

# market this season

**N**RM has launched its own, independently-branded whey-based calf milk replacer (CMR) product in time for this year's calf rearing season.

NRM Power Whey was launched at National Fielddays last month and supply will begin later this season.

But it is losing its high profile veterinary consultant Dr Bas Schouten, who joined the company three years earlier to support and promote the alternative whey-based milk powder (Denkavit Whey) to calf rearers.

Denkavit Whey will this season be marketed through Fonterra's subsidiary NZ AgBiz.

NRM business manager Rev Crawford says he is having to advise customers and farmers that Schouten has signed with Fonterra.

"Obviously we are disappointed to lose a person of Bas' character and qualifications as he was instrumental in leading the charge of informing the market of the superior qualities of whey based CMRs three years ago when we first launched.

"At the same time we take some huge positives from this move. Not the least of these is further validation of the efficacy of whey-based CMRs, which NRM fought so hard to establish in the market.

"Fonterra's action of taking (NRM's) Denkavit Whey CMR brand and the person who has fronted its marketing

and sales strategy is an endorsement by Fonterra that NRM's strategy has been right."

Crawford says NRM has always believed whey-based products would play a major part in the future of CMRs, as an alternative to more costly casein-based products. The company had provided Dr Schouten as an independent resource and advisor for farmers.

"We knew we had to provide independent, expert advice to prospective farmers, and Bas had a free hand. NRM relied on him as much as farmers did, and he did a great job for us both.

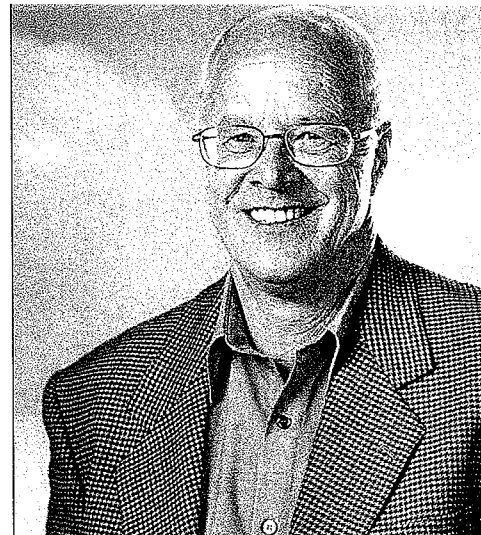
"I suppose it is flattering when the country's largest company endorses your strategy in this way."

NRM will need its new whey-based product judging by the way its remaining stocks of Denkavit Whey CMR sold after May's announcement of the licence going to Fonterra.

It is understood the company had 200 tonnes of Denkavit Whey CMR left in store from the previous season. However, NRM says a significant amount of this sold out within a few days of the move by Fonterra.

Schouten says he made the decision to shift to NRM's rival because the Denkavit Whey brand was "his baby".

He will continue his roving calf rearing and nutrition role, this time under the Fonterra banner.



Veterinarian Bas Schouten has moved with the Denkavit NZ AgBiz, a subsidiary of Fonterra. He will continue to pro up against a new whey-based powder, NRM Power Whey, n former employer NRM.

## Women rear more than a third of bobby calves

A third of New Zealand calf rearers are women who juggle the job between the stresses of family and farm, says long-time calf rearing expert and scientist Dr Paul Muir.

He hosted a workshop on calf rearing at the recent Women in Dairying conference in Rotorua and says the source of labour was revealed in a recent calf rearing survey carried out by Dr Muir's company On-Farm Research.

Dr Muir's Poukawa calf rearing and dairy beef research covers a range of individual calf rearing projects, including rearing for intensive beef systems. He sees the success of the project lying in developing efficient, low cost ways to rear calves commercially. Some of its findings are also relevant to rearing dairy replacements.

Patience and attention to detail seems to make woman farmers more effective at rearing. However he also says it is a job that can be made more difficult if not planned out properly.

"Logistics play a big role in doing it successfully and with less stress. On many farms we have to work the system around the sheds and shelters provided, which is not always ideal," he says.

Kiwi calf rearers and their charges could benefit from greater space, providing better flow and conditions. A rough rule of thumb for rearing is

around 1.5 square metres a calf.

"If you don't have enough space then you will find your older calves get pushed out too soon, putting undue pressure on them at a relatively early stage."

Dr Muir says many dairy farmers don't know what it costs to rear their replacements, and he will also be discussing the true costs of rearing calves taking into account all factors including colostrum, milk, meal and grass.

Ideas gleaned from extensive overseas travel last year will also be shared with delegates. Dr Muir viewed calf rearing operations in Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland and Scotland.

"While a lot of this may be relating to beef systems, there is still a lot that dairy rearers can take away with them from this," he says.

Being a farmer as well as a scientist gives Dr Muir a unique insight into what research is worthwhile from a farmer's perspective. It explains the huge popularity of his calf rearing seminars that attract anything up to 100 people. The calf rearing research programme has also attracted industry-wide support over recent years, and is now funded by Meat and Wool New Zealand.

Dr Muir has made numerous written contributions to agricultural societies and is frequently sought to address field days and discussion groups around the country.

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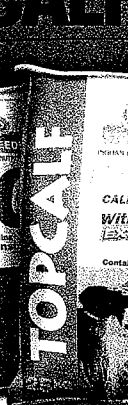
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