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JULY 2024

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STRAIGHT-TALKING JANE SMITH

P8



FARM 2 FORK ... PURE PASSION P15-23



HAY BIG BOY

It's bull sale season on pages 5-7

PHOTO LOT2: GRAMPIANS ANGUS

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The farm to fork story

As a child, as macabre as it might sound to someone whose childhood wasn't lived in a pair of Red Bands, one of my favourite memories was when my father butchered a sheep for our table.

He wasn't trained as a butcher, but he was of that generation of old-school farmers that just got in there, boots and all, and taught himself the skills needed to get the job done.

We had a killing shed, and I would watch from my seat on a box in the corner as he deftly removed the skin from the carcass, and piece by piece, every part of the animal would be transformed into food for our family.

He would let me hold the still-warm heart in my hands, and from that, I had a deep respect for the animal we had raised with so much care and attention, which would now keep our bellies and our freezers full.

This was the 80s and times were tough.

We were farming in Hawkes Bay and the sector was not too dissimilar to where we are now. Like so many others at the time, my parents had to operate on the smell of an oily rag.

They were self-sufficient way before it was the woke thing to be.

My dad milked a cow called Alice, and I distinctly remember him being a soft touch and always giving fresh milk to the farm cat.

My mother had an adept green thumb and a passion for gardening. We had an extensive vegetable garden and I have many memories of being in the garden with her when I was tiny.

Digging for potatoes was like a treasure hunt to five-year-old me and shelling peas with my nana while we chatted away about everything and anything was golden.

We had chickens, so we were never short of eggs, and at one point, pigs were even added to the mix.

While none of this was about education and all of it was about keeping us fed in the healthiest and most cost-efficient way possible, it gave me a profound connection to the value of food, the taste of fresh, seasonal produce and a respect for the skill required to be a food producer.

For many of you, your rural childhood may be quite similar to mine, and because of that, you are more likely to have a healthy respect for New Zealand farmers and farming.

For our urban friends, who may not have had that experience, that connection between the food on your table and the skill and dedication it takes to produce it can be lost.

There are many ways to create connections between consumers and food producers, but one avenue that often gets overlooked is New Zealand's restaurant scene.

Good chefs are storytellers. They become narrators of our farming stories by championing quality, sustainably grown New Zealand produce and creating dishes that showcase the quality and flavour of locally sourced ingredients.

Restaurants like Inati, King of Snake, Black Estate, Amisfield, and Hayz at the Anchorage are paving the way for a fresh approach to farm-to-table dining experiences.

As consumers demand to know the provenance of their food, restaurants connect dishes to growers, where the farming story and the food story intertwine and the gap between farm and fork closes just a little bit more.



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Scaled-down show to go ahead

CLAIRE INKSON

The 2024 NZ Agricultural Show, which was cancelled in April, has been thrown another lifeline as the Canterbury A&P Association has announced that a private company will run a scaled-down version of the event on Canterbury Anniversary week.

Christchurch company Event Hire is reinventing this year's event as The Christchurch Show.

The event will run on the Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of show week at the Canterbury A&P Showgrounds, which is the usual location.

While there has been concern from the public that the 2024 show may lose some of its rural feel, Event Hire co-owner Phil Anderson says the company will keep the event's agricultural flavour.

"I think the key is for it to still have the look and feel of an A&P show, which is absolutely important. That's definitely part of our planning process, which we are well into as we speak."

Anderson said he was confident agribusinesses would still be interested in trade sites at the show as Event Hire focuses on drawing the crowds.

"We want the show to feel busy and full, so we are going out there with some pretty competitive rates and terms."

"We've kept the entry fee really affordable and want to get all those elements right."

The Canterbury A&P Association



will hold traditional animal competitions and its City Farmyard for children from Wednesday to Friday at the show but as a separate entity.

"We regret that with nil reserves, the compliance and financial risks for the association of running a full show in partnership with Event Hire precluded a combined event," Canterbury A&P Association board chairperson Stewart Mitchell said.

"It's disappointing that our financial and resourcing issues have forced the cancellation of this year's NZ Agricultural Show."

"However, the association welcomes the involvement of Event

Hire in providing a number of fun days out for the Christchurch public on Canterbury Anniversary weekend."

Richard Lemon, the association's general committee representative, said this year's event was only a stopgap measure while the association gets the show back on track in its original format in 2025.

"This year it's just an interim show; that's why we were just going to have a livestock section because we need to put together a new model."

Lemon said the show was relying on cost structures that were relevant 25 years ago, but that compli-

ance costs had gone up tenfold in the past 10 years and were killing any potential revenue streams.

"We could certainly make a profit, but no-one would be able to afford to go."

"Trade sites and entry fees would be too expensive."

"Until we find a system to generate more income, we are going downhill fast."

While many smaller A&P shows are struggling, commitment from volunteers tended to be stronger regionally.

"The difference between the Ashburton, Methven and Mayfield shows, for example, is that the

community gets behind them.

"We have to drag people from all over Canterbury to organise the Canterbury Show."

"There's not the same community, and the city expects to be making revenue out of us."

Lemon said the show in its traditional form was essential for bridging the gap between town and country.

"Children don't get the same opportunity to be involved in rural life."

"For a lot of them, the smiles they get on their faces when they handle a lamb or an animal is phenomenal."

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ETS move welcomed by farmers

CLAIRE INKSON

Industry groups have cautiously welcomed the Government's announcement to remove agriculture from the Emissions Trading Scheme and disband the He Waka Eke Noa Primary Sector Climate Action Partnership in favour of a new Pastoral Sector Group to tackle biogenic methane.

Mid Canterbury Federated Farmers president David Acland has said the move is positive for New Zealand's primary industry, although the sector will still need to meet challenges and global treaty obligations.

"We are out of the ETS, but that doesn't mean we don't still have that challenge of reducing agricultural emissions."

Acland said companies like Nestle are still signalling that they want to understand the emissions profile of our food and where it sits within their profile, but that New Zealand is well on track to meet 2030 emissions targets.

"The emissions profile of New Zealand sheep, beef and dairy is very good in a global context."

Acland said it was imperative that the Pastoral Sector Group don't follow in the flawed footsteps of He Waka Eke Noa.

"We don't want to repeat what we had with the last pastoral collaboration when one party went into it with a big stick."

"Hopefully, this time around, without the ETS hanging over us, we can actually pull something



"We don't want to repeat what we had with the last pastoral collaboration when one party went into it with a big stick. Hopefully, this time around, without the ETS hanging over us, we can actually pull something together that is fit for purpose"

— David Acland

together that is fit for purpose."

It's a sentiment echoed by Beef + Lamb New Zealand chairperson Kate Acland.

"We withdrew our support for He Waka Eke Noa because of the significant impact this would have had on our farmers."

"While we are prepared to be

part of a new group that discusses how to manage New Zealand's agricultural emissions, any involvement will be with full transparency and discussion with our farmers. We will not allow this to be a repeat of the He Waka Eke Noa process."

Acland said Beef + Lamb New

Zealand would not support a price on agricultural emissions to achieve reductions, while emissions reductions are already happening more quickly than needed.

"Based on this, there is absolutely no justification for a price. This is a non-negotiable for our farmers."

"Our view is that we should be

focused on the outcome we are trying to achieve - the management of agricultural emissions - and be open to solutions and different ways of achieving this.

"Sheep and beef farmers have reduced their absolute emissions by more than 30 per cent since 1990 and are offsetting a significant proportion of their remaining emissions through the trees and native vegetation on their farms."

Acland said much of this sequestration is still not recognised or rewarded and that recent analysis by AgResearch indicated sheep production is already "warming neutral".

DairyNZ chairperson Jim van der Poel said the Government's announcement was positive and that for New Zealand to remain internationally competitive, all paths forward must be grounded in a science-based approach.

"New Zealand's dairy farmers are among the world's most GHG-efficient producers of milk, and inclusion in the NZ ETS could have shifted production to less-efficient producers offshore, hurting farmers, the economy and the country."

"That outcome would also increase global emissions."

The new Pastoral Sector Group will be developed with engagement from DairyNZ, Beef + Lamb New Zealand, Deer Industry New Zealand, Federated Farmers, Dairy Companies Association of New Zealand, and the Meat Industry Association.

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Bull sale an out-the-gate success

CLAIRE INKSON

Grampians Angus owner Jono Reed said he was happy with how the Culverden Stud's annual sale went this year.

"It's awesome to have such great support when, as everyone knows, there is a lot of pressure happening out there, and for those reasons, I think it's probably our most successful sale."

The auction was on June 14, with Grampians selling out.

Sixty of the 60 bulls up for auction sold on the day, with an average price of \$10,200.

The top price was \$15,000, going to lot 35, lot 11 and lot 3.

Although prices were back on the previous two years, Reed was unfazed.

"It's just the way everyone's been, in a lot of cases, a couple of thousand back.

"But the consistency was probably the most satisfying thing to see; it stayed steady the whole way through, and people could just find what they wanted. It just banged away."

A good crowd in the hundreds turned up for the sale, with some of the larger stations purchasing more than one bull on the day, which makes things easy, Reed said.

"We are really lucky we have a few stations that like what we are doing, and they know our product can handle their conditions and scale.

"It's a no-fuss, honest sort of product"

Reed's son Hank, 10, got in on



the action by putting his hand-reared charolais bull up for auction.

"Silverstream Charolais gave Hank an orphan calf, and he hand-reared it and did a good job.

"It was just his calf he used to ride and muck around with."

Hank put the bull in the sheep yards and tried to promote him.

Auctioneer Neville Clark thought it would be a laugh if they sold the bull at the end of the main auction.

