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Welcome to ESAI April 2022 News

Like most of you, the Ellesmere Sustainable Agriculture Inc Committee and its Project Tinaku team have had a busy start to 2022.

We have been planning the next phase of the planting programme which includes 14 different projects that are about to kick off.

We want to thank the many members of ESAI and the wider community who took up the opportunity to take part in several of our workshops or attended the information evening about the new passage between Jollies Brook and the Rakaia Lagoon.

An organisation like ESAI can only be as successful as its members allow them to be so your participation is not only welcomed, it is vital for our group to thrive.

This support includes the dozens of members who have taken time to participate in our surveys to better understand what your situation and challenges are so ESAI can best support your farming business. If you have not spoken to our team yet, please contact Jo Fearn so she can find out what you may require on jo.tinaku@esai.co.nz

We have also been busy with our next generation, organising field trips for Leeston School and inviting Ellesmere College students to take part in our chainsaw courses. It has been wonderful to see the passion our young people have for the land, so we hope we can inspire them to be the future guardians of our region.

We hope you enjoy this update and please share it with anyone who may be interested or is considering becoming a member.

The team at ESAI and Project Tinaku



One of the many Project Tinaku restoration sites around Ellesmere.

Tinaku restoration projects step up for autumn

The plants from our first round of Tinaku Project sites have now been in the ground for almost a year and have put on some great growth over the past season.

With such a wet summer, vigorous weed growth has been an issue at some sites, requiring extra maintenance from our planting contractors. Project sites continue to be monitored by Tinaku staff, with maintenance contracted out for the first three years.

Plans have been finalised for 14 more planting projects for this autumn, with planting to get under way near the end of April. This planting will see a further 11,000 native plants put in the ground along 3.1 km of Ellesmere waterways.

Time flies, and from July 2022, we will be entering the third and final year of our Jobs for Nature Tinaku Project funding. If any ESAI members have wetlands, stream edges or drains that they think could benefit from native planting, get in touch with Johanna Blakely or David Hewson, who will arrange a visit to assess the potential project site.

Johanna and David will be beginning site visits for the next round of projects this month.



Chainsaw course huge success

ESAI received an overwhelming response to a Chainsaw course that was advertised to ESAI members and the wider community. Due to the demand we had to expand the course to two days, March 17 and 18.

The attendees learned about health & safety whilst using chainsaws, maintenance, sharpening, correct operation and also some practical basic cuts.

As the course is made up of two parts, the participants return in six weeks to carry out the second half of the course before receiving their NZQA Chainsaw Proficiency Qualification standards.

ESAI welcomed along five of the Gateway Students from Ellesmere College who all enjoyed their day and gained valuable skills, which will prove useful in their future rural careers and NCEA credits.

Big thanks for joining our survey

Thanks to all those who have taken time to be surveyed so far, by either Jo or Liz.

Over 40 surveys have now been conducted and the results are proving extremely valuable in planning future workshops and information events, mapping nitrate water results, identifying members who may need assistance and just tracking the general attitudes and opinions of our members.

We are just over halfway through our current membership base, but we are finding a lack of contact details is now impeding further progress, so we would encourage any members who haven't already been contacted to get in touch with us and we can arrange a meeting with you. Please email jo.tinaku@esai.co.nz



Dr Shaun Forgie from Dung Beetle Inovations and Shona Sluys from NZ Landcare Trust discuss the benefits of Dung Beetles on NZ farms.

How dung beetles provide some solutions

Earlier this year ESAI hosted a joint event with NZ Landcare Trust on John Legg and his family's Lakeside Ayrshires Dairy Farm near Leeston where attendees heard about the potential benefits of Dung Beetles.

Dr Shaun Forgie of Dung Beetle Innovations who facilitated this workshop was featured on Seven Sharp recently. If you want to watch the interview, click on this link: <https://fb.watch/bMSjs90X9r/>

Numerous studies have found that Dung Beetles could have the potential to improve water quality and soil health in our pastoral landscapes and they could offer a solution to the over 100 million tonnes of dung produced each year here in NZ.

