

VET PRODUCT UPDATE

Farmers invited to test new grazing app

Wanted: Beta test farms for a novel, data-driven app to help farmers fight triple drench resistance with strategic grazing.



Ryan Luckman.

The team behind DAGI - short for Drench and Grazing Integration - is recruiting up to 150 farms for this next step in development, and is keen to hear from anyone interested.

"We want the farms to be a good representation of NZ farms generally, so different sizes, locations, models, are all invited to get in touch," says DAGI inventor and vet Ryan Luckman.

"We would like farms to be able to give us the name of their vet who they'll be working with, so that we can support them in how to get the most out of DAGI as well."

Luckman says the plan is to set the beta test farmers off in cohorts of about 50 each, with roughly a month in between each.

Farms that sign up will pay \$600 for a year subscription, which is usually \$1000, but the year only starts from the time the team is 100 per cent happy with the app.

That means their involvement will probably last up to 18 months, if not more.

DAGI aims to give farmers heat maps identifying high-risk parasite zones on their properties in real time, so they can make better decisions about which mobs to graze where and how to use refugia to slow the development of resistance.

Support for the concept in the past 12 months has been fantastic, Luckman says, from individual vets, practices and farmers, to labs, farm management system suppliers, pharmaceutical companies, the Sheep and Beef Cattle Vets branch of the NZVA, Beef + Lamb NZ, and Wormwise.

"We've also had some international support - multiple organisations in the UK

are keen to discuss getting DAGI over there, plus contacts in Chile and Sweden have expressed interest."

Production animal vet Grace Boardman has joined the team to help drive the project, and will be the go-to support person for farmers and vets as the app is rolled out.

Luckman says having originally trained in the United Kingdom, she has insights from that market that will help the international transition, and she will be meeting key contacts there during a planned visit of several months next year.

"We've also had some fantastic help from time to time from other vets and farmers, who have flown the DAGI flag for us at various events that we haven't been able to get to. Brendan Lane and Euan Tait - many thanks!"

Showcasing DAGI in the Innovation Hub at Mystery Creek this year was a perfect chance to take farmers' pulse about the app, and drench resistance in general, and Luckman was heartened by what the team heard.

"As exhibitors it was great to chat to the farmers and realise what a difference DAGI is going to make to them, as well as how keen they are for tools to help them with drench resistance.

"Many of them know things need to change imminently and actively want to be a part of that shift.

"It's inspiring to see the industry so driven to act, and definitely reassures me that it can be done. There's plenty of will out there, we just need to provide the support."

General feedback so far is that DAGI is making refugia and avoidance easier to visualise, and that integration with farm management programs already used on farm is essential, he says.

Thus the team is continuing to discuss this

with existing farm management platforms like FarmIQ, Resolution and Mobble to eliminate the need for double data entry and make it as easy as possible to adopt the tool with minimal disruption.

"So far all are keen to be involved and we are just working on how to physically manage the integration."

This feature won't be ready for the beta test roll-out, but part of that particular process is making sure that the app as a standalone does everything it's supposed to do.

"We can then go down the road of fitting it into other software - but we are putting the foundations in place now."

Luckman started working on DAGI after his own experience in practice at The Vet Centre Waimate with his farmers.

"Every week, I was having more conversations with farmers about drench resistance. It was clear something had to change."

Managing parasite risk isn't just about drenching - it requires careful tracking of grazing history, paddock conditions, and worm populations.

But keeping all that data organised is nearly impossible without the right tools, he says.

Instead of relying solely on drenches, DAGI focuses on prevention and strategic parasite control, first by reducing exposure to worm larvae and second by using refugia.

By mapping paddocks and analysing grazing patterns, DAGI helps farmers make better decisions about where to move their stock, reducing parasite risk.

It also visualises which paddocks have the highest resistance risk, helping farmers with their refugia practices, preserving effective treatments for longer.

Support for DAGI development has come from Beef + Lamb NZ, as well as the NZ Veterinary Association.

