



19 February 2016

The 2015 award-winners are ...

Radio New Zealand presenter and producer, Susan Murray, took out the top award for agricultural journalists at the 2015 awards dinner in Wellington for the New Zealand Guild of Agricultural Journalists and Communicators.

Susan won the supreme award, the **Ministry for Primary Industries Rongo Award**, which recognises excellence in agricultural journalism. She also received the **Federated Farmers Broadcast Journalism Award**. Susan is part of the hour-long Country Life radio programme presented on Friday night and repeated on Saturday morning.

Runner-up, with a series of articles written for Country-Wide magazine, was the Country-Wide team. The team also won the the **AGMARDT Agribusiness Award**, which recognises high quality information about and effective analysis of national, global and other agribusiness.

The 2015 awards were announced at Friday night's awards dinner. The event is usually held in October each year, but this year was delayed as it clashed with the Congress 2015, the annual congress of the International Federation of Agricultural Journalists hosted by the New Zealand Guild and held in Hamilton last October.

A total of eleven awards were presented, ten for journalism and one for photography. The key objectives of the awards are the encouragement and recognition of excellence in agricultural journalism.

Other award-winners on the night were:

- Gerald Piddock, of the The Waikato Times, who won the **DairyNZ Dairy Industry Journalism Award**, which recognises the ability to communicate the complexities of the dairy industry.
- NZ Farmers' Weekly's Neal Wallace scooped the **Alliance Group Ltd Red Meat Industry Journalism Award** for a second time. Entries into this award focus on all aspects of the red meat industry, from genetics, breeding, on-farm, processing, marketing, and all issues facing the red meat industry.

- Stephen Bell, writing also for the NZ Farmers Weekly, won the **Beef + Lamb New Zealand News Award**, which recognises excellence in hard news journalism, focusing on any aspect of the beef and sheep industry.
- The **Federated Farmers Rural Photography Award**, was won by freelance writer and photographer, Tony Benny, of Christchurch, for a photo which appeared in the NZ Farmer.
- Ballance Agri-Nutrients sponsors the **Farm Business Writing Award**, which was won this year by Sonita Chandar, of NZ Farmer.
- The **AgResearch Science Writers Award**, established to enhance standards of science writing, especially about pastoral agriculture, was won by Jon Morgan, of NZ Farmer.
- The **Horticulture New Zealand Journalism Award**, set up to recognise excellence in agricultural journalism focusing on New Zealand's horticulture industry, was won again this year by Elaine Fisher for articles in Coast and Country and Avoscene.
- The Guild's own award – the **Agricultural Journalism Encouragement Award** – is designed to encourage and recognise excellence among journalists with three or less years reporting on agricultural issues. This year, it was won by Jemma Brackebush, of the RNZ rural news team.

“Congratulations to all of the 2015 winners who, we were delighted to see, came out on top of a very high standard of entry,” says Guild president Ali Spencer, who also welcomed MPI as sponsor of the Rongo Award for the first of a three year-term this year.

“The Guild truly appreciates the support of all of our sponsors. They are helping us to encourage excellence in agricultural journalism.”

The 2016 Awards will be announced in October this year.

All of the winning entries will be published in the Guild's website – www.gajc.org.nz – in the next few week.

**For more information
Awards Administrator / Guild National Secretary**

**Sue Miller,
04 233 1842 0274 510 339**