Quote attributed to C.P. McMeekan

• “research is useless unless it is applied” (Scott, 1997)

• And it cannot be applied if farmers do not know about it

So what can we do?
Farmlet studies

• Viewing is important to farmers.
• Farmlet studies allow not only to do the work but for farmers to visit and view at differing stages of the year.
• Able to discuss treatments and management for a group and also for the farms at that time of year.
How can we do it?

• Finding innovative ways to get the information to farmers: website, local papers, National Farming papers, FaceBook, WhatsApp, Webinars, videos.

• Importantly, we need to keep thinking about how to get farmers involved. So systems have to be simple.

• Annual open days such as at Teagasc.
1940’s in New Zealand
- Ruakura Farmers’ Conference & field days

1980’s
- A quarterly production of a video called “Farming with pictures”. Research & commercial farms
- The “RED Squad” followed a farmlet under trial for a year.

Currently
- DNZ website – example is pre graze mowing - weekly data updates & video clip
Information flow

Researcher

Farmer
But we are not all involved in farmlet studies

- But we can visit the farmers
- Join in with discussion groups
- Get to know what they are thinking
Scientific or farmer credibility?

- We must involve farmers/stakeholders in planning process
- Where are you going to publish?
- Science papers in peer reviewed journals are good for scientific credibility but not for farmer knowledge
- Information must be available to farmers
A must for all agricultural scientists

• Scientists must get out to talk to farmers – we need to understand what they are thinking.
• Farmers are quite innovative and we can learn a lot from them.
• Farmers want to be able to be told about the trial by the person doing the research, not just getting a report from someone on it.