

- ▷ Pest control ideas
- ▷ Batt-Latch news and product development
- ▷ Does your Batt-Latch need repair?
- ▷ Getting the most from your GrassMaster Pro



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## Over-run with pests?

Since the 1990s, Novel Ways have been involved in pest control research work, with the aim of developing electronic products to help control introduced mammalian pests in NZ. This is a huge task to do well, and we have had limited success. With the help of GPSRD funding and some TIF grants, we developed a Multi-trap device that is a re-setting kill trap for possums and rats, but our prototypes were heavy and expensive. This type of product has been surpassed by NZAutoTraps with their AT220 trap, and later models. Other taxpayer funds have been invested with The Cacophony Project, a research team developing infrared cameras and species identification software.

Identifying our Batt-Latch device as a possible resource, over the last few years we have sold a few of our timers (usually with the modem functionality) for use with capturing deer inside deer-fenced paddocks near the farm bush boundary.

The idea is to let the feral deer access the paddock for a few nights, and then, once you are certain there are some deer inside it (using trail cameras usually), use a standard or Modem Batt-Latch timer to release a tall gate held open under tension - that closes them in the deer-fenced paddock. In most cases this has been spectacularly successful; a very easy way to cull feral deer from farm boundaries. We've added some new software to the timers to allow for a quick and quiet release, which could also suit other traps, for example for pigs, goats, and possums.

But large-scale pest control with traps (rather than poison) requires very cost-effective traps and it is well known that 80% of pest interactions with normal traps doesn't result in capture. The pests ignore the traps or are not inclined to venture into the capture area.

Possums for example, have a poor sense of smell to detect a point source lure like an apple in a Timms trap. We have been working on an audio and light pattern lure that is small and solar powered, could be added to any trap or bait station, and has a range of lures that the user can select depending on the target pest. The prototypes are called MD Callers. Here's where it gets tricky, as research to find the best lure combinations is really quite time-consuming. In a recent trial we carried out in the local Waipahihi Botanical Gardens, the 22 'lured' traps and the 'control' traps didn't catch any possums over five nights. But we'll persevere, and are trying a smaller number of MD Callers at a different location, and hope to obtain better results.

**Meanwhile, all the best for your pest control efforts!**



## What are *your* bright ideas?

We are always happy to hear from Batt-Latch users and innovators.

Apart from applications with dairy, dry stock, horses, and (yes!) sheep, we've adapted a unit to release seed for quail.

We appreciate your feedback, comments and questions... and your ideas on future applications!

## CONTACT NOVEL WAYS LIMITED TODAY!

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www.novel.co.nz

# Batt-Latch

Solar-powered Automatic Gate Release Timer

Labour and time savings  
Reduces dairy herd lameness  
Improves feed utilisation

Novel Ways  
AGRITECH INNOVATION

## Batt-Latch in the Spotlight

### The Batt-Latch – A Time Saver!

*Our Batt-Latch timer is increasingly popular (in NZ and overseas), and we are continuing the process of sourcing rugged components to make them even more reliable. The latest features include a metal gearbox, heavy duty solar panel and a backlit display – we've had very positive feedback so far!*

Over nearly 30 years, the Batt-Latch (designed and manufactured by Novel Ways Limited) has been making life a lot more pleasant for many dairy and drystock farmers all through NZ and, increasingly, overseas.



*The Batt-Latch gate timer is typically used with the supplied portable spring gate kit to hold the herd back in a paddock, raceway or feedpad.*

At your pre-set time, the temporary gate's handle is released by the timer's gearbox, and the spring contracts onto the opposite post, alerting the stock that it's time to go. All timers come with a two-year warranty. The manual (if you lose yours) is available to download from our website: <https://www.novel.co.nz/downloads.html>

**The payback period for one Batt-Latch timer is estimated to be as quick as just 15-16 days!**

## Your Feedback

- *The Batt-Latch is a magical piece of equipment that can knock hours off your working week...*
- *... we pretty much had no lameness all of last season...*

## Sending Messages Later...

There are a range of apps which enable you to schedule sending texts in the future, for example if you know you won't have time to send them when needed.

Auto Text, Do It Later, SMS Scheduler, Later or AutoSender Apps allow you to pre-program and schedule a text message to be sent out at a specified time. You can also set up recurring messages.

