

# Do your farm a favour with digital

Farms today are complex systems with a multitude of factors needing to be managed.

Whether it's weather, water or wages, you need digital technology to save your time and money. It can also help you navigate all through the noise.

Doing things manually, rather than setting up automated systems takes a lot of time out of your day. Time is all you have and my bet is it's in pretty short supply these days. This is where technology can kick in. And yes I get it. You can't run a farm by a computer. And yes it takes time to set systems up. The good news is once it's done, it's done and it'll be the gift that keeps giving.

Templates, process plans or cheat sheets can all be accessed in the cloud by a touch of a button by any member of your team. Today's technology can do a lot of the heaving lifting for little or no money. The tech stacks and apps are already here. As Futurist William Gibson said: "The future is already here — it's just not very evenly distributed."

What he means by this is that some farms are using today's technology to great effect, and some aren't and are being left behind as a result.

If you can measure and predict your grass growth better, you can make better stock decisions which mean better productivity and profitability for your farm.

You can make better decisions about your rotation strategies too.

There's no coincidence that those farms that are adopting the right technology are making more money. You'll see that through your industry associations, with the research they are reporting on, or your own discussion groups.

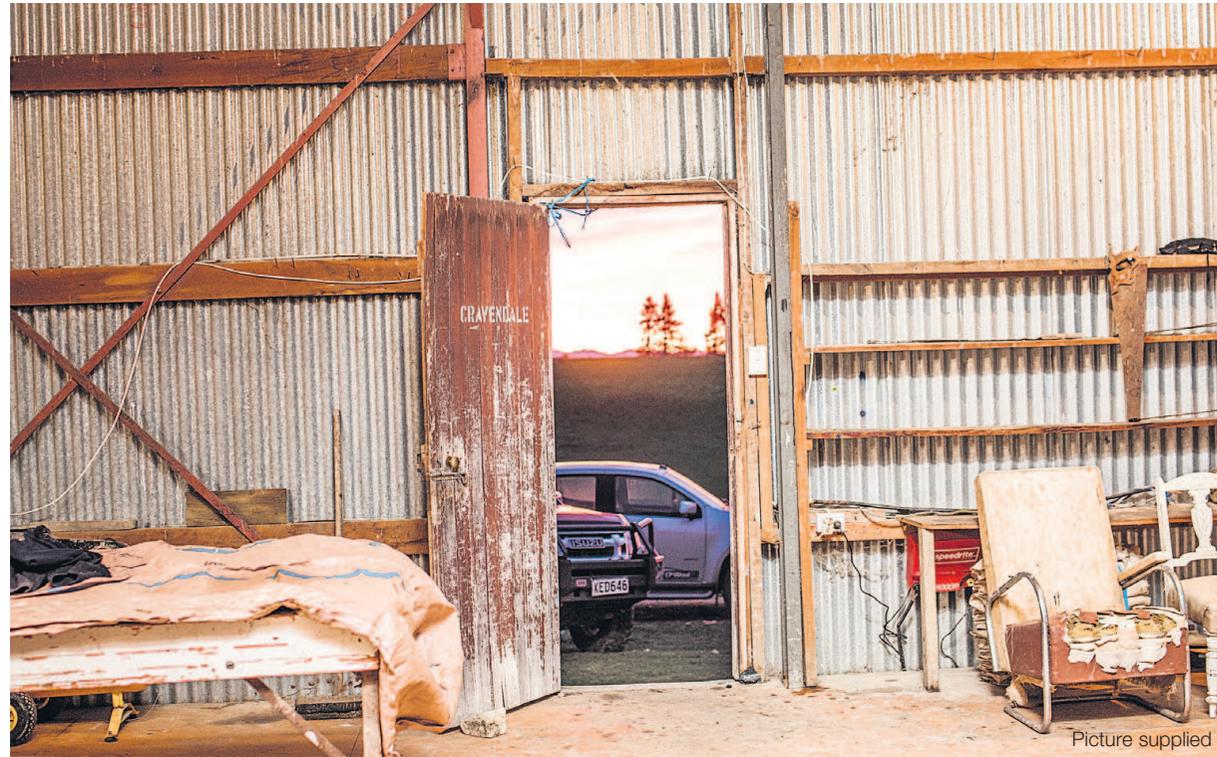
When you have good data it means you and your farm team can make good decisions.

Without that data, you're flying blind relying on guesswork.

Does this mean you lose your sense of self and stockmanship? Does it mean you lose your own agency and autonomy? Does it make you less of a farmer?

Certainly not. If anything, it will only make you a better farmer with more tools in your toolbox.

It will also make you a more attractive employer to a pool of very competitively-contested talent. If they see you and your farm



Picture supplied

up with the play, they might choose to come and work with you, rather than that other farmer down the road.

Any data point can be a decision support tool.

Weather is data. So are kill sheets and plate meters. The same can be said for breeding values.

Soil sensors for moisture and temperature are also decision support tools. As is your good partner, farm manager or shepherd.

Data allows you to demonstrate proof of placement. It can keep the council off your back when you're measuring what they want at a better, deeper level.

There are also tools and technologies that can make the world of "life admin" easier. Calendly is a calendar tool that shows people when you're free. It's super simple to use as soon as you plug it into your calendar.

That way you don't have to go back and forth trying to manually schedule appointments with your stock agent, feed or fertiliser rep.

Even your diary can be a tool if you use it well. I say to my team "If it's not in the

diary it doesn't get done". You can even make appointments with yourself to make sure you get what you need to get done, done.

Voxer is a great app that acts as a walkie talkie using your mobile. It will work on 3G, 4G and 5G and can be listened to live or later, whether you have reception or not.

Google Drive and docs are a great free tool you can use that anyone can access using a link.

Even the Notes section on your phone is a simple tool to make sure you don't forget a thing.

Basic technology tools — many of which are free — could save you at least 10 percent of your time a week. That could be a minimum of five hours.

Ask yourself what could you do with an extra five hours a week? Maybe get off farm more? Get to the local golf club to clear your head. Or spend more time with the kids. Don't be afraid of digital technology. It can be your friend rather than your foe.

You and your farm will be better for it.

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