

Fieldays 2008, Mystery Creek



After the party

The Southern Hemisphere's biggest agricultural tradeshow has wound up for another year, as the National Fieldays 40th birthday at Mystery Creek attracted 131,629 visitors.

Reflecting changing times in the rural sector, the Innovations Centre attracted serious interest.

Powered by the University of Waikato, the popular attraction featuring invention competitions has run for Fieldays entire 40-year history.

Innovations awards are broken into two major sections: Equipment, a fiercely contested class for improvements to existing products or for equipment or software that has passed prototype stage and

are now available for sale; and Innovations, with entries often coming straight from the farm or orchard that are at an early stage of development.

The Invention of the Year is awarded the "Golden Standard" award and Young Inventors (under 25 years of age) are also recognised. Innovations judges said that simple and effective solutions to common farm problems were the order of the day.

Judges were delighted to award the 2008 Golden Standard, for invention of the year, to Murray Lopes, for the Ultimate Mobile Gate Post, a simple addition to standard gates and fencing that provides the flexibility to create pens and folding gates, creating stock drafting solutions on-farm.

Mr Lopes says he became frustrated with the gates he was using to shift stock around the farm. "I thought, 'there has to be a better way,'" he says.

The Young Inventor of the Year was awarded to Cameron Ardern for his Multipurpose Feeder. Ardern's product caters for the changing needs of calves with a feeder that is versatile enough to feed a range of products including molasses, palm kernel, hay and meal.

Innovations Centre judges commended Ardern for "a practical solution to a real problem that was designed and built with enthusiasm and practicality."

Inventions category Merit Awards were presented to Richard Pilbrow for his Automatic Gate Opener, and Alex Taylor for his Post Puller.

In the Equipment category, the Equipment of the Year trophy was awarded to Technipharm International Ltd for the See-lect A Cow Split Drafter, a drafting solution that employs speed detection technology and a split drafter to provide inline drafting, improving efficiency on the farm and reducing animal stress.

