

# Thick silage cover means no bird damage, less spoilage!

**GOLDEN BAY** farmer Ross Patching no longer worries about pukekos tearing holes in his maize silage cover.

Patching, who milks 280 cows in Takaka, says since switching to Geosmart eco silage, there has been less silage spoilage on the farm.

He says the thick silage cover means bird damage is now a thing of the past and the quality of maize silage isn't compromised by air getting into the stack.

"It was becoming a nuisance for us: we fixed the holes, but they came back next week and did it all over again," he told *Dairy News*.

"Now there are no holes in the silage cover, there's less spoilage and we end up with better



Geosmart eco silage cover is easy to install and results in less silage spoilage on the farm.

quality of silage." Patching grows 140 tonnes of maize on farm.

Cows are also fed grass and grass silage. He ordered a

Geosmart eco silage cover in November last year for his grass silage,

replacing the traditional single-use plastic cover. "For starters, it was

## LONG-LASTING COVERAGE

- Geosmart Eco silage covers can be reused for several years, preserving the quality of the feed, and substantially reducing waste.
- They require very little maintenance and can be easily repaired if damaged, further prolonging their service life.
- With a thickness of 1mm, the silage cover can adapt to the dimensions of any silo or heap, ensuring optimal anaerobic storage conditions.
- Heavier weight reduces the amount of ballast needed, virtually eliminating the need to use of tyres

very easy to install. I think it took two of us less than half an hour," he says.

He also used it to cover a small crop of oats.

In March this year, he used the Geosmart eco silage cover his maize silage.

"You can use it again and again so there's no

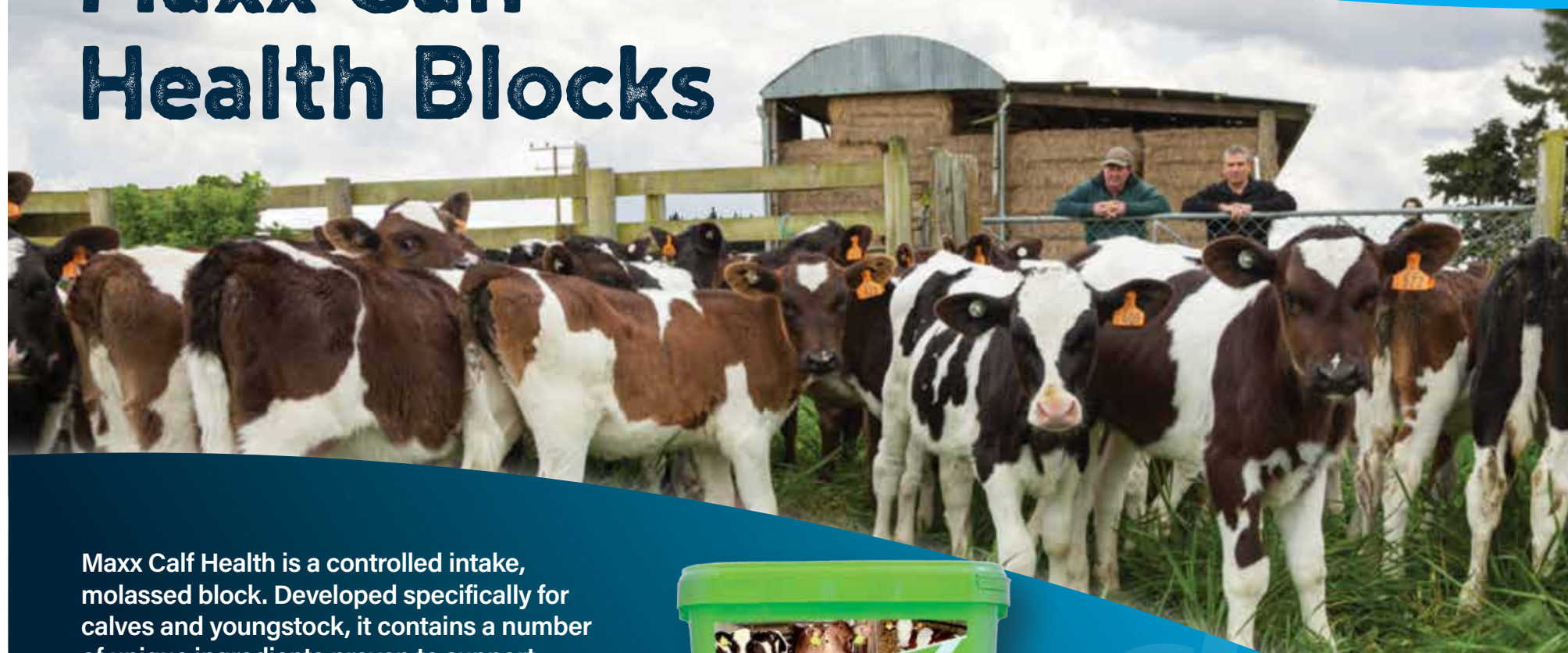
wastage of plastic," he says.

