

PEOPLE

Plasback commercial manager brings wealth of experience

NEW ZEALAND'S ON-FARM PLASTICS RECYCLER, PLASBACK, IS LOOKING TO THE FUTURE WITH ITS APPOINTMENT OF A NEW COMMERCIAL MANAGER, NEAL SHAW.

Shaw will work with Plasback's existing commercial manager, Chris Hartshorne, for a transition period of at least six months.

He will then lead the company forward as it grows to recover ever larger volumes of waste plastic, introduces new products made from recycled plastic, and adapts to the government's latest regulations on product stewardship.

Hartshorne welcomes Shaw to the Plasback team and says, while he has a lot to learn, he brings a wealth of experience in the agricultural industry.

This includes many years in rural retail as well as working with government as the head of the efforts to eradicate *Mycoplasma bovis*.

Shaw began his career as an agronomist with Pyne Gould Guinness in Ashburton before he shifted to Dunedin with Nufarm, where he was a technical sales rep.

"Then I moved back to Ashburton to work for the Ashburton Trading Society. I was with ATS for 23 years and held the positions of general manager for operations, general manager of retail, and CEO," he says.

"While I was CEO, we transformed the company from ATS to Ruralco, which gave it a national footprint without the bricks and mortar infrastructure of a traditional farm

supply business."

He left Ruralco to serve as general manager of sales with Farmlands. His real change of pace came when he became national operations manager forASUREQuality, which had the contract with the Ministry for Primary Industries to respond to the *M. bovis* outbreak.

"ASUREQuality had the role of dealing with the disease through testing and placing controls on infected properties. We got the rates of the disease down to a level where MPI is now handling the operational delivery on its own."

After he left ASUREQuality, Shaw took a short break from work before he joined Plasback.

He says Plasback has done a lot of hard work over the past 15 years to establish its on-farm collection scheme and develop a network of companies that can recycle silage wrap and other farm plastics.

"Plasback's time has now come. The volume of plastic we are recycling is growing dramatically. It is heartening to see the farming community make such a major effort to recycle its waste. There is a lot more awareness of the need for sustainable product stewardship.

"The Ministry for the Environment has con-



ducted a review of the sector, and we are working through how we can move in the direction they want to go.

"We are wary of a levy-based system because it can result in all customers paying for a service, even if their product is not collected. We want to ensure that any costs passed on to customers are fair and reasonable."

Shaw says Plasback is expanding and improving its collection services. It is working with companies that supply agricultural products other than silage wrap to recycle their waste, and it is in discussions with companies in other industries as well.

"We also want to increase the number of recycled products we offer in New Zealand beyond our current range. Visit our website plasback.co.nz to see what is available.

"Recycling is not an easy market to be in, but it is encouraging to see more and more companies realise they must provide their customers a way to dispose of their waste responsibly."

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