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2026 Newsletter Novel Ways Limited www.novel.co.nz Taupō New Zealand



Graham Lynch
Owner
Novel Ways Limited

Recognising and celebrating sustainable biodiversity

New Zealand as we know it today was once part of Gondwana, which split under tectonic forces into the continents of Australia, Africa, South America and Antarctica. A land mass which was originally nearly twenty times the size of New Zealand split off from Australia about 80 million years ago. Over time, much of it sank below sea level, but enough remained to provide an environment for ancient species like tuatara, primitive frogs, forebears of kiwi, moa, weta, and kauri trees, amongst many others. As notable examples, freshwater crocodiles and two species of dinosaur were also thought to be present, but died out about 15 million years later.

New Zealand evolved as a paradise for birds and species of many kinds, with no surviving mammals except for small bats, and no proven human occupation until East Polynesian migrations occurred (ancestors of Māori), with settlements established around 1250-1300, followed by Abel Tasman's expedition in 1642 (384 years ago), and James Cook's Endeavour voyage in 1769 (257 years ago). European settlement was well under-way by 1820.

As humans developed socially, economically and culturally, there have been far-reaching impacts on the environment, including extinctions of native flora and fauna species. But more recently a focus on sustainability and biodiversity means that introduced pest and plant species control has gained a lot of support and backing, together with a focus on protecting, restoring and sustainably using New Zealand's natural resources.

Please contact me:
gbl@novel.co.nz

0800 003 003

Since 1960, the Department of Conservation has been working with specialist contractors to establish pest-free islands off the coast of New Zealand, and so far there are 110 of these providing support for threatened species, with larger islands being targeted for pest eradication. In a valley close to Wellington City, Zealandia Te Māra a Tāne was fenced off in 1999 with a pest-proof fence that is 8.6km long and encircles 225ha of regenerating native bush. Native birds are flourishing here, and spread out into greater Wellington, with the site being a major tourist destination. Originally recognised as a reserve in 1927, by 2006 the 3,400ha Sanctuary Mountain Maungatautari in the Waikato region was encircled with a similar 47km long fence, at an initial cost of about \$20 million. This eco-sanctuary is being funded by a combination of private volunteers and donations, with ongoing ratepayer and government support.



Photo: Eddie Hutt, Taupō

These are large projects, which deserve our support. But let's also acknowledge and appreciate the many far-sighted land-owners and dedicated individuals who work on their own bit of paradise – wherever that is in New Zealand or overseas – to protect, restore and sustainably use the valuable and precious resources which make up our world. Thank you!



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!

- Freephone 0800 003 003 (NZ only)
- Phone +64 7 376 56 58
- Website www.novel.co.nz
- Email enquiries@novel.co.nz

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...*

NEW Modem Upgrade

In 2026, we'll be releasing a new firmware or code update for Modem/Text Batt-Latch units. This will only suit CAT-M1 (4G) Modems world-wide because the 3G network is being disconnected.

Those NZ owners who have an older Modem unit can have their units upgraded for a fee.

For those NZ owners who already have a 4G unit, the upgrade will be at no charge.

If any unit also requires servicing, our usual charges will apply.

The upgrade means that:

- Power use will be reduced
- Response times will be improved

Soon we'll start contacting Modem owners on our database to offer the upgrade. Our overseas Modem owners will be looked after through our distributors.

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 read about innovative ways of using our solar powered automatic gate timer.

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

- corralling wild deer
- 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 Danish distributor, 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

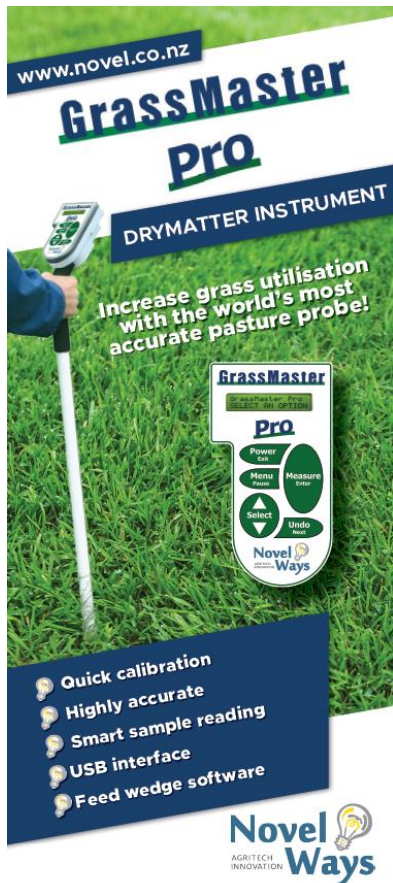
Your local rural supply store can also handle repairs and sales - ask them!

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.

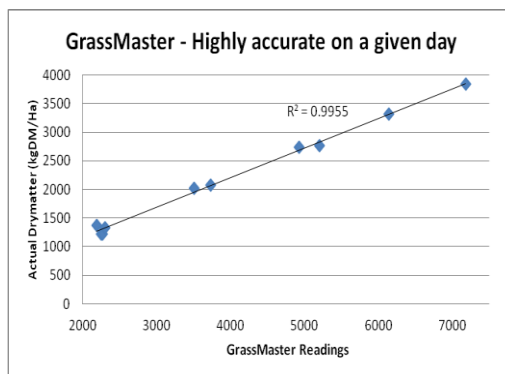


Extra profitability on farms can result from:

- 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/>



Unit 3 / 6 Ashwood Avenue **or** PO Box 2340
TAUPŌ 3330, New Zealand

- ☎ Freephone 0800 003 003 (NZ) or +64 7 376 5658
- 🌐 Website www.novel.co.nz
- ✉ Email enquiries@novel.co.nz