

## WHATAWHATA FIELD DAY - 150 turn out for field day

The Whatawhata field day on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2013 was well attended by Waikato Regional Council staff and gave us a good opportunity to touch base with other council Land Management staff rural professionals and farmers who had travelled far and wide to attend the field day



A one-off event on ways to boost farm profits and improve environmental protection drew 150 people at the end of last month.

The field day was held by Waikato Regional Council, NIWA, AgResearch, Beef & Lamb NZ, NZ Farm Forestry Association and the **NZ Association of Resource Management** at the Whatawhata Hill Country Research Station.

"We had a mix of farmers, rural professionals, scientists, policy makers, iwi and others who are interested in hill country farming and related environmental management," said the council's sustainable agriculture co-ordinator Bala Tikkisetty.

"It was very pleasing to get good feedback from the people in attendance, both in terms of the content and the process."

Presenters discussed the results of a series of farm-scale experiments that began in 2001 at the Whatawhata research station. These experiments assessed the costs and benefits of a range of management practices to reduce the effects of hill country farming on the environment.

"The area had erosion and weed reversion challenges, poorly performing beef and sheep breeding enterprises, and degraded streams," he said.

Changes made included conversion of the steepest land to plantation forestry, indigenous forest restoration, intensification of the farming enterprises on to easier terrain with better pasture production, changes in stock type, poplar planting for soil stabilisation and exclusion of livestock from streams. Significant improvements have followed.