

# Farm Progress Days - New Zealand Style

A three-day agricultural festival known as "National Field Days" is fast developing into one of New Zealand's major tourist attractions. Staged each June at Mystery Creek outside the farming center of Hamilton (about 80 miles south of Auckland), the event (June 12-14 this year) takes on the appearance of a large state fair with colorful booths, displays, demonstrations and competitions. Included is an exciting fencing contest, the only one of its kind in the world, where teams match skills in erecting fences and hanging gates.

Manufacturers demonstrate their agricultural machines, farm implements and gadgets in competition with each other much to the delight of spectators. Even non-farmers find it exciting to see squadrons of huge earth movers and tractors churning up the soil, irrigation systems hurling columns of water into the air and small farm bikes whirling around muddy tracks and along the sides of the hills.

There's also an annual competition to select the best dairy, sheep and dry stock farms in the area. Visits are arranged to the winning

farms during the three-day event at which time visitors can not only look over the farms but also talk to the owners.

Admission to Fielddays is \$1.35 a day; three-day concession tickets may be purchased for \$2.70. Competitive demonstrations

commence at 10 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. each day, concluding on the afternoon of the third day (June 14) with aerial top dressing spraying and fire fighting. Free buses operate frequently between Hamilton and Mystery Creek.

Air New Zealand has organized several tours that include a visit to this year's Fielddays. For further information or brochures write to the New Zealand travel commissioners in Los Angeles, San Francisco, or New York or contact any Air New Zealand office.

## Disease Control for Azaleas

Leaf gall has been a common and troublesome disease of azaleas during recent wet springs. It may also occur on some rhododendrons and is most noticeable after new growth begins in the spring.

This disease is caused by a fungus. The fungus is wind-borne and may overwinter as spores on the bark and in bud scales of azaleas.

Symptoms of the disease are fairly recognizable. All or only part of the leaves may be affected. When diseased, they become distorted (thick or fleshy) and turn pale green or whitish. When young, these gall-like leaves are covered with a mealy fungus growth. As the bladder-like galls age, they turn brown, dry up and fall off. Flower parts may also be affected. When the disease is severe it may reduce vigor of the plant due to the loss of young leaves.

Leaf gall is usually most severe on plants growing in very shaded locations or in locations where air movement is very slow and evaporation poor. The disease is seldom a problem during dry springs or when plants are in sunny locations. Infection occurs when moisture is ample.

Once the disease appears, there is no practical method of control except to pick off and destroy the galled plant parts. It reduces the source of spores and may provide adequate control of the disease.

In situations where gall removal isn't feasible, the disease can be prevented by proper timing of fungicide sprays to protect the new growth in early spring.

Start preventive spraying

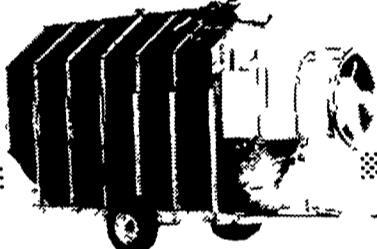
at bud-break and continue at 10-14 day intervals, or as long as young leaves are present. When plants are in a shady location or frequent showers occur in early spring, use the shorter interval between sprays. Add a spreader-sticker to help the material adhere more firmly to the leaves.

The following fungicides may be used to prevent the outbreak of azalea leaf gall: maneb (1½ Tbs. to a gallon of water), ferbam (2 Tbs-gallon) or zineb (1½ Tbs-gallon). For more information, contact your county extension office and ask for a free fact sheet on "Azalea Leaf Gall."

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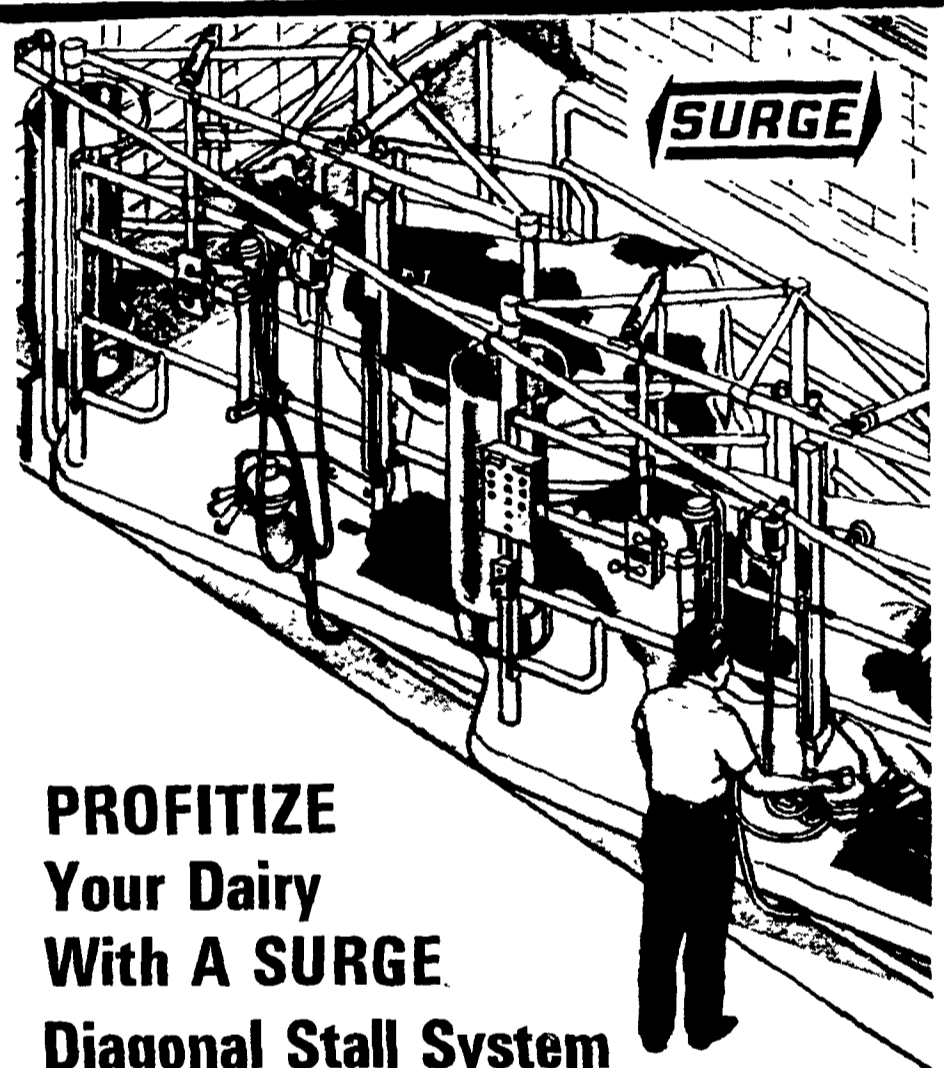
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