

# 'Awesome' farming takes prize

It's not so much what you do but how you do it, was how the chief judge of the SourceNZ Dairy Business of the Year competition, Professor Keith Woodford of Lincoln University, summed up the event.

"They've all done things very differently and they've all achieved very different results," he said.

"There are nine teams here and they're all worthy winners."

Woodford said figures were so close after the judging – with PGG Wrightson senior consultant Joe Clough – that he got up at 1 am to "make sure we got it right".

ICEHOUSE Agribusiness course in Australia and New Zealand worth \$11,000.

SourceNZ managing director Warren Morrith, who presented their prize, said with the focus on profitability the competition showcased those at "the absolute pinnacle of dairying".

## Other awards

The Martins also won the low input farm system award and the northern North Island regional award.

The medium input system award went to Donna and Bruce Arnold



Railside Farms partners John and Michelle de Veth with Akke van der Velde and Helwi Tacoma

Because finalists supplied Fonterra, Tatua and Open Country Cheese (OCC) there were variations in milk pricing as well as farm systems to be taken into account.

While eight out of the nine finalists had good production/cow, one had moderately low production.

Red Sky Agricultural's David Beca, who assisted the judges, said the finalists were "truly exceptional" and the judges had had an extraordinarily hard job in selecting the winners.

Supreme winners were Graeme (Grimmy) and Sharon Martin of Morrinsville (*Dairy Exporter* May, page 6).

"Grimmy is an awesome farmer," Sharon said.

"Farming is not an easy life but I love it."

They won attendance at an

also from Morrinsville (*Dairy Exporter*, May, page 7). The high input farm system award went to David and Raewyn Bennett of Walton (*Dairy Exporter*, May, page 9). The South Island regional award went to Railside Farm outside Oamaru (*Dairy Exporter*, May, page 13) while the southern North Island award was taken out by Foxton's Poplar Partnership (*Dairy Exporter* May, page 9).

At the retreat the following day at Brookland Estate out of Ngarawahia, the finalists discussed issues on their farms as well as future goals. Succession was a concern for a number of them, and several aimed to ease back from day-to-day farming in the short term. Others were looking for challenges in areas outside of dairying or outside of farming altogether. **D**



Supreme winners Sharon and Graeme Martin.



Donna and Bruce Arnold.