



Ravensdown PGP Programme Quarterly Progress Summary Report

Contract reporting period: July - September 2014

Quarter 1 of the 2014/15 year has provided an excellent opportunity to review the upcoming work programme. The 2014/15 annual business plan for the programme was updated and approved. A major advance from this update was the purchase of sophisticated sensing equipment which will enable the programme to continue to develop robust relationships between sensed data and underlying pasture and soil fertility. A workshop was held in early September with the programme personnel from AgResearch, Massey and Ravensdown, reviewing the first nine months of the programme and planning the extremely intensive sampling period that will be commencing in the next quarter of the programme.

Activities against the data collection and collation objective continued in this quarter with a fourth field sampling carried out on Limestone Downs, the programme's first research farm in July to investigate winter pasture/sensing relationships. To date a total of 1992 soil and 1823 plant tissues samples have been collected.

Encouraging preliminary results relating pasture nutrient levels to sensing data have been strengthened further although it is still early days and the main focus remains collecting a high quality robust dataset. In an ancillary Ravensdown funded project (that is not part of the PGP programme), Ravensdown continues to make very good progress on testing its generation two technology enabling more precise aerial fertiliser applications to hill country. The aircraft has been operating now for close to nine months and is proving reliable. This system enables a prescription map to be loaded into the aircraft and inform the fertiliser application.