This can extend the functionality of the Batt-Latch Modem Unit. For example, you can schedule a job for more than seven days in the future, edit or change a message before it goes out, or ask for a periodic status update.

**Search in the Google Play Store (Android) or App Store (IOS) for options and details.**

*If you do use any of these apps, please give us some feedback.*

## The Batt-Latch Modem Unit

Text/Cellular Remote



*The modem version of the Batt-Latch timer can be controlled with text commands, in order to:*

- *Have it release at any time*
- *Check its status*
- *Delay or cancel the programmed release time*
- *Set new release times*

*For example, when away from the farm and late for a milking, the Batt-Latch can be sent a text to delay its next saved release.*

Communicating by mobile phone makes the Batt-Latch unit very flexible for changing situations. To start you off, they are supplied in New Zealand with a pre-paid SIM card (specify Spark or One NZ when ordering) but you must remember to top up online at least once every 12 months, or, for greater convenience, add it to your current service provider's plan.

For overseas purchasers, a local SIM card will need to be installed – choose a reputable local provider to ensure the best possible service/reception. Instructions are on our website.

See our website products page at: <https://www.novel.co.nz/>

**Keep up to date with the latest manual – also on our website**

## Batt-Latch Product Development

*From New Zealand and around the world we're told about new and innovative ways of using our solar powered automatic gate timer.*

**Read more about other applications for the Batt-Latch, on our website:**

- *sheep feeding trials in the South Island*
- *horse feeding systems in Denmark and Finland*
- *cell grazing for remote dry stock movement in Manawatu*
- *bird seed timed releases in the Waipahihi Botanical Gardens, Taupō*



### Break-feeding Sheep

A sheep farmer in the South Island has been helping us work out a suitable gateway system to use with the Batt-Latch timer, for allowing a mob of sheep into a new break. We have ended up with a three-spring 5-metre-wide gateway; the springs being lighter gauge and smaller diameter than the cattle springs we normally use. We have been able to keep the gearbox shaft loading down to below 7kg inline, and, after a small amount of training, his mob of sheep are regularly moving unattended into new intensive breaks, assisted with Kiwitech temporary fencing.

**Interested in finding out more? Contact Novel Ways for details.**

### Applications for Horses – New Zealand and Overseas

Our agent in Denmark, Ole Trier (Smartfold ApS <http://www.smartfold.dk/>), was excited to tell us about his customers' use of the Batt-Latch with Icelandic horses. We also know the application will work well in New Zealand.

When teamed up with a roller gate (see below) the horses are released to a new feed area. We're told that horses need regular feeding opportunities not only to maintain energy levels, but the right feeding frequency helps to control physiological, digestive, and behavioural issues.



Utilising the roller gate – mounted with two straps either permanently or temporarily in a gateway, or on fence standards for break feeding – gives you all of the functionality of the Batt-Latch or Modem Batt-Latch. Resellers in the UK and Europe also report that the Batt-Latch successfully releases horses, allowing them access to new pasture or hard feed, meaning the owner can control the weight gain and condition of the animal.

Horse owners find the Batt-Latch useful, as often they are 'absentee owners' for much of the time each day. The use of a roller gate instead of our special heavy-duty spring will have applications for horses, being quieter and of less risk to these animals. We've sourced a retracting Flexi Gate which works well alongside the Batt-Latch - we think this team will be perfect for NZ applications!



See our website products page at: <https://www.novel.co.nz/>

## Batt-Latch Servicing and Repairs

We've published a handy guide for when your Batt-Latch timer needs service or repair.

