

# RURAL GUARDIAN

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wide 

CHRISTMAS EDITION 2024

TO EVERY FARM IN THE SOUTH ISLAND



'WHAT ARE PEOPLE EATING?'

P16



SEASON STYLE

P20-21

# COUNTRY CHRISTMAS CHEERS



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# Festive traditions

CLAIRE INKSON

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, and while many of us will lament exactly where the year has gone, there doesn't seem to be a storefront or television commercial that isn't flashing green and red to warn us that Santa is coming and we need to start decking the halls.

What I love most about Christmas is those little rituals we develop with family and friends.

Rituals and traditions are important; they bind generations and provide a thread of continuity.

In our little family, it's decorating the tree together while a Spotify Christmas playlist blasts from the speakers.

It's a new pair of pyjamas, popcorn, and a Christmas movie on Christmas Eve.

It's my Grandmother's favourite cookie and cream log dessert on Christmas day.

She may not be here anymore, but it's a lovely way to remember her.

None of our little rituals are expensive, but they give us an incredible amount of comfort and joy.

And really, farming, guided by the seasons and the welfare of livestock, is all about ritual and routine.

Celebration and the rhythms of agriculture have been woven together since the beginning of time.

By nature, I like routine and structure, but rituals are routines sprinkled with a little magic.

Anthropologist Bradd Shore describes routines as behaviour on automatic pilot.

But once our acts have crystallised into a fixed routine, Shore said, they may keep evolving, taking on symbolic significance

and adding layers of meaning to our actions – this is called “ritualisation”.

“We can think of rituals as routines with a significant symbolic load.”

Of course, they evolve and change as the family grows and changes, but these rituals become part of our family story.

As a nation, our festive rituals and traditions are evolving too.

While we may still see a fair amount of snow-themed Christmas décor, New Zealand is beginning to embrace its summer Christmas vibe.

Because who would want to swap building snowmen for a BBQ dinner in the sunshine followed by a quick post-dinner ocean dip?

That's showing through in our dinner choices, too.

Ham, a British tradition imported on the first four ships along with cricket and, unfortunately, gorse, has finally been trumped by lamb, according to a 2023 Retail New Zealand survey.

More than a third of respondents (34.29%) to the survey opted for the classic Kiwi favourite over ham (33.17%). The survey reported that beef was ranked in third place at 13.34%, and chicken (7.97%) prevailed over turkey (7.75%).

Of course, you do you, but whatever meat graces your Christmas table, make sure it comes from a Kiwi producer.

And there is no surprise that our dessert of choice is the Kiwi-created (you heard me Australia) pavlova, which came out on top by 70.13% of participants, with trifle a popular second choice.

Wherever or however you spend Christmas and whatever rituals you call your own, the team at Rural Guardian thanks all of our readers and advertisers for their support

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“We're aiming for 30% supplementation by the end of the year, and we're already at 15%,” Paddy said.

“It's a step in the right direction for both the environment and the business.”

And Paddy's team, known for their skill and camaraderie, is an essential part of ACL's success, and he understands the responsibility that comes with.

“We've got a great crew, and some of them have been here for years,” he said.

“It's always good for a laugh. It's a great place to work, and we all take pride in what we do.”

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# Ham it up Kiwi style this Christmas

CLAIRE INKSON

**N**Z Pork is encouraging Kiwis to ham it up this Christmas by choosing New Zealand-produced ham as their dinner table centrepiece – but how do you know what you’re buying is actually homegrown?

NZ Pork chief executive Brent Kleiss says finding an actual Kiwi ham can be challenging.

“For bacon or ham, it’s difficult because somewhere in the range of 90% of bacon and ham is imported.”

The challenge doesn’t end there.

NZ Pork advises consumers to carefully check the label on their ham, as some bacon and ham products may suggest they are New Zealand-grown but are actually from foreign shores.

“Current labelling allows prominent New Zealand branding on products made from imported pork, with the country of origin noted only in small print. This misleads shoppers who want to support local farmers by choosing New Zealand products.”

New labelling rules should have put a stop to the vague claims pork products are “made from locally and imported ingredients”.

Kleiss advises turning the package over and checking the product’s country of origin, which should be listed on the back.

