

THE BALLANCE FARM ENVIRONMENT AWARD 2023

In far off New Zealand a passion for farming with a holistic approach and bringing off-farm skills into the business has gained Otago farmers Steven and Kellie Nichol the Ballance Farm Environment Award 2023. An award sponsored by farmers' co-op Ballance Agri-Nutrients Ltd, which was formed in 2001 when four existing farm suppliers came together.



The new company's name was a tribute to former Prime Minister John Ballance, who created the legislation that led the way for New Zealand's rapid agriculture based economic expansion. John Ballance, who died in office in 1893, was a farmer's son from between Lisburn and Glenavy. Famed for making NZ the first nation to give votes to men and women. A friend of the Maori he had an in-built Ulster liberal view of giving fair play to all law abiding citizens. Today, his home farm is still in the Ballance family and features a modern conference centre and exhibition area provided by the Ulster New Zealand Trust. For details of opening hours and special events browse www.theballancehouse.com.

Steven and Kellie Nichol, winners of the Ballance Farm Environment Award, farm 1489ha, 3,689 acres, at Clarks Junction, Otago, South Island, mainly as a sheep-breeding and finishing operation with additional cattle grazing plus carbon and production forestry. The family who has farmed in the area since 1871, run 4500 ewes, 1500 hoggets and 80 rams for by grazing 290 mixed-age beef cows each year.



Ballance Agri-Nutrients Ltd has supported the Ulster New Zealand Trust as the display of Victorian farm machinery at The Ballance House was upgraded and work continued to mark the links between Ulster and New Zealand.