



Q1 2018 UPDATE

DataLinker update, fee introduction for 2018

With DataLinker now more than a year old, we'd like to update you on its progress so far and let you know about some changes occurring to DataLinker's funding.

First of all, I'd like to thank you for your support of DataLinker, which was established in September 2016 to help make data exchange in the agricultural industry easier without compromising data control. It is currently one of three farm data initiatives alongside the Farm Data Standards and the Farm Data Code of Best Practice.

So far, 17 agricultural companies have registered with DataLinker as a provider or consumer of farm data, or as both, and six implementations are operational. We're really pleased with the feedback we have received from organisations using DataLinker, many of which value its ability to allow efficient and accurate sharing of farm data.

DataLinker was developed with initial funding from DairyNZ alongside programmes under the Ministry for Primary Industries' Primary Growth Partnership – the Red Meat Profit Partnership and Transforming the Dairy Value Chain. This initial funding will finish on 31 May 2018, and the investors are clear that DataLinker must become self-supporting.

We've built a business model with many participants, leading to a low cost for

individual companies. We understand the challenges of IT and connectivity, and appreciate that many companies intending to supply or consume data are still in planning and implementation phases. However, to ensure DataLinker viability and service delivery we are now asking for a financial commitment from participants, potentially before you have started supplying or consuming data.

From 1 June an annual fee will be introduced for organisations registered with DataLinker. For organisations that are either users or consumers of data, the annual fee will be \$3500 + GST. For organisations that are users and consumers of data, the annual fee will be \$4500 + GST. These fees will be invoiced in June each year, and we anticipate the costs will reduce over time as membership grows.

For organisations that join DataLinker for the first time (i.e. are not already registered with DataLinker currently) after 1 June, an additional one-off fee of \$6000 + GST will go towards the cost of initial support required to join and access DataLinker's services.

If you are interested in signing up to DataLinker now, I encourage you to do so before June to avoid the initial set up fee. With everyone contributing, these fees will enable DataLinker to continue to provide and develop its data sharing framework so it can continue to support the growth of seamless sharing of data within the agricultural industry.



Dr Bruce Thorrold, DataLinker board chair

In this newsletter you can read about three agricultural organisations who are using DataLinker to great success. Computer pasture management programme Pasture Coach and decision support tool Farmax are currently working together to enable efficient pasture data sharing between farmers, and Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics are using DataLinker to efficiently share their data with multiple organisations. Turn the page to read more.

If you have any questions about the introduction of fees in June, or about DataLinker in general, please feel free to contact us on support@datalinker.org or visit datalinker.org.nz. We will also be in touch again in a few months to remind you of the upcoming fee changes.

Dr Bruce Thorrold



DataLinker costs from 1 June 2018



For more information contact support@datalinker.org or visit datalinker.org.

Sharing pasture data will enable quicker and better decisions for farmers

Making quick decisions on-farm will become easier thanks to a collaboration between pasture management programme Pasture Coach and decision support software tool Farmax.

Pasture Coach is a tool that allows farmers to accurately record pasture data and enables timely grazing management decisions. Farmax is a decision support tool that models farm-wide scenarios based on the input of various farm data, helping farmers plan, monitor, review and analyse farm operations.

Pasture Coach co-founder Chris Lewis and Farmax general manager Gavin McEwen both saw a need for a farm data recording platform to integrate with a farm modelling tool to enable accurate and timely pasture management decision-making for farmers.

“Pasture Coach is a simple and efficient tool that farmers can use to record pasture data, and the Farmax tool can then access that data to run farm operation scenarios for their farm,” says McEwen. The programme is currently in its final stages of testing and will likely be available to farmers in autumn 2018.

For Lewis, it’s the quick decision-making that both tools together enable that will be most useful for farmers.

“There’s a saying that the difference between a good farmer and an average farmer is one week,” says Lewis. “The ability to make a good decision, quickly, is crucial for farmers.”



*Chris Lewis
Pasture Coach co-founder*



*Gavin McEwen
Farmax general manager*

Lewis and McEwen agree that without DataLinker, the project wouldn’t have got off the ground.

“DataLinker was crucial in that it provided a secure platform and process for us to share such large sets of data, greatly minimising the risk of duplication or double-handling,” says Lewis.

McEwen says Farmax is always looking for reliable, standardised farm data sets to use in its modelling and predictions, and they have future projects planned that will use DataLinker.

“We support a whole range of farm data and the simpler it is to obtain, the more useful we are as a decision support tool for farmers,” he says.

“That leads to a range of flow-on effects, where farmers can then make better decisions based on the information and data at hand, which contributes massively to the industry as a whole.”

Data sharing good for farmers, industry and economy

To provide farmers the tools they need to increase profits, they need to have the best information available to make the right decisions.

That’s the focus of Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) Genetics, whose research programmes are designed to facilitate the ongoing genetic improvement of New Zealand’s national sheep flock and beef herd to lift profit for farmers and the beef and lamb industry.



Graham Alder, B+LNZ Genetics general manager

As part of its sheep progeny testing, B+LNZ Genetics analyses data, such as weight, dag score and genetic traits, to establish genomic breeding values.

B+LNZ Genetics general manager Graham Alder says the data collection and analysis his team does is to give farmers all the information they need to select the best rams for their breeding programmes.

“The aim is to help breeders and farmers identify top genetics that will perform best in their environment, and identifying those top genetics comes down to having the right amount of information and data at hand,” he says.

To make the transfer of data seamless, B+LNZ Genetics uses DataLinker. Alder says the more agricultural companies that share and use data with DataLinker, the more information and options become available to aid farmers’ decision making.

“There is really no downside to using DataLinker,” Alder says. “It’s a standardised and secure platform to upload and share multiple, large sets of data, which is exactly what we need as an industry.”

He would also like to see more data-sharing between organisations in the future. “Information is power,” he says. “In our case, having as much information and data as we can to analyse, the better we can report back to farmers and industry to help with their decision-making.

“More informed decision-making, from our point of view, helps lead to stronger genetics, and a stronger beef and lamb industry.”