“If it’s from New Zealand, it will say solely New Zealand.”

Still not sure? Kleiss advises looking for the official NZ Pork logo.

“Look out for the green 100%



Above – New Zealand pork has some of the world’s highest animal welfare standards. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Right – NZ Pork chief executive Brent Kleiss wants imported pork to be grown to the same high welfare standards as Kiwi producers.

New Zealand Pork stickers or the Pigcare sticker that guarantees the pork you buy has been grown under the pig welfare assurance programme we run here.”

If unsure, Kleiss advises asking your supermarket or butcher for clarification.

Overall, 62% of pork in our supermarkets is imported – a worrying statistic for the small group of 70-80 commercial pig farms on Kiwi soil that rely primarily on the

domestic market.

Only 3% of New Zealand pork is exported, mainly to the island nations of Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea.

One reason is our high animal welfare standards, which mean New Zealand pork producers can’t compete with less stringent overseas growers.

This creates an uneven playing field for farmers to export and

when competing with imported produce.

“We would like to see that if you are importing pork into New Zealand and selling it commercially, that pork has been raised under the same welfare standards as New Zealand.”

Kleiss said there are plenty of certification programmes in countries that export to New Zealand that overseas producers could adhere to.

“At the moment, the Government seems to apply a blanket rule that broadly recognises that if pork is from France or Germany, for example, the standards are on a level with ours, but in practice, that’s just not the case.

“We would like to know that if a New Zealand shopper is going into a supermarket and sees two packs of bacon sitting next to each other on the shelf, the New Zealand one is not disadvantaged by the fact that the imported stuff is produced under cheaper and less stringent standards.”

Kleiss said that NZ Pork wants imports to continue, but with more transparent labelling and a fair marketplace.

“We are realistic that people need options in terms of affordability, and also, New Zealand wouldn’t be able to keep up with demand for particular cuts.”

Kleiss recommends searching the NZ Pork website for the New Zealand pork awards to find the best producers of New Zealand ham if you are looking for something extra special for Christmas dinner.

However, local butchers should also have quality, locally grown ham in-store.

“We are encouraging people to buy ham from New Zealand, which benefits everybody, and for them, from a taste point of view, it’s a great way to celebrate Christmas in a real Kiwi way.”



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# Festive fun hits the farm fields

CLAIRE INKSON

Christmas is going full country in Mid Canterbury as The Family Farming Charitable Trust's (FFCT) second annual Christmas in the Paddock competition takes festive fun to the fields.

"It's all a bit of fun, raising morale, and spreading the cheer," event organiser and FFCT volunteer Jane Hanson says.

"We want people to be able to drive around Mid Canterbury and check out the displays, see our countryside and experience a bit of Christmas spirit."

The FFCT is a farmer-led organisation that runs events to encourage connection and get people off-farm.

This competition, though, encourages farmers to get creative and design rural-themed paddock Christmas displays.

Hamish and Natasha Moore of Fairton Farms north of Ashburton won last year's competition for their Three Little Pigs display with bales.

"Their display was amazing; it was completely out the gate."

Those who want to enter this year's competition can submit a photo via the Farming Families Facebook page.

Entries close on December 20.

The lucky winner will receive a smoko shout for their farm and two tickets to the FFCT Summer Session event on April 5.

"It's a light-hearted way to do something positive after a challenging year," Hanson said.



LEFT - Hamish and Natasha Moore won last year's competition with their Three Little Pigs display. OTHER PHOTOS - Previous entries have been cleverly manufactured with tyres, hay bales and pallets. PHOTOS SUPPLIED