The bull sold for \$3800, money Hank intends to put towards a motorbike.

"He's into all things farming. He's probably been more machinery-focused, but he likes everything we do. He is mad about hunting," Reed said.

Right - Hank Reed with auctioneer Neville Clark.

Above - The average price for this year's auction was \$10,200.

Below - Lot 35 was one of three bulls that fetched the top dollar of \$15,000.

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Calm Kaiwara bulls sell well

CLAIRE INKSON

Kaiwara Angus's success lies in the temperament of the bulls, says Kaiwara Angus owner and breeder George Johns. "Temperament is essential to breeders and farmers and seemed to be an elevated interest and priority this year. "People joke that our bulls are as laid back as their breeder, but they still get the job done," John's wife Penny Clark-Hall said. The stud, situated just out of Culverden in North Canterbury, had another successful sale on June 14. Twenty-four out of 26 bulls sold at an average of \$7700, with a top price of \$13,000. Sales were up on the previous year when 20 out of 25 bulls were sold at an average of \$7000 and a top price of \$11,000. "We have been extremely fortunate to have a loyal customer base who have supported our stud over the years and we are so grateful to them. "Equally, we are thrilled to

welcome so many new customers and farmers who came this year. It is exciting for us to see that we are hitting a mark in the market." Clark-Hall, who has been handling the stud's marketing and social media, said there was good, positive energy at the sale. "It was a bit more lively, and we stepped up our marketing this year, which has really helped. "It's a different game from going to a supplier to going direct to the customer. "It takes a lot more investment of your time and energy, so I think we saw the benefits of it this year." Clark-Hall said the drought had put their bulls to the test, but they had held their own well. "George backs his bulls 100 per cent, always offering a three-year guarantee to clients to replace them if they break down. "That confidence comes from the fact that they, and their progeny, have proven that they cannot just survive but perform in the hard drought months in the hill country."



Top left - Kaiwara Angus is all about family. Penny Clark-Hall, George Johns and their children Eva (left), Tilly and Tommy (in dad's arms).

Above - There was a good turnout at the Kaiwara Angus bull sale.

Left - Twenty-four out of 26 bulls sold on the day, at an average price of \$7700.

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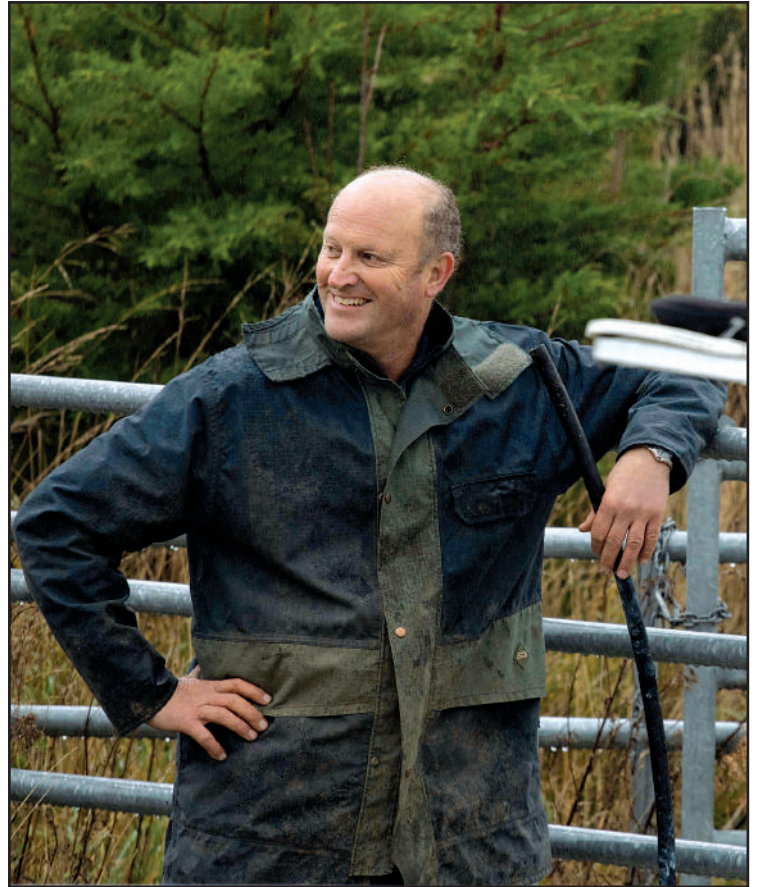


Above - Despite a wet and windy start to the auction, the sale drew a good crowd.

Right - Cleardale Station owner and breeder Ben Todhunter was happy with how the bull sale went.

Left - The average price at this year's sale was \$6690.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON



Todhunter satisfied with sale results

CLAIRE INKSON

Undeterred by the wet and windy start, a resilient group of potential buyers gathered at Cleardale Genetics' third annual bull sale.

The sale was held at the Todhunters Rakaia Gorge property on June 10, with 22 of the 25 R2 Angus

bulls up for auction sold on the day at an average price of \$6690.

The top seller was lot 13, going for \$11,000.

This was down from last year's sale, which saw an average price of \$7195 and a top sale price of \$14,500.

Despite sales not being as strong as the previous year, Cleardale

Station owner and breeder Ben Todhunter said he was satisfied with how the auction went.

"We were pleased to sell most of the bulls and have a few passed over so that people have the option of buying something without being forced into paying top money when it's quite a tough year.

"We had a good appearance,

and good clearance and a few new buyers here as well."

Hazlett Livestock agent Callum Dunnett said that although bull sales had been softer than usual due to the economic challenges facing the sector, farmers were still happy to pay for bulls that had good data and genetics.

"Generally, people are still pre-

pared to spend the money on good quality genetics, so there is still demand at the top end.

"The middle market has come back a bit, but people are still looking for good quality bulls to buy. They may not be able to spend as much as they had in the past, but they are still after a good quality product."



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'We deserve a trial by science,



Straight-talking North Otago farmer Jane Smith is also an environmentalist and agricultural advocate. PHOTO SUPPLIED

JANE SMITH

Convince me it is worth spending \$183 million via the Agrizero ponzi scheme to find a way to reduce four millionths of a degree of warming per year attributed to New Zealand livestock.

Find a calculator willing or able to work out the cost of this per degree of 'warming'. The collective spend by agricultural organisations and taxpayers over the past two decades on the great methane gravy train to design the emperor's new clothes, has now surpassed \$930 million.

Rural rhetoric suggests that we have been recently saved by the demise of He Waka Eka Noa and an exit from a default obligation in the ETS. This is not correct.

While both of those previous pathways were indeed unpalatable, our supposed saviour is now vast swathes of mitigation expenditure until we create a livestock sector that we no longer recognise.

One that forces farmers off the hills and into intensive feedlot production and one that corners us to select livestock genetics on political traits rather than productive traits.

The irony is that they are chasing a "solution" to a "problem" that has never been tangibly identified, let alone accurately quantified or qualified.

The clown show continues while the band plays on, thinly glossed over as "what our global consumer expects of us" - which is simply an

OPINION

empty sentence that rolls off the tongues of politicians and agricultural boardroom clones with ease and vigour.

This self-perpetuating parody continues to bloom when fed, watered and wheeled out by ag sector leaders, co-operatives and levy organisations all the while being underpinned by taxpayer money - in a country that can't afford something that vaguely resembles a first world healthcare system or functioning roads.

A key point that continues to be missed in this debacle is that if you culled every single ruminant animal in New Zealand tomorrow (or every single molecule of natural biogenic methane produced by them) this would make NO quantifiable difference to global climate change, be it warming or cooling.

Why have we jumped straight on the methane mitigation bus before asking what we are actually mitigating?

Why do we continue to throw hundreds of millions of dollars that we do not have into a self-sabotaging strategy that will risk the future of the New Zealand sheep, beef and deer sector and its contribution to diverse rural communities and what used to be known as a rockstar economy?

Many scientists have jumped on

the gravy train, quick to announce the what, when, who and how; without asking the key question - why.

If an award was given for the most misguided misuse of funds it would go to 'Agrizero' (with the runners-up being unwinding decades of genetic progression by selecting sheep and cattle on supposed low methane genetics - closely followed by a \$29 million taxpayer-funded methane satellite).

An onlooker may suggest that the agricultural companies funding Agrizero have surplus money to launder through the greenwash, which is effectively all that they have done.

An alarming low level of understanding by companies involved in Agrizero of what they have actually signed up to or what they will actually achieve is worthy of a full taxpayer enquiry, given the 50% of crown funds that have been "invested".

If only these companies or the crown had put the same time, effort and resources into promoting the efficiency of New Zealand pastoral farming, or even been charitable enough to share our carbon efficient pastoral IP with the rest of the world - this could have been our greatest contribution to cooling the current climate change hysteria.

Instead, they decided to double-down and apologise for a crime we didn't do - even stating when questioned that this is simply the

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Living with pain that doesn't go away

BY KATHRYN WRIGHT

If you live with chronic pain, you've probably tried a lot of different things.

If you've tried everything the doctor or physio has suggested, it can be easy to lose hope.

The struggle is real – you feel like your pain is sucking you under.

Sometimes, pain can't be avoided, but pain is only one part of the total experience of your life. We get messages from different places that tell us we have to get rid of and control pain. But as you know, it doesn't really work long term if you have an ongoing or permanent condition.

To try something radically different, first you must understand the difference between pain and suffering: straight pain is simple and clean – back or nerve pain, any pain that is undeniable.

Suffering is when you do not or cannot accept your feelings ABOUT the pain, such as sadness, uncertainty and worthlessness.

This can become a vicious cycle and can keep you stuck trying the same old methods that you know don't work.

