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ADVERTORIAL

**LOMACS reverse gateway spring**

**An 80-year-old Northland man believes he has invented a game-changing device for electric tape gateways with a touch of reverse engineering and farmers are impressed with what they see.**

Pipiwai farmer Alex Macmillan, the man behind the creation of LOMACS gateway hinge spring, due to be launched in at the Northland Field Days in Dargaville, says 'it could last a lifetime and save farmers plenty of money, frustration and broken gateways along the way'.

"While appreciative of the companies that created the current designs of gate tape handles — of which I have purchased hundreds over the years — the products clearly have a limited lifetime and eventually fail for a number of reasons and I always wanted a better option," says Alex.

"I felt there had to be a better way to operate gateways that are controlled by electric tapes. Rather than whinging about what others had created, I thought I should get into gear and devise a solution myself and a couple of years ago set about designing a bullet-proof model — based on my observations over decades of farming."

The product is made of marine grade stainless steel to take rusty springs out of the equation once and for all.

"This point was clearly reinforced by the many hundreds of farmers who visited our stand at Mystery Creek last year. The reason other types fail is because they are exposed to UV light, weather and contamination — such as mud, water and foreign matter, which get in and degrade the componentry of their make-up, and they ultimately break.

"I set out to design something that was sturdy, would last for decades and which was much more environmentally friendly given there is no plastic in the mechanism — just marine grade stainless steel."

Alex also devised a way to permanently secure the hinge spring to

the opposite post to which the spring handles are traditionally used. The hinge spring and activator is permanently secured to the post and has a swivel design allowing it to move from side to side, so it essentially eliminates any chance of damage. "It also gives consistent spring compression on the tape attachment every time as there is no chance of it stretching beyond the current barrel. The barrel itself is well-protected from contamination such as mud, organic matter and water."

The robust activator, which attaches the stainless steel unit to the post, can be quickly and easily fixed to the post in a number of ways.

"Having the unit permanently attached removes the risk of someone running over the unit, as happens with the current spring units. Being electrified from the barrel end, the tape is always live, removing the risk of inquisitive animals chewing it, which is another benefit. I am looking forward to unveiling my updated prototype to the New Zealand



Alex Macmillan — the inventor of LOMACS reverse gateway spring

market for the first time at the field days and believe locals will be sold on the concept. More innovations are in the pipeline, and in time may enhance this invention, but for now I want to focus on doing the LOMACS gateway hinge justice and giving farmers access to a quality product," he says.

"The exciting thing is the unit can be applied to sectors outside of farming — the marine industry being just one."

The first units will be available for sale mid-year with the price still to be determined. Visit LOMACS New Zealand Ltd in Rural Pavilion 1 at site 604.

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