



## **Ballance wins inaugural Smart Farming Award**

Ballance Agri-Nutrients' breakthrough environmental planning tool, MitAgator, has taken out the inaugural South Island Agricultural Field Days Smart Farming Award.

Backed by 30 years of independent science from AgResearch, MitAgator helps farmers reduce contaminant losses that impact water quality.

As agriculture has become more sophisticated, technology that allows farmers to work smarter has assumed greater importance. To acknowledge these changing times and the role innovation plays in helping farmers meet the demands they face, South Island Agricultural Field Days (SIAFD) has initiated the Smart Farming Award.

The Canterbury consultancy firm Agri Magic Ltd sponsors the Smart Farming Award, which was decided on Friday March 15<sup>th</sup>. The judges who selected the winner were BLINC Innovation's Toni Laming, ANZCO founder Sir Graeme Harrison and primary sector business innovator, Richard Green.

The judges were unanimous in their decision and say that MitAgator was a standout given that the key judging criteria centred on new technology that enables improved decision making and adds value to agricultural businesses.

Ballance Agri-Nutrients chief executive Mark Wynne welcomed the award as endorsement of MitAgator, a farming tool that has been 10 years in the making.

"MitAgator will change the way we farm in New Zealand for the better. It gives farmers a speedo on their dashboard that takes the guesswork out of 'farming within limits' by mapping hotspots for the four key water contaminants – nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and E.coli pathogens," Mark says.

"This tool is tailored for today's farming because it shows where to invest to achieve the greatest environmental gain. Farmers know where the real risks are and where they can make the biggest impact for every dollar they spend, whether that should be fencing a stream or building a wetland."

MitAgator was developed by Ballance Agri-Nutrients with financial support from the Primary Growth Partnership.

It is available to farmers through Ballance's team of Farm Sustainability advisors. Its Risk Map and Scenario Analysis deliver a new gold standard in Farm Environment plans.

The judges also gave a Special Award for emerging innovation to Kiwi company Halter for its virtual fencing and animal movement technology. The concept is in its early days but is truly innovative, they say.

The judges wanted to encourage Halter's 'out-of-the-box thinking' with a Special Award. Halter has thanked the judges for the special award and says they would like to donate their prize money to the Muslim community in Christchurch.

Organisers say the inaugural Smart Farming Award attracted some first-rate entries. FarmIQ and Groundtruth's smartfarms.co.nz website, were also finalists and excellent contenders worthy of mention.

Smartfarms.co.nz and FarmIQ both provide a framework and technology that can be applied in a range of ways to provide farmer value.

Agri Magic managing director Charlotte Glass says the calibre of the entrants for the inaugural award was outstanding and Agri Magic is proud to sponsor them.

"Innovation and providing value to farmers are very dear to our hearts at Agri Magic. The focus of SIAFD has always been on comparative demonstrations and this is a great opportunity for farmer to compare the latest technology options at the Kirwee event too."

Make time to visit the sites of the award winners and finalists or seek them out on-line.

Award finalists with sites at SIAFD March 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> include:

Ballance Agri Nutrients – Site 228

Halter – Covered site C62,

FarmIQ – within the Farmlands site.