses the risks, not the hazards of specific endocrine disruptors, because the repercussions are very different.

So I state again - the politicising of science has led to science being marginalised.

This makes Agcarm's role in lobbying for sensible science more important than ever.

For some good news now - and a real win for innovation and science over political advantage - is the proposed increase in data protection.

It's also been the fruition of over 18 years of work by Agcarm.

I'm talking about the ACVM (Data protection) Amendment Bill.

Well I couldn't talk to you without mentioning could I?

Some have argued that we should just wait for the TPPA to come into effect. This would have been a major mistake for two reasons.

Firstly, because animal health products are not covered under this Free Trade Agreement; and

Secondly - because of the uncertainty of the TPPA being passed into legislation – especially due to the political situation in the USA. A potential building of walls!

The ACVM Amendment Bill will mean an increase in data protection:

- 10 years protection for innovative products; and
- 5 years for new uses, reassessments, reformulations.

This is fantastic and a bit sad at the same time. It's fantastic because it will mean more choice and better, more environmentally-friendly agrichemical products get to market.

The sad news is that future Agcarm presidents won't have anything to talk about.....

What are the next steps for data protection?

The Bill needs to go through its second reading, before it is considered by the whole House. After the third and final reading, it is passed into law. This is expected to take place by September. The legislation and regulations are then written, with the change expected to take place between July and September 2017.

Naturally registrants will be waiting to take advantage of this new legislation.

But ACVM are not meeting regulatory timeframes as it is. So, this time next year, delays will be even longer.

This is despite application fee costs increasing by between 40 and over 200 percent in the past two years.

I therefore encourage you to liaise with Dr Jan Quay – technical director for Agcarm so that she can update the regulatory bodies on the number of product applications expected around this time. Hopefully additional resources can be allocated to cope with the extra workload.

On another very positive note – Agcarm annually provides two scholarships to support education and raise awareness about careers in Agcarm-related industries.

This year's entries from Massey University were all of an exceptionally high quality and picking a winner from the two categories was especially difficult.

Our agricultural/horticultural scholarship winner, Sarah Ross, wants to use her education to help less privileged nations. She wishes to educate growers on how to better manage crops and increase yields. This is a goal we share with her and we are very pleased to support her in her goal of using agriculture to help the world.

Sarah is here with us today. Congratulations again Sarah. Members - please make her feel welcome. And no – she is no relation to Mark Ross.

Our veterinary science scholarship winner, Ben Mitchell, believes that new animal health medicines are needed to help manage disease resistance in animals.

This is of great importance to Agcarm. Having the right animal health products available is critical to managing resistance.

Compared with other countries, New Zealand doesn't have significant evidence of antimicrobial resistance. But we do need to know more about disease and resistance prevalence.

So Agcarm is working with government and industry to gather local information.

Monitoring the use of antimicrobials will allow us to make decisions based on sound data, rather than making changes under pressure from our trading.

We will hear from Nigel French, Professor of Food Safety and Veterinary Public Health on antimicrobial resistance in foodborne pathogens, this afternoon.

Another industry initiative that Agcarm is heavily involved in is helping farmers to manage parasites on farms. Under the Wormwise banner, Agcarm and industry experts have beefed up resources to inform farmers of the simple, but important strategies to manage internal parasites in animals.

The first meeting of the Wormwise trust was in March. There is now a new Wormwise website, regular newsletters and educational programmes to ensure researched and up to date information is shared across the country.

On the global front, Agcarm has taken up an industry observer role on the VICH steering committee - the International Cooperation on Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Registration of Veterinary Medicinal Products.

Agcarm's role will be to represent our industries views at the global decision table.

Agcarm works closely with a number of international counterparts to foster greater global alignment around stewardship of products and their use. This includes Animal Medicines Australia.

On the plant health side, Agcarm works closely with our global equivalents - Croplife Asia, Croplife Australia and Croplife International.

Locally Agcarm has a strong stewardship focus and we will hear from two speakers regarding activities that Agcarm is closely aligned with – container and unused product recycling, and bee health.

Being a trustee of Agrecovery, the container recycling programme, Agcarm is striving to improve the service to farmers and members.

A review is underway on the scheme's management. A tender process for services will start later this year to ensure the effective long-term delivery of the programme and value for money for scheme funders. We will hear from Agrecovery's business manager, Simon Andrew, later today.

Bee health is critical for agriculture and horticulture in New Zealand. We all know this. We welcome unified support for our bee industry. I am looking forward to hearing from the chief executive of the newly established Apiculture New Zealand – Daniel Paul - later this morning.

To sum up, I have briefly covered just a few of the things that Agcarm does to ensure our (\$36 Billion) primary industries stay competitive. NZ's strong export focus is unique. So sound science is critical to ensure innovation, quality and productivity is continually advanced. And that trade barriers do not to block already tightly regulated food imports.

I would like to welcome our new members.

Since the summer conference in February:

Ceva has joined as an Animal health manufacturer.

Rebecca Fisher from Market Access Solutionz and

Donald Nordeng from BioGro have joined as individual associate members.

A very warm welcome.

I'd also like to thank the Agcarm board for its hard work during the year. I thank especially our five retiring members:

Just Hurst – who has been on the board for 12 years (2004) and was Agcarm's President for two years (from 2010 to 2012). Justin is currently our longest serving Immediate past president!

Peter Merson - Peter has been on the board for eight years (2008).

Holger Detje – having been a board member since 2011 (five years), he is moving to take a role in Korea.

Michael Voerman – who has been on the board for two years (2014)

Paul Koffman - Paul is continuing the tradition of Vice Presidents getting moved, through mergers or overseas transfers. He is moving back to the States after two very active years on the board. Thanks and congratulations Paul.

I hope you will join us this evening to farewell them.

Later today we elect new members to our board. Along with excellent governance skills they bring fresh ideas and perspectives to ensure that Agcarm continues to provide a relevant and important service to its members. And, just as importantly, that they maintain Agcarm's relevance to Government and other key industry bodies - as the recognised peak voice for the animal health and crop protection industries.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Mark Ross as CE, Dr Jan Quay (technical director, animal health), Dominique Bray (communications) and Lee Sheppard (events and administration) for their excellence in the execution of Agcarm's strategies. Without their hard work, today would not be possible.

Finally I'd like to thank you, the members, for your support of Agcarm during the year.

I also encourage you to get involved with Agcarm. Actively get engaged at meetings, at conferences like these, and at regulator workshops. Because the more you engage, the more you will get out of Agcarm.

Thank you.

On that note I'd like to introduce our next speaker.

ENDS