

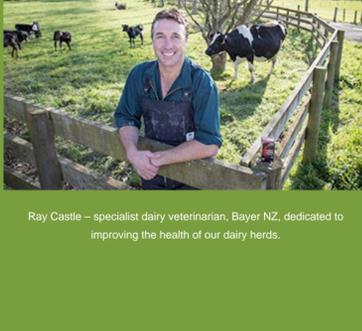
Nau mai. Haere mai. Ki te pānui o RHANZ mō tēnei wiki (Te Reo for welcome to the RHANZ Newsletter for this week).

In this issue: Erosion of NZ rural services has to stop, Bayer NZ working hard to address health and nutrition issues for rural communities, rural research day as part of the National Rural Health Conference, plus a selection of relevant media and research articles...

Who are RHANZ?

The Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand represents a united voice from across multiple rural sector organisations. Our aim is to provide solutions and influence policy affecting the health and wellbeing of rural communities.

[Visit our website](#)



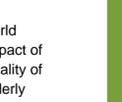
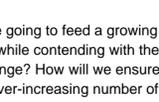
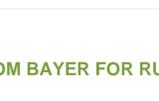
Ray Castle – specialist dairy veterinarian, Bayer NZ, dedicated to improving the health of our dairy herds.

We thank our strategic partner and supporters.

Strategic Partner



Strategic Supporters



STRONG SUPPORT FROM BAYER FOR RURAL NEW ZEALAND



How are we going to feed a growing world population while contending with the impact of climate change? How will we ensure quality of life for an ever-increasing number of elderly people? These are two critical world challenges that Bayer is focused on meeting head on.

They are challenges the company is not addressing alone. We partner with a range of organisations, such as RHAANZ, to address unmet societal challenges.

Bayer's operations in New Zealand are primarily focused on the rural sector. Our Animal Health and Crop Science divisions are our largest here, but we also have important Consumer Health and Pharmaceuticals divisions too.

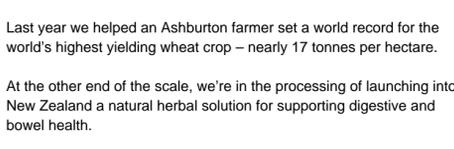
Partnering with RHAANZ is a natural fit and one our New Zealand team is looking forward to developing further.

Key health and wellbeing initiatives we're supporting include enabling rural health students from Auckland University to attend the suicide prevention workshop Safe Hands, Safe Plans as part of the National Rural Health Conference.

We're also looking forward to lending a hand at the Health Hub, National Fielddays, in June, and providing educational material on a range of health and wellbeing topics.

All Bayer New Zealand employees are entitled to a paid day off per year to do voluntary work. We had a couple of our rural employees volunteer for RHAANZ at the recent Central District Fielddays and are looking forward to more opportunities as our partnership develops.

As for those worldwide challenges - Bayer is a company founded on innovation. Ten percent of our global sales go back into developing better medicines and the production of high quality food.



Eric Watson – world record holder for highest yielding wheat crop grown in partnership with Bayer.

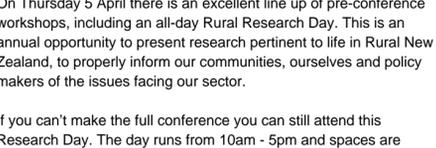
Last year we helped an Ashburton farmer set a world record for the world's highest yielding wheat crop – nearly 17 tonnes per hectare.

At the other end of the scale, we're in the processing of launching into New Zealand a natural herbal solution for supporting digestive and bowel health.



We're working hard to address health and nutrition issues and look forward to supporting and working with RHAANZ for the betterment of rural New Zealand.

By William Malpass, Communications Manager, Bayer New Zealand.



8 more sleeps to go until the National Rural Health Conference 2018. A great Programme is ready to launch along with some fantastic networking opportunities with rural health professionals, agribusiness groups and rural communities.

On Thursday 5 April there is an excellent line up of pre-conference workshops, including an all-day Rural Research Day. This is an annual opportunity to present research pertinent to life in Rural New Zealand, to properly inform our communities, ourselves and policy makers of the issues facing our sector.

If you can't make the full conference you can still attend this Research Day. The day runs from 10am - 5pm and spaces are available. Students and registrars can attend for \$25 and everyone else for \$85. [Click here](#) to view the programme.

The Rural Research Day has been endorsed by The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners (RNZCGP) and has been approved for up to 5.67 CME credits for the General Practice Educational Programme (GPEP) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) purposes.

If you have already registered for the conference and wish to attend, please email Emma registration@conference.nz to add this to your registration.

If you haven't registered yet, please click below. You can attend this day only by selecting 'Thursday only' as your registration type.

[Click here to register now](#)

Media Watch

Massey signs agreement to partner with National Fielddays Society

Massey University will be a partner of the health and wellbeing programme that was successfully implemented at Fielddays in 2017. The College of Health at Massey University is a member of the Rural Health Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand and wants to help ensure research-led education makes a difference to outcomes in New Zealand rural health.

