

RURAL GUARDIAN

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wide 

AUGUST 2023

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WITH Claire Inkson – OPINION

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Lambing memories

Of all my childhood memories on the farm, lambing season is the time of year I remember most fondly.

I was three years old when my father gave me my first lamb to rear.

Her name was Snowball, and she was a robust Corriedale, and from the moment my father handed her to me, we were the best of friends.

Thankfully, because she was a ewe lamb, I was allowed to keep her (Rambo was not so lucky, mysteriously disappearing one day while I was at school).

By the time I had finished primary school, I had a flock of around ten pets, all of who I knew by name and had their diets supplemented with hand-fed discarded apples from our little orchard.

They each had their time in the limelight being paraded in fancy dress and competing in the hotly contested bottle feeding competition at the school pet day.

Aside from the cute factor of raising pet lambs, the whole experience was filled with important life lessons.

Raising lambs gives children a sense of responsibility.

Mixing the right amount of milk at the right temperature and at the right time in well-cleaned bottles was crucial to the lamb surviving and thriving.

So rain, hail or shine, no matter how tired we were or what other activities we would rather be doing, we were responsible for this tiny, woolly and noisy creature.

And so we learned empathy and



Three year old me and Snowball. Jersey knitted by Nana, – pigtails – by Mum.

discipline.

Sometimes, though, the lesson was a harsher one.

Usually, our first experience with death as farm kids, if we are lucky, is a pet, and that pet is often a lamb.

A lamb would be brought home cold, hungry and sometimes weak.

We would place it by the fire in a box in the kitchen to warm up and patiently try and get the lamb to feed.

Sometimes, despite all our best efforts, the lamb didn't survive.

And so we learned that life isn't always kind, and sometimes endings aren't happy ones.

We learned you had to be tough to survive.

We learned resilience.

Tailing time was a family all-hands-on-deck affair.

We each had our roles, and mine was usually lifting the lambs into the chute with my brother.

The best thing about tailing time was the time spent together as a family, the picnic lunches in the paddock and the feeling of satisfaction at being able to contribute in a meaningful way to the farm business.

We learned the value of hard work and how to work collaboratively as a team.

Growing up on a farm is a privilege I consider myself lucky to have experienced.

In this issue, we celebrate the next generation of farmers with Emma Poole's success at last month's FMG Young Farmer of the Year grand final.

I was lucky enough to attend the practical day and the awards night.

The electricity in the room and the cheers from the crowd when Emma was announced as the competition's first female winner was one I will never forget.

We talk to Rabobank agribusiness associate Sam Bryan about his recent shearing trip to Mongolia and discuss bearing prevention with Vet South sheep and beef vet Donna Hamilton.

We have a yarn with Robbie "Gooserooter" Shefford about rural mental well-being and explore a bit of farming history with the Tipapa Woolshed.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you.



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RURAL RECHARGE

Take a smoko break for mental health

Gooserooter – not a typical influencer

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Robbie Shefford, or Gooserooter, as he is more commonly known, is on a mission for mental health.

In his modified 1952 Fordson tractor with a caravan in tow, sporting exaggerated mutton chops and dressed very deliberately in pink cover-alls, Robbie does not look like your typical mental health advocate.

Which is precisely the point. Shefford, formerly a truck driver and mechanic, has become an unexpected influencer of sorts sharing everything from truck repairs to his stories from his road trips around the country or anecdotes from his own life's journey.

What has struck a chord with his ever-growing social media following, though, are his conversations around mental health and well-being told through anecdotal experience.

With an eye to the rural and trucking sector, where mental

health issues remain a growing problem, Robbie promotes diverse conversations and shares his own insights and struggles.

"Two people can watch my videos and think completely different things," Shefford says.

"Everyone takes things in different bits at different speeds.

"That's why I talk about analogies in life, because it makes a lot of sense when you can simplify it and make it relatable.

"The punchline might be the same. It's just the process of telling the story to get to the punchline that might be different, and different people will resonate with different stories."

For Shefford, the message is clear and simple. It's O.K. to not be O.K.

"There's light at the end of the tunnel, and it's just working with your inner resilience to find that strength to move forward," Shefford said.

"I think a lot of people forget to look out the window and look at what is in front of them instead of



Robbie "Gooserooter" Shefford at the South Island Agricultural Field Days in Kirwee earlier this year. PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON

down at their phones." Shefford travels the length of the country, attending events as

a commentator, getting involved in tractor pulls, or simply parking his distinctive tractor and caravan

for people to stop and connect and chat.

Shefford has just launched a book, "Robbie's Mind Matrix", to help fund a bigger caravan so he can go on longer treks, stopping at places that often get left out of the mix.

Shefford says the book and the merchandise are unlikely to make him a millionaire; but he will be happy if an event brings in enough to fill his fuel tank and get him to his next destination.

"Everything I do is self-funded, so the book, as well as the coffee cups and hats, help get me from event to event.

"Once I can get a bigger caravan, I can go on a bit of a tiki tour and visit all the towns that get forgotten about.

"Instead of going straight up State Highway One, I want to stop at places like Geraldine, Methven, Mt Somers and Mayfield and do some talks there."

Keep an eye out for the distinctive Fordson tractor and "Gooserooter" himself, no doubt coming to a town near you.

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The future of agriculture is in good hands

During June and July I was closely involved in the FMG Young Farmer of the Year, an event that I view as incredibly special within New Zealand agriculture and with that goes the importance of New Zealand young farmers' clubs across the country.

The contest consists of six months of district and regional semi-finals culminating in a national final. Three age groups now compete, AgriKids for primary schools pupils, Junior Young Farmer for secondary pupils, and the Young Farmer of the Year open to those 18-31.

What we see in the young people contesting is a passion for agriculture, a thirst for learning and rapidly increasing practical and technical skills as they progress through the contest age groups.

Watching the AgriKids being put to task technically by Lincoln and Massey universities, Ravensdown, MPI, and Worksafe, or being set a practical challenge by New Holland, Honda, Bushbuck or Milwaukee, is quite something. The secondary youths are given a series of tasks,

technical modules, farmlet projects, a speech and quiz session that have all the technical attributes of the adult contest. The main event sees our very best demonstrate the highest degree of technical and practical ability to be crowned Young Farmer of the Year.

As a parent of young people participating, I see the advantages as much broader than the contest itself. The opportunity to learn is the real prize. This year we attended both the Kirwee Field Days and the National Field Days. In Hamilton we spent three days going around the sites taking in the technology, methods and knowledge on display.

I was very grateful for the company representatives who took the time to engage with our boys, answer their questions and share knowledge with them. We found everyone to be very generous with time, expertise, and encouragement. I would hope they found our boys to be keen to learn.

Back home we have found so many people very quick to offer to share their knowledge and that saw us visiting high country



Young people are being exposed to every aspect of modern farming, including new technologies, such as cow wearables.

stations, dairy, beef and sheep farms, and various agricultural service firms. Foothills Young Farms stepped up and ran a training day one Sunday. All of this interaction was outstanding, and we cannot measure the impact this opportunity for learning will have on these young people.

The contest is the culmination of the learnings from all the contestants from across New Zealand.

What we see in these contestants, across all three age brackets is two things in my view.

Firstly, the bright new future of agriculture as they look to embrace new ideas, ways of doing

things and new awareness of roles and responsibilities of food producers, and that is something we have to look forward to.

But equally, I believe that these young people are also the public display of what is already occurring behind the farm gate, they are being exposed to the technologies we are using, the level of expertise that is required to produce nutritious, sustainable food, and they are taking part in the conversations already being had at the farming family kitchen table.

So, for what is already happening on farm and for the journey that the passion of these young people will take us on, the future of agriculture is in great hands!

As a footnote to this article, a proud Dad moment, our youngest son Charlie along with his Mt Somers Springburn teammates Georgia and Flynn, won the AgriKids and our middle lad James and his teammate Jack Foster placed third in the Junior Young Farmer competition. Our congratulations to everyone who entered, it was an outstanding display.

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Hugh Jacksons supporters were out in force.

PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON



The Grand Finalists Peter O'Connor, who took out second place, Title winner Emma Poole and Hugh Jackson who came in third.



Peter O'Connor in the farmlet challenge.



AgrikidsNz grand champions Flynn Wallace, Georgia Heaven and Charlie Clark with Charlie's brother James and father David Clark.



Hugh Jackson wrapping a bale in the agri-sports challenge.

Breaking the grass ceiling

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

The 2023 FMG Young Farmer of the Year contest was one for the history books, with the prestigious title being awarded to a woman for the first time in the event's 55 season history.

Waikato Bay of Plenty farmer Emma Poole was announced as 2023 FMG Farmer of the Year to ecstatic applause from the crowd at the Grand Final event awards ceremony held in Timaru on July 9.

Peter O'Connor, representing the Aorangi region, came in very close behind Poole to take second place, with Otago-Southland representative Hugh Jackson taking third place.

Poole, a grand finalist in 2019, described the win as "knocking the grass ceiling off the roof."

"There's a long chain of women that have worked really hard to display the important role we play in agriculture," Poole says.

"All those women have given me the confidence to stand up and give it a go.

"I'm just a product of what they've all achieved."

Poole claimed the title following three days of gruelling challenges against the six other grand finalists.

The practical day is the most arduous in the competition schedule and was held at the Winchester Showgrounds Friday, July 8, on a stunningly crisp winter's day.

Despite the frosty start, the chilly conditions did not stop the competitors from turning up the heat as they battled it out for the coveted title.

The day saw finalists compete in practical and theoretical challenges and modules involving building, machinery, livestock and methane testing.

The agri-sports were popular with spectators as Te Radar commented on the challenges and entertained the crowds.

Although placing an impressive third in the agri-sports, Poole said they were the most challenging of the day.

"I had a pretty frustrating start with a baler and tractor, and that comes down to stress, but it is no different to what we are doing

every day.

"Farming is tough when stress comes on, and you've got to find a way to adapt and carry on."

Grand final convenor Ashleigh Bell was pleased with how the finals had come together and saw the event as an opportunity to showcase the region.

"We are playing to our strengths, and putting a twist on events that have been done in the past, and adding the Aorangi flavour," Bell said.

"The community have backed us to make that happen."

The next generation of farmers coming up the ranks had a chance to show their farming skills and pick up a title with the Junior Young Farmers of the Year and the AgrikidsNZ competition.

"Seeing the Juniors and the Agrikids coming through is amazing," Bell said.

"They are so talented and have so much skill."

Siblings and Dunedin pupils Zoe McElrea, of Columba College and Millar McElrea, of John McGlashan College, secured the title of FMG Young Farmers of the Year after a series of challenges spanning two days.

The twins were up against 13 teams from across the country and were put to the test with tasks that included crop spraying, building a planter box and straining fence wire.

The top five teams then went head to head in a quiz at an awards ceremony held on the Friday evening.

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Emma Poole competes in the agri-sports challenge.



Emma Poole in the farmlet challenge.



Te Radar commentated the event and entertained the crowds.



An impressive line-up of new Holland tractors and balers ready for the agri-sports challenge.

“We’re stoked,” Millar said. “We’ve been doing a lot of work to get to this point – we knew we had to enter the event feeling like we could win it because if you don’t believe in yourself, then you’re disadvantaged already.”

The title of AgriKidsNZ Grand Champions went to a tenacious trio from Mt Somers Springburn

School, Flynn Wallace, Charlie Clark and Georgia Heaven. “It’s awesome that all the effort we put in has paid off. “I think it’s fair to say we’re feeling really happy with the win,” Charlie said.

Young Farmers’ chief executive Lynda Coppersmith said the Agrikids is the fastest growing

part of the contest, which Young Farmers were looking to grow and build upon. “If you want to keep young people engaged in the sector, you have to make it fun,” Coppersmith said. “The competition gives them something to keep striving for.” Coppersmith said the talent

demonstrated by contestants across the three-day final proves the sector is in good hands and that she was thrilled for Emma Poole. “It’s the most prestigious farming award in the country, and it’s incredible to see someone who will be such a strong ambassador not only for the contest but for the entire food and fibre contest

as a whole.” Alongside the coveted title, trophy and the Cloak of Knowledge, Poole also took home \$90,000 in prizes from event sponsors. Poole takes the title from her brother, mentor and last season’s FMG Young Farmer of the Year, Tim Dangen.

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Bearing prevention is front of mind as lambing approaches

Preventing bearings in ewes will be at the forefront of sheep farmers' minds heading into lambing season.

Gore Vet South sheep and beef vet Donna Hamilton says while there is no silver bullet for preventing bearings, there are some steps farmers can take to reduce the risks.

"Identifying at-risk stock is a good place to start as a first step," Hamilton says.

Ewes carrying multiples are especially at risk.

A ewe carrying triplets is eleven times more likely to prolapse than a ewe carrying a single, and a ewe with twins is five times more at risk.

Flatter paddocks also help reduce the risk with multiples, so Hamilton suggests keeping flatter paddocks for triplets and twins.

Access to salt in late gestation is a risk factor.

"If salt is fed, it is better not to do this late in pregnancy," Hamilton advised.

Feeding a crop with a higher water content late in pregnancy can also be problematic.

"Feeding swede crop late in pregnancy has been identified as a risk factor for bearings – the likely cause is high water content.

"On those type of crops ewes produce a lot more urine, and a full bladder increases pressure on the abdomen."