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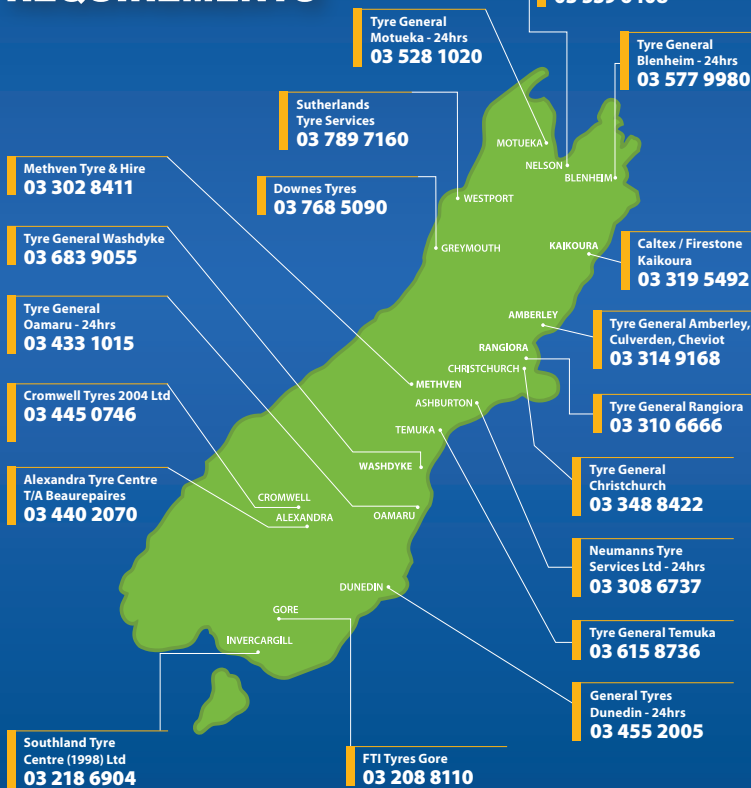
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# Gobbling up Kiwi Christmas traditions



CLAIRE INKSON

Roast lamb, baked ham or roast chicken are Kiwi family Christmas lunch staples – but turkey is gaining in popularity as New Zealanders explore new traditions.

Canter Valley poultry farm owner Lachlan Dick is determined to make turkey a staple on Kiwi tables – and not just during the festive season.

But while many of us are well versed in roasting a chicken, cooking perfect turkey can seem daunting.

The perfect roast turkey is all about keeping it moist, Dick says.

“One of the common

faults people have is that their turkey dries out. But brining turkey is a bulletproof way of ensuring it doesn’t dry out.”

Canter Valley Farm has been operating in North Canterbury since 1987. It produces duck, quail, and turkey for the domestic and overseas export markets.

Dick, originally from a sheep and beef background, purchased Canter Valley in 2002.

The farm is one of two leading turkey producers in the country, raising around 12,000 turkeys at one time.

The farm processes around 40,000 turkeys annually, contributing to around 250,000 turkeys farmed in New Zealand each year.

British United Turkeys are the breed of choice.

Far left – Canter Valley Farm owner Lachlan Dick would like to see turkey a kiwi staple all year around.

PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

Left – The farm processes around 40,000 turkeys annually.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

The large, white birds can consistently produce up to 35% breast meat.

New Zealand does not import fresh or frozen turkey, so all turkey on supermarket shelves was raised here to high animal welfare standards.

Canter Valley Farm is certified by Free Range Egg and Poultry New Zealand (FREPNZ).

Turkeys are free-range, only moving into sheds at night time.

“They have a lot of room in the sheds, we are very low density compared to a chicken farm.

“Low density is the key thing. And they have food and water ad lib all of the time, and good ventilation.”

The turkeys are fed a grain formula to supplement their natural diet and are not given any hormones or steroids.

Like many farming operations, Canter Valley faces challenges in the current economic climate.

Input costs are high, and with 25 staff, wages are a significant expense. “Wages have probably gone up around 18 per cent in three years, and to try and pass on those costs isn’t easy.”

Canter Valley has explored ways to diversify its product offerings.

Pet Food was a big part of Canter Valleys business until the global downturn, Dick said.

“We were getting quite good

money for our frames from big pet food manufacturers, but that dried up.”

To re-enter the market and gain more control, Canter Valley is developing its own range of canned pet food.

Production trials are being completed now to ensure the product meets nutritional criteria.

“We are heading down the track of making our food, branded as Local – real New Zealand farm food for your mate.”

It’s also a practical way to deal with good protein that would otherwise be wasted.

“You want to get as much from your bird as you can. I come from a farming background, where your dags are your profit.”

New products are being added to entice people to try turkey, including the farm’s new steak and diced options.

The farm is also working on growing its direct-to-consumer customer base.

