



Taratahi Agricultural Education Centre



Farming across New Zealand – managing a far flung fleet

When your fleet is spread across farms from the far North to the deep South, you need a way of keeping an eye on things. This was the challenge faced by Ivan Allanson, National Fleet Manager for Taratahi Agricultural Education Centre.

Taratahi has been educating Kiwis for agricultural careers for nearly 100 years, and offers full-time courses, diploma programmes and short courses. The Centre has a residential campus near Masterton in the Wairarapa with other campuses in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Manawatu, Hawke's Bay and Southland. Across the campuses Taratahi has 42,000 stock units of sheep, beef and deer, and milks 2,000 cows.

With so many working farms, Taratahi Agricultural Education Centre runs a large fleet – 75 road vehicles (vans, utes, cars, a truck and a bus), plus a wide range of on-farm vehicles including quad bikes, light utility vehicles, motorbikes, tractors, trailers, and utes for farm managers.

Ivan oversees this vast fleet, ensuring it is safe to use and runs as efficiently as possible. Two years ago, he decided to install a Teletrac Navman GPS fleet management system to give him a hand.

"My main concern was safety. With a GPS system we can track all our vehicles across the whole country. If something goes wrong we know exactly where to send help. I also wanted to make cost savings on our fuel usage. Our on-road fleet drives around 33,000km a week, so being efficient in how we use our fuel is important."

A dispersed fleet

Managing a fleet that is dispersed across the whole country presents challenges. There are Teletrac Navman Qube GPS tracking units fitted to 68 vehicles in the onroad fleet, while some of the vans also have incab MDT860 messaging devices. Ivan uses the Teletrac Navman software to view the whole fleet, while individual fleet managers use the software to manage all the vehicles on their own particular site.

"The software gets all the information we need on things like RUC, registration, servicing into one place," says Ivan. "This is important because off-road driving is a significant factor for us. We have a number of farm utes which are driven principally on the farm, and we can therefore claim back a lot of the RUC if we can prove the vehicles were off road. Using the Teletrac Navman system, providing this proof is very easy."

Ivan also uses the Teletrac Navman app on his iPad to keep an eye on things in the evenings, for example, to arrange servicing for a vehicle breakdown or if there is an accident.

Safety is top of mind

When you're educating large numbers of young people on working farms, health and safety is a top priority.

"With the new H&S regulations, we're even more careful about providing a safe work place on our farms," says Ivan. "For example, if one of our employees was consistently driving too fast, we would be liable, so with the GPS tracking system we now monitor continuously for speeding."

"As we're often operating vehicles in remote areas over rough terrain, we're conscious of the risk of accidents," continues Ivan.

"If an accident occurred, the GPS tracking system would allow us to quickly locate exactly where the vehicle was so we could send help. We can also use the software to replay how the vehicle was driven in the lead up to the accident. This would help us work out what occurred, and whether we need to change our processes in order to prevent future accidents."

At-a-glance servicing and maintenance

Keeping up to date with servicing and maintenance was a headache for Taratahi, but the Teletrac Navman system has made that much easier.

Ivan uses the software dashboard functionality, which gives him an at-a-glance snap shot of things like total km per week, out-of-hours use, speeds over 105 km and vehicle maintenance. He can also easily see when the next registration or warrant is due, or where RUC usage is at.

"Being able to see a snapshot of the whole fleet is a huge benefit."

"For example, right now I can see that one vehicle that has gone past its service milestone kms by 3.2 km," says Ivan. "I can also see a couple of reminders that a service is coming up within 2,000km, and there are two lots of WOFs due in the next 14 days."

"Being able to see a snapshot of the whole fleet is a huge benefit. If I got one of my staff to track all of this manually it would be very time consuming."

Rapid reporting

As a large organisation, the ability to accurately report on the fleet is important. Ivan uses data from the Teletrac Navman system in order to regularly report to the Board on the condition of the fleet. Data from the system also enables the Trust to make future decisions about the fleet.

"We currently own all our vehicles, but using the figures from the Teletrac Navman system, we would be able to compare whether leasing a portion of them may be a better deal. We can also see if we need to shuffle vehicles within our organisation to keep the km down."

The big picture

Ivan says the main benefits for Taratahi Agricultural Education Centre are enabling regular and accurate servicing, and keeping up to date on the RUC and warranting.

"The remote management of vehicles is now so much easier. This was a significant challenge because the geographical spread of our vehicles made management hard."

"Our fuel costs have also dropped. If you keep your speed down, you don't use as much fuel. Servicing has become less costly, for example, as brake pads don't wear out as quickly. If we find over time that a vehicle needs excessive servicing, then we can take a detailed look at how it has been driven."

Ivan appreciates the variety of different reports he can get out of the Teletrac Navman system.

"It's been absolutely excellent. We can tailor it to our needs very specifically, and the ease of use is amazing."

Benefits

- Efficiently managing a fleet dispersed across the whole country
- Tracking vehicles for safety
- Up to date servicing and maintenance
- Accurate reporting to management
- Savings on fuel costs



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