Hamilton said the same probably applies to Fodder Beet, but feeding singles on these crops in late pregnancy is usually fine.

Some farmers also found disturbing stock while resting helped prevent bearings.

"One farmer we know uses his huntaway to run through the flock and get them moving.

"It encourages ewes to empty their bladders, which reduces intra-abdominal pressure," Hamilton said.

As well as the feed type, gorge feeding can cause issues.

"How crops are being fed is a factor.

"If ewes are in a gorge mentality, such as being on one-day breaks, they will feed more quickly and produce more gas in a short time which increases abdominal pressure.

"Four-day breaks, for example, would potentially lessen the risk."

Weight gain between mating and scanning is also a factor, as is shearing in the first half of pregnancy.

Some farmers have found that



Donna Hamilton.

supplementing ewes with Vitamin D helped mitigate the risk.

"This is farmer-based evidence; there is no science behind it, but some farmers use it for bearing prevention and metabolic support.

"And they believe it's working," Hamilton said.

During a study conducted in 2000 and 2001, a number of things were identified as NOT associated with risk to bearings:



There is no silver bullet for preventing bearings.

PHOTO: ANDREA LIGHTFOOT, UNSPLASH

- Thin vs fat ewes at the end of pregnancy
 - Weight gain or loss from scanning to lambing
 - Ewe tail length
 - Magnesium levels
 - Amount of feed late pregnancy
 - Shearing three months before mating or in the second half of pregnancy (protective)
- If ewes have bearing issues, Hamilton

recommends a hygienic approach to treatment.

"Using a mild disinfectant in water to clean the tissue and giving antibiotics will improve your success rate.

"Ensure you mark her as a cull, as she will likely have a bearing again next year.

"Consider the use of anti-inflammatories to improve discomfort and success of treatment."

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Lincoln University's events great for life planning

All the whanau are welcome at Lincoln University's Hui Whakatuwhera Open Day on Friday September 29.

It offers the perfect way for prospective undergraduate students, and those supporting them, to find out why Lincoln University is such a great place to study.

In 2022, nearly 1400 people from around Aotearoa New Zealand attended Open Day, enjoying the food trucks and music, and even throwing the odd gumboot, and the University is aiming for even more this year.

Open Days are about more than just coming on-campus. They are a way of connecting with the University's academics, staff and students, and discovering all the future opportunities on offer, in the primary industries and environment, business, sport and recreation, property and valuation, tourism and beyond.

It's a fantastic opportunity to attend presentations about study programmes of interest, as well as engage with lecturers, current students and alumni at the Expo, and have all your questions answered, and to find out about



It is all smiles at the Lincoln University Open Day.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

the fantastic careers Lincoln qualifications lead to, through our connections to industry and practical-learning based courses.

You will also learn about the extensive student support services available, and how students are guided through their

journey at Lincoln.

There are also campus tours showcasing Lincoln's wide range of accommodation options and campus facilities, such as the University's spectacular new science building Waimarie, the library, Whare H kinakina

LU Gym, and the University's dedicated student space, Grounded.

Alternatively if you are interested in postgraduate study, which Lincoln has experienced fantastic growth in recently, you should attend the Postgraduate

Information Evening.

It's held the night before Open Day, Thursday 28 September, and it's where you can find out about the range of postgraduate qualifications on offer, from certificates and diplomas to master's and PhDs.

Lincoln also has fantastic fee-waived options available for some postgraduate programmes until the end of 2024, which means you can grow your employability, or even change career direction for free. A selection of our programmes, such as some taught master's degrees, can be done in a year and online, so you don't have to make a massive time commitment. You can study when and where you want to.

Whatever your situation and your goals, Lincoln University will have something to suit you, and an event where you can find out about all the options available to you.

Registrations for Hui Whakatuwhera Open Day and Postgraduate Information Evening are open now. Head to www.lincoln.ac.nz for more information and to register.



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AUGUST 10

Arable Awards

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AUGUST 19

Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Kurow Ball

For more information, visit the Upper Waitaki Young Farmers Facebook page.

AUGUST 24 AND 25

iHemp Summit

Rydges, Christchurch

For more information, go to:
<https://hempsummit.nz/>

AUGUST 26

Teviot Valley Young Farmers Winter Ball

For more information, visit the Teviot Valley Young Farmers Facebook page.

Chocolate success

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

A young Ashburton entrepreneur is changing the plant-based milk game with his innovative chocolate oat milk.

21-year-old Daniel Williams began the journey to create a chocolate oat milk that tasted as good as its dairy counterparts when he was just 18, after being inspired by a vegan documentary.

"I realised there was no alternative to dairy chocolate milk, so that's where it came about," Williams says.

Williams started experimenting in his Grandparents' kitchen, and once satisfied the idea had potential, he began seeking investors.

"I put the idea up on an angel investors' site.

"Investors see it, and if they are interested, you have a Zoom call, and you go from there.

"That's where most of the funding came from.

"Most of it was overseas."

Once funding was secured, the necessary equipment was purchased, and product trials began.

Getting the flavour right was top of the agenda.

Williams put the milk to the

test with locals, using feedback to hone the taste.

"I spent ages on it, and Foodtech in Auckland was involved because, although I'd got pretty close with the flavour, we had to be able to commercialise it."

The flour for the milk comes from Harraways from oats grown in the Otago region.

A long-term goal for Williams is to process the oats themselves, but the cost of set-up means that will be a way down the track.

"It would be great to buy direct from farmers, but it's something we will look at once we are more established."

With the product marketed as Vegifare in the initial trials, the oat milk will be branded as "Tude" as a way to "de-veganise" the product at its official launch this month, Williams said.

"A lot of vegan products can put people off.

"I'm a carnivore, I'm not vegan, and before doing this, I would have probably been in the same boat and been put off by the whole vegan thing."

Williams plans to sell the product online initially and through a select number of around eight specialty shops before expanding to sell the product through sales reps direct to dairies and convenience stores.



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A bright future beckons for agriculture industry

It's been only a few months since I started as an Associate Minister for Agriculture, but I've been enjoying every moment of it. I've always had a close connection with farming life, having lived on a farm and being from a region where primary industries are the lifeblood. It's a privilege to take up this responsibility to be able to serve such an important industry.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role so far has been the opportunity to talk with people from across the sector and see the remarkable work they're doing.

This included attending numerous industry events. Among these was the Primary Industries Award, which showcased great examples of emerging talent. I also attended the Century Farmers Awards in Lawrence where the longstanding contributions of farming families spanning generations was celebrated. And who could forget Fieldays, a momentous event in any entrepreneurial farmers' calendar. Along with getting to see the cutting-edge technology being showcased, I got to open a panel discussion featuring some inspiring women working in

agriculture.

Through events like these, it is obvious why our country has such a bright future. Our nation has arguably one of the most innovative and talent-filled agriculture industries in the world, and our exponential growth in exports backs this. Our primary industry exports are poised to exceed expectations, now surpassing \$56 billion. In this challenging environment - with Cyclone Gabrielle and a tough global economic climate - we cannot overstate the crucial role of our trade and export growth in

our recovery.

That is why the recent signing of the New Zealand-EU Free Trade Agreement is so important. This agreement will provide substantial new trade access to our fourth-largest trading partner. This progress marks a significant milestone in breaking down trade barriers and unlocking new opportunities for New Zealand products. With an estimated annual increase of up to \$1.8 billion in exports to the EU, this agreement signifies a big step forward for our nation. The agreement will eliminate tariffs

on renowned products such as kiwifruit, Manuka honey, fish and seafood, onions, wine, and industrial goods. It will also create sizable new quota access for beef, sheep meat, butter, and cheese, that could be worth hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

Our government has always recognised the agriculture as a key pillar of our economy. It is why we've been committed to enabling growth and stoking the innovation and talent already flourishing within the industry - and I'm excited to see what our future continues to bring.

Vertical farm for Ashburton

By Sharon Davis

An Ashburton property will be home to the first full-sized automated vertical farm for leafy greens, with the first harvest expected in October.

Construction of the system on Seafield Road is almost complete. It will be commissioned in August, ready for planting to start in September.

The facility is owned by Ashburton local Mark Etheridge and will be used by Rolleston-based vertical farm supplier Landlogic to showcase its modular vertical production system, where plants grown in multilevel trays in climate and light-controlled cells in a warehouse.

The automated vertical growing system had the potential to improve food security with

reliable harvests and reduced overhead costs, said Landlogic chief executive Alan Cottington.

"The increasing unpredictability and frequency of severe weather events, attributed to global warming, along with the rising costs impacting traditional open-field farming, mean it's more important than ever to consider new approaches to sustainable agriculture.

"Our food security is vulnerable when we rely on traditional farming methods or importing for leafy greens, which are a basic and healthy food essential."

The commercial production of leafy greens, herbs or plant seedlings using multi-level growing systems was expanding rapidly around the world and New Zealand needed to get on board if it was to remain competitive and ensure a

reliable and efficient alternative to in-ground production was available, Cottington said.

The automated indoor system meant there were no seasonal crops and no crop losses - and it was better for the environment.

"Harvest times and end product quality are consistent and reliable, allowing commercial growers to confidently commit to delivery schedules and quantity agreements."

"Nutritionally, the product is at least equal to, if not better than, in-ground plants and the nutritional levels are much more consistent."

Cottington said the automated system did not use pesticides, fungicides or herbicides and required significantly less water than in-ground systems, with a water efficiency rate of 99.9%.

The Seafield Road system

would start with a single cell, but had the option to expand to up to three cells with the ability to produce 350kgs of leafy greens a week for the local market.

When fully installed, the system will take up 476m² out of 900m². The rest of the building contained a packaging room with a fully automated weighing and packaging system, dispatch area, office and staff facilities, Cottington said.

The system was developed in Australia and uses bioponics.

"We have live microbes in our nutrient system - just like what you would find in healthy soils - which creates a healthy environment for the plant to grow.

"We use a clay pebble growing media that enables us to re-use this for up to 12 months, this reduces growing costs and also helps with bio-security by essentially not

bringing replacement media to the system every time we plant," said Cottington.

Landlogic plans to conduct seed trials at this facility to assist other clients and help local seed companies develop products that can be sold around the world.

We see this technology as complimentary to traditional agriculture in NZ and an answer to the increase in pressure for land for housing, said Cottington.

"It offers the ability for us to increase our production by efficiently using land. By using Vertical Farming for leafy greens production we can re-use available land for production of root type vegetables that are better suited to outdoor production, and also use vertical farming to reduce imports of leafy greens out of season."



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Genetic modification, what's really in it for farmers

There have been calls growing louder recently about the need for New Zealand to pivot away from its natural advantage in the global food marketplace, and much like how they have in the past twenty plus years or so, the reasons for doing so are much the same albeit with some newer generation techniques becoming available that promise more than the last and without the problems that may have occurred in the older tech.

The dilemma we are faced with in food production is we're being used as the first line of defence in the global fight against climate change, the aspirational targets global leaders have signed

us up for with little regard to how they'll be achieved or the degenerative implications to rural communities especially. It's the perfect opportunity for someone with a patented product that could be sold to farmers who have little or no other option if they're needing to tick some boxes on their environmental reporting.

One of the preexisting issues we have as a nation is there is no overarching vision or strategy when it comes to food production, as a result despite there being many examples of exporting success and good value food, there is a huge gap between the dollars that stay

behind the farm gate and what consumers must pay for the nutrition they need. Farmers already bear a great burden of production costs when buying things like pasture seeds retail. If you need something like Plantain there is only one option that will help your nutrient budget which is also the more expensive, while not necessarily being the best option on other factors like persistence and production compared to other varieties. Meanwhile for the farmer that grows crops on behalf of seed companies they face tight margins relative to the high risk, and even have to pay for the fancy bags their seed is

retailed in!

It is quite a broken and disjointed system that needs to be repaired or replaced before we could contemplate allowing the problem to more than likely get worse if there became a smaller number of seed varieties and their patent holders dictate the market.

In my own situation as a deer farmer I'm really proud to grow nutrient dense venison and velvet as naturally as possible, for a few years now we've had to sign a declaration that our animals have not been fed any GMO or GE feeds, as this is of huge importance to our markets, especially in the US

where demand for NZ venison is growing, in part owing to our reputation as a clean, natural food producer. On the input side for us there has been the use of diverse pasture mixes, initially using common retail seeds but more latterly I try to source seed direct from growers who have their own seed varieties or uncommon species. Despite seeing good results from this for our animals, soil and farm ecosystem, it could have to be replaced my monoculture pastures and even a move away from deer altogether.

It all reminds me of a lyric about a Genie in a bottle...we've got to rub it the right way.

Mid Canterbury farmer takes on envoy role

A Mid Canterbury farmer has been appointed New Zealand's Special Agricultural Trade Envoy.

Methven-based Hamish Marr started his new role representing New Zealand farmers on July 1.

Marr is the first arable farmer to be appointed as an agricultural trade envoy. He will work alongside the Government to support key objectives and advocate for farmers and growers offshore.

Agriculture minister Damien O'Connor said Marr would play an important part in helping New Zealand exporters to seize new opportunities in the market and would tell trading partners about New Zealand's move towards a sustainable and climate-resilient agriculture

sector.

"Hamish comes from a strong farming background and has first-hand experience exporting products to market - making him well-suited to advocate for our farmers and growers offshore," O'Connor said.

Marr takes over from Mel Poulton, who started as trade envoy in 2020.