People can purchase directly from the Canter Valley website or from the factory door.

“We are encouraging people to come to our website and we can supply them by courier.”

It’s no surprise what’s on the menu at the Dick household this Christmas.

“Probably a cranberry-stuffed turkey roast and some duck.”

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# Surround yourself with positivity

## 1 What did your journey into farming look like?

I grew up on a 30-hectare dairy farm in West Limerick, Ireland, where my brother and dad still milk 54 cows.

Being a family farm there was a lot of exposure to farm life while growing up. Farming was more fun than school so I guess it all started from there.

## 2 Tell us a little bit about your farming operation.

We currently sharemilk 500 cows in Methven at about 300m on 129 effective hectares for David and Sonia Molloy.

Amongst other interests, we also look after seven properties for Dairy Holdings in Mid Canterbury.

## 3 What challenges have you faced in your farming business, and how have you tackled those challenges?

From snow to earthquakes, commodity lows to interest rate highs and all other challenges that we all face as farmers, the thing that gets us through is continuing to do the basics of farming right and commu-

**Where we ask a farmer five quick questions about farming, and what agriculture means to them. Today we talk to 2024 Zimmatic Trailblazer Irrigation Award winner and Mid Canterbury dairy farmer Eugene Cronin.**

nicating with our fellow farmers.

When we are challenged in our business, we go to those who have had long and successful careers. This can be as simple as a chat over a cup of tea.

## 4 What has been a major highlight for you in your farming journey?

It never ceases to amaze me how much effort our families and farm teams put in when there is a challenge.

From Covid to weather events or being a team member down - the agriculture industry is resilient beyond doubt.

## 5 What advice would you have for the next generation of farmers?

Surround yourself with positive people - it is contagious. Lean on what you are good at, learn more on what you are not.



Eugene Cronin, with wife Sarah, at the 2024 Zimmatic Trailblazer Irrigation Awards. PHOTO SUPPLIED

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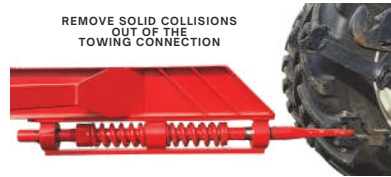
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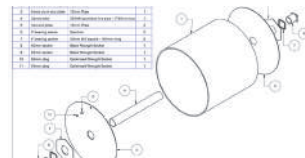


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# Festive angst? You're in control

KATHRYN WRIGHT

Sometimes we get chucked together at Christmastime with relatives that we would probably not choose to have in our lives – if there was a choice. Sometimes it's unavoidable. How do we get through?

Conflict with family members is really common but can make for a very anxious time at Christmas and other family gatherings.

There are a few ways you can reframe how you think about anticipating this time of year that can be really helpful, as can the introduction of boundaries.

I will introduce a few ideas in this article, however, you must take what is helpful for you and your own situation, whether that be one or all of these ideas.

Can you limit your time with the person/people? Stay for fewer nights or even just a day. Go for a long walk after mealtime (when the conversation can start to diverge). Good for the digestion as well.

Focus on what IS going well – delicious food, that one auntie you can have a good laugh with, good weather, having a day off work.

Although it is tempting, drinking too much will reduce your capacity to reason with yourself and others, and make it more likely that you'll say something you regret.

If conflict is common in family conversations, practise saying "can we agree to disagree?" as it's not



Christmas can be stressful or special – and you have some control over which, says registered counsellor Kathryn Wright.

always about changing someone's mind on a topic.

What behaviour will you not tolerate?

You cannot control other people, but you can decide to remove yourself from a situation if your boundaries are violated.

If you have a particularly nasty relative – I know that it's not easy – but try and muster up some empathy for them, they are likely that

way for a reason, and being nasty, contentious, or cantankerous has become the only way they know how to deal with their own life.

It has likely become a protective mechanism for them. I am not suggesting that you be ok with the way they are but understand and accept that they are this way and limit your contact with them.

No matter what happens this Christmas, you can ALWAYS

choose your own reactions to a situation – what you say, who or what you focus on, how much you eat or how much alcohol you drink.

You have full control over how you treat yourself and others – what do you want to stand for in the face of massive challenges that you may have very little control over?

