



## Storm proofing choice for irrigation investment

Precautionary measures and choice of equipment could alleviate future irrigator storm damage. **Antony Willemse** of Bauer New Zealand explains.

The devastating winds that swept across the country last month and upturned large numbers of linear and pivot irrigation systems has provided a timely reminder of measures that can minimise the risk of damage, and of the need to assess the strengths and weaknesses of irrigation systems produced by different manufacturers.

Parking pivot irrigators in a downwind position and making use of fixed anchor points to lock down every span will help irrigation hardware withstand high winds. Parking close to shelterbelts and hedging can alleviate the worst of the wind, as long as they are far enough away to avoid damage from falling trees.

"Half filling tyres with water can also help hold down pivots in high winds," says Antony Willemse of Bauer New Zealand. "You can still adjust tyre pressure to suit soil conditions but weighing the tyres in this way lowers the machine's centre of gravity appreciably." However, irrigator design and construction

has the biggest impact on vulnerability to exceptional wind conditions. "Of the several hundred Bauer irrigators we have installed around the country, only six spans on two separate machines were affected by this big wind event," Willemse said. Bauer has always advertised the ability of its irrigators to withstand high winds, but how often do you get to see this tested in practice? "Our recent high winds proved that the claim is not just marketing hype." Bauer as a company have over 85 years experience in producing Irrigation related products, manufacturing solid set, Hard-hose Irrigation, as well as pivot irrigation. Bauer also manufactures a broad and complete range of farm dairy effluent products.

Reports say more than 800 irrigation systems were upturned by the high winds, with machines parked in the recommended down-wind position being affected by the wind coming in from several directions. A big recovery and repair operation is underway to get systems back in working order as quickly

as possible but the sheer scale of the damage means this will take a good many weeks to complete.

Irrigator parts ordered immediately after the storm from overseas manufacturers by local irrigator distributors are already in transit, and IrrigationNZ, the national body promoting excellence in irrigation practice, has welcomed efforts to mobilise repair teams. But it warns that farms needing complicated irrigator rebuilds may not get their machines working before Christmas, impacting milk production, threatening crop viability and putting pressure on stock food supplies.

"IrrigationNZ kindly offered to help out with co-coordinating our pivot repairs and to see if we needed assistance at all. But we were in the fortunate position of barely being affected, which was somewhat of a surprise to them."

Bauer irrigators have a number of features that help resist wind damage. Willemse explains: The spans are heavier and the bracing

and pipe work are made from thicker cross sections. Also, the base beam on each span is longer. "In fact, the longest of any irrigator, we believe."

Bauer irrigators have the lowest centre of gravity, with gear boxes mounted to the outside of the machine, which greatly increases the leverage required to tip up a tower. The tower bracing is designed to increase lateral stability and additional gusseting increases resistance to twisting.

These are among the features that together with durability, ease of use, powerful traction and water application efficiency have helped the Austrian manufacturer become a global leader in irrigation systems for agriculture. With a large range of configurations and sizes in reel, linear and pivot designs, the Bauer range meets every possible need for efficient use of water resources.

"There are a lot of lessons to learn from this wind event that will better prepare farms

whenever it is repeated," Willemse said. "From choosing equipment that's best designed to withstand such events and remembering best precautionary practice in the field, farmers and growers can minimise damage impact and keep their crucial irrigation resources available for use." In New Zealand, Bauer works with eight dealers operating from eight locations to provide local expertise for installation, servicing and repairs.

Our dealers can be contacted as below:

| DEALER  | ADDRESS                    | PHONE         |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|
| Allied Water Systems Ltd (trading as Think Water Leeston) | 22 Station Rd Leeston      | (03) 324 3880 |
| Bromley Dairy & Pumps Ltd                                 | 6 Weld St, Fielding        | (06) 323 9660 |
| Kirk Irrigation Ltd                                       | 6 William St, Waimate      | (03) 689 8474 |
| On farm Agri-Centre Ltd                                   | 31 Venice Place, Nelson    | (03) 547 3276 |
| Ordish & Stevens Ltd                                      | 219 High Street, Masterton | (06) 370 0700 |
| Think Water Hawkes Bay Ltd                                | 1 Dunlop Rd, Onekawa       | (06) 847 0047 |
| Think Water West Coast Ltd                                | 59 Guinness St, Greymouth  | (03) 768 6993 |
| Think Water Taupo Ltd                                     | 38 Runanga St, Taupo       | (07) 377 6344 |



### No Pushover Seriously Tough

As many are aware, over 800 irrigation machines have been damaged in our recent September storm, highlighting the up, and down sides of roadside advertising (below). We'd like to take this opportunity to highlight that less than 1% of all Bauer machines sold into the local market, and in fact only 6 spans, have suffered wind damage, a fact that has left our clients feeling, well ..... blown away. Despite the storm, we're still standing. On behalf of the Bauer Group, we'd like to thank the companies who have loyally stocked, serviced and supported their local clients with the Bauer product range.

All of our clients will enjoy the advantage of irrigating right through the coming season, and we'd like to extend the invitation for others to enjoy this same local benefit, supported through our nationwide dealer network. Bauer offer a range of quality irrigation options which allow us to stand proud. With a versatile range of both Pivot, Linear and Hardhose Irrigation capabilities available, we are able to deliver a product range which is truly built for New Zealand conditions.  
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