Foundation for Arable Research chair Steven Bierema said he was delighted at the news of the appointment.

"Hamish will be a well informed and incredibly considered representative of New Zealand agriculture wherever he goes. We couldn't have asked for a better person. It is great to have him as a fellow arable grower," Bierema said.



Hamish Marr.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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The arable lifestyle story

By Claire Inkson
 Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

The New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association hosted its annual Grain and Pulses Forum at the Riccarton Park Function Centre with a wide range of speakers that covered the arable story from paddock to plate.

The event, held on June 21, was attended by 80 delegates from across the sector.

"It was a good turnout," said Luisetti Seeds managing director and Grains and Pulses Business Group chairperson Edward Luisetti.

Luisetti said he thought the speakers at this year's forum were the best they have had.

"We covered the full life cycle of some of our arable products, from breeding a new variety through to the introduction of new consumer products."

Luisetti said the speakers gave a view of the industry as a whole.

"It highlighted the importance of cereal plant breeding and the benefits and opportunities it creates for arable farmers and New Zealand."

Economist Cameron Bagrie presented a global agriculture economy update and the impacts of a recession, which he termed more of a re-set, on the arable sector.



The Grain and Pulses forum was attended by 80 delegates from across the arable sector. PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON

Doug Michael from Gladfield Malt spoke about the rise of the craft brewing industry and the opportunities for locally sourced barley malt, and Daniel Williams took attendees through his journey of creating Vegifare chocolate oat milk.

Process Vegetable chairperson David Hadfield gave a pulses sector update, and Steve Shorter from PGG Wrightson Seeds concluded the forum with a presentation on plant breeding

genetics.

Delegates were treated to a barbeque lunch at the end of the event, allowing them to connect with other attendees in the industry.

"It's a very good networking opportunity; that's a big part of it," Luisetti said.

The next big event on the arable calendar is the Arable Awards, held on August 10 at Wigram Air Force Museum in Christchurch.

The awards will acknowledge

and celebrate innovators and leaders who drive progress in the sector, which has seen significant growth in recent years.

"There's a danger that with all the focus on costs and challenges our growers are grappling with, we lose sight of our significant success stories and all the hard mahi that underpins a sector that returns more than \$1 billion in farm gate sales," Federated Farmers arable chair Colin Hurst said.

This year's awards are the

first to see a collaboration between Federated Farmers, the Foundation for Arable Research, United Wheat Growers and the New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association that will see 12 awards up for grabs, three more than previous years.

"The arable sector provides full-time employment for more than 11,300 New Zealanders.

"The new Arable Employer of the Year Award will recognise someone who has demonstrated exemplary employment practices, promoted positive workplace culture, employment retention and a progressive career pathway in the industry," Hurst said.

The other two new awards will be for Arable Researcher of the Year and the top Plant Breeder and Researcher.

"We haven't secured our place in the world as a leader in seed production - 60 per cent of the world's radish seed, 50 per cent of white clover seed and 40 per cent of global carrot seed, for example - as well as underpinning our pastoral farmers with maize, feed and grass seed, without cutting edge research and development," Hurst says.

The other awards will cover growers of the year, innovation, emerging talent, agronomy, environment and sustainability and the hotly contested Arable Food Champion.



Economist Cameron Bagrie have an update of the global agriculture economy.



Doug Michael from Gladfield Malt spoke about opportunities for arable growers and the rise of the craft beer industry.

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Ag drones now flying high

By Sharon Davies

The use of agricultural drones in New Zealand is set to take off.

Drones are already used for precision application of herbicides or pesticides, fertiliser application, and seed spreading.

Ag Smart UAV owner Vaughan Ward said agricultural drones were used for a variety of applications and came into their own for more remote or hard-to-reach locations, or small areas that need a precise application.

“We spray a variety of targets with herbicides to control gorse or broom, or control weeds in drains.”

Drones could also apply insecticides and fungicides for tree nurseries and crops.

“I don’t think for a moment that unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will ever fully replace ground-based machinery or manned aircraft for agricultural applications. However, they have a place.

“As larger unmanned aircraft become available and battery and hybrid technologies advance, who knows where it will lead – especially with the rising cost of fuels.”

Drones can also be used to survey crops, check on livestock, or for mapping – and new multi-spectral sensors have also introduced ways to add precision, said Ward.

“Our survey drones can quickly and easily obtain crop data using different light spectrums.

The results from this sensor can tell you a lot about crop health or damage, identify areas of weed infestation, or areas that require fertiliser,” he said.

The data can be loaded into a spraying drone or more traditional land-based spraying equipment to allow contractors and farmers to target the application based on the need of the crops.

“For a fertiliser application, for example, the drone could vary the rate of application based on the data from the multi-spectral sensor.”

The new technology allowed a more precise application which could save input costs and increase yields, Ward said.



Agricultural drones are set to take off.



Ag Smart UAV owner Vaughan Ward says drones come into their own for remote or hard to reach locations.

Ag Smart UAV

Ag Smart UAV has been operating for four years and runs a fleet of two mapping and two spraying/topdressing drones.

It is the only Mid Canterbury drone company licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority to fly larger agricultural drones and apply agri-chemicals.

Additional, larger craft will be added to the fleet soon.

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A professor's view on herbicide resistance

Herbicide resistance does not mean an end to arable farm profitability, according to an Australian weed management professor.

University of Adelaide weed management professor Christopher Preston said resistance covered almost all the herbicides available for grain production.

"If you talk to Australian growers they will tell you that weed resistance has made them better farmers.

"But it does mean that weed management becomes more complex and has to be more strategic," Preston told delegates at last month's Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) conference.

In Australia there were 24 grass species and 28 broadleaf weed species with resistance to at least one herbicide mode of action - the most notable being ryegrass, which had evolved resistance to nine different herbicide modes of action.

Resistance to Group 1 and 2 herbicides was widespread across the southern states of Australia and resistance to glyphosate

(Group 9) was increasing.

"Across Australia, one in six farmers now have glyphosate-resistant ryegrass. The only post-emergent treatment that reliably works is Paraquat (Group 22), so farmers are using a lot more of this," Preston said.

Australian grain farmers have adapted to post-emergent herbicide resistance by increasing their use of pre-emergent herbicides and using sequences of chemistry rather than relying on singular treatments.

Crop competition is another strategy, Preston said.

"This doesn't kill any weeds but reduces the seed set by up to 50%."

Early-sown crops reach canopy closure quicker, shading out ryegrass seedlings, he said.

A nine-year trial for weeds on a farm site that was over-run with herbicide resistant ryegrass showed the effectiveness of crop rotation and double breaks, where two years of effective annual ryegrass control are used to drive down the weed population.

The project also highlighted that the high cost strategy for



University of Adelaide weed management professor Christopher Preston.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

weed control was the most profitable.

"If you think you are spending too much on weed control you are probably not. There may be space to spend more. Do it right and get more profit," Preston said.

End of season weed control tactics such as hay crops can reduce the amount of weed seed going back into the soil, as can machinery such as an impact mill which crushes weed seeds.

Future alternatives included electrical, laser and microwave weed control.

The WeedSmart Big 6 tactics developed in Australia to manage seed banks are: rotate crops and pastures, increase crop competition, mix and rotate herbicides, optimise spray efficacy, stop weed seed set and implement harvest weed seed control.

"Stacking of weed control

tactics in each crop is essential to keeping weed populations low and allowing long-term profitable crop production," Preston said.

A programme on herbicide resistance in New Zealand has found widespread resistance in ryegrass, particularly to Group 1 and 2 herbicides. So far there has been no resistance to glyphosate on arable farms.

FAR senior field research officer Matilda Gunnarsson said the programme had helped to take the stigma away from having herbicide resistance as farmers, and got the industry to realise how widespread it was.

Resistance was a bigger problem in areas where grass seed crops are grown and rotation options were limited. A total of 71% of arable farm samples in South Canterbury showing resistance compared with 35% in Mid Canterbury and 11% in the lower North Island.

Just five ryegrass plants/m² can reduce wheat yield by 5%.

However, yield loss is not the only reason to control weeds; seed certification and export requirements also demand good weed management, she said.

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Most New Zealanders have Land Rover memories

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Few vehicles are more cherished or iconic than the Land Rover.

With its roots entwined in modern agriculture and post-World War II history, the Land Rover symbolises utilitarian reliability and no-frills function over form.

Most New Zealanders have owned a Land Rover or had childhood memories of riding in one with relatives across a farm paddock.

“So many people will stop you and say, oh, I learned to drive in one of those,” Series II A owner Jeremy Evans says.

“Particularly out in the country where everyone’s either got one or had one or knew someone who had one.”

The Land Rover was born in post-World War II Britain in 1947 by the Rover Company, in an ex-aircraft engine factory Rover moved into after their original Coventry factory had fallen victim to bombing during the war.

The brainchild of Rover chief

designer Maurice Wilks, the Land Rover was inspired by the robust Willys Jeep to be an agricultural workhorse for Britain.

Steel was still severely rationed, so the body was made from aluminium originally hallmarked for aircraft and painted in shades of the surplus green paint that had initially been destined for aircraft cockpits.

The original design had the steering wheel in the centre to mirror a tractor but was repositioned off to the side for practicality when it came to production.

What began as a short-term project for the Rover company to increase cash flow, soon became a top-selling vehicle.

In 1969-1970 sales of Land Rover were recorded at 60,000 per year.

As a testament to the vehicle’s resilience, it is estimated that more than 70 per cent of the two million earlier models produced are still being driven.

“People are pulling them out of barns.

“There are just so many of them everywhere, which is great.

“Few of them die completely,”

Jeremy says.

Jeremy’s 1968 Series II A had been returned from the rusty dead by its previous owner before Jeremy purchased it last year.

“I’ve had more modern ones, but this is my oldest one.

“I bought it because it was so mint.

“It had had a total nut and bolt restoration with parts from England and Australia.

“It had gone from a rusty pig to back to almost new condition.

“Right down to the heater.”

The engine and gearbox, which is a four-speed with overdrive, were rebuilt, and the body restored, with rust removal and new paint.

What sets this vehicle apart, though, is the attention to detail.

“It’s got a leather steering wheel and a mini radiator that works like a heater core that comes from the engine.

“A lot of Land Rovers either never had them, or they rusted out because of the water running through it.

Jeremy says the heater is a welcome addition on a chilly day, although it does have its drawbacks.



Jeremy Evans with his Series IIA and Andy Bain with Warrick Neal’s Series II Land Rover. PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON



Angie and Andrew Mason with their 2023 Defender. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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"It does tend to steam the vehicle up a lot, though.

"So you are out there with your rag cleaning the windscreens and the side windows all the time in winter."

Andy Bain, farmer and owner of Bains Classic Motor House, has had plenty of Land Rovers over the years.

"Everyone remembers one, or they've had one in their farm shed, or their gran had one.

"Everyone has a connection to them somehow," Andy says.

Andy has a 1961 Series II out on loan for the day from Warrick Neal, who restored the vehicle.

The Land Rover had been in the Neal family since it was six months old.

Warrick's grandfather, Max, purchased the vehicle for £1300 and used it for his building company before it became the family car for Warrick's mother in 1972.

The Land Rover was retired to the farm shed in the 1980s before Warrick stripped the vehicle in 2018 and reassembled it with parts sourced from across the globe.

Both vehicles are so meticulously restored they provide a window into what a new Land Rover would have been like when it rolled off the factory floor in the 1960s.

The New Generation

The Land Rover Defender, a follow-on from the previous 110 and 90 models, was produced between 1990 and 2016. It ceased production mainly due to safety

regulations.

In 2020, a completely redesigned luxury Defender (L663) was launched to rave reviews.

For the farmer and owner of Amberley House, Angie Mason, the new Defender was the perfect mix of comfort and robust versatility.

Angie purchased the vehicle earlier this year.

"We are hard on our vehicles because they do go on the farm.

"But we wanted something a bit more comfortable because we were also going to be driving into town a lot.

"We looked at the Range Rover, the Discovery, and the Defender," Angie says.

"But the Defender was just so totally us."

Angie says the Defender was able to tow the horse float and drive around the farm but was equally at home in the city.

"It doesn't look out of place anywhere.

"It's just really pragmatic, and I think the decision for me is that it is luxurious without being ostentatious."

Angie says the new Defender's styling gives enough of a nod to its predecessors to retain the Land Rover's original old-school charm.

"It's retro yet modern.

"They've managed to keep the essence of the iconic Land Rover in this really modern, almost luxurious vehicle.

"And that's quite a hard ask, really," Angie said.



PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON



Warrick Neal's Series II Land Rover has been in his family since near-new.

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The Series II A has been restored with meticulous attention to detail.

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Tillmans: Where quality meets passion

Lindsay Sandford is one of those clever creative chaps, who's always loved the soul enriching world of handcrafted wooden furniture.

That passion was passed down by his mother, so perhaps it makes total sense that he's the manager-owner of the impressive Tillmans Fine Furniture shop in Christchurch.

It's a destination store and showroom that has a serious point of difference that it's loyal customers love because it only sells New Zealand-made furniture. This point of difference is the vital ingredient, whilst proudly supporting local craftsmen it specifically allows Lindsay and his team to deliver you exactly what you need and desire.

All of Tillmans' manufacturers are based in New Zealand, including five in Christchurch, and they're names that appreciators of fine furniture would know instantly in Kovacs, Montreux, Davies, Pace and David Shaw.