Dung Beetle Innovations have offered ESAI a great opportunity to join forces if we can get enough local farmers on board, so if you are interested in finding out more, please contact jo.tinaku@esai.co.nz.

For more information on Dung Beetles head to <https://dungbeetles.co.nz/>



Keith Woodford talks to attendees of the GHG Workshop.

ESAI hosts greenhouse gas workshop

The Tinaku team decided to organise a workshop on greenhouse gas (GHG) emission on farms to bring our members up to speed on upcoming changes in regulations.

Two dozen farmers attended the workshop to hear from Keith Woodford, Professor of Agri-food systems at Lincoln University, who talked through the implications of climate change and the new regulations on the New Zealand agricultural sector.

Dave Harrison, Policy and Advocacy Manager at Beef and Lamb NZ spoke via a Zoom link about the intricacies of the He Waka Eke Noa system.

Finally, Sarah O'Connell of the AgriBusiness Group, on behalf of B+LNZ, provided practical advice on responding to climate change and planning for the future.

[This workshop was videoed and you can watch all presentations here.](#)



Ellesmere College students talk about the Gateway programme.

ESAI supports Gateway Programme

This year the Tinaku Project is funding 10 students on the Gateway Programme through Ellesmere College.

The Gateway programme aims to enable students to gain valuable skills and knowledge to get them into careers in the rural sector.

Upcoming ESAI events and workshops

ESAI will continue to organise events and workshops that deal with issues that are important to our members, so please make sure you put these in your diaries and sign up to come along.

Financial advice and succession planning workshop – April 27

Fill up your glass-a celebration of rural women event – May 6

Growsafe & Certified Handler – May 10

Safety working at Heights Course- June 2

Basic First Aid - June 10

Pest Control Methods & Trap Library – June 22

Be sure to keep an eye out for these being advertised in the local press as well as social media pages and email updates. If you want any more information or you want



Ecologists Laura Drummond and Hamish Peacock from Pattle Delamore and Partners (PDP) present the findings of their feasibility study.

Jollies Brook to Rakaia passage discussed

Ecologists Laura Drummond and Hamish Peacock from Pattle Delamore and Partners (PDP) on March 31 revealed the findings of the feasibility study into a passageway between Jollies Brook and the Rakaia Lagoon at a public meeting in Lakeside Soldiers Memorial.

Around a dozen Rakaia Huts residents, local landowners, ESAI members and other interested parties attended the event and were given the opportunity to view concept plans and asked questions. General feedback from those that attended was very positive and many would like to see the project go ahead.

To watch the full presentation, please [click here](#).



Leeston Consolidated School pupils learn about the biodiversity at the Irwell River mouth.

Field trips for local schools

Nearly 80 Year 3 & 4 students from Leeston Consolidated School took their learning to the mouth of the Waiwhio/Irwell River for a Kids Discovery Plant-Out Monitoring Day organised by Te Ara Kakariki and supported by [Project Tinaku](#).

The children were hosted by Lou, Emily and Laura from Te Ara Kākāriki, Nicky Thorne from EnviroSchools Waitaha, as well as Brittany Smith and Johanna Blakely from [Project Tinaku](#) as they measured biodiversity inhabiting the Irwell River.

Brittany is developing a plan to improve and regenerate this area for education and recreation purposes in the future and was keen to see how the kids interacted with the environment.

Children from Southbridge School also re-visited the planting site on the Legg's farm recently to check up on the plants they helped with last spring and practice some maths and science skills out in the field.

The project is also helping to fund an exciting new planting project with the school.

All these education activities fulfil some of the key goals of the Tinaku Project and Ellesmere Sustainable Agriculture, which aim to foster a love of the



Who are ESAI



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