How do you want to be able to

look back at this Christmas and say how you handled it?

And a word here for those of you working overtime on-farm to "catch up" after some very challenging weather.

I know that the temptation to work through Christmas to try and complete tasks is very tempting.

You may even want to do this because you are "not a Christmas person".

If you have children or young people in your family, this is about them.

They will notice that you are not there on Christmas Day. It means a lot to them for you to be there, whether you are a parent, grandparent, aunty, uncle, etc.

If not for you, be present for them.

Thinking about your boundaries prior to Christmas Day will be helpful in allowing you to be clear about what you will and will not tolerate, but also in your general life.

Always remember that boundaries are about YOU and what you will accept – or not. They are not about controlling or changing another person.

Christmas is a very short time that can be very stressful or very special. Sometimes both!

Either way, you do have control over how it might look for you.

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

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# Hub to focus on practical skills

CLAIRE INKSON

Mount Hutt College students will have access to practical, hands-on agricultural and trade courses as the school Ōpuke Innovation Hub begins its phased roll-out next year.

“It’s been a long process and it’s a big project we are undertaking, but we are looking at reshaping what agriculture and trades-based learning looks like for our students,” Mount Hutt College vocational pathways co-ordinator Amy Honeywell said.

At present, many students have to travel to Timaru or Christchurch for some courses.

“Kids had to get to school at 6 o’clock, get on a bus for an hour, do two hours on the tools, miss out on classroom lessons and have to catch up – all for two hours of learning.”

The hub will enable students to study agriculture and trade courses at the college, with industry experts assisting in delivering the classes.

“We want the hub to be on-site so they can do double periods and then return to normal classes.”



Mount Hutt College vocational pathways co-ordinator Amy Honeywell, with principal Jack Saxon, says the innovation hub will reshape what agriculture and trades-based learning looks like for students.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

The project involves developing a practical curriculum that would be taught in a new dedicated hub of purpose-built classrooms and sheds. The broader community could also use these for night classes and workshops.

Honeywell said the project is for

the whole community, not just the college.

“Over time, we hope to offer night courses or block courses for industry delivered through both practical and online modules.

“Businesses can send their workers to learn certain micro-cre-

dentials or develop their skills without travelling further away.”

The hub would be a community asset that could be utilised by the Methven Summer School and could serve as an additional Civil Defence Centre for the Methven community.

“We are working alongside the community; it’s a partnership.”

Consultation with the community began in 2021, with over 1000 participants, which Honeywell said highlighted the need for the hub.

“The key theme raised by the community is the need for practical, hands-on and diverse experiences for students with community and industry involvement.”

Two community consultation meetings followed, and three working groups focusing on agriculture, trade and property and infrastructure were formed.

“The community want students to develop skills for life and real-world transferable skills.”

The curriculum will be delivered in phases, with trades starting in term one in 2025 and agriculture the following year.

The first project for trade students will involve cutting a shipping container and turning it

into a smart container, which will be gifted to a not-for-profit charity.

The first container will be given to Bike Methven.

“It will be a smart container, built for what they need, which will be a kind of racing hub.

“It might have innovative features like solar power, water catchment, and a pull-out barbecue.

“It’s a real projects kids will be involved in – hands-on learning involving multi-disciplines.”

Honeywell said the agriculture curriculum would include innovation such as drone technology and precision agriculture.

“We are looking at reshaping the whole agricultural area and making sure it’s future-focused and sustainable to make an impact for the future.”

Graduates from the innovation hub will receive a diploma and NZQA credits.

The college will be sourcing funding to bring the hub to completion.

“We are applying for grants and looking for support from industry and whoever is prepared to help us because none of this will be funded through the Ministry of Education,” Honeywell said.

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# Designing your Carbon Project with Verity NZ

**Y**ou may be thinking about areas of your farm that you would like to enter in the Voluntary Carbon Market (VCM). How do you get from 'being interested' to receiving your first verified carbon credit payment from your land? What do all these terms mean that you've been hearing lately over the paddock fence?