Mention their importance to the Tillmans' success story and watch Lindsay smile.

"We are very proud to support



Bruce McKenzie, a Kovacs frame craftsman since 1972.

our local manufacturers," he said. "They give us both the quality we need and the flexibility that customers can't find elsewhere. So often imported, contemporary furniture is too deep, too low or offered in a limited colour range, our close working relationship with our manufacturers allows us to solve many of those issues

people face. It's very gratifying being able to offer that level of service."

Having been a family-owned business since 1956, that family feeling is important at Tillmans where he, Lyndon Bowden and Penny Claridge make a super connected team, with all-round skills to make the customer



Lindsay Sandford, Penny Claridge and Lyndon Bowden.

experience one to remember. Penny is their in-house interior designer who loves nothing more than helping people create their perfect piece of furniture, she is available to consult in your home, all as part of your Tillman's experience. Old fashion values reign, you will be listened to, given honest, expert advice

and Lindsay even delivers the furniture personally to your home!

Originally of rural stock, Lindsay understands the complexities of the farming lifestyle so has recently joined the RuralCo network to allow his many mid-Canterbury customers to enjoy the benefits it offers.

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Caring for your skin in winter

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

We all know that summer is a time to pile on sunscreen and consider protecting our skin from the elements, but that is equally as important in winter, especially in the height of lambing and calf rearing season.

Your skincare regime shouldn't stop at the bathroom sink in the morning, especially with the dry winter atmosphere in the South Island, Berry Beauty owner and beauty therapist Katie Berry says.

"For ladies just looking for a simple routine to get them through the busy season, start with a good cleanser that is ideally paraben-free."

Katie suggests following a single morning cleanse with a good-quality serum.

"For environmentally attacked skin, which is basically weathered skin, we recommend a vitamin C serum because it is super healing."

"Vitamin C is brilliant to use if you are outside all the time."

Katie recommends following up with a good moisturizer, but stresses that sunscreen is the most important thing, even in winter.

"We recommend putting sunscreen over the top of your moisturizer and one that is specific for the face."

A sunscreen containing zinc oxide is best as it forms a physical

barrier on the skin, as chemical sunscreens can still allow some UV rays to slip through and cause damage.

Katie said sunscreen should be applied at least twice daily, especially for those living in the Southern Hemisphere.

"Studies show that in Australia, we are aging twenty years more prematurely than those living in the Northern Hemisphere."

"That's simply because our ozone layer above New Zealand and Australia is so much thinner than in the U.K, which makes us prone to a lot more environmental damage than anywhere else in the world."

By not wearing sunscreen, any money spent on a skincare regime is wasted, Katie said.

"It's an important part of your skincare regime; I can't emphasize it enough."

With Katie's clinics based in Ashburton and Methven, many clients passing through Berry Beauty's doors are rural women.

As a farmer's wife herself, Katie understands how difficult it can be for farming women to find the time, and sometimes the confidence, to attend skin care appointments.

Katie says women should not feel intimidated by beauty therapy clinics or feel they have to dress up to attend appointments. "Gumboots are welcome.



Berry Beauty owner and beauty therapist Katie Berry.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

"You don't have to dress to the nines to come to the clinic and have a facial."

You can just rock in off the farm, have a conversation and start the process."

The relationship between

client and therapist should be 50-50, with a good active home care regime paired with in-salon facials every month or every twelve weeks as a minimum if time is an issue.

"What we do in the clinic is go

one step further and work with the technology and ingredients to penetrate the skin deeper than you can at home.

"That allows us to start any kind of tissue and DNA repair, which will give long-term anti-aging and protection results."

Katie recommends choosing a clinic with a holistic approach that looks at the broader picture of nutrition, supplements and water intake for optimum results.

"If you are just treating skin topically, you aren't going to get any long-term results."

Water intake is important, especially in winter when cooler weather doesn't make us naturally feel the need to hydrate as regularly as in the heat of summer.

Katie also recommends a plant-based essential fatty acid supplement to all her clients.

"It basically helps your skin absorb what you are putting on topically."

Rural women need to prioritize self-care, and Katie found that once they take the first step and visit a clinic and get a good skin routine in place, they never look back.

"We have so many clients that work on-farm, and they are all so grateful they came to us."

"We need to normalize these conversations because, in the agriculture industry, women tend to forget they need to look after themselves," Katie said.

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Stewart and Jane Whiteside bought Tipapa in 2020, just before New Zealand went into lockdown. PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON



Mechanical shearing machines were installed in the early 1900s, and were originally powered by a steam tractor. PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON



Blade Shearers outside Tipapa woolshed in 1897. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

A venue with shear charm

By Claire Inkson
 claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

An aging historical woolshed in North Canterbury has a new lease of life as a rustic event venue for weddings and community functions.

The woolshed was originally busy servicing the Tipapa Estate's thousands of sheep across a property that was over 18,000 acres spreading out across Greta Valley and towards Motunau Beach.

The Tipapa Estate, which also includes a historic homestead and extensive gardens, now comprises of 130 acres of its original land.

Like many large estates of the era, most of the property was sold off in the previous century or excised as ballot farms to soldiers returning from both wars.

The T-shaped woolshed was built in 1880 from native timbers by then owners, the Acton Adams family and was designed to accommodate 12 blade shearers, on six stands.

In the early 20th century, mechanical shearing machines were installed, powered by a steam tractor reversed up to the shed, with a belt drive to spin the machinery.

This meant shearing was much more efficient and halved the number of shearers required.

Later, an electric motor was installed to replace the steam-driven system.

In the 1960s, the Robertsons purchased Tipapa, and in the 1970s began converting half of

the woolshed to accommodate deer.

Pioneering deer farmers, the Robertsons captured wild deer by helicopter to build up a herd, as domestic deer were unavailable in New Zealand at the time.

In 2003, the estate changed hands again when it was purchased by John Carr.

In 2008, John transformed the woolshed into a function centre.

With its rustic charm and rich history, the repurposed woolshed proved popular, with 200

weddings held in the homestead gardens and shed over the next nine years.

In 2020, Tipapa was purchased by the current owners, Stewart and Jane Whiteside.

The sale took place at a challenging time for an events venue, as the country went into lockdown almost immediately after.

"We purchased the property on a Thursday, and then the country went into lockdown the following Wednesday," Jane says.

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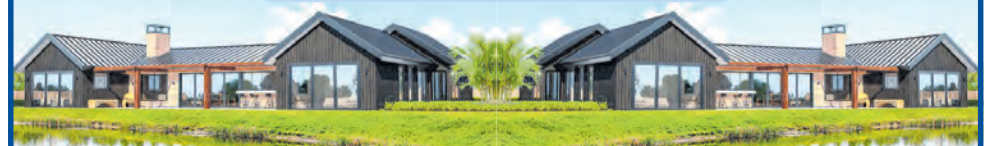
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The woolshed has been lovingly restored retaining its history and rustic charm. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

“It was terrible timing.”
Despite the challenges of covid restrictions, the Whitesides have breathed life back into the business, hosting weddings, community functions and joining the Hurunui Garden festival.
“Having a wedding here appeals to people who want to do the event themselves, or just like the rustic feel,” Jane says.

The woolshed is also a popular choice for farmers tying the knot.

“Farmers often want to get away from farming and do something elegant, but they love the idea of this place.”

“They can have the elegant moment on the front lawn of the homestead with canapes and drinks, and then they can come to the woolshed and let their hair down.”

The Whitesides have continued the strong relationship between the estate and Greta Valley Primary School, located a short distance from the homestead and on estate land originally donated by the Acton Adams family.

With the community hall irreparably damaged in the 2016 Waiiau earthquake, Tipapa opened the woolshed doors to provide a venue for school events.

“The school is holding its production here, and we also host the Scargill Spring Show,” Jane said.

This year’s play will be the second school production held at Tipapa, which also hosted the school’s 125th-anniversary celebrations in 2018.

The history of the woolshed has been lovingly preserved during the restoration process, with the interior walls a canvas

for stencils and graffiti from shearers of a bygone era.

“The story is that the previous owner got them to pull the graffitied boards down from around the shed, replaced them, and had them put in here,” Jane said

“They put a bit of rattle here and there for continuity, but these are authentic stencils.”

“The earliest date we have found is 1903, but we know it was operating well before then.”

Ladders hang from the woolshed’s timber ceilings, fashioned from lime wood by Stewart, and adding to the rustic feel of the venue.

“Stewart made these out of tree limbs that were down in the hayshed from a huge lime tree that used to grow outside the kitchen during the Robertsons’ time.”

“If people want, I decorate them, or people can do their own decorations.”

Maintenance on the woolshed remains ongoing.

“Parts of the woolshed are relatively fragile, and our main aim for the back is to ensure the roof is watertight and replace missing timbers.”

The woolshed can host events for up to 150 people, which feed back into the local hospitality businesses still struggling with the after-effects of covid restrictions.

“We have a bed and breakfast here in the homestead, and guests can stay at the other local Airbnbs and bed and breakfasts in the area.”

“They can eat at the Greta Valley Tavern or have breakfast at Fossil Point café.”

“It brings in business to the area.”



Tipapa woolshed is now a popular event venue.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

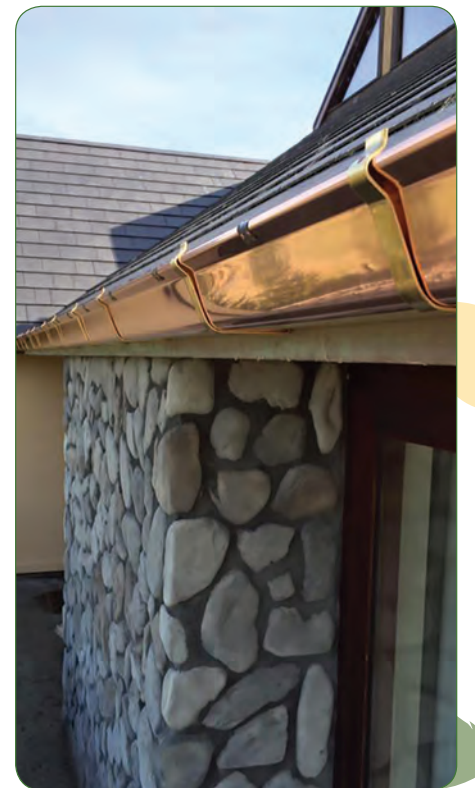
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A Mongolian adventure



Horses are an integral part of Mongolian culture.



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED Conditions for shearing in the Gobi desert were some of the hottest and stickiest Sam Bryan has experienced.

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Fermented horse milk might not be for everyone, but it was just one of the Mongolian experiences Rabobank agri-business associate and former shearer Sam Bryan will not forget.

Bryan has recently returned from a three-week stint in the East Asian country as part of the Share Mongolia programme.

The programme aims to arm

Mongolian shearers with training and modern equipment, enabling them to shear and farm more economically and sustainably.

Currently, most shearing in Mongolia is done using scissors, a time-consuming method that limits the number of sheep shorn to just thirty per day and makes it difficult for herders to support their families.

Bryan was one of around 13 Rabobank clients and staff who embarked on the trip throughout

June and July, sharing their skills and getting thoroughly immersed in Mongolian culture.

Bryan says the group was warmly welcomed by locals who went out of their way to give their guests a taste of authentic Mongolian hospitality.

"The best part about the trip was the people, how well we were looked after and how hospitable they were," Bryan said.

"They put a lot of effort into looking after us and making sure

we had a good time."

Bryan spent the first part of his trip in the Ömnögovi province in the south of Mongolia in the Gobi desert doing two full days of shearing, which Bryan described as "the hottest, stickiest and sandiest" shearing experience he has had.

At the end of the second night in the Gobi desert, a visit to a family of herders ended with Bryan adding camel shearing to his repertoire.

"We called into this family on

the way home one night and decided to have a go shearing their camels.

"It was pretty easy; we just grabbed them, sat them down, tied them and shored them.

"It's a bit like shearing an alpaca."

The Ömnögovi province suffers from over-grazing, which Bryan says has significantly impacted the grasslands, with around seven kilometres disappearing into desert every year.

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Sam Bryan with a white camel calf.



Horse and mutton are menu staples in Mongolia.

Bryan said tens of thousands of animals were visible in the valley every morning of his stay, including horses, yaks, cattle, sheep and goats.

By teaching more efficient shearing practices to herders and looking at new markets for the wool, the hope is they can reduce stock numbers and lessen the environmental impact.

"We gathered some of the wool to send back to Europe, with the idea of adding value to the wool they got from running sheep.

"We are hoping that would encourage the herders to run fewer goats and reduce the impact of overgrazing."

The sheep farmed by the herders are Awassi, a fat-tailed, coarse-wool breed adapted to the desert conditions.

"In the desert, they have next to nothing to eat, but they do alright because they have a big lump of fat over their tails.

"It sort of acts like a camel's hump; it's the same kind of thing." Bryan's next part of the trip

was to central Mongolia, to the Arkhangai province.

The journey took several hours in the Mongolian vehicle of preference, which, somewhat surprisingly, is a Toyota Prius.

"We travelled on these dirt tracks; they are not even roads – they are more like farm tracks.

"And these Priuses are just amazing; they would go everywhere."

Bryan and his group trained thirty-five herders with mobile shearing trailers and equipment

donated from various banks and organisations, including one funded by Rabobank.