It is avoiding or giving up the things that have meaning in your life and missing opportunities to spend time with the people who matter.

What would you be doing in your life if you had no pain? How would the areas of personal relationships, work, leisure, community, personal growth and health look and what



would you be doing? How would you open yourself up to the vitality of this moment?

What would it be like to do all of these things WITH the pain?

Often our minds tell us things that are unhelpful, often around rules and limitations that obey your pain's desire to stop you living

your life.

Trying to distance yourself from thoughts like "I can't live a normal life because of my pain" – observe your thoughts and try not to let them control you.

It is the way that you think about your experience that will often dictate how you feel. It is still

possible to think one way and act differently.

Sometimes it's the case that you are going to feel pain no matter if you practice and honour what matters to you or not.

You have the capacity to contain ALL of your experiences, good and bad. Only if you can accept your

difficult thoughts and feelings about the situation, can you then open yourself up to being willing to live a full life, regardless of your pain.

Having a willingness to take responsibility for your rehabilitation and to build the life you want, is a strong predictor of recovery.

Ask yourself why you should be willing to move towards what is meaningful to you, and to bring the pain along with you, if that's what it takes.

You might come up with such reasons as "struggling against pain doesn't make it go away" or "struggling and avoidance takes me away from what I value", or "I have already suffered enough".

This is not about giving up and resigning yourself to helplessness, in fact it's quite the opposite: it is actively participating in an ongoing process of living your life to the best of your ability, without the control agenda around your pain – or having it control you.

It's a shift in focus, learning how to be in the moment, embracing your life, but bringing your pain along with you, much like we would if we had to carry around an unwanted Christmas gift.

Make decisions in your life that support what's in your heart. Things that make you feel alive. You are so much more than your pain.

*Kathryn Wright is a registered counsellor
www.kathrynwright.co.nz*

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A childhood of freedom on the farm

1. What is the name of your club, and how long have you been a member?

I have been part of the Pleasant Point Young Farmers club since moving back to my home town just over a year ago.

2. What has been the highlight for you of joining Young Farmers? What are the benefits and experiences that you feel have helped you most?

One of the highlights of being part of this club and the wider NZ Young Farmers, would have to be the social interactions with fellow peers. It is definitely a community built for everyone, with any background. All the events and small catch-ups give me something to look forward to throughout the month!

There are huge benefits with being part of Young Farmers such as courses, support and having your say, just to touch on a few.

Being on the exec team for our club has come with a lot of leadership and commitment opportunities, which has allowed me to step up and take action.

We are still fairly new to opening the club back up, so I get a great feeling of accomplishment that I am bringing something back to our community. As my parents were also once a part of this club, I feel like I'm helping to restore part of my heritage.

3. How did you become involved in agriculture?

I've been involved in agriculture since before I could even walk, having grown up on the family farm my whole life.

One thing I'll never take for granted is my childhood and the freedom of being around the farm - doing things I probably shouldn't have been doing, but that is when you learn! I learned to take initiative, think on the spot, and do an honest day's work.

It is a privilege to do what we love and it all shows when it pays off down the line.

Young Farmers are the future of New Zealand agriculture, so each issue we shine a spotlight on a Young Farmers Club member. Today we chat to BRIANNA McKEOWN.



4. What is your job now?

I have the pleasure of working at Vetlife, which is one of New Zealand's leading veterinary providers. At Vetlife I assist in managing two of the largest wagyu producers in New Zealand.

On a daily basis I am interacting with farmers from the top of the North Island to the bottom of the South Island, ensuring their animal health programmes are

implemented to the high standards the producers expect.

I am responsible for ensuring the smooth delivery of animal health product to our clinics as well as partner clinics.

Throughout the month I deal with numerous invoices as well as contributing with the wider team I'm part of.

Having never dealt with cattle previously, as I am from a sheep and crop farm, it is great to diversify my

knowledge.

5. What do you think the future of farming will look like, and what would like to see happening in New Zealand agriculture going forward?

The future of farming is forever changing as we face new challenges everyday where farmers are having to adapt to new ways and policies where some are not always beneficial.

I believe small family farms are slowly being pushed away as the costs are becoming too high in comparison to the income coming back in. New Zealand used to live off sheep's backs before the development of synthetics but now flock numbers have roughly halved since the peak.

With wool prices now at an all-time low it is hardly worth the cost of the shearer. I would love to see a whole lot more support and drive put behind our small family farms around NZ so that we can keep them being passed down for generations.

Our parents, grandparents and families have worked so hard to create and build what they have, just for it only to be sold on due to financial and emotional stress.

6. What are your future plans?

I'm not too certain on what my future may hold but I would love to continue within the agri and animal health sector.

I would also love to see my local young farmers thrive even when I have aged out.

I know that no matter where I may move to within NZ there will be a local club I will be able to join.

7. Who has been your biggest inspiration in agriculture, and why?

Both my mother and father are my biggest inspirations. They have distributed their attributes to me, creating a motivated, dynamic woman of passion and creativity. When I was little, I believed everything my parents told me. Their views became mine. I was always told to never give up and always see things through even when they get hard.

The older I get the more I can see the sacrifices they make in order for us to have a future in agriculture and to keep the farm within the family.

Through all of my life's highs and lows my parents have always been there for me and pushed me forwards.

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Throwing down the arable gauntlet

ANISHA SATYA

Associate minister for finance Nicola Grigg laid down a challenge for attendees of the Grains and Pulses Forum in Ashburton last Thursday.

“I’m looking for the next billion-dollar industry. We’ve got kiwi[fruit] and we’ve got apples, so what’s the next big one?”

Over 70 people attended the day conference on June 20, and heard from economists, MPs and innovators in the arable field.

The event kicked off with a walkthrough of the Luisetti Seeds facility, lead by Edward Luisetti, managing director of Luisetti Seeds.

The warehouses sport four cleaning lines and four seed treaters and this, combined with the Rangiora facility, means all the seed cleaning is done in-house.

The warehouse processes everything from peas to barley and wheat, which Luisetti hopes to keep more of back in the country.

“There’s a lot of milling wheat imported, and we want to educate consumers to look to buy New Zealand grain.”

Associate Minister for Agriculture Nicola Grigg led the speakers by laying out the Government’s ambitious goal to double export revenue by 2034.

She said the current make up of parliament ensures “the agricultural sector is as well represented as it has ever been”.

Senior consultant Nick Robertson discussed the local and global



Left - Nick Robertson, senior consultant at Berl.
Below - Edward Luisetti.

PHOTOS ANISHA SATYA

of moneymaking.

“The Canterbury arable sector is known worldwide,” Robertson added.

“We’re such a small part of the global economy, that what happens around the world will inevitably impact us here.”

He said slow international growth and downturns in the dairy industry affected the country’s fall in revenue.

“It’s been the other primary industries - horticulture, seafood and arable - that’ve limited this overall fall in our export revenues.”

Robertson said arable exports are forecast to hit \$290 million

in 2024, up \$18 million from last year’s batch.

Thomas Chin, general manager of the association, said the forum gives farmers a chance to reconnect while getting a rundown of the industry’s outlook.

“There are a lot of dynamic factors and influences that have bearing on the future of the grains sector of New Zealand,” Chin said. “It’s a chance for people to swap values, reconnect, and learn about the state of the industry.”

The Grains and Pulses Forum 2024 was run by the The New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association.



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Keeping the cup full

CLAIRE INKSON

In the midst of a challenging drought, the recent Refill Your Cup event in Hurunui brought together a community of two hundred women.

The event, which took place on May 29 at the Omihi Community Hall, was the fifth of its kind in the district.

It was a day filled with inspiring speakers and a much-needed opportunity to step away from the farm and connect with one another.

The event recognises that rural women, often the emotional backbone of their families and farms, bear a significant amount of the stress during difficult times like a drought.

“Since 2015, Refill Your Cup has come about from an overwhelming desire to provide an opportunity for women to come together so they can nurture their families and communities,” event co-founder and Hurunui District Mayor Marie Black said.



Above – Hurunui District Mayor Marie Black and artist and speaker Corina Hazlett enjoy a laugh.

Left – Kate Ivey, Corina Hazlett, Anthea Prentice, Sara Heard, Ange Davison, Marie Black, Carla Muller and Jen Lepine.

Below – The event gave women a chance to recharge and connect.

The event featured four keynote speakers – Fitness entrepreneur Kate Ivey, artist Corina Hazlett, Cheviot GP Anthea Prentice and agricultural economist and consultant Carla Muller.

Black said line-up of speakers and the small businesses selling products at the event showcased the role women now play in business both on and off the farm.

“There is a generational change.

“What I see is women using their own skills and talents to actually add value to their farming operation.”

Lunch was provided with catering by Greta Valley School, and the event was free thanks to sponsorship from Westpac and support from Rural Support Trust and the Hurunui District Landcare Group.



Event organiser Ange Davison (left) interviews Cheviot GP Anthea Prentice. PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON



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Women doin' it for themselves

By CLAIRE INKSON

The Mid Canterbury branch of Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ) will hold a women's health and rural skills day on July 3 at the Ashburton A&P Show-grounds.

The event will include lessons in butchery with Bill Den Baars, trailer-backing with Donald Shearer, and a women's health segment with Dr Emma Andrew.

RWNZ regional leader Francis Beeston says the organisation approached local women in the primary sector to find out what areas they most wanted to upskill.

"We did a bit of a survey.

"We went to Young Farmers, Farming Mums and different groups and asked what skills people wanted to learn, and butchery skills and backing a trailer were quite popular."

The day's cost is \$20 for RWNZ members and \$25 for non-members, and morning tea and lunch

are provided.