<https://www.novel.co.nz/files/BLowerandrepairguide2021>

Please ensure that any timer returned to our Taupō workshop for repair:

- is clean, so we don't spread anything around
- includes contact details and a description of the issue(s)
- identifies any new or spare parts required, for example a strap, full spring gate kit

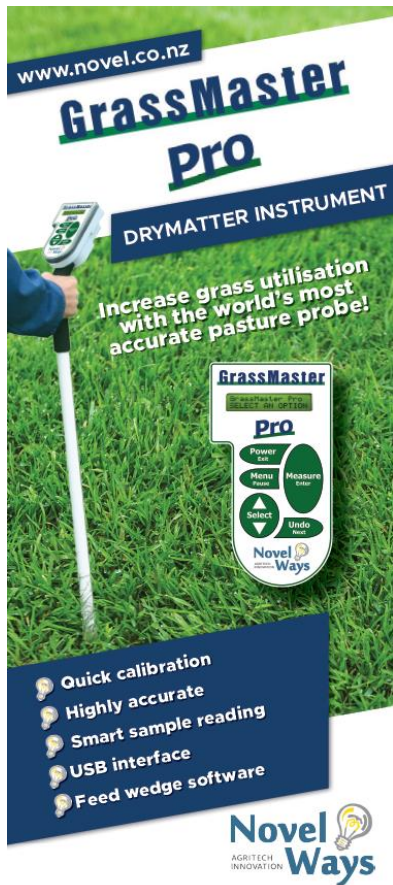
**Your local rural supply store can also handle repairs and sales - ask them!**

### Warranty

While each new Batt-Latch has a two-year warranty, we will charge for damage caused by extreme external forces, even if the unit is otherwise within a warranty period.

See our full servicing and repair guide online for details.





Manufactured exclusively by Novel Ways, the GrassMaster Pro uses the well-established capacitance method to estimate drymatter.

It is highly portable and easy to use, is not affected by pugged pasture or hills, and can be used in damp conditions.



Free for use with all GrassMaster products, GrassTrack supports the storage of 800 paddocks - it imports and exports data to EXCEL. It is suitable for larger farms and forage cultivar trials.

These quadrat readings (graphed, right) were taken on a chicory/ryegrass/clover mix paddock and then compared to actual weighed drymatter.

## Getting the most out of the GrassMaster Pro

Using electronic signals, the hand-held GrassMaster probe senses the water trapped inside the nearby grass blades, and uses a recent calibration to give a repeatable average of the drymatter in the paddock. The resulting figure is usually given in kilograms of drymatter per hectare (kgDM/ha).

The rugged and dependable GrassMaster Pro holds the average drymatter figure for all paddocks on the farm, and this very useful information can be read off the screen or downloaded to a computer.

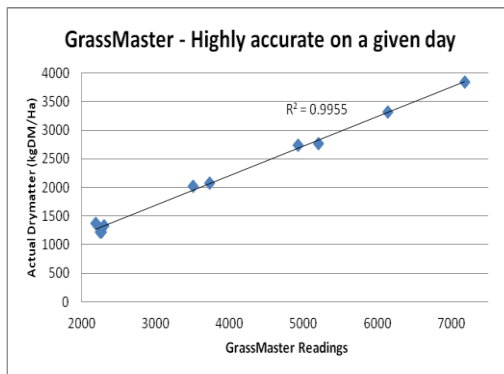


Extra profitability on farms can result from:

- using better grass cultivars,
- having less pugging and damage from improved stock and pasture management,
- reducing reliance on supplements,
- using fertilizers carefully,
- improving Metabolisable Energy of the grass grown,
- increasing top-soil depth and quality.

Many of these outcomes rely on initial monitoring of the current situation, and accurately measuring changes and improvements. At RRP NZ\$1,995 + GST, the GrassMaster Pro drymatter instrument should be a highly cost-effective starting point.

The GrassMaster Pro is usually calibrated within minutes at the start of the walk by both probe measuring and carefully estimating kgDM/ha in one low cover area and one area with high forage cover. Once the brisk farm walk is completed by any staff member (you can take data from the side of a quad bike too), the GrassMaster information can be used to quickly create a feed wedge graph, total feed available, and a host of other trending data.



Recent trials also indicate that, once calibrated, the GrassMaster Pro will closely match even highly experienced whole paddock visual assessments of similar forage mixes. Put simply, it's great at grading cultivar plots or paddocks!

Published research shows that regular estimates of herbage mass **can improve profitability of pasture-based dairy systems**. By

measuring pasture cover, feed supply and demand can be better matched, reducing wastage and saving some imported feed costs – potential gains of over \$100,000 per year, for an average NZ dairy farm.

Read more on our website or visit Grazetech - our business associate's website: <https://www.grazetech.com.au/page/articles-and-information/>



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