## What is a Carbon Credit and the Types of Projects

One carbon credit represents a reduction, avoidance or removal of one metric tonne of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) or its carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). After certification by a government or independent certification body, credits can be traded between entities. Based on their net emissions impact, there are three types of projects that can generate carbon credits. Carbon avoidance projects are where an action prevents a carbon-emitting activity from happening (for example avoiding deforestation). Carbon reduction projects are where an action decreases the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, compared to prior practices (for example replacing coal fired power with renewable energy). Carbon removal projects are where an action removes CO<sub>2</sub>e from the atmosphere and locks it away for decades, centuries, or millennia (for example tree planting).

For most farmers, carbon removal related credits are the most applicable and are sought after by the carbon credit buyers in different markets.

## Carbon Pools

There are a variety of ways a carbon removal project can be set up, depending on what features of your farm are sequestering or emitting carbon. In the New Zealand farming setting, carbon is sequestered by grassland, soil, trees & shrubs (either through the above ground or the below ground biomass) and leaf litter. Conversely, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are emitted from farms through pathways like livestock grazing, effluent, fertiliser and lime spreading, vehicle emissions, burning, and forest harvesting.

## It's Not Just Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Other farming greenhouse gases like methane and nitrous oxide can be compared to carbon dioxide in terms of their Global Warming Potential (GWP). For example, methane has 25 times the GWP of carbon dioxide, meaning 1kg of methane released into the atmosphere traps the same amount of heat in the atmosphere as 25kg of carbon dioxide does. These other greenhouse gas emissions reductions can be accounted for as carbon dioxide equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e) in your carbon project. Any emissions reductions you make must be able to be scientifically measured and any changes will be monitored throughout the life of the project.

## Choosing Your Carbon Project Areas

Unlike the requirements for entering the NZ ETS, there are different eligibility criteria for voluntary carbon projects. Land areas can be big or small. Provided you own the land, and can demonstrate the criteria discussed below, the land is likely to be eligible.

## Biodiversity and Community Benefits

You might have areas on your farm that are supporting rare and threatened native species or are exemplary for the type of landscape around you. These are great areas to consider entering in the carbon project. Verity NZ will assess whether you have any High Conservation Values (HCVs)



present on your land or in the surrounding area, as well as look to see if your project will benefit biodiversity in your catchment or have other benefits to your community like creating new jobs and business opportunities.

Verity NZ are focused on "community/climate change/conservation and biodiversity" projects, rather than exotic "mono-culture" forestry plantations.

## Additionality

To generate and claim credits, there are certain rules. One of them is the "additionality rule". You must be doing something extra to sequester or reduce emissions than what you're already doing on that land right now. Improved land management practices, like retiring marginal land, are the key to demonstrating additionality. These new initiatives must not be required by NZ law or your local council regulations. For example, if your regional council already requires farmers to fence off riparian margins, the fencing and land retirement in those areas would not be eligible for carbon credits. So, ask yourself, are the land use changes you are proposing things that are already required under law, or are they 'above and beyond' the requirements? Other rules you need to be compliant with are described below.

## Reducing Leakage

Leakage means displacing your emissions activities somewhere else. It's important to make sure that you're not just offsetting the gains you're making in the project area by moving them to another area of your farm or business. An example is if you fence off an area of steep hill country that is usually grazed by two hundred R2 cattle, but you then increase your stocking rate on the flats by two hundred R2s. To reduce leakage, the carbon footprint of those animals across your whole farm area would need to be reduced, whether by a stocking rate reduction or some other efficiency measure. Another example of leakage is if you were planning on planting a large area, but you had to cut down a lot of trees or scrub to create access tracks or clear the

area for planting. In this case, the project initiation would be causing more carbon dioxide to be lost to the atmosphere than if there was no project.

## Permanence

The change in land management for your voluntary carbon project must last for 20 years or more, and the typical project length is 60 years. This is a requirement of most international registration bodies. This means that you couldn't plant a forest and claim the credits off the trees as they grow, then harvest them. You must plan for the life of the project and think about how the project permanence will affect your current farm, your family and future generations, and potentially new owners in the future. You must be committed for the long haul, but the credits are also going to be coming in for the life of the project.

## Project Design

Talk to Verity NZ about our funding model, where we pay for all the up-front implementation costs (like planting, seeding or fencing) so that you are not out-of-pocket to get the project off the ground.