"We are hoping for a mixture of both RWNZ members, and also just rural women in our community.

"We have made it between school hours so people can drop the kids at school and come along for the day."

Beeston said the day is about increasing rural women's skill sets and providing attendees with an opportunity to network and learn more about RWNZ.

"Rural Women as an organisation are always doing a lot around policy and advocating for women in health and education.

"In Wellington, where our head office is, there are a lot of opportunities for leadership and development, whether it is health, children or education.

"We are always submitting and advocating for those issues."

To register, email Francis.Bee-ston@ruralwomennz.nz.

Similar events will be held in Timaru on July 1 and Darfield on August 2.



Right - Rural Women New Zealand's Mid Canterbury branch will hold a skills day on July 3 giving women a chance to hone their butchery and trailer-backing skills.

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Magnesium and General Health

Science buffs will know that Magnesium and Calcium are in the same column in the Periodic Table. It is unsurprising then that these two essential minerals control nerve and muscle function. In muscles, Calcium dominates Magnesium when muscles contract. Magnesium should then dominate Calcium in the relaxation stage. If Magnesium is low, then Calcium dominates both stages.

What this really means is that inadequate Magnesium is a recipe for cramping, stiff, sore and tired muscles. A tell-tale sign of low Magnesium are muscle cramps, especially at night. We need to be aware that dehydration, low salt intake and some drugs, notably statins, can affect muscles. While muscle cramps are uncomfortable, it is the effects of low Magnesium on heart (cardiac) muscle that are frightening as it can affect electrical impulses and blood flow in the heart.

The best way to think about Magnesium is its effects on 'tubes'



in the body, especially blood vessels. Our muscles contain tiny blood vessels that bring oxygen and nutrients to our muscles. With sufficient Magnesium our blood vessels should open (dilate) after contraction.

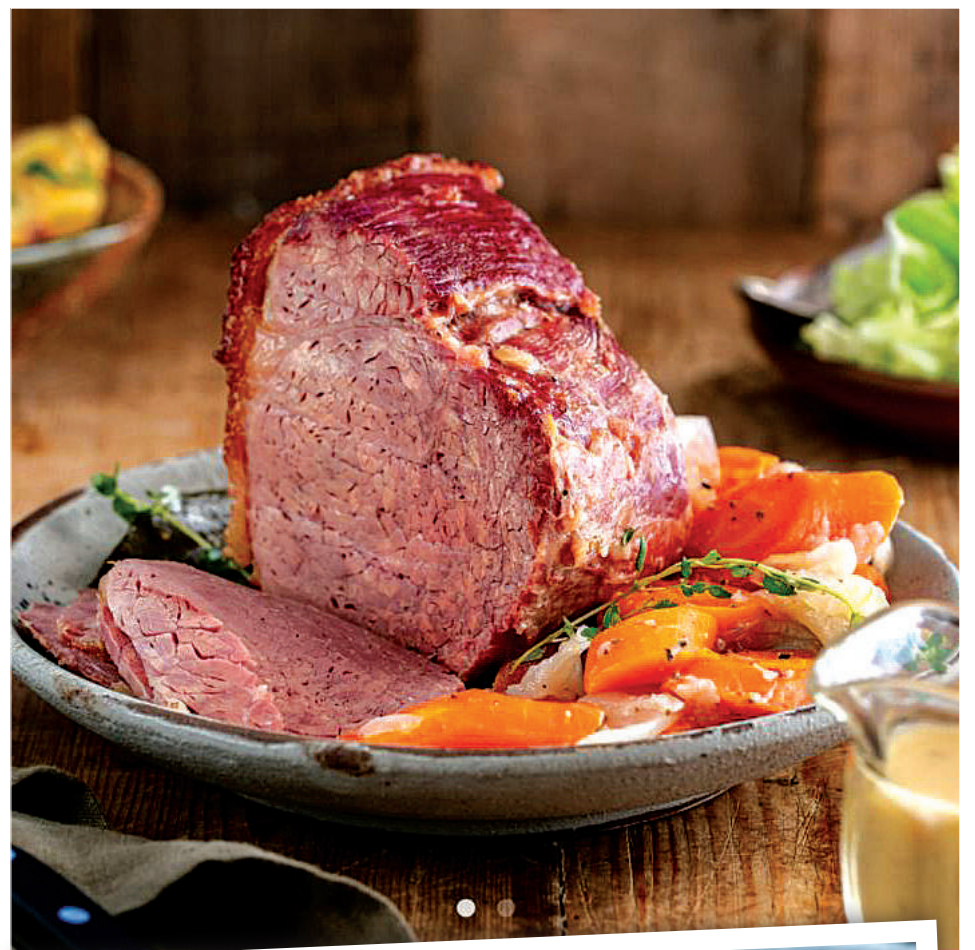
Low Magnesium does the opposite whereby blood vessels narrow and can then spasm.

In our skeletal muscles this can bring muscle tightness and cramp. In smooth muscle that lines our blood vessels this can cause blood-flow restriction and can lead to hypertension.

It is not just blood vessels that are affected; it is our heart muscle, eyes, lungs, gastrointestinal tract and in women, their reproductive tracts. This is why Magnesium is so helpful for PMS.

For people without symptoms, I recommend my multi-mineral/vitamin/antioxidant complex as it includes Magnesium. If you are symptomatic, I recommend adding Magnesium that combines Marine Magnesium, Magnesium Citrate and Magnesium Glycinate.

John Arts (B.Soc.Sci, Dip Tch, 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 all new newsletter at www.abundant.co.nz.



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2 onions, cut roughly
2 bay leaves
4 stalks fresh thyme
1t ground black pepper
2T brown sugar

Sauce
20g butter
2T white flour
1C cooking juice, strained
1t Dijon mustard
1t brown sugar
Salt and pepper, to taste

To serve
Shredded green cabbage
Chopped fresh parsley

Corned beef

- Place the corned beef silverside in a large pot. Add the cider, water, carrots, onions, bay leaves, thyme stalks and pepper. Slowly bring to a simmer. Cover and cook for 2 hours keeping an eye on the liquid level. You may need to add a little extra

half cup.

- Remove from the heat and strain the juice keeping 1C for the sauce.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the corned beef and vegetables into a small roasting dish. Spread the sugar on top of the meat. Place it into the oven for 10 minutes to golden up the top. Remove and rest while you make the sauce.

For the sauce

- In a small pot melt the butter. Add the flour and cook for 2 minutes. Add the reserved cooking liquid, mustard and brown sugar stirring until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.

To serve

- Option 1: Serve with shredded cabbage & fresh parsley.
- Option 2: Serve with fried cabbage and spinach with scalloped potatoes.
- Option 3: Serve with fried broccoli rice, lemon zest and peas with mashed root vegetables (potato and kumara).
- Option 4: Serve in a corned beef, pickle and cheese toasted sandwich.

Recipe courtesy of Beef + Lamb New Zealand



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Winter warmers with a twist

CLAIRE INKSON

Pies on a Winter's Day is a Kiwi institution, and one small bakery is getting a name for itself in North Canterbury by putting a gourmet spin on the traditional pastry.

Amberley Pies, owned by British pastry chef Billy Hansford and wife

Hayley, has been serving pies in the small service town of Amberley since October 2020.

"I think a pie, particularly on a day when it's quite cold, is the perfect food to grab on the go.

"It's quick, it's easy, it's filling," Hansford says.

Amberley Pies has recently expanded to include an outlet in Rangiora, but it all started in 2018

when the couple opened a food truck selling gourmet burgers at events and around the small service town of Amberley.

It was once they added pies to the menu, though, that the business took off.

"We ended up doing three times as many pies as burgers.

"It got out of control, and we ended up renting the domain

kitchen at the rugby club to keep up with demand."

The search began for a suitable permanent space to open a

dedicated pie

shop. Eventually, with retail sites in Amberley in short supply, they were offered the site on Markham Street.

The location was perfect. Markham Street, historically Amberley's main street, is the location of other vibrant businesses, such as the Brew Moon Brewery and Little Vintage Espresso, meaning the street was already a popular haunt for local foodies.

Covid-19 restrictions wreaked havoc in the first month of operation, but a sympathetic landlord made the challenge easier.

"We opened as we were coming out of the first initial lockdown, we started, and then the second lockdown came in.

"We were only open three or four weeks between lockdowns, and we

had a big lockdown sale when we knew we would have to close again.

"Our landlord stopped our rent, and I don't think we would be here now if she hadn't done that."

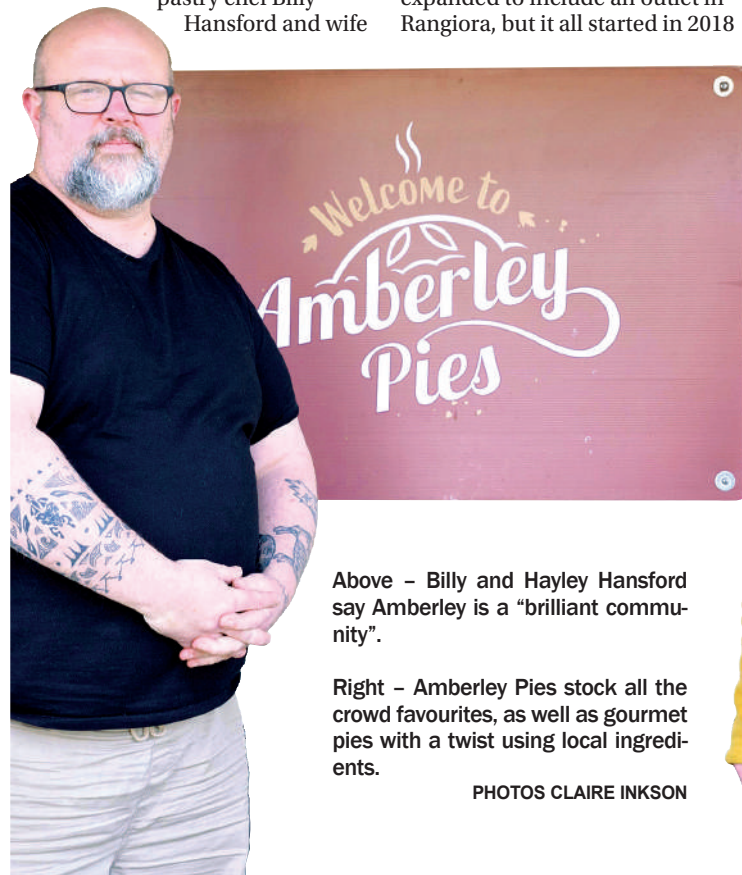
Hansford said the community has been supportive of the business, and the town's diversity makes it a special place to live and work.