Patching still uses old tyres to keep the eco silage cover down but he points out that it's only one-third of the tyres he would normally use to keep a lightweight plastic cover down.

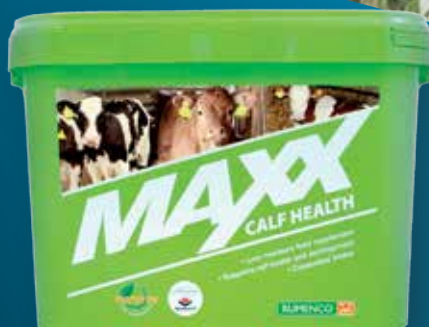
His plan is to do away with tyres over time and use sandbags on overlaps.

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# Winter-proof your farm

LLOYD THOMAS

AS WE approach the winter months it's important to be prepared for the challenges and uncertainties that come with unpredictable weather events. Winter can be challenging enough as it is, so having some contingency measures in place can help take some of the stress off. Here are some contingency measures you can take to protect your farm.

1. Ensure council and dairy company compliance:

Make sure you're compliant with both your local council and dairy company (this will likely be a condition of supply.) The last thing you need over winter is to be pressured to make changes, or worse, slapped with a fine. If you're unsure or just want expert advice on the best plan of action so you can do it once and do it right, talk to an accredited effluent management system designer. They'll be able to tailor a plan for your situation.

2. Ensure the functionality of your storm water diverter:

Now is a good time to make sure your storm water diverter is functioning correctly or get one installed if needed.

3. Prepare storage and effluent management equipment:

If you need more storage, or want back-up storage, consider purchasing a bladder tank. These

can be both cost-effective and easy to install, requiring minimal earthworks. Being closed storage you also won't be worried about it filling up with rain.

It is important to empty your ponds and storage in preparation for spring. This is a good opportunity to review your effluent equipment in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and functionality and repair/replace anything that is not up to scratch.

Portable effluent management equipment that doesn't require electricity to operate can be a huge benefit.

Tractor driven PTO pond stirrers can be taken to multiple storage areas and are also great to ensure the pond is thoroughly mixed before emptying with minimal sludge or solids left behind. PTO pumps are great for pumping thicker slurries and from various places.

As for spreading, both drag hose systems and slurry tankers give the ability to spread anywhere over the farm. Drag hose systems are an efficient option for farms with large storage wanting to empty ponds fast, and all in one go. Slurry tankers are a great all-round solution. They allow for easy spreading when you want to, while also being great for handling thicker slurry, and cleaning out ponds, troughs, underbarn storage and weeping walls without the mess of a digger.



It is important to empty your ponds and storage in preparation for spring.

4. Invest in a flood pump:

If you live in an area prone to flooding, consider purchasing a flood pump as a 'no-brainer' insurance policy. The key

to saving crops and pasture from drowning is time, so pumping the water off fast is critical. It will also save the stress and hassle of having to re-grow and buy in addi-

tional feed. Sharing a pump with your neighbours could be a good option if appropriate.

If you do have or get a flood pump, find a good place to park it so that in

the event of a flood you can act fast to deploy it. The faster you can act, the less impact the water will have on your crops and revenue.

5. Be prepared for

power outages:

With unpredictable weather patterns, it's important to be prepared for power outages. Consider purchasing backup generators or alternative sources of energy to ensure your farm can continue to operate during outages.

By taking these steps now, you can have peace of mind knowing your farm is as protected as you can make it against the challenges and uncertainties of the winter months.

• Lloyd Thomas is a Nevada effluent management specialist

## ECO SILAGE COVERS

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