In exchange for the training, the herders treated Bryan and the New Zealand group to traditional Mongolian cuisine, including fermented horse milk and a dish similar to a hangi, a Khorhog.

"It's mutton and potatoes, cooked up in a sort of milk can with rocks heated over the fire," Bryan explained.

"It's actually pretty good." Bryan said the Mongolians

have a nose-to-tail approach to cooking and are adept at making do with very little, with horse and mutton being menu staples.

"They run a lot of horses, milking them in summer and eating them in winter.

"They race them too. "They are resourceful and a very proud people."

Bryan hopes to return to Mongolia next year to check in with the herders they have trained and ensure they are maintaining their equipment.



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We added more Fish oil and 1500mg of both Chondroitin and Glucosamine with 400 mg of Curcumin extract. The results have been excellent. Her joints have greatly improved and is especially thrilled with her feet as these were causing real problems.

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Most joint supplements are based on glucosamine sulphate. While beneficial, it is nowhere as effective as chondroitin sulphate, as this is a constituent of cartilage and exerts many positive benefits to joints.

I replaced her supplement with my joint formula that has 50/50 chondroitin and glucosamine. I believe this was the most important part of her improvement. You must wonder why most supplements have little chondroitin. I think this comes down to the cost of quality chondroitin.

There are many diet changes that can help arthritis. By far the most important are fats. Some fats are inflammatory and worsen arthritis. Some are anti-inflammatory and reduce the inflammatory part of arthritis. Omega 3 from oily fish is very anti-inflammatory and is the most important oil to reduce joint pain. Please email me if you would like a copy of my Anti-Inflammatory Nutrition Guide.

John Arts (Adv.Dip.Nut.Med) is a nutritional medicine practitioner and founder of Abundant Health Ltd. For questions or advice contact John on 0800 423559 or email john@abundant.co.nz. Join his newsletter at www.abundant.co.nz.



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IN ROWENA'S WORDS ...

As good as it gets: All Blacks vs Australia

Rugby test provides a brief respite from potholes and politics

It's hard to believe we've reached the second half of the year already. With a Rugby World Cup and an election in the mix, 2023 was always going to be huge – but I think we can all agree, what's been served up so far has been beyond any expectations.

As such, I'm really looking forward to a brief respite from potholes and politics, as Dunedin plays host to the All Blacks v Australia Bledisloe Cup match on August 5.

There's a certain vibe about the city on test match weekends, that even if you're not heading

In some cases, [a Heartland game] is quite literally the chance for farmers to face All Blacks on the footy field.

to the match, is easy to enjoy.

The city comes alive – both with supporters and those just along for the ride.

After a lean few months, it'll be fantastic to see sold-out accommodation packed bars and even just people wandering the streets again.

Plus, the way we've been playing these past few weeks, it's actually an enjoyable watch again – touch wood.

Also enjoyable (although one-sided) have been the two Heartland union Ranfurly Shield Challenges – Horowhenua-Kapiti and South Canterbury. I really love these games because they are something the players and management will never forget.

In some cases, it's quite literally the chance for farmers to face All Blacks on the footy field.

The Heartland Championship has been a huge passion of mine since its inception in 2006 and although our two original trophy namesakes – Sir Colin Meads and Sir Brian Lochore – are no longer with us, the values they showcased as hardworking men of the land still ring true in this competition.

Grassroots rugby at its finest. ■

Right, Rowena with a cardboard cutout of Sir Brian Lochore in Oamaru ahead of a Heartland Championship Lochore Cup match.



Rowena Duncum and Jamie Mackay broadcast The Country radio show on Newstalk ZB, Gold Sport and Hokonui, Monday to Friday, 12-1pm. Also streamed on iHeart Radio and on demand via www.thecountry.co.nz

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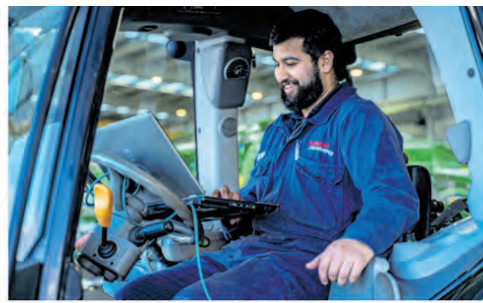
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Long road to revive wool worth taking

OPINION: Having made her mark as a woman in the industry, **Philippa Wright** asks: Where is wool heading?

I bought into my own brokering company in Waipukurau, 25 years ago and am still there, although living back in the Bay, commuting to the store while also working from home.

I did not join the industry with any great intentions other than to earn enough money to live the lifestyle I desired at that time. It was quite a surprise that it was so male dominated as I progressed through the ranks in my early years, especially with those years in the sheds when women were so dominant.

This was something I struggled with throughout my 40-plus years and sadly there has not been a notable change in the more senior roles to this day.

I feel I have let the side down slightly here as there really does need to be a better strategy in place to encourage and support women in the industry beyond middle management and into the board rooms so to speak.

It still surprises me that I persevered for so long but, like so many in this industry it truly does get into your blood. It equally surprises me that I can honestly say that I have loved it and am eternally grateful to the Global Campaign for Wool, of which I have been with for 15 years and am a Trustee for the NZ Campaign for Wool. The Campaign truly inspired me and continually reminds me of wool's outstanding attributes and its immense value to the world.

The plight of wool

There is presently more talk in the public arena about wool and its plight than I have seen in years. It feels abysmally sad that it has taken probably the worst price drops I have ever seen in my career to create this much delayed conversation to begin, and I sincerely hope it is not all too late.

I have always and still very much believed that the saddest day in our history was the day the wool growers



Philippa Wright sports the product she is so passionate about.

of NZ voted to firstly stop all marketing of NZ Wool and then decommission the wool board entirely.

Yes, there were some serious issues, but surely this could have been overhauled to create an enduring long-term strategy which could have been kept to account through the years of serious competition from the synthetic industries?

So, here we are, fighting for our lives to maintain one of NZ's oldest industries. An industry that provides so many solutions to our very real and serious environmental and

Philippa Wright has been involved in the wool industry for 46 years.



Philippa Wright has been involved with the wool sector for 46 years, starting as a shed hand in the McKenzie Country, then onto classing South Island merino clips, and, finally, to becoming part of the brokering scene in Napier — which, she says, is still the heart of the North Island strong wool.

economic issues.

I am heartened by the sudden inspiration of new-uses and re-creating of uses for many long-valued products using NZ strong wool.

I am impressed by the urgency sensed by groups to enlighten and inspire the next generations to understand the attributes of wool and the many possibilities.

Realistically, I don't see my generation seeing the results of what is going to be a very long road to put wool back to its rightful place, but what I do see and believe strongly is that we have a younger generation coming into this with very new eyes and using the knowledge that our generation have built and hopefully passed on.

They have the capabilities to move much faster and be far more agile with technology that just simply wasn't available to us. So, yes, I believe in the future of wool, and I know the world needs it and will be a better place because of it.

The next generations deserve to know and understand its value.

I have been in it for the long haul and will be until I am buried in my wool coffin, so don't lose heart, always choose wool, and live well. ■

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Face-to-face hui with our farmers

OPINION: Discussion is sometimes robust and heated but is constructive overall writes **Kate Acland**.



Fair regulations, the sector's future, production and profitability, farmer input, advocacy, attracting people to our industry, and telling our story have been major themes at more than 50 informal Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) farmer feedback sessions held throughout New Zealand.

Not surprisingly, agricultural emissions pricing and He Waka Eke Noa were a key focus of discussion.

It's always great getting out and face-to-face with our farmers and communities.

Given the serious concerns raised during the recent B+LNZ annual meeting it was even more important that we met with farmers in their woolsheds and community venues around the country.

The meetings were about listening and having in-depth conversations. There were no presentations or set agendas because we wanted farmers to ask questions freely and tell us what was on their minds.



The discussion, which was unsurprisingly robust and even heated at times, was constructive overall. The general feedback was that it was a useful forum and should be used more often.

Farmer perspectives on He Waka Eke Noa were varied. Most were not in support of the original pricing proposal, many were supportive of working with other industry groups in partnership, while others questioned the partnership's effectiveness and suggested leaving immediately.

There was good support for B+LNZ's new bottom line positions; that we should be focusing on a farm-level measurement and getting a

reporting system for emissions in place, that there should not be a price on agricultural emissions until outstanding issues were resolved like recognition of sequestration, the availability of viable mitigations, no emissions leakage, and that targets are reviewed using the best science.

While there wasn't consensus on He Waka Eke Noa, farmers emphasised the importance of transparency, fair treatment, accurate reporting, and effective communication. We will prioritise this feedback as we navigate the next few months.

Attendees also wanted to see farmers' voices more prominently reflected in our policy and advocacy and were united in their calls for a level playing field on regulations and policies, so they can get on with the business of farming.

They wanted to see more support for farming and its future, certainty

Beef + Lamb NZ chief executive Sam McIvor speaks with farmers in Dannevirke.

Photo / NZME

on policies, and opportunities to voice their concerns when policies are unworkable.

Another common theme was the need to showcase positive stories.

While there's concern about the sector's outlook, farmers remain rightly proud of their world-leading and sustainable red meat production and want to see their achievements celebrated. Again, this is a useful reminder to guide and prioritise our work on farmers' behalf.

Farmers re-emphasised the importance of B+LNZ's research and extension investment. At 40 percent of our overall budget, we're focused on delivering tangible research outcomes so sheep and beef farmers can increase productivity and profitability now and in the future.

B+LNZ's research portfolio is diverse and includes programmes across animal health, productivity, genetics, environmental health, mitigations (greenhouse gas) and landscape management. We will continue to showcase this work.

As part of our response to the annual meeting remits process, we're undertaking separate reviews of the Farmer Council role and our approach to advocacy.

The feedback sessions will feed into these processes, too.

The series wraps up on August 1 in the Eastern North Island. We'll provide farmers with a full summary of the sessions and the actions we'll be taking. ■

Farmers re-emphasised the importance of B+LNZ's research and extension investment

 Kate Acland is the chairwoman of the Beef + Lamb New Zealand board

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Rare species get extra-special care

CONSERVATION: Couple delighted QEII support helps them save precious taonga

Rick and Angela Stolwerk's 600ha sheep and beef farm in southern Marlborough is home to some of New Zealand's most threatened species.

The couple were inspired to find out more about the flora and fauna on Mirza Downs after an ecological survey in 2008 discovered outstanding natural values on their property, many on limestone outcrops.

"Angela and I bought this property in 2005," Rick said. "It's a typical Marlborough coastal East Coast sheep and beef property, traditionally with very dry summers. The limestone features of this special piece of coast are spectacular and awe inspiring but, in addition to the geological features, it was awesome to discover that the flora and fauna are stunning too – and in many cases, special to this area."

After their discovery, the Stolwerks registered two QEII National Trust covenants on the property, in 2013 and 2019, thus protecting 135.5ha of habitat for over 25 species of endangered and critically endangered plants and animals, including Rick's favourite, the Kiwaia 'Cloudy Bay' moth – a tiny, flightless moth that mainly jumps to get around.

"This minuscule moth is super-special," Rick says. "Being 'Threatened, Nationally Critical' has certainly raised its profile on our property. I am



keen to do what it takes to make sure that this moth survives as its habitat is decreasing rapidly. Its present distribution is limited to the east coast, so having the largest known population on our property makes it a 'must-save' for me."

A QEII National Trust-led project, funded by Jobs for Nature, is improving the stewardship of high-priority areas such as the Stolwerks' property, by engaging experts to assist landowners to better care for the rare and threatened plants and animals in their covenants and providing funds for required management activities.

Experts have been engaged to conduct ecological surveys of about 40 QEII-covenanted sites in the eastern South Island. The surveys provide information on the status and distribution of the threatened or at-risk species and offer advice on the short- and long-term management of the covenant, including how to address threats to ecological values.

It's serious conservation work and Rick and Angela were pleased to be selected to take part in the project. Ecological reports found 27 species of plants and seven animals (lizards and invertebrates) classified as threatened/at risk and identified a range of ecological threats, such as the Asian paper wasp. The reports recommended various actions specific to the property, including controlling weeds and exotic grasses, light sheep grazing of some open areas, managing vehicle access and appropriate pest control methods.

"The ecological reports show how special this area is and the Jobs for Nature funding has been a real game changer for us and our covenant," Rick said. "Up until this project started, we were struggling with pest

control in the covenant. The journey is not over, but this funding has enabled us to knock a large hole in not only wilding pines and old man's beard, but also the many animal pests which, up until now, have run amok among the birds and invertebrates."

Strong partnerships have developed throughout the project and Rick emphasised the support of others and the importance of working together.

"The opportunity to meet like-minded people who have the same intergenerational aspirations as Angela and I – to see this area return to its original healthy coastal ecosystem – has been amazing. There is no way that one or two individuals can achieve ... habitat restoration, it is only possible by partnering with all like-minded groups.

"We've been fortunate to have the support of our lessees Brett Solly and Jo Cameron, and we have received significant assistance not only from QEII, but also Marlborough District Council, the Department of Conservation, the East Coast Protection Group, local iwi and many other local contractors and community groups. Everybody has given selflessly of their time and some have assisted financially as well." ■

The Kiwaia 'Cloudy Bay' moth is just one of the endangered animals found at Mirza Downs.

Photo / Robert Hoare



The ecologically rich limestone outcrops at Mirza Downs in Marlborough.