"There's a lot of Poms, there's a lot of Aussies.

"We didn't really have a sense of community when I was in London.

"You get on the tube in the UK, and no-one talks to you, but over here in Amberley, you can't walk down the street without seeing someone you know and saying hello or them yelling 'Hi' from across the street.

"It's a fantastic community."



Above - Billy and Hayley Hansford say Amberley is a "brilliant community".

Right - Amberley Pies stock all the crowd favourites, as well as gourmet pies with a twist using local ingredients.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON



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Food fit for a king ... but without all

CLAIRE INKSON

King of Snake has been a Christchurch institution since it opened in 2012 at its original location on Victoria Street.

Now on Cashel Street in the Terrace, with opulent, exotic décor and views over the Avon River and the Bridge of Remembrance, King of Snake remains the place to go in Christchurch for guaranteed impeccable Euro-Asian cuisine and a five-star dining experience minus the pretence.

"It's lavish and it's comfortable, and it's about exporting people out of Christchurch for an evening to somewhere exotic and different," King of Snake executive chef Stuart Langsford says.

Langsford said part of the restaurant's charm is a blend of high-end dining with a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere.

"Our market is huge and varied. People can come in and spend \$50 or \$150.

"We have high-powered businessmen and teenagers in hoodies and everyone in between."

King of Snake has received its fair share of accolades in the past decade, including being voted Supreme Establishment of the Year and winning the Service Foods Outstanding Restaurant Award and the One Music Outstanding Ambience Award at the 2022 Canterbury Hospitality Awards.

The menu is elegant and exciting, with small shared plates including dishes such as Chatham Island



Stuart Langsford has shaped Christchurch cuisine during his career. PHOTOS SUPPLIED



Pressed duck from Canter Valley Farm with caramelised mandarin sauce.

crayfish mini brioche sliders and wild venison carpaccio.

Larger plates include crowd favourites such as Crispy Pressed Half Duck with Caramelised Mandarin Sauce and Penang Curry Beef Cheeks.

It's not just the food that sets King of Snake apart.

The cocktails are exotic and playful, with names like Hikaris Flight and Fire Lotus and decadent

dessert cocktails like Siliso punch with clarified yoghurt.

Ingredients are fresh and locally sourced wherever possible. Duck comes from Canter Valley Farm in North Canterbury, beef from Tamar Beef in Mid Canterbury, and some produce and dry goods from Christchurch-based Service Foods.

Salmon is sourced from Akaroa Salmon, fresh market fish from the Little Fish Co. and venison comes

from Premium Game in Marlborough.

"We are in the pursuit of excellence. We are constantly developing what we are doing," Langsford said.

If King of Snake is the jewel in the crown of Christchurch cuisine, then Stuart Langsford is Canterbury culinary royalty.

Langsford's CV includes work at some of Christchurch's most esteemed restaurants, creating a

legacy that has seen the chef raise the standards of the city's dining experience over three decades.

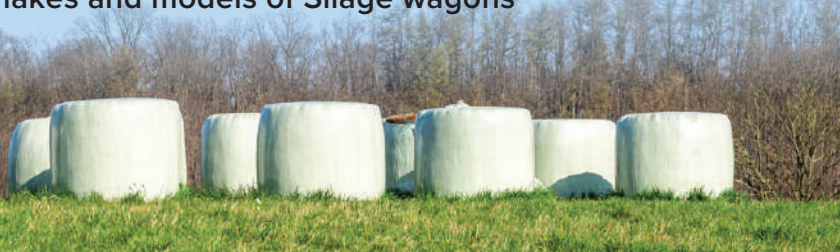
Langsford moved from the UK to Christchurch as a teenager and landed a job as a kitchen hand at the Christchurch Gondola.

"I didn't know what I wanted to do.

"In hindsight, I was reasonably lucky to work where I worked at the time, but I didn't know it then."

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the pomp and ceremony



Sashimi of fresh market fish from Little Fish Co.



Wild venison carpaccio with chilli black bean dressing. The venison is from Premium Game in Marlborough.

Langsford spent a stint in Queenstown before returning to Christchurch to work as a part-time chef at Morley's Lodge in Hornby, creating "elevated pub restaurant food".

Langsford then worked at Misceos, one of Christchurch's most popular cafes.

"It was an amazing team, amazing food, and cool people. I still remember some of the

stuff on the menu from when I started."

From there, Langsford landed a job at the Cocoa Club, with a menu of provincial French cuisine with Pacific Rim influences.

"It was the steepest learning curve of my career, but that is where my passion for food came from."

Langsford worked his way up to head chef in a kitchen environment he describes as "brutal".

"It was intense and I was proud because chefs came in with 10 years' experience, and two months later, they were gone; they couldn't handle it."

After two years at Cocoa Club, Langsford took a break to travel before taking the position of head chef at Indochine, a restaurant with an Asian influence, in 2003.

Langsford went on to work at other iconic Christchurch restau-

rants, such as the Bicycle Thief, Pedro's and Pegasus Bay Winery in Waipara.

These days, Langsford presides over King of Snake, Roca, Mexicanos, and cocktail bar Monarch, all owned by restaurant entrepreneur David Warring.

"Mexicanos is Mexican Street Food; it's cheap, cheerful, tasty and fresh.

"Roca has been open about eight

or nine months and is slightly more elevated.

"It's still casual dining but at the upper end of our restaurants."

In a 30-year career, Langsford has left an indelible mark on the Christchurch restaurant scene and shaped the city's food culture.

He attributes his success to hard work rather than talent.

"I'm not naturally gifted; I just have an excellent work ethic."



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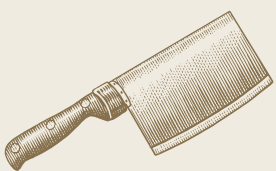


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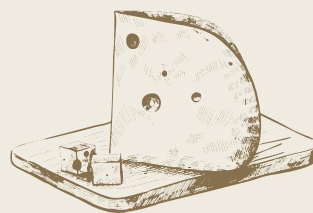
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Service Foods South Island general manager Troydon Lill describes Service Foods as a “supermarket for businesses”.
PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON



Family business

BUILT FROM THE GROUND UP

CLAIRE INKSON

Service Foods, one of New Zealand’s largest independent food distribution businesses, is a family success story like no other.

The company’s roots lay in Christchurch, where Service Foods founder Stan Balar had bought a small grocery store on Colombo Street with his wife Vicki in the early 1980s after emigrating from India.

The store, which then was little more than a dairy with just a few employees, has evolved into a food service company with 16 branches, more than 200 temperature-controlled trucks, and over 750 employees.

It all began with specialty spices in the early 1990s, Service Foods South Island general manager Troydon Lill explains.

“There weren’t many food places around in the 90s, so Stan started getting requests from the Indian community wanting spices from their homeland.

“So he started importing them and became a wholesaler.”

In 1994, Balar Wholesale Supplies was established, later becoming Service Foods and beginning the company’s slow, steady growth trajectory.

Much of that growth has been achieved by acquiring existing businesses, allowing Service Foods to be a universal supplier to the food industry.

Lill describes the company as a “supermarket for businesses.”

“In the last seven years, we have bought about 23 businesses and brought them under the Service Foods banner.

“We have to have that distribution network to be able to offer that one-stop-shop service.”

Service Foods supplies a wide range of establishments, from restaurants, cafes, and wineries to hospitals, schools, retirement homes, and cruise ships.

All up, Service Foods supplies more than 10,000 businesses nationwide.

Restaurants range from high-

end bespoke dining experiences, such as King of Snake and Inati in Christchurch, to regional smaller cafes and bakeries, such as Amberley Pies.

Key customers include big names such as Domino’s Pizza, Lone Star and Burger Wisconsin.

“We start delivering at 4am in the morning.

“We are doing around a thousand deliveries daily in

Produce can be processed and prepped by Service Foods to client’s specifications.

“We can offer prepared produce where it’s all cut up and ready to go, and they just have to cook it.”

“The quality of produce is really important because if you have confidence in your produce, then chefs will look at your meat as well.”

The emphasis is on quality, fresh and locally sourced products with

produce lines and 674 cuts of meat.

Service Foods delivery trucks travel regionally daily, delivering to areas other distribution businesses miss, including Mt Hutt, Methven, and further South to Fairlie.

“Our trucks are set up to be off-road and navigate gravel drive-ways.

“There is an opportunity to supply bigger farming stations, particularly when the shearing gang comes in, and you have to feed 20 people.”

Despite the size of the company, Service Foods remains a family-owned and operated business, with Stan Balar still involved in the company in an observatory role and his two sons in leadership positions at an executive level.

