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Editorial

Speaking from a weather-wise point of view, hasn't it (the weather) been quite unseasonal and unpredictable over the last twelve months? Yes, as I recall, it particularly started going 'crazy' about this time last year, around March, April. Remember? Howling winds and rain in the north of our country at first with more wind damage on this round! The flooding hit there a year later, just a couple of weeks ago! Meantime, last year, the centre-west of the North Island, from Waikato to Horowhenua districts, was spared the worst of winter storms and deluges although most districts in these areas got their fair share of winter and spring rains.

But the southern end of the island really 'copped' it, the Kapiti Coast, southern Wairarapa, and greater Wellington, with the last named district certainly hardest hit. Who can forget those terrible TV views of several lovely houses right on the edge of earth-banks where slips had fallen or washed away right to the edge of, and even under, the foundations? One would have

to be made of stone not to feel at least very sorry for the owners of these homes, for it would have dawned on them very quickly that what had been their own little cosy and safe castle faced almost certain demolition!

It brought back vividly to my mind pictures of the terrible 'Abbotsford' disaster about forty years ago and for our younger members, no, it wasn't in Abbotsford, England, it happened right in our own Aotearoa. Where the h..... is Abbotsford, I hear many of you ask? I'll give you a clue it's in the South Island, far down south!!! Ask your parents, they will remember that horrific disaster.

But, getting back to now-time, we all recall only too well, I'm sure, how winter set-in very early last year with lots of rain, especially from Manawatu southwards. Fortunately there was a bumper spring and summer 2005 - 06 so all farmers had heaps of fodder stacks and bales for the long winter and cold spring which immediately followed that good season. But it has been

an awful year, not only for farmers but perhaps even more so for commercial gardeners, they just could not win, with wintery-like conditions lasting almost to the beginning of December in most districts south of the Bombay Hills and those on the north side faring not much better because of continuing excessive downpours during this time.

Here in Taranaki we really seemed to get one month of spring weather only, December, and after New Year early summer arrived and has stayed with us right up to now, time of writing. A real 'Indian Summer' which I fervently hope will last until after Queen's Birthday weekend!!! Well, can you blame me for this?!!! Anyway, one thing is certain, our farmers will be pleased for the good late summer we've had. They have been able to make a reasonable supply of winter fodder for their stock after a worrying no-grow-spring, so they are, I'm sure, reasonably prepared for the coming winter!

For, sure as the next winter will arrive sooner or later, few of them would have had even a pitchfork full of fodder left over by the end of last October!!! So, for all farmers and agriculturalists and their livestock, here's hoping for a mild winter and a benign spring for this year of 2007.

Cheerio everyone from Paul



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