How do rural schools survive?

OPINION: Alberfeldy certainly passes the grade, says **Kem Ormond**



My own children attended a small rural school of about 40 pupils, and it was certainly a time they remember fondly. I know that rural principalship is no easy job and the teachers that accept this position are dedicated!

Not only do they attend to the business of teaching, but they also have responsibility for keeping our schools, and our communities afloat.

They are the chief drain cleaners, balancers of books, gurus of property development, five-minute plumbers and electricians, as well as brewers of tea, arborists, and lawn mowers, and of course the unflappable smile at the front gate to welcome their pupils' arrival at school.

Rural schools are often the hub of the community. Pet or calf day at a local rural school is a time when all the community gathers and is a wonderful opportunity to catch up with neighbours.

Extended family

I found a small rural school on the

Parapara Highway 25 minutes from Whanganui called Alberfeldy Primary School (Te kura o Alberfeldy) and I wondered how they managed with such a small pupil role.

Alberfeldy School was opened in 1903 has had two different names in its lifetime and three sites.

It has been on its current site since 1959.

Several building projects during recent years have seen an increase in the size of the school from one large classroom area to two classrooms and a multi-purpose room.

A close-knit enviro and farm school consisting of 15 pupils, it offers great student to teacher ratios in a country environment.

Catering for students from year 1 to 8, I was interested in finding out what made this school unique and why do some students catch a bus from the other side of Whanganui to attend this school.

One of the reasons is that Alberfeldy School is like an extended family-whānau, and they care about their students.

In turn the older students work with and take care of the little ones. This is certainly how I remember our small rural school.

If you left your jersey on the playing field, it would be returned to you by another student.

Do they have the same resources as town schools?

More than often, rural schools are well equipped especially if there are no facilities nearby and Alberfeldy is no exception. They have expansive playing fields, playgrounds, and a swimming pool. Being both proactive and innovative, they are also well resourced when it comes to IT, with pupils often attending technology classes with another local school as well.

The school has been part of the enviro schools programme for several years. They have an orchard and vegetable gardens, and the students learn to care for their animals. They have only one rabbit and hope to have chooks and guinea pigs soon. They have almost finished building their new guinea pig hutch and once completed, will be able to welcome a family of guinea pigs. The new chook hutch will be completed by the end of the term.

The school is always on the lookout for anyone from the community who has farm-related skills they can share with the children.

Children learn life skills

It is great that children learn where their food comes from, and I have to say I have met many that have no idea. This is where children at a rural school have an advantage.



I tell a story about my mother as a young wife. Visitors were coming for afternoon tea, and she had made some scones. She went to the milking shed with her cream jug asking my father for some cream. He said it would take a while to separate it from the milk. Her reply was "can't you just get it from the fourth teat?" My mother was a town girl and even at her age, she thought cream came from a separate cow teat.

So, when a school like Alberfeldy lets their pupils have the farm to plate experience, this is a learning adventure. Reading Alberfeldy's curriculum plan, it summed up what most rural schools want for pupils. A curriculum that means more than classroom programmes and things articulated on paper. Their curriculum is defined by learning that pupils experience. I think this sums it up nicely. ■

Alberfeldy Primary School pupils busy harvesting flax.

Farmers welcome review of emissions trading

By Sharon Davis

Farmers have welcomed the government decision to review New Zealand's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) settings, including the permanent forest category. The Government opened the ETS for

review to find ways to encourage companies to invest in emissions reductions. It also plans to review the permanent forest category with a view to potentially restrict permanent exotic forests and the effect forestation has on rural communities. Beef + Lamb New Zealand (B+LNZ) said

the review was "long-overdue" and an acknowledgement that the ETS wasn't working.

Chief executive Sam McIvor said B+LNZ had been campaigning for changes to the ETS since the Zero Carbon Bill was introduced in 2019.

He said the policies had led to an "out-of-control" change in land use into forestry which had "severely impacted" rural communities.

"The Government has acknowledged that too much exotic planting is happening and that the current ETS settings are not driving real emissions reductions."

The scale and pace that whole farms had been sold and converted into forestry was a concern, he said.

B+LNZ was not anti-forestry and supported the integration of trees within farms, McIvor said.

"It will take us some time to work

through the details and test the options with farmers."

However, McIvor said there were some good concrete options for changes to the permanent forest category of the ETS.

"We will continue to push for settings in this area that restrict the amount of whole farms being converted into carbon-only farms, but that still encourage and enable the integration of trees on farms, and that work for Maori farmers.

"We also welcome the consultation's consideration of recognising a wider range of forms of sequestration such as pre-1990 natives and wetlands (either through the ETS or other mechanisms) and giving greater reward for these types of sequestration, as they also deliver wider environmental outcomes, such as biodiversity," he said.

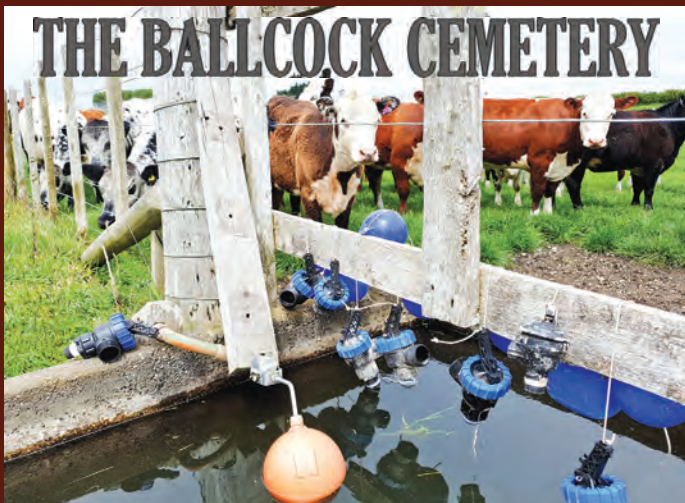
Submissions on the review close on August 11.

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Freshwater farm plans detailed for West Coast

By Brendon McMahon

Westland farmer meetings have started this week to tee up those landowners and leaseholders caught in the first round of the compulsory national farm freshwater plan rollout.

The new freshwater farm plan requirement will take in all properties over 20ha and will take effect from August 1, but with the first area covering much of Westland district from Hari Hari to the Taramakau River coming on stream by February.

The meetings on Tuesday in Hari Hari and Whataroa, and on Wednesday in Kokatahi and Kumara are being run in conjunction with the West Coast Regional Council, which has already implemented freshwater management plan areas, and a new MPI funded support role to support the region's farmers to formulate the compulsory plans. A webinar for those who cannot make any of the meetings is also available.

The new rules take effect from next month in selected regions, with the West Coast among the first to roll out the Resource

Management (Freshwater Farm Plan) Regulations 2023. The first group of 85 farms tagged by the West Coast Regional Council for the compulsory plans will go 'live' in February 2024. They have been picked because of the environmental vulnerability of Lake Kaniere, and also include the 51 farms in the Kowhitirangi and Kokatahi Valley - the traditional heartland of Westland dairying.

West Coast Regional Council acting consents and compliance manager Rachel Clark said how the plans would be shaped for each farm across each of the four freshwater farm plan areas was a work in progress, although the timetable had been announced and initial meetings started with those affected. Ms Clark said a template for the mandatory plans was expected to be set by the Ministry of Primary Industries, with the council just one party in the process. "Essentially, the regional council don't have too much of a role apart from holding the farm plans and doing the regular compliance stuff."

The new regime would be administered and audited independently. "There will be



Stream and drain crossings along with riparian and pasture management will be covered off under the new farm water management plans for all properties over 20ha, including the Taramakau Valley farm pictured - one of the 398 dairy farms scattered across the West Coast. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

a template to work through to develop the farm plan," Ms Clark said.

"I believe there have been some trial farm plans done on the Coast."

The plans would cover riparian fencing, effluent disposal and dairy shed environmental requirements.

"We do have farmer working groups on the Coast...we fully understand that everybody is

keen to know what to do." Ms Clark said stronger requirements around stand-off pads had been in place for a while, and would be included in the new plans.

A staff report for the council meeting on May 11 says a farm plan co-ordinator will be funded by the Ministry of Primary Industries to provide support, education and advice to farmers on developing their farm plans. "Council staff will be contributing

to this process." The plans are required to include:

- Farm maps identifying features such as waterways, critical source (discharge of contaminant) areas, and other risks to freshwater and freshwater ecosystems.
- A risk assessment across farming and growing activities such as irrigation, application of nutrients and effluent, winter grazing, stock-holding areas, stock exclusion, offal pits, and farm rubbish pits.
- A schedule of actions to manage identified features and address identified risks. Each plan will need to be certified by a 'freshwater farm plan certifier' appointed by the regional council, audited by a 'freshwater farm plan auditor' and enforced by regional councils.

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Expansion plans for huge water rehab project

By Jonathan Leask

New Zealand's largest managed groundwater rehabilitation project is getting bigger.

The Hekeao/Hinds Water Enhancement Trust (HHWET) has been granted leases for two new sites and renewed the use of a third to continue its work on improving groundwater and river quality in the area.

HHWET chair Peter Lowe said gaining the leases is a step towards the expansion plans and continuing to have a positive impact on the ecosystem health.

"Our year 6 annual report clearly shows that the projects undertaken by HHWET in line with its goals, can and do make a positive difference to the Hekeao Hinds Catchment".

HHWET is a community group set up to manage large scale groundwater rehabilitation projects across the Hekeao/Hinds Plains.

These projects include managed aquifer recharge (MAR), near river recharge (NRR), and targeted stream augmentation with a goal of enhancing groundwater quality, improving baseflows to spring-fed streams

and rivers to improve ecological, cultural, and social values and to improve and sustainably manage groundwater storage levels.

HHWET executive director, Brett Painter, said while water quality gets a lot of focus, HHWET is aiming to improve "the quality and the quantity, the critters in there, the whole picture – the whole ecosystem".

A key indicator of the project success is the Hinds River.

"Where we have made the most measurable difference is in the Hinds River because that system moves quickly while groundwater systems move incredibly slowly and are vast," Painter said.

Analysis of annual average flows at a site before and after MAR/NRR produced a 112% increase in average flow for the 2020/21 versus 2015/16 'dry' year comparison, he said.

"We more than doubled the flow and that will have had a significant impact."

HHWET started with just one MAR pond in 2016 and has expanded its site numbers to 15.

They have applied to Environment Canterbury for resource consent to operate MAR sites at 34 locations, 14 existing



Hekeao Hinds Water Enhancement Trust executive director Brett Painter and chairperson Peter Lowe.



The near river recharge site at the Hekeao/Hinds River.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

and 20 new sites.

"We will stage the next phase once consents are confirmed," Painter said.

Once the resource consents are obtained, HHWET intend to construct soakage pits on each site for managed aquifer recharge (MAR).

MAR sites are infiltration basins, which act like big leaky ponds, which are filled with high-quality water that seeps down and recharges the groundwater, and in turn enhances quality and replenishes aquifers.

At the pilot site, the groundwater nitrate levels were between 6 and 7mg/l in the area before the project started and they are now 1.2-2.2mg/l when the site is operational.

"We can expect similar concentrations immediately down-gradient from other MAR sites," Painter said.

Granting the three leases is council's latest contribution to HHWET's efforts, having previously provided the use of council consented, but unused, stockwater funding, and use of

council land for projects.

Residents in the area contribute to the project through an Environment Canterbury's (ECan) targeted rate, currently its only source of funding after its Provincial Growth Fund money ended last year.



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Groundswell NZ's solution to unworkable regulations

It is all very well criticizing the unworkable environmental regulations, but what are the alternative solutions?

At Groundswell NZ we have put a considerable amount of thought into developing a solution that combines all environmental issues under one integrated policy framework while significantly reducing duplication, cost, and the overwhelming burden on people.

The first step we started with was a vision that all NZ farmers could embrace and aspire to – To be the worlds most environmentally sustainable food and fibre producers.

A major failure of the current approach to environmental issues is multiple regulations operating in silos conflicting with each other and delivering perverse outcomes.

An example is climate change policies incentivising large scale pine planting at the expense of productive land, landscape values, native shrublands and the viability of rural communities.

Another failure of the existing system is the extensive number of rules, many of them impractical, or unnecessary.

We propose retaining regulation for activities that can have major environmental effects such as effluent ponds, discharges to waterways, and irrigation takes.

However, for other issues such as indigenous biodiversity, wetlands, emissions, and cultural values we propose these all become part of a nationwide industry and community led advisory and action programme.

How would this look on farm?

Our proposal would not seek to override existing initiatives such as Catchment and Landcare Groups but would empower farmers and all the different industry and community led initiatives in taking an integrated approach to environmental issues.

A key feature would be a nationwide advisory and support service that complements existing programmes and resources identified gaps.

At an individual farm level advisors would understand and consider all aspects of the environment – freshwater (including the individual catchment context), indigenous biodiversity, cultural values, emissions, erosion,



Regulation for activities that can have major environmental effects, such as effluent ponds, would be retained.

and weeds and pests.

An action plan for each farm would address the key environmental risks and priorities. This plan would need to be tailored to each farm's vision, needs and resources, and flexible to adapt to climatic events and sudden changes in markets.

The action plan would be reviewed regularly – maybe annually or earlier if the need arises.

Farm plans would be industry led rather than a one-size-fits-all prescriptive Government mandate. The governments single issue focused Freshwater Farm Plan would be replaced by

an industry led approach that integrates all environmental issues into one action plan.