“They are a really humble family and have been able to reinvest the profits back in the business to help it grow quickly and expand.

“When it’s your family business, you don’t want it to fail, and you’ll put everything into it.

“They are really passionate,” Lill said.

“When it’s your family business, you don’t want it to fail, and you’ll put everything into it. They are really passionate

Christchurch alone, which is pretty big.”

Some Service Foods clients are in the agricultural sector, such as farms and high country stations, looking to feed staff or agritourism guests.

“Farms may either be going to that tourism market and suddenly have 10 or 20 people for dinner.”

a farm-to-plate ethos.

“We want to get everything local. “We use a lot of smaller growers for mushrooms and microgreens.

“For oranges and apples, we only really import when local seasons are coming to an end.”

The product range on offer includes an impressive 4400 dry goods, 450 lines of seafood, 400



by Claire Inkson

A Temuka bakery is bringing a bit of nostalgia back to a Kiwi favourite. Paul and Lynette Hawker started Stockman's Bakery in Temuka two years ago, bringing sweet treats and savoury pastries to their menu.

It was their Stockman's Pies, though, that quickly gained a reputation throughout Canterbury for quality and taste.

The pies are made without fillers, preservatives or colouring agents.

Paul describes their pies as "meat and gravy, not gravy and meat."

"For us, it's about the old traditional way of making a pie that takes people back.

"We want to get people to slow down and think back to when times were a bit simpler."

"We do everything the old way, and people say that's how their Grandma or Mum used to do it. And that's what we are aiming for."

Flavours range from the Kiwi favourites of mince and cheese and peppered steak to pork and apple and hogget and mint.

"Creamy chicken is our most popular," Lynette says.

The couple supplies pies to six outlets,

from garages to cafes and pubs throughout Mid and South Canterbury, but they recently signed a contract to supply food distribution business Service Foods, which will see Stockman Pies be available nationwide.

To keep up with demand, the bakery has five staff members, whom the Hawkers consider family.

"It's definitely a team job. We are on the floor working with our staff and helping them grow as people so they will eventually go further in their careers."

The bakery compliments the Hawker's other business, Spitroast.com Mid Canterbury.

The Stockman's logo of a farmer and his dog is based on Lynette's Grandfather.

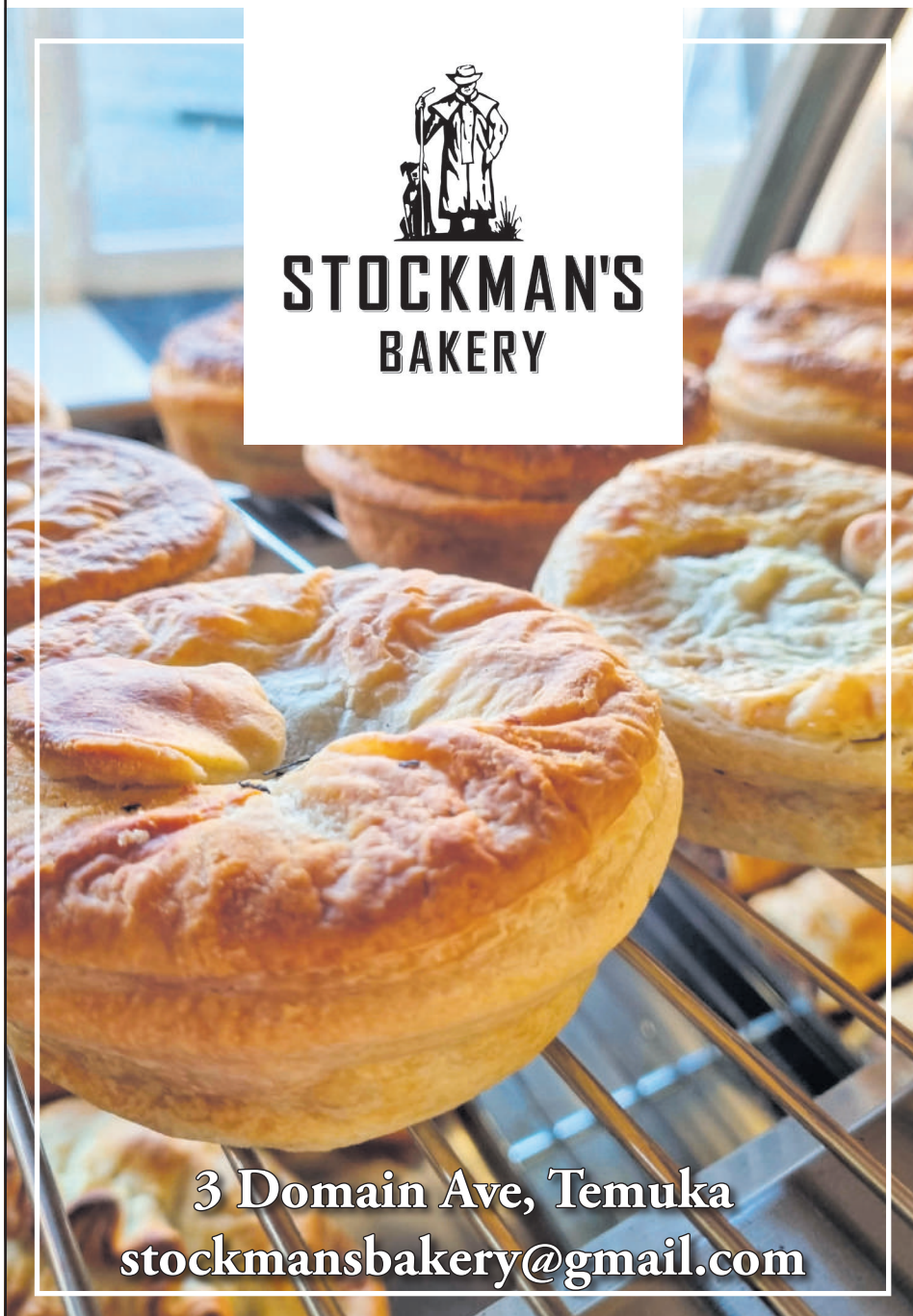
"I come from a farming background, and he is just a good Kiwi farmer; he is my idol," Lynette says.

With Stockman's Bakery continuing to grow, chances are Stockman's Pies will be warming the hands of hundreds of New Zealanders on the rugby field side-lines and beyond this winter.

"It's nice to put a smile on people's faces. If you can change someone's day in some small way, it's a good feeling," Paul said.



Ingredients at Inati are fresh and locally sourced wherever possible.
PHOTOS JEROME WARBURTON



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Sharing THE LOVE of food

CLAIRE INKSON

To dine at Inati (meaning to share in Te Reo Māori) is to have a unique culinary experience to remember.

Chef Simon Levy, who was born in the UK, and his Kiwi wife Lisa opened Inati in 2017, offering a fresh take on fine dining.

Located on Hereford Street in central Christchurch, the restaurant has a theatre-like ambiance.

A long polished table gives guests a front-row seat view into the kitchen.

Food is exquisitely prepared and seasonal shared plates reflect the provenance of the local ingredients on a menu split by Earth, Land and Sea.

Levy's passion for food began as a teenager in the UK.

"My journey as a chef began when I was 13, and school wasn't my forte.

"I went to work at Waterloo Fire Station with a TV chef from Australia.

"I got the taste for it very quickly, and sort

of started skipping school to go there, and I basically ended up working there instead of places I should have been."

From there, Levy's career took a steady upward trajectory fuelled by a passion for food.

After a few years working at Waterloo Fire Station, Levy joined Claridges under esteemed chef Sir John Williams, currently executive chef at the Ritz.

From there, Levy joined The Ivy, which gave him his "foundation".

"It's now called the Ivy Club. It's very famous, and a beautiful restaurant with great food.

"We used to have people come from all over the world, some very famous people."

"We had something for everyone there, and it was a phenomenal place to get your grounding and work with some very big names."

From there, Levy went to work at Rules, London's oldest English restaurant, where he met his wife, Lisa.

continued next page

From P22

"She was HR and front-of-house manager, and I went there as a sous chef and ended up being executive sous chef."

When the executive chef at Rules injured himself, Levy stepped up to run the restaurant.

"It made me grow up, going from just being one of the team to a senior role organising 30 chefs and 12 kitchen hands at a young age was a huge challenge, but one I was very successful at."

After running a few smaller kitchens, Levy went to work for Gordon Ramsey at the Warrington Hotel.

"It was really cool; I got to do that for just under two years."

After working in French chef Pierre Koffman's kitchen and opening a restaurant called The Huts, it was time to move to New Zealand.

After working at some of New Zealand's top restaurants, such as Pegasus Bay Winery, and with chefs like Johnny Schwass, the Levys decided it was time to open their own restaurant, and Inati was born.

"It was just a life-changing moment, knowing we were ready to do something ourselves."

The Levys wanted Inati to be an extension of their home.

"We wanted people to come in, feel relaxed and just be at ease."

"We wanted to break down the formalities of having a kitchen out the back, where there are brick walls out the front and no-one knows what's going on at the back, and no-one knows what's going on at the front, and no-one wants to talk to each other."

"We are one team and one family."

Levy said the menu is designed to showcase the best of what Canterbury has to offer, either fresh and in season or preserved for later in the year.

"The way I like to show something is in its beautiful and brightest form and accentuate the flavour."

Levy tends not to mix as many foods on a plate as other chefs and uses local, fresh ingredients.

Many ingredients, such as miners leaf, gooseberries and wild fennel, are foraged.