"We look forward to working with Fielddays to be part of the community improving health and well-being in rural New Zealand," says College of Health Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Jane Mills. "Optimal health is the result of many factors including the individual person, the environment and society they live in. There are many opportunities to make a difference." (Voxy)

[Read more](#)

Mobile towers coming to improve black spots in Manawātū and Rangitīkei

Mobile blackspots in Manawātū, Rangitīkei and Whanganui will be boosted with the addition of 31 cell towers.

The three Central North Island regions have been earmarked by the Rural Connectivity Group as the lifeblood of rural New Zealand, where better mobile coverage could drive economic growth and productivity.

The group was appointed by the Government to deliver new mobile and broadband coverage to 30,000 rural homes and businesses, 1000 kilometres of state highways and 90 tourist destinations by December 2022. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

Air New Zealand feels Shane Jones' wrath over axed regional air links

Regional Economic Development Minister Shane Jones has given a blunt warning to Air New Zealand to stop shutting down its regional air links.

The extraordinary censure from the NZ First MP came during last Friday's announcement that the Government was stamping up \$1.75 million towards the \$4.75m cost of building a new terminal at Bay of Islands Airport near Kerikeri.

Striding towards Air NZ's regional affairs manager, Ian Collier, Jones said "terminal" was a fitting word for the warning he was about to deliver.

"Don't keep closing down regional air links. And take that message to your supervisors." (NZ Herald)

[Read more](#)

Rural midwife crisis 'unfair' for pregnant women

The number of rural birthing units being closed or downgraded has reached crisis point, Rural Women New Zealand says. The group's health spokesperson, Margaret Pittaway, says the shortage of midwives and birthing support for rural communities is alarming.

There are at least 72 vacant positions for midwives in hospitals across the country. (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

Rural practitioners to convene at Pinnacle rural symposium

On Saturday 21 April 2018, primary care health practitioners based rurally across the Midland region of New Zealand will congregate in Te Aroha for Pinnacle's first rural symposium in four years.

Convened by Pinnacle Incorporated's Rural Service Level Alliance Team (SLAT), the free day-long event is designed for rural general practitioners and nurses, and will this year cover new approaches to delivering health services in rural communities.

Pinnacle's medical director, and rural GP owner Dr Jo Scott-Jones said attendees will hear from at least eight industry experts about rurally relevant skills-based topics.

"These include rural chest pain, psychological emergencies in remote locations, Primary Response in Medical Emergencies (PRIME), minor surgery, mobile health solutions, and a panel addressing sustainable rural primary care. (NZ Doctor)

[Read more](#)

Go for 5G, but bring rural NZ along too

New Zealand's ambitions to get on with the roll-out of 5G technology should be applauded but don't put dealing with woeful rural coverage on the back-burner, Federated Farmers Vice-President Andrew Hoggard says. (Federated Farmers)

[Read more](#)

Poor mobile coverage leaves rural firefighters to miss emergency callouts

Firefighters are missing emergency callouts and arriving at scenes without a full crew because of poor mobile coverage in rural areas, according to volunteer fire brigades.

Volunteer firefighters in rural Manawātū and Rangitīkei often relied on text messages to alert them to callouts but mobile blackspots in the regions were causing them to miss emergencies when text messages arrived hours after being sent, Cheltenham fire officer Ian Corbett says.

He said many of his team lived out of town in neighbouring villages, such as Waituna West, Kīwitea and Feilding, and couldn't hear the siren at the fire station. (Stuff)

[Read more](#)

West Otago Health may lose after hours emergency service

Residents in West Otago are worried they may soon be without an after hours emergency service, leaving the community vulnerable. If you call 111 for a health emergency in rural Tapanui, Millers Flat or Heriot, it's likely that medical staff from West Otago Health turns up to help.

But the medical centre's chairperson, Alistair Body, said that after hours service was under threat.

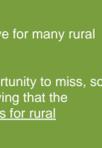
"Since June 2015 we have been on a series of transition payments, so essentially the funding that we had for after hours service from Southern District Health Board [SDHB] through WellSouth [Primary Health Network] has been decreasing," he said. (Radio NZ)

[Read more](#)

CE Column

Erosion of NZ rural services has to stop

Media over the last fortnight has issued rife with stories about rural services under threat – hospitals, schools, midwifery and after hours services, then we had the outburst from Shane Jones criticising Air New Zealand for making further cuts to flights across rural and provincial NZ.



I personally thought Minister Jones' comments were right on the money and exactly the type of advocacy I'd expect from a Minister of Economic and Regional Development.

Bravo – he certainly hit a raw nerve for many rural people!

We thought this too good an opportunity to miss, so issued our own media release saying that the "endless gnawing away at services for rural communities has gone too far"

We also gave the Government some accolades for its commitment to reinstate "rural proofing" across government departments. This was a key election ask from RHAANZ and we are delighted it has been taken up. Our chairperson, Dr Martin London, has been invited to be part of the expert advisory group guiding this work. Given that Air NZ is 51% owned by the taxpayer we'd expect that "rural proofing" will be applied to them as well.