Rather than ticking boxes the goal of an industry led farm plan would be to empower farmers as custodians in environmental sustainability/Kaitiakitanga.

The Significant Natural Areas (SNA) policy would be gone and along with it the projected millions of dollars wasted on tick box surveys. In its place would be a system that complements the QEII Trust by focusing on what are the key threats to existing indigenous biodiversity and habitats on each farm. Opportunities to enhance

or restore is also important, particularly in more intensively farmed areas where wetland restoration and protecting waterways would be a focus.

Farmers have been undertaking a huge amount of environmental work that benefits emissions and the climate. This would continue with a focus on emissions efficiency and best practice. The new emissions tax proposal would be binned, but farmers would continue to fund emissions research and new technology through the simple existing industry levies structure as they have done for the past 20 years. However, there would be more rigour around establishing research needs that aim to deliver cost effective, tangible environmental outcomes that can be practically applied on farm.

We see substantial benefits from our proposal and have received strong interest across the political spectrum. Groundswell NZ welcomes feedback on our proposal and would like to see a future government adopt it as a proposal for wider public consultation.

Jamie Mcfadden
Groundswell NZ environmental spokesperson.

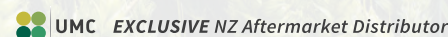
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Problems not always seen in rural relationships

Calving and lambing season can be a stressful time on the farm and put pressure on relationships already under strain from financial stress and the pressures of juggling family commitments.

Sometimes though, it's difficult to recognise the difference between a strained relationship that is going through a rocky patch and family harm.

Family harm is not limited to physical abuse. Sexual, psychological, financial, and verbal abuse all classify as family harm.

Safer Mid Canterbury safer families coordinator and counsellor Anna Arrowsmith says she has heard high reports of unhealthy family dynamics in rural areas, although it often happens under the radar.

"With all the forms of harm and abuse we talk about, so much of it is hidden."

New Zealand has the worst rates of family harm in the developed world, with police being called to a family violence incident every three minutes, and it's not limited to a particular area or socio-economic group.

"Family harm does not discriminate against race, age, where you live or against wealth," Anna says.

"It isn't just limited to places like South Auckland, it's just that it's more open, and there are more physical violence callouts to those areas.

"But the statistics do not reflect what's happening everywhere else."

In urban areas, physical abuse callouts are often made by neighbours.

In a rural setting, where neighbours are often well out of sight and earshot, neighbours may not know abuse in the household is occurring.

Women themselves are less likely to call the police unless they fear their lives or those of their children are at risk.

The physical nature of farm work also means bruises caused by family harm can be easily explained as a knock in the calf shed or a fall in the sheep yards.

"We've always acknowledged that we don't have the statistics on physical violence that happens in rural communities because of their location and lifestyle," Anna said.

From her work in rural communities, Anna has found that verbal abuse in rural relationships is common.

"With all the complexities and combinations of stress involved on the farm, and couples working together on a farm just weren't treating or talking to each other very nicely," Anna says.

"Even given the stress or what the justification is, it's still unacceptable to be swearing at each other, or name-calling, or whatever that looks like.

"When you are talking about the pressures of working together, the early mornings and the whole nature of the job, they all bring high levels of stress.

"But none of those factors are excusable for the dynamics within those relationships where the male partner is being emotionally and verbally abusive towards their female partner."



Safer Mid Canterbury safer families coordinator and counsellor Anna Arrowsmith.

PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON

Financial abuse and control were also prevalent, and while Anna says this can go both ways in relationships, it is more commonly directed at women.

Financial abuse can appear in different forms, such as preventing a woman from seeking employment, making her ask for money or giving her an allowance or not letting her know about or have access to family money. "Women in relationships don't often have the financial freedom to buy or do what they want without permission, even with their own money," Anna said.

What does a healthy relationship look like?

Anna says that a healthy relationship means both people can be themselves and feel safe and happy.

"A happy, healthy relationship is when both partners feel safe.

"It's fundamental.

"What that means is that you can be authentically yourself and don't have to think before you speak or act, for fear of how that will be received by the other person or what other personal conflicts can arise from that because you both have that love and acceptance of each other."

What to do if you are a victim of family harm

Often women feel trapped in a relationship, with little access to finances, and concerned about the effect of breaking a family unit, how their

community will see them, or a lack of emotional support.

"I always look at safety first, but a woman won't leave until she is ready to," Anna said.

"And when she is ready to, all the support is there for her.

"There are agencies, services and programmes: and everything she needs to do that."

Anna recommends calling the free national helplines, Shine or It's Not Ok.

"The people on those phone lines can sit and have those conversations or help women increase their boundaries."

Where to access help or information

- Women's Refuge: Free national crisis line operates 24/7 0800 REFUGE or 0800 733 843. www.womensrefuge.org.nz Shine. Free national helpline 9 am-11 pm every day/ 0508744 633. www.2shine.org.nz
- It's not ok. Information line 0800 456450 www.areyouok.org.nz

What we can do as a community

- Know the signs of family violence
- Offer support as a friend. Find a safe time to talk about your concerns with those involved.
- Teach our young people what a healthy relationship looks like
- Support the White Ribbon Campaign, a global campaign to end violence against women and girls.
- Speak up and talk about family harm. End the silence; stop the violence.



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Opened in 2012, the centre has established Nelson College as a

leading Trades educator in New Zealand. Strong ties with local businesses and industry visits enhance workplace preparation.

Unique to Nelson College, our highly experienced trade-trained tutors prepare Year 12 and 13 students for trade careers or academic pathways in engineering. Our boys are instilled with pride, competency, and grit to handle complex projects, and problem-solve, producing high-quality workmanship.

Building: Spacious facilities allow for larger-scale building

projects, like sleepouts and garden sheds. The program teaches traditional framing components and building theory application.

Engineering: Students utilise the latest CAD software to design heirloom-worthy projects that can be produced on CNC machines. Students proficiently machine intricate components to create steam engines in year 12, and advanced engines in year 13.

Automotive Engineering: Students gain an understanding of automotive engineering principles and concepts, and

vehicle systems and componentry by working on a variety of petrol and diesel vehicles, that have been stripped and reassembled, allowing hands on experience.

Fine Woodworking: Our programme covers basic hand tool competency, and safe workshop practices. Students apply cabinetry and woodturning skills to complex projects, maintaining exacting standards of output.

"Gibbons is a proud long-term supporter of the Nelson College Trade Education Centre. Our support is unconditional

when it comes to supporting the development of youth through trades education and is something that is important as an industry and also business community. The model that we have developed at Nelson College provides a pathway for those that are interested in a trade and provides them with work and world-ready skills, that are industry recognised. We recently celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the Trade Education Centre which is a milestone all those involved in the project should be really proud of."

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Win for Timaru producer

Sharon Davis

A Timaru honey producer has won the supreme honey award for the third year in a row.

Jarved Allen from the Manuka Collective took home the supreme award at the Apiculture NZ conference in Rotorua at the end of June.

The Washdyke-based company, under production operations manager Jarved Allen, also took home the best manuka honey award for the third time in four years and collected an impressive total of five gold awards, three silver and two bronze.

"It is always an honour to receive an award, but it was really rewarding to get the award for the third time in a row," said Allen.

This year was more challenging – the standard of the honey had improved and there was a lot more competition this year, he said.

"It's good to finish on a high note. I always said this would be my last crack at it (the competition)."

Allen started out in the honey industry in Timaru 20 years ago, and is grateful to Steve Lyttle and Carolyn Bell who shared their expertise with him.

Allen said he had a real passion for creating honey blends – and really got a feel for that 10 years ago.

"We're not afraid to blend from

different regions," he said.

The Manuka Collective uses honey from its Hamilton-based partner company and also sources honey from independent apiarists around New Zealand. The honey is blended to create a more consistent New Zealand blend for the international market, Allen said.

Carlee McCaw and Tim Sinclair from Milburn Honey Farm in Otago took home one gold, one silver and two bronze awards.

Simon Aarts from Coalgate Honey in Canterbury got one gold and one bronze, while Otago-based Marsh's Honey got a gold award and Dale Honey a silver.

The National Honey Competition, held before the conference, featured products across a range of honey categories from creamed honey to chunky honey and cut honeycomb.

Head judge Maureen Conquer said the quality of honey had improved again this year.

All entries were blind-tasted, and an international scale of points used to determine the winners across 10 main categories - with only a few points separating the top three entrants.

A selection of less common varieties were included in the tasting for the People's Choice award including avocado, lavender, willow and Spanish heather honeys.



Kaimai Range Honey's Jody Mitchell produced the crowd favourite in this category.

Glasson Apiaries, based in Blackball on the West Coast, received the ApiNZ Sustainability Best Practice Award.

Gary Glasson said the business, started by his grandfather in 1924, runs 1200 hives within a 70km radius of home.

His son Samuel joined this apiary full-time about 18 months ago. The business has been going for almost a century over four generations, Glasson said.



"We're really stoked to win this award as a small business. Beekeeping has seen some highs in recent years and is now going through some tough times with a lot of people leaving the industry. Honey prices, excluding manuka honey, had gone from \$12 to \$4 but was now back around \$6.50 to \$7."

Economic sustainability comes first otherwise there is no business - and that usually ties in with environmental sustainability, he said.

"Having the apiaries close to

home means less time sitting in trucks using fuel and more time looking after the bees. We're always looking to improve producing more with less.

"I'm a believer that the family farm or small business is always going to be good for the local community and the country. We all want to leave it in a good place for the next generation to carry on and be successful," Glasson said.

The Roy Paterson award for innovation went to another sustainably-produced product – the K pani pallet cover. The hemp-fibre cover created by Stuart Fraser of Natural Sugars reduces the reliance on plastic for wrapping hives.

The Unsung Hero Award went to a trio of busy bees from Gisborne this year, Barry Foster, John Mackay and Steve Jackson, for their support of beekeepers in their region following Cyclone Gabrielle.

Rotorua-based forest entomologist Stephanie Sopow was awarded the Peter Molan trophy for exceptional contribution to apiculture science.

Sopow has been leading work on the biological control of giant willow aphid. The arrival of the aphid in New Zealand has affected host trees and seen bees and wasps start to harvest the aphid honeydew.



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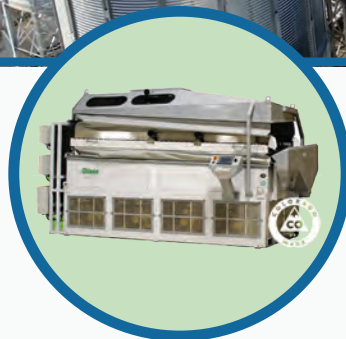
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Preventing sprains and strains on dairy farms

By Claire Inkson
Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

DairyNZ, in partnership with ACC, has embarked on a three-year project to identify the causes of sprains and strains on dairy farms and develop practical solutions to reduce them.

"There are two key things we wanted to come out of this project," DairyNZ research engineer Brian Dela Rue says.

"One is having a good understanding of the causes and the impact of injuries, and secondly, we need to get solutions for those out to farmers."

Sprain and strain injuries make up 40 per cent of dairy farm injuries, with the highest period for injuries between August and October.

While Dela Rue says the basic advice about keeping your back straight and knees bent while lifting is important, the project aimed to develop engineering solutions that would aid farm workers who were busy on the farm trying to get jobs done.

As a part of the project, a survey was conducted in 2021 and 2022 of 370 farmers and farm workers to better understand how and

when sprains and strains were occurring.

That survey discovered that 25 per cent of injuries were back injuries, resulting in around 1000 claims through ACC for back-related injuries over the past five years.

"About a third of the injuries were related to bending, twisting and reaching, particularly when carrying something.

"Another 12 per cent of injuries were associated with lifting heavy items such as buckets or bags."

Repetitive injuries from cupping cows, for example, were also common, and ankle and knee damage from uneven ground and motorbike injuries were also identified.

Forty two per cent of injuries were related to forms of slip, trip or fall that came about by working on pugged ground in paddocks, slippery concrete or tripping over hoses in the dairy shed," Dela Rue said.

A series of design thinking workshops were held involving farmers and a range of engineers, health and safety and workplace design specialists to test solutions that would reduce injuries rather than relying on

behavioural change.

"We focused on different topics in each of the workshops and then went on to say, which ones do we think will make an impact, and can we start to deliver within our timeframe?"

The result is a series of prototypes that are under development and on trial on farms.

Easy Entry Calf Trailer

The project identified that collecting calves from the paddock is a high injury risk.

DairyNZ, with QCONZ and Kea trailers, is working on designing, building and testing a trailer with easy-entry gates. The trailer has been trialled on farms over the last two years with promising results.

Features and Benefits:

- A spring-loaded, self-closing door
- High reinforcing bar to prevent stooping when loading calves
- Off-set hinges to allow 180-degree opening for ease of unloading
- Latch function to prevent gate opening during transport
- Reduces bending and lifting when loading calves

compared to other trailers.

Flexible Breast Rail

Heifers and smaller cows often stand forward in the bail, meaning people cupping cows must reach to cup them, which can lead to back and shoulder strains.

To mitigate this, DairyNZ is developing a flexible breast rail concept.

"It's basically an elastic bungee that we set to the right tension to allow the bigger cows to fit in the bail.

"The smaller ones we hope will stand against it, and therefore a bit closer to the cup," Dela Rue explains.

