

*What The Entrants Say*

# About The Awards...



Ballance Farm Environment Awards

CANTERBURY

## *In general*

I wasn't that excited initially about entering, but the feedback from people was very good. It was nice rubbing shoulders with like-minded people. I think they (the awards) are an excellent idea, and particularly good PR for farming too.

- *Tim Anderson*

It is a pretty well run and sponsored competition. I think the awards are fundamentally the right thing to be doing, from environmental, public relations and individual learning perspectives. One of the reasons we entered was because it was the peak of the dirty dairying campaign and as much as anything we wanted to see if we could in some small way help influence the negative image being portrayed about our industry and also benchmark ourselves.

- *Chris Bolderston*

They were very good. It was pretty helpful to get an independent appraisal of what we do on our farm. The experience of entering was certainly beneficial to us, and we will probably enter again at some stage. It brings issues to the fore you have to consider.

- *Brian Leadley*

Entering was very good, mainly because it made us aware of the things you can improve on the farm to be more environmentally conscious. We might enter again next year because we've got a couple of new programmes going through concerned with traceability and fertiliser and chemical use. We're now more conscious of different approaches to cultivation. Good ideas were tossed around about no tillage and minimum tillage. It was a chance to see how other people handle things.

- *Jeffrey Bruce*

## *The judging process*

The judges were very relaxed without any pressure. There was not pressure to front up with a lot of data. I got a feeling the judges got a good understanding of our philosophy and the way we use the land. I enjoyed the feedback from the judges, and the report was of value.

- *Tim Anderson*

The three judges were all easy going and laid back. I didn't feel pressured that I had to prove myself. I learnt a bit from them and hopefully they learnt something from me.

- *Tony Allan*

We had a good team of judges, and got pretty good feedback from them. All communicated well with us on what we're doing. It was a challenge to us as competitors to be reasonably organised in our thoughts as to how we wanted to approach the judging time.

- *Brian Leadley*

The judges were very good. We learnt a bit about soil structure from them. It was definitely good fun. The judges were very relaxed. They listened while I explained what we're about, and they offered tips and ideas quite freely. We gained a little bit more knowledge from the judges because they look at things in a totally different light and give new perspectives without any commercial bias.

- *Jeffrey Bruce*

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## The benefits

The whole process of two lots of judging, the awards and subsequent field days provided a great opportunity to learn and interact with like minded people and to compare farming systems.

- *Chris Bolderston*

Confidence, reassurance. I'm a young fellow starting out, and it was a boost for me. A wee bit of advice. General sort of ideas I hadn't maybe thought of.

- *Tony Allan*

We did have a few small changes we implemented as a result of the awards. In our longer term plan we took notice of all their comments. It helps you focus on what you are doing and confirms whether you've got things right or need to fine tune things.

- *Brian Leadley*

The report we got was good and straight up, it didn't offer too much criticism. The people who were winning awards were doing something exceptional. It was a benefit to us to talk to them and see how those guys operate. The awards night itself was a very good night out.

- *Jeffrey Bruce*

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## What they'd say to others about entering...

Anything that requires you to front up occasionally is good for you. Initially we didn't get excited because you want the farm to look good. You will certainly want to do a pre-run check.

- *Tim Anderson*

If you think you've got something beneficial give it a go, you've got nothing to lose. There's probably a lot of people out there who don't feel confident enough. I was one of them. I would be keen to have another go in a few years time.

- *Tony Allan*

It is becoming more of an imperative for us as food producers to the world that we keep ahead of other suppliers to provide us with not only access but hopefully premiums. This competition provides the opportunity to see how far along the environmental road you and your operation is.

- *Chris Bolderston*

I would definitely recommend people to have a go. It's certainly a beneficial experience doing it just to see what it's about. By being in those awards it makes you conscious of what is and what is not sustainable.

- *Jeffrey Bruce*

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## Who are these people?

Tim Anderson is a stud and commercial sheep farmer near Conway Flat in North Canterbury. He farms with wife Sue.

Tony Allan, Mackenzie Country sheep and beef farmer in partnership with wife Sharon.

Brian Leadley Mid -Canterbury arable farmer. Farms with wife Rachel.

Jeffrey Bruce South Canterbury arable farmer. Farms with wife Andrea.

Chris Bolderston and wife Diane run a dairy farm near Hinds in Mid-Canterbury.

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