On another good news story, donations are continuing to flow in from our Wellness Campaign from Central Districts Fielddays, including through our [Give A Little Site](#) which we have not been promoting specifically. Every dollar helps and some of the comments are heart-warming, for example:

"I am very passionate about this work, and I would love to put my hand up to be of help in any way they feel there is a need that I could fill. I have been in the Mental Health System here in Northland. (If you could call it a system) Sorry but I have struggled to survive for nearly 13 Years, and if it were not for the LOVE, and support of my Family, and close Friends I would not be here today. This was until the 12th February 2018 I am now totally FREE of all symptoms relating to either PDSD or Bi Polar 2. So if I could just help one person throughout their struggle with depression or anxiety, to never give up on HOPE. Then my struggle has been worthwhile. Now I know that I would not come close to the influence our wonderful John Kirwan has had on so many lives, here in NZ. With his story of HOPE. But like I said if I could make a difference to just one person then my life has been made the richer, and I would be so happy to be giving back some of what I was given during my journey. Thank you."

Vodafone has confirmed our text donation lines will remain open through March and April so if you can think of a way to encourage your colleagues, friends and family to make a donation please feel free to do so. [Click here](#) to access the postcard promoting this facility.

Please make sure the words "text WELLNESS to 4644 to donate \$3 to RHAANZ" appear in your message. Many thanks.

Cheers and best wishes
Michelle

Subscribe

Anyone interested in rural health is welcome to subscribe to this newsletter. Keep up to date with us by [subscribing now](#).

Member Column

Would you like to contribute an article for our newsletter? Tell a story about yourself or one of your members or something you're passionate about. Email your item to Michelle ce@rhaanz.org.nz

Media Watch

Growing hostility between urban and rural says professor

Growing hostility between New Zealand's urban and rural communities has been observed by a keynote speaker at a planning conference in Tauranga.

Professor Paul Spoonley of Massey University was taking part in a wide-ranging panel discussion on the final day yesterday of the New Zealand Planning Institute's conference at ASB Arena.

The hostility together with reducing the size of dairy herds and preventing the spread of New Zealand cities across fertile soils were among the issues to emerge during the final session of the conference. (Newstalk ZB)

[Read more](#)

Midwifery 'crisis' in Whanganui: 'Burnt out' and 'working for free'

A Whanganui midwife says she will be forced to give up the profession she loves if the "midwifery crisis" is not taken seriously.

The New Zealand College of Midwives have estimated that rural midwives, like Whanganui's Jessica Mill, are earning around \$7.38 an hour after tax and expenses. They say the profession is at breaking point.

Miss Mill, a solo mother of two children under 5, admitted that there are some days when she struggles to get food on her children's plates.

"I pay about \$300 a week for child-care because I'm on-call 24/7. I am the mum who never makes it to birthday parties. It's tough." (NZ Herald)

[Read more](#)

RESEARCH & RESOURCES WATCH

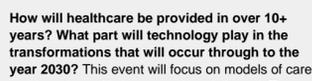
Wellbeing and Mental Distress in Aotearoa New Zealand: Snapshot 2016, Study by HPA

This snapshot report summarises key findings from the 2016 Mental Health Monitor and 2016 Health and Lifestyles Survey.

Participants reported that the experience of mental distress was common (personally or among people they knew) and that mental distress was more than depression and/or anxiety, and included feeling isolated, overwhelmed by stress and not being able to cope. Awareness of mental distress in self or others was associated with more positive attitudes but participants indicated a reluctance to disclose mental distress in some environments, such as workplaces. Social isolation (also known as loneliness) emerged as an important concern. It was strongly associated with depression, anxiety and other forms of distress, particularly among young people.

[See the full article.](#)

Events Watch



National Rural Health Conference, Pullman Hotel, Auckland, 5-8 April 2018.

The dates are Thursday, April 5 to Sunday, April 8, with the two main conference and exhibition days being Friday, April 6 and Saturday, April 7.

6th RRHS Symposium will explore current research in rural and remote health

The 6th Rural and Remote Health Scientific Symposium, Outback Infront, is being held in Canberra on 11-12 April 2018 and [registration is now open](#). With its sights fixed on the future, the Symposium program will reflect the breadth and depth of current research in the rural and remote health sector today.

Emerging Tech in Health, 22 May 2018, Christchurch

How will healthcare be provided in over 10+ transformations that will occur through to the year 2030? This event will focus on models of care, and how they will change and be delivered. The presentations will have a clinical and patient outcome focus whilst highlighting how technology will be developed and used to support these outcomes.

<http://www.hinz.org.nz/?page=2018RETH>



All creatures GREAT & SMALL 2018 NZVA conference | 19-22 June 2018

ClaudeLands Events Centre, Hamilton www.nzva.org.nz/conference2018

[See website for lists of topics and incredible speakers.](#)

International Conference for Rural & Remote Nurses & Midwives

Leading primary healthcare in a changing world. 20-22 September 2018, Queensland, Australia.

[Find out more.](#)

15th National Rural Health Conference

24-27 March 2019, Hobart Tasmania.

[Find out more.](#)