## Registration

Verity NZ will help you decide and refine where to have your carbon project on your farm, what sort of project it will be (reduction, removal or avoidance), and how you will be demonstrating additionality and reducing leakage. Verity NZ will then register the project with an international or a domestic validating body (depending on the project eligibility and methodology used). Our experienced and qualified staff will create the required project documentation for registration.

## Verification and Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)

Verity NZ then arranges for an independent third-party verifier (VVB) to come to your farm to check that what the project proposes is feasible and quantifiable. This is an important step in the process, because once an independent verifier has approved the project application submitted by Verity NZ, your project can qualify for Verified Carbon Unit (VCU) credits. One VCU

represents a reduction or removal of one tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent achieved by your project. All VCUs adhere to several quality assurance principles to ensure that they represent greenhouse gas emission reductions or removals that are real, measurable, additional, permanent, independently verified, conservatively estimated, uniquely numbered, and transparently listed. Consequently, these credits have a premium linked to them and are more attractive in the carbon market for investors.

## Baselining

The project commencement date is what we call the "baseline". At this point, Verity NZ will carry out a thorough assessment of your farm. Depending on the type of carbon project, baselining may include taking soil samples, vegetation assessments through sample plots, and collecting LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) imagery of your farm using our specialised drone equipment. All this information is used to assess existing ground cover, topography, above ground biomass and other parameters that are used to calculate the initial carbon pools in your project area. The baseline data is then recorded in the project registry and your carbon credits will be calculated based on the sequestration/emissions changes from that point.

## Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV)

A registered project requires annual monitoring and reporting by Verity NZ staff. Then every two to three years, an independent verification step occurs through the VVB. This is where the measurements taken during baselining are repeated to calculate the difference in carbon pools over time. Projects can be registered from 20 to 60 plus years, so regular monitoring is an important ongoing part of the process. A report is generated after each monitoring event so that the changes in carbon pools are documented and available for the validators (VVB), registries and landowner to see. This forms the basis of your eligibility for carbon credits over that period.

## Payment

Your first payment for carbon credits will come approximately two years after your project has been independently verified and the baselining has been completed. During initial discussions, Verity NZ will be upfront and open about our terms with you so you understand how the costs/benefits from our structure will work.

## Scale

Carbon projects can be big or small. They can be areas on just one farm or on many farms that share the same project characteristics which are managed together (a bundled project). Overseas, there are verified voluntary carbon projects that are capturing hundreds of thousands of hectares of restored grasslands, wetlands and native bush. There are even verified projects in Africa that are reducing deforestation activities across whole countries. Verity NZ can manage projects of any scale.

## Talk to Us

The limit is your imagination when you start a "conservation-for-profit" carbon project managed by Verity NZ. Get in touch with Duncan Ensor today for further information.

**Written by Maria Captein, Field Technician for Verity NZ based in Methven.**

# Breaking the 'fix-it' mindset

CLAIRE INKSON

Fixing people's problems instead of helping them find solutions is a classic leadership mistake.

That was one of the key takeaways Mid Canterbury photographer, farmer and Hekeao Hinds Hill Country Catchment Group member Anna Munro learned at a recent Ignite Leadership Course.

"As farmers, we tend to want to fix things.

"When we see a problem, we fix it.

"But if you deal with people and fix all their issues, it can be disempowering for them.

"It doesn't allow them to find their own answers," Munro said.

Rural Coach partner and coach Sarah Barr facilitated the two-day course in Ashburton in October. Four more courses are planned for Mid Canterbury in 2025.

The course aims to foster leadership, communication, and coaching skills.

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective has funded 12 people to date to attend the course, which includes follow-up one-on-one sessions.

Munro said the course focused on having conversations with open questions to allow the other person to dig deeper and find their own answers.

"It's a coaching model of questioning."

"It's a lot of empowerment and effective communication, which I

found valuable for my personal life as well."

The course is not just aimed at those seeking board or directorship positions; it can also give people the skills to communicate effectively with staff, colleagues, and clients in everyday rural settings like farms and agricultural organisations.

Munro said that being in a "fix-it" mindset can lead to burnout as people tend to double up on everyone else's problems as well as their own.

"You aren't helping anyone if you come away from a conversation and have ten things on your to-do list from their problems."