Levy has built relationships with local growers, with asparagus and artichokes coming from Christchurch, truffles from Limestone Hills in Waipara, lamb from Stoneyhurst near Motunau and veal from North Canterbury.

"We want to use growers who share our ethos. Whether it's vegetables, meat, or fish, we make sure it's sustainable and well looked after."



Above - Inati owner and executive chef Simon Levy's passion for food began as a teenager in the UK.

Left - Ingredients at Inati are fresh and locally sourced wherever possible.



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Funding a 'great start'

CLAIRE INKSON

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective chairperson Duncan Barr says the Government's announcement of \$7 million directly to 11 catchment groups is "a great start", but more support will be needed.

"We are all facing funding cliffs, and we all need a sustainable funding model moving forward to enhance the good work all catchment groups throughout the country are doing."

The Ōtūwharekai/Ashburton Lakes Catchment Group, in conjunction with the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective, will receive \$950,000 of funding

over four years.

The \$7 million in funding is part of a \$36 million package announced by Agriculture Minister Todd McClay on June 5.

The package will support Ministry of Primary Industry staff working with catchment groups nationwide.

The latest funding announcement is in addition to MPI's current investment in 46 catchment-based projects, which support 290 groups and over 9000 farmers.

"Supporting locally led catchments projects is one way the Government backs farmers' efforts to improve land management practices and water qual-

ity. Every catchment is different - we need local solutions for local issues," Associate Minister of Agriculture Andrew Hoggard said.

Barr said the direct funding would allow catchment groups to continue investigating issues affecting their catchment and implementing action plans based on local knowledge.

"It's localisation of issues, not centralisation.

"So rather than central government in Wellington dictating what's happening in regions when they have no idea about local issues.

"It's a good initiative because it puts locals in control of their own destiny."



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More TLC for Mt Harding Creek

BY JANINE HOLLAND

The newest catchment group in the district is aiming to enhance and improve the little-known Mt Harding Creek.

With origins below McLennans Bush and Awa Awa Reserve at the bottom of Mt Hutt, supplemented by springs and stockwater, the creek is heavily modified as it passes through Methven, and heads mostly east to join the North branch of the Ashburton River. Above Methven, the district council manages the creek for stockwater, and from Methven down, the regional council looks after it for drainage.

On the outskirts of Methven, a new subdivision Thyme Stream, has been designed around the creek. Local school children, families and the Methven Lions Club have extensively planted its banks in recent years. Locals and visitors enjoy the adjacent walkway which forms part of the Methven walkway network.

With the support of the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective and Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation, around 30 community members

came together last November to discuss forming a catchment group. Hot topics included; flooding outbreaks, poor bank stability, unreliable flows, lack of funding for native planting, and inconsistent messages from the two councils about how best to manage the creek. Landowners wanted to be able to do more to protect their properties from flooding events, and wanted to understand what was planned for the future to help them live safely alongside it.

A steering group has met three times and is starting to form a vision for the creek's future. The concern at the moment is keeping flows. With the district council's decision to close stockwater races within three years, two important water sources for the creek will be impacted. Significant flow augmentation from the Pudding Hill Stream and the North Ashburton River stockwater intakes may be lost. Some people believe Mt Harding Creek's flow below Methven might cease in low rainfall and low spring-flow summers once stockwater is turned off. There is a concern about what will happen to the biodiversity within the creek.

Landowners at the bottom end – bore the brunt of this in February – watching in despair as fish floundered as the creek dried up.

Flooding and drainage blockages have also caused grief for landowners, particularly along Forrest Drive in Methven, and on several low lying farms, but the stockwater decision may lessen this impact. It's unknown exactly how it will play out, given more frequent high rainfall events experienced in the catchment in the past seven years. The group is keen to be part of conversations with the Ashburton District Council about closing stockwater races, and will be asking to input into the working group set up to manage this transition.

The Mt Harding Creek Catchment Group is open to anyone living above Methven, through to the Winchmore area where the creek enters the Ashburton River. The steering group will meet again over winter and welcomes interest and support from others in the catchment.

Contact facilitator Janine Holland if you want to know more on 027 460-4940 or jrholland@xtra.co.nz



Mt Harding Creek is heavily modified as it passes through Methven.

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Chipping away at forestry business

CLAIRE INSKON

It all began with two childhood mates, a digger and a couple of chainsaws.

Campbell Contracting co-owners Jeff McNeilly and Craig Campbell, who have been friends since their school days in Ranfurly, began their logging contracting business 11 years ago.

Campbell had been logging down south and had moved to Mid Canterbury for his wife's work as a midwife, while McNeilly was working overseas.

"I was logging for another guy here at the time when we had all the winds. I thought we might as well buy our own digger. Jeff was over in the mines in Australia and getting sick of it, so he came back, and we got into it," Campbell says.

The excavator that started it all was on loan from a friend.

"Our mate just sort of gave a digger to us and said, if you make some money, pay for it. If you don't, give it back.

"We managed to pay for it and just went from there."

The business levelled up a notch when the pair bought a processor.

"It's the first step when you sort of jump up production because before that, you are cutting up everything with a chain saw."

Between logging, land clearing and firewood, the business took off.

Just over a decade on, Campbell Contracting has grown to three

logging crews, 13 staff, nine excavators, logging trucks and skidders.

The business operates throughout the South Island, focusing on South Canterbury and Banks Peninsula.

"Basically we have to go where the work is. There's not a lot of wood left in Mid Canterbury."

All machinery maintenance and repair is done in-house in a dedicated workshop at the company's Mayfield yard, saving the business money and time.

"It's a cost-saving measure and it gets repairs done quicker."

The guys reckon that the key to the business' success has been a strong work ethic, a willingness to take on jobs other companies won't touch and diversification.

"We are well known for doing a good job and there are not too many jobs we won't tackle," Campbell said.

The pair recently added a mobile Pezzolato solid drum wood chipper to their machinery arsenal, which means they can supply dairy farms with cost-effective wood chips for calf bedding.

The tractor-towed, PTO-driven wood chipper, complete with its own crane for efficiency, was imported from Italy last month and has already been put to work with impressive results.

"One of the reasons we bought it was because of the quality of the chip it makes and being on a tractor means it's universal and easy to move," McNeilly said.



Above - The Pezzolato wood chipper, which has its own crane for efficiency, in action.

Right - Craig Campbell (left) and Jeff McNeilly have been mates since their primary school days in Ranfurly. PHOTOS CLAIRE INSKON



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Seed forum a growing success

CLAIRE INKSON

New Zealand Grain & Seed Trade Association (NZGSTA) president Charlotte Connoley says the Women in Seed Forum turnout was “incredible”.

“We had 140 attendees, and attendance keeps going up every year, which is really positive.”

The event, which took place on May 21 at the Chateau on the Park in Christchurch, is in its fifth year. A diverse range of women attended from across the seed and arable sector.

Connoley said that while the national conference attracts decision-makers and managers, the forum has attendees from throughout the seed and grain industry, from agronomists and lab technicians to people involved in seed processing.

“It’s a really good opportunity to get everyone across the value chain, which is great in terms of collaboration because we can’t just look at things in isolation.”

The forum featured eight keynote speakers who presented on technical research, scientific innovation, and broader topics related to communication and nutrition.

Professor Andy Allan from Plant & Food Research and Auckland University spoke about gene editing, its implications for the industry and the challenges of public perception.

Clare Bradley from Agrisea gave attendees a glimpse into the seaweed business’ journey and the



Above – Clare Bradley gave attendees a glimpse into the Agrisea business. Right – Jo Brady from Barenbrug (left) with communication expert Amy Scott.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

SEED EVENTS

Upcoming seed industry events:

- Breeders Forum, Tuesday, July 30, Commodore Airport Hotel
- Services to Seed Forum Thursday, August 8
- Arable Awards of New Zealand, Thursday, August 15, Wigram Airforce Museum
- NZGSTA Annual Conference, November 4-5

product’s science and innovation opportunities.

Fiona Anderson, a PhD student from Lincoln University, gave insight into her research, and Dr Linda Johnson spoke about her work with endophytes and supporting resilient farming systems.

Communication expert Amy Scott gave a lively presentation on communication challenges and how to understand communication styles better.

Charlotte Glass from Agrimagic spoke about her challenges and how to “walk your own path”, and Fields of Change founder Bridgit Hawkins spoke about opportuni-

ties for women to increase their role in the primary sector.

The day finished with a presentation by author and nutritionist Clare Turnbull.

Connoley said events like the Women in Seed Forum were important as a networking opportunity for women, especially since most other industry events are male-dominated.

“An industry event of any kind is important for sharing knowledge and bringing everyone together.

“I think the unique thing for women going to these events, is that women tend to be less than 10 per cent of the total audience

and the males are more like 90 per cent.

“That creates a challenging environment for women to collaborate and network in.”

Connoley said that it would be good for the industry to reach a stage where an event could encompass both male and female participants in the seed industry, but the growth in the forums’ numbers suggested there was still a need for a women-only event.

“It’s clear there’s a desire for this and people find it a comfortable setting to understand the industry better.

“It’s just not as daunting.”

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DR CALLUM EASTWOOD

Technology and innovative solutions are an increasingly important part of farming, helping to solve some of our challenges including improving working conditions, increasing productivity, and reducing injury on-farm.

That's why it's been great to be involved in the Reducing Sprains and Strains project. This was a project funded by ACC's Workplace Injury Prevention Grants programme, with co-investment from DairyNZ.

Farmers generally prioritise health and safety, but sprain and strain injuries do happen and often during the busiest times. Our research showed that sprains and strains make up around 40% of all dairy farm injuries, particularly between August and October during spring calving.

These findings are why I saw this project as having the chance to make a real difference, supporting the health and wellbeing of farm teams.