The breast rail will have a vinyl cover to stop cows from getting their heads caught underneath.

Calf Milk Bucket Trolley

A bucket trolley is being developed to help reduce lifting injuries around calf feeding, with a prototype on display at the National Fieldays being well received by farmers.

"The trolley allows you to slide the milk bucket onto the trolley, and when you lean it back, the bucket stays upright, and you can wheel it off the pen," Dela Rue said.

"We've also added a battery drill operated pump that allows you to just pump the milk from that."

Exosuits

Exosuits are being tested for jobs such as calf pick-up and feeding, and cupping cows.

"The idea is that if you are leaning over, it will transfer some of the load away from your lower back and into stronger muscles in your thighs," Dela Rue said.

A trial of the exosuits will begin on farms around Canterbury over the calving season to investigate if the exosuits make a difference, are fit for purpose or can be adapted to be fit for purpose.

Sensors will be fitted to the exosuits to measure the difference in fatigue between using and not using the device.

Calf pen gate

Moving between calf pens with a heavy weight can lead to risks when reaching or climbing over.

A saloon-style gate system to move between pens is being developed, and DairyNZ is working with QCONZ and Gallagher to design and test the concept on farms over spring calving.

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Stacey Stewart uses videos and virtual meetings to connect Pukeatua school children with life on the farm.

PHOTO: CREDIT CLAIRE INKSON



Pukeatua children visit Kaiwaiwai Dairies.



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Bringing the farm to the urban classroom

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Ashburton dairy farmer Stacey Stewart takes time out of her farming day once a fortnight to connect with an urban primary school in Wainuimata and provide students with a snapshot of farm life, chatting online and sending videos of farm activities.

Stacey's farm is part of the Farmer Time programme, connecting primary and intermediate children and their teachers with farmers.

The programme, initially developed in the U.K., has been brought to New Zealand shores with the support of Beef + Lamb NZ.

Stacey has connected with Pukeatua school, a small low decile school with a class of 17 children across Years 6-8.

"I make a lot of videos, pop them together and add some voiceovers, if need be.

"Then the children can watch the videos and then ask me questions," Stacey said.

Stacey shows the children all

aspects of farm life, from artificial insemination to a cow birthing a calf or a vet providing medical care to an animal.

"We have done a video showing A.I, what's involved and how we make the decision to put which bull to what cow."

Stacey doesn't shy away from the realities of farming when making the videos.

"Vets are all on board; every time they come, I record what they are doing.

"We had a cow with an abscess once, and we videoed the vet as she sliced it open.

"Just a bit of the eww factor," Stacey laughs.

Stacey sees the programme as an effective way to help bridge the urban-rural divide and educate children on where food comes from.

"It shows them milk doesn't just come from a carton, and meat doesn't jump on a plastic tray; it comes from somewhere."

Stacey also believes the programme gives students a more positive view of farming.

"It shows them farms aren't bad

and farmers are not the devil like we are sometimes portrayed."

The programme also has the potential to open students' eyes to a career in the agriculture sector.

"I figure if just one person comes into this industry because of this exposure to farming, that's one more person we have on our side," Stacey said.

This sentiment is echoed by teacher Mark Williams, who works Stacey's videos into the class curriculum.

"It's about introducing them to a possible career choice," Mark said.

"That's what triggered my interest.

"Some of these kids would never choose farming or anything to do with farming if they weren't introduced to it at primary school.

"It broadens their experience."

Mark looked to build on the children's enthusiasm by arranging a farm visit to Kaiwaiwai dairies near Featherston.

He approached Fonterra, who funded transport costs to the

farm, as well as a visit to a cheese factory, and put on a barbecue lunch for the children afterwards.

The visit was a highlight for the students, exposing them to other aspects of farming they could pursue in their future careers.

"It's bigger than just milk and cows.

"The farm we visited with the electronics, the solar power and the technology that gets used in the process of getting milk from cow to the table.

"There's a whole range of possible career choices that kids can make out of that."

The students continue to be enthralled with Stacey's videos in the classroom and look forward to their fortnightly Farmer Time.

"The videos that Stacey has provided have opened up other areas for teaching and learning.

"The children raise questions in areas where they want more knowledge."

Mark and Stacey would welcome the opportunity for the class to visit Stacey's farm and meet her in person if funding could be secured.

With most of the children having yet to travel far outside their city, such a trip could have a strong positive impact on their learning and future career path.

"That would just be the icing on the cake for sure.

"Some of these kids don't even know what's outside Wellington," Mark said.

Farmer Time has just completed a successful first year in New Zealand, with over 1000 students taking part, and feedback from participating teachers, farmers and students has been overwhelmingly positive.

"It's been amazing to be a part of this programme from the inception and see it grow so much," Farmer Time national co-ordinator Marie Burke said.

"Our hard work to match teachers with farmers and growers has paid off, and we can't wait to see where it will go from here."

Farmers and teachers who wish to become involved in Farmer Time can visit the website www.farmertime.co.nz to find out more information about the programme.



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Nestle and the Green Party

A friend once told me that a current Green Party policy will be Labour Party policy within ten years. It was said to get me thinking about the possibility of a future ban on the importation of palm kernel, and the evidence speaks for itself. The ban on plastic bags, the proliferation of cycle lanes, protection for renters and the ban on live exports have all been longstanding Green policies that have eventually been enacted under a Labour government.

Last week Nestle, the world's biggest food manufacturer, buckled under pressure to take action on their environmental impact and ditched its policy of buying carbon offsets to make certain brands "carbon neutral".

Instead, Nestle will now concentrate on reducing their actual carbon output by focusing on their own emissions and that of their supply chain. A big part of their supply chain is, of course, ingredients, and one of Nestle's biggest ingredients is milk.

Nestle have joined a growing list of Fonterra customers who are very interested in the carbon footprint of New Zealand milk. Being a significant customer of Fonterra, this announcement could impact New Zealand dairy farmers in a more direct way than any policy currently being announced by political parties hoping to win my vote.

Perhaps just to reaffirm the possible threat to the livelihood of New Zealand dairy farmers, Nestle have just launched a plant based, non-dairy, vegan certified KitKat. While I am normally keen to try any new snack foods, I will be leaving this one on the shelf and sticking to the normal full dairy deliciousness. I'm not willing to take the risk that the vegan version might taste better.

If you were to generalise about New Zealand farmers you would traditionally peg us as National voters, and former Prime Minister John Key certainly had the rural vote sewn up. Key was well known for his "Ambitious for New Zealand" slogan. His personal story of growing up in a state house and, through hard work and perseverance, becoming a currency trader and then Prime Minister was the perfect backstory when it came time to pitch his slogan to Kiwi voters.

Christopher Luxon hasn't hidden his admiration of John Key. Key was rolled out at Luxon's first National Party Conference as leader and a few other events for a round of back slapping photo opportunities. Stay tuned for the return of Key if the polls remain close.

Luxon and his agriculture spokesperson Todd McClay have been loud in their determination to win back the rural vote that resoundingly deserted



The Green Party proposes a ban on the importation of palm kernel.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

them at the 2020 election. They released their agriculture policy on a windswept farm in the Waikato. While the event was overshadowed by Luxon categorising New Zealanders as "negative, wet and whiny", their policies lacked the ambition we saw from the Key-led National Party. Luxon wants to scrap the ute tax, live animal exports would be reintroduced, and a Review Panel would be created to consider every local and central

government regulation. There was more, but nowhere in the nebulous wish list was anything that would greatly assist me and other farmers meet the challenges we face to meet Nestle's and others emissions reduction criteria.

Green Party agriculture policy would certainly address most of Nestle's needs. Their proposed ban on the importation of palm kernel and the phasing out of synthetic nitrogen fertiliser

would definitely lead to lower stocking rates and lower overall emissions, unfortunately it would also lead to Nestle looking elsewhere for ingredients as New Zealand's dairy output plunged to a catastrophic low. But you have to give them points for pushing an ambitious agenda, rather than taking us back to how things were when Key was PM.

Nestle is a business, and they are looking to lower their carbon footprint because that is what the market demands. Fonterra and other processors are asking their farmers to lower their on-farm emissions because that is what their customers demand, and if we can't provide it, Nestle and others will look elsewhere.

National purports to be the party of business and the party of farmers, yet I haven't seen anything from them that addresses these very clear market signals.

National are currently riding high because they're not Labour, I'd find it much easier to give them my vote if they had some solutions. Hopefully when Key joins Luxon on the campaign trail he will share some advice on how to be truly ambitious for New Zealand.



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Making fodderbeet work

Mike Copland's fodder beet crop topped the Ashburton region this season – yielding 44.5 tonnes of dry matter per hectare.

The crop covered 23 hectares, on a 10-year rotation, and won the Ashburton A&P Association fodder beet competition, before placing third in Mid-Canterbury.

However, growing successful fodder was only half the equation for Copland and his wife, Michelle, who milk 750 cows in a hybrid business partnership with Mike's parents.

While beet is a cost-effective autumn and winter feed, it is volatile and hard to get production from cows that are unwell or mineral deficient.

Fodder beet has 30-50% less phosphorus than either pasture or kale, and it is well below the US National Research Council's recommendations for phosphorus supplementation in dairy cattle.

However, Copland has proactively refined his pasture and stock management in the last few years to make feeding fodder beet successful for him.

Last season, his fodder beet came in at 38 tonnes per hectare. Copland said the difference this year included an early soil-test, and that he added more lime early, ploughed, harrowed and top-worked the paddock.

He also added one million litres of effluent and 100 tonnes

of solids so "there was plenty of potassium in the soil." His fertiliser included a Potash and urea mix.

"The beauty of the fish fertiliser is that it only costs \$2/litre, so at \$20/ha, why not? It's beautiful stuff, and I think that had a big impact this season," said Copland.

He also treated the whole farm with a biological grass grub spray in November/December and only had one small breakthrough area for the whole season.

Mildew was a challenge in a wetter-than-usual season, but Copland sprayed early, so they could harvest the crops earlier.

The beet was fed to two late-lactation milking herds. Their daily feed breakdown was 9kg grass, 5kg beet (peak), 2kg palm kernel, 1kg home-grown barley, and ad lib straw.

"We always have straw available for the cows – on the laneways and in the paddocks. They need it, they eat it, it helps with that gut-fill, and it keeps them happy," Copland said.

"We start off feeding 1kg/cow of the fodder beet, then we move to 2kg for a few days, and so on until we're feeding up to 5kg at around the two-week mark. That's the most we would give the milkers. It's high energy, they put on weight, and it extends our lactation to 310 days.

"It works out at 8c/kg to



Mike Copland's fodder beet crop yielded 44.5 tonnes per hectare this autumn.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

grow. You do have to use the transition time and mineral supplementation to safeguard against potential metabolic issues," Copland said.

He also offers mineral loose licks.

Copland said there was no question in his mind about the value of the right mineral supplementation.

"I'm aware what fodder beet can do to cows if it's handled wrong, and I'm countering that by transitioning cattle on and off it gradually, making sure our cows are full all the time, and supplementing them with the Max Phos Loose-Lick. The loose-lick is an important part of my management plan, and we've been using it for five years now.

"You may think your animal health costs are up there by spending additional money on minerals, but we just finished the cash-flow for this season, and we are 15% below budget for animal health.

"We've had less lame cows, less mastitis...less everything really. I feel that is a pretty good result," he said.

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Get your farm (and animals) humming this spring

Novel pasture combo makes grass go further

What if you could lift your lambing percentage or milk production by 8% in one go, just by altering one piece of your system to make the whole thing function better?

No change to ewe or cow numbers; no extra inputs; everything else stays the same, but from one year to the next, performance takes off.

Now, instead of ewes or cows, think ryegrass. Could one thing be altered that would make such a big difference? As Barenbrug pasture systems manager Blair Cotching explains, the answer is yes.

Welcome to the amazing world of ryegrass endophytes, where a great marriage between tiny fungi and their host plant can work wonders.

In this case, pairing Barenbrug's newest endophyte, NEA12, with the well-known hybrid ryegrass Shogun has created a super-charged pasture that grows 8% more than Shogun with its original endophyte NEA.

It would normally take plant



Grow more feed at home with high-octane hybrid.

breeders eight years to achieve such a jump in pasture growth, Blair says.

"On average, genetic gain in ryegrass advances at about 1% a year. To lift yield by 8% in one hit, by finding the right

marriage between endophyte and ryegrass, shows how powerful the relationship between the two can be."

And it couldn't come at a better time. With farm budgets stretched thin, every blade of grass grown

and grazed on farm helps control spiralling feed costs.

One fast way to profit from Shogun NEA12's extra growth this spring is to undersow it into thin pastures, Blair says.

"If you do it properly, within a

matter of weeks those areas will be back growing the way they should be, to maintain good productivity for the next one to three years.

"There are a lot of under-performing pastures out there at the moment, for various reasons.

Left as they are, they'll just keep going backwards at a time you need as much home grown feed as you can get."

Just as importantly, he says, undersowing Shogun NEA12 will also do your animals a big favour.

"Because it is a tetraploid, it's energy rich, tastes delicious and is easy to eat."

Happy, well-nourished animals convert grass into protein more efficiently, and that's good for both your finances and day to day management, he says.

The key to success? "Pick the right paddocks – don't undersow pastures already thick with grass or weeds."

Seed for Shogun NEA12 is available now for spring sowing. Ask your seed merchant for more detail.

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