It's rewarding to be at the other end of the project now and look back at what we have achieved. Our role at DairyNZ was focused on concept development. We then built partnerships with engaged companies to help develop and produce some of the successful solutions, including Kea Trailers who are now selling the popular Easy-Entry Calf Trailer Gate.

This trailer gate has a



PHOTO SUPPLIED

spring-loaded self-closing saloon door, allowing easy calf loading without having to slide or open gates, and it can be retrofitted to existing trailers. During the prototype phase, Kea Trailers and many farmers helped trial and design this, and some farmers have already purchased one after seeing them in the Fieldays Innovation Hub last year.

Other innovative products looking to go to market are:

- Easy-Access Calf Pen Gate (produced by Gallagher), which can be retrofitted between calf pens to allow hands-free access while carrying buckets or moving calves.
- Bucket Trolley (produced by Wheelco) which has a pivoting design to enable easy lifting and carrying of 1-2 colostrum buckets across uneven ground.
- Cups on Mat (produced by The Wholesale Matting Company)

which is a cushioned mat to elevate shorter people working at cups-on into a better ergonomic position.

These were all trialled with farmers to check for ease of use and to ensure they worked for current farming practices. I believe these products can genuinely help reduce injury, while making the job easier for farmers.

I've appreciated the opportunity to work alongside farmers

and other experts every step of the way, including co-designing solutions that will reduce injury risk and make the job easier.

Working in partnership with QCONZ and Pāmu was also valuable, further bringing a farmer-centred approach to the project.

New Zealand has many different farm types and so the solutions aren't a one-size fit all, however, the project's co-design approach has provided some valuable options for farmers looking to make the job easier while improving on farm safety.

One thing that was obvious during our work was how many great ideas are already out there on farms nationwide. I encourage you to seek ideas on how to reduce the risk of sprains and strains on your farm from other farmers and your team.

Farmers shared these popular tips to avoid injuries:

- Using a specialised trailer to transport calves,
- Piping milk into calf feeders instead of lifting buckets,
- Having two staff pick up heavier calves together,
- Tucking hoses away after use in the milking shed,
- And investing in footwear with good grip and ankle support.

You can find out more about the project at dairynz.co.nz/sprains-strains

By Dr Callum Eastwood is a DairyNZ senior scientist

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A calf for a cause

CLAIRE INKSON

The I Am Hope Foundation (IAHF) is calling on farmers to support Gumboot Friday, an initiative that provides free counselling services for children, by donating a calf for the cause.

“Our Rural Champions can send their calves off to the sales yards with an ear tag that has a number and Gumboot Friday on it.

“And then when they go to the sales yards, they just let their stock agent know that the proceeds from that sale go to Gumboot Friday.

“It’s that simple,” Michelle Cogger from IAHF says.

The IAHF was founded by Mike King in 2016 to provide mental health support to New Zealand’s youth and young people.

“Our goal is to foster a culture where society takes responsibility and actively supports our kids, enabling them to feel comfortable and empowered to ask for help should they require it.

“We strive to amplify their voices, listen to their needs, and create an environment where their thoughts and opinions are truly valued.”

The IAHF is a small organisation that punches well above its weight in making a difference in the mental health space.

“We are a team of 16; we are not a big charity.

“But we have four ambassadors that travel the length and breadth of New Zealand, going to all the primary schools.”

Gumboot Friday was an initiative

started by IAHF in 2019 to give children free, timely access to counselling services.

The counselling platform is available for anyone aged five to 25, and counsellors are available online or in person.

Since 2019, Gumboot Friday has provided 91,000 free counselling sessions.

“The public wait time to see a specialist could be anything from six months, eight months or two years.

“So we devised Gumboot Friday so children could be supported in the interim while waiting in the public system.”

The initiative received \$24 million from the coalition government over four years in the recent budget, but with demand for the service growing, fundraising is still needed.

Gumboot Friday is held on the first Friday in November, with this year’s event falling on November 1.

While anyone can donate or fundraise for the organisation throughout the year, the annual event encourages people to put on their gumboots and have fun while raising funds.

“We would love to get more communities doing fun stuff for Gumboot Friday in November, and we’d love to hear about them.”

Previous Gumboot Fridays have seen schools and other groups and organisations holding gumboot throwing events and gumboot

painting competitions.

“The idea is to have fun with it and think outside the square.

“But the underlying message is that there is a counselling platform for young people to be able to talk to someone,” Cogger said.

All funds raised for Gumboot Friday go directly to providing children with counselling services.

The IAHF meets any administration costs.

To access counselling support or for more information, visit www.gumbootfriday.org.nz.



Mike King began Gumboot Friday in 2019 to meet the demand for counselling services for young people.

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Catching eye cancer in cows early

GEORGIA EVANS

When you're working at the back end of a dairy cow every day, it's easy to miss what's going on at the front-end, which means cases of eye cancer can go unnoticed until they are at a more advanced stage.

Senior large animal vet at Vet-South, Sunita McGrath, is keen for farmers to look out for this disease, officially known as squamous cell carcinoma, to improve treatment options and recovery.

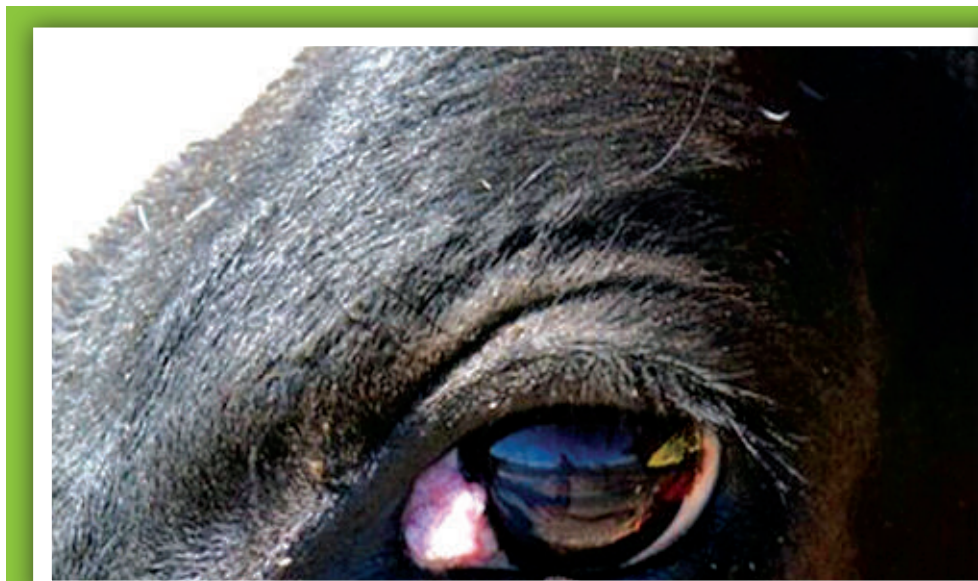
"Cancer eye is as awful as it sounds and, like most types of cancer, early detection leads to better outcomes, so it's good practice to check for it periodically," she said.

"If you see a tumour in your herd, get it checked! Even if you can just send your vet a photo, they can usually give an indication as to whether it needs to be examined more closely, or removed straight away, leading to a much better result for you and the cow."

Eye cancer can affect the eyelids, eyeball or 'third eyelid' (the eyelid that slides across the eye).

These tumours are said to develop in cows due to a mixture of reasons - environmental, viral and genetic factors can all play a role. It is most commonly seen in unpigmented tissue, such as animals with white faces, but it is not just localised to these. It's also related to ultraviolet radiation - not too dissimilar to skin cancer in humans.

According to Sunita, the initial stages of cancer eye are usually slow. It may just present as a tiny,



Above - Early stages of eye cancer can be more easily removed and are less likely to recur.



Right - Sometimes later stages of eye cancer can be removed, however, the chance of recurrence is high.

knobbly growth on the third eyelid, which can be hard for farmers to detect during normal day-to-day routines. Cows may also have a slight discharge from the eye, due to irritation.

Over time, the tumour will (usually) continue to grow in size, eventually becoming a large mass that becomes necrotic and foul smelling.

At this stage it is far more obvious that something is wrong. If the tumour spreads, it can also cause

the lymph nodes around the cow's head to swell up.

"Quite often, farmers may initially confuse cancer eye with pink eye and treat it themselves with a tube of eye ointment, which will offer no improvement. A vet visit is highly recommended to get onto the appropriate treatment early," Sunita said.

"Early surgical removal of the lesion provides the best outcome and the prognosis is a lot better when the tumour is small in size, as the

vet will be able to get good margins.

"Just a single cell left behind is enough to seed another tumour!"

Sometimes, the third eyelid may need to be removed, while other times, the whole eye might need to come out.

If the tumour has invaded local lymph nodes, or has migrated into tissues around the eye, then removal is not an option. In cases like these, nothing can be done and culling the cow for pet food is the only option left.

Transportation to the works is not permitted for bad cases. Only a very small eye cancer is allowed, if certified by a vet.

If the eye cancer has reached a late stage and is obviously very painful for the cow, a vet will not be able to write a works certificate, with the issue being compromised animal welfare.

Sunita's main advice is: "If in doubt, get it checked out!"

By Georgia Evans of VetSouth

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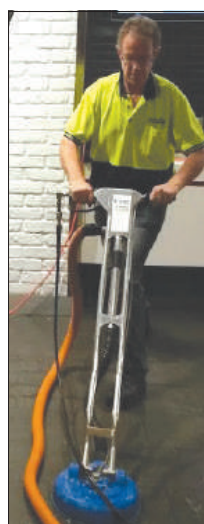
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