Munro said the model can also be turned around and used on yourself, allowing you to move from focusing on mistakes to seeing opportunities.

"It's about looking for options rather than dwelling on mistakes and beating yourself up."

Munro said her communication style has improved her personal and professional relationships, although changing old habits can take time.

"It's made me want to go away and work on my communication, but some of it's ingrained, and it's hard to change things.

"It doesn't happen overnight.

Coach Sarah Barr says the course teaches people to be aware of how they operate themselves and the impact of how they operate with others.

"How we operate could limit the

opportunity for others to grow beside us."

Barr said people often found the benefits of the course to have a flow-on effect on personal relationships.

"We often get people say, I came here to get more of my staff, but this is really useful for dealing with my kids and my wife."

Part of the program focuses on giving effective feedback that is both positive and corrective.

Barr said that saying "well done" every day at knockoff time becomes meaningless.

"If you say that every day, it's not appreciated.

"If you want your feedback to be meaningful, give them some information.

"Give them the details, and then they will know what you value."

Barr said the aim of the course is for people to listen more and talk less and to understand that everyone approaches situations differently.

"It doesn't mean their way is wrong; it's different from yours.

"It's about being more focused on the outcomes desired and engaging your family or team so they feel ownership over the results on the farm.

"Whatever the situation, when people feel ownership, they are far more engaged in delivering."

The next Ignite Course is scheduled in Ashburton for March 26 & 27.



Rural Coach partner and coach Sarah Barr says that when staff feel ownership, they are more likely to deliver. PHOTO SUPPLIED

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# Muster time on Lake Heron Station

ANNA MUNRO

**M**t Somers photographer, farmer and mum Anna Munro and her son Charlie went along to capture the action of the Lake Heron Station spring muster.

Hardy merino wethers from Lake Heron Station spend their winter up the Rakaia, and spring sees them mustered back to the station.

The muster, on November 12 and 13, involved crossing the sheep over branches of the Rakaia - Jagged Stream and Washbourne Creek.

This year's muster was later than usual due to the Labour weekend snowfall and recent heavy rain in the headwaters, causing river levels to run high.

The mustering team consisted of station owner Philip Todhunter, stock manager Clayton Smith, shepherds Archie Moore and Noah McLean, Robbie Harper, Nina Erasmus, Sarah Hawkins, Dylan Burgess and myself.

Plus a bunch of dogs absolutely fizzing!

We set out from the station early on the Tuesday for an honest climb up Cascade Hill.

She's a right old puff, but the views make it all worthwhile.

The first rays of morning sun were magic as they appeared over Glenfalloch, bathing the climbing shepherds in hazy golden light.

Echoes rang out across the tussock faces with the first bark up of the day, clearing any wethers from the hillside.

Despite a very tough season in



the high country, the sheep looked to have wintered well.

We continued our slog up Cascade Hill with regular bark-ups, watching the ribbons of Lake Stream grow smaller below.

At the top the boys headed off to muster the basin above the Thompsons Hut, and I got the cruisy beat spotting sheep from the peak.

There were some wily old merinos grazing in a few tricky spots, but Clayton managed to nab them

with some clever dog work.

My sister Nina and Philip cleared the wether paddock and Prospect Hill, no mean feat for Nina at five months pregnant! What a machine.

Over the afternoon the shepherds mustered wethers from their own beats, communicating over radio and sending them drifting down the ridges.

Little handfuls of sheep became larger mobs and eventually the merinos were mustered across the

wether paddock and through the final gate into Tarndale.

The following morning saw us dropped in various spots up the Rakaia River by Scott Rodgers from Heli Rural.

I took my son, Charlie, on the second day which was quite the adventure for a one-year-old.

We were dropped at the Washbourne Hut, but merinos travel as far up the river as the Reischek Hut.

The scenery up the Rakaia is

truly breathtaking, and with Charlie chirping away in the backpack there was nowhere I'd have rather been.

We found pockets of sheep here and there and set them drifting down the Rakaia River flats.

A few wethers tried to do the dirty, holing up in thick patches of matagouri to avoid being mustered, and Archie and Clayton spent a decent stint crawling through scrub to retrieve them.

There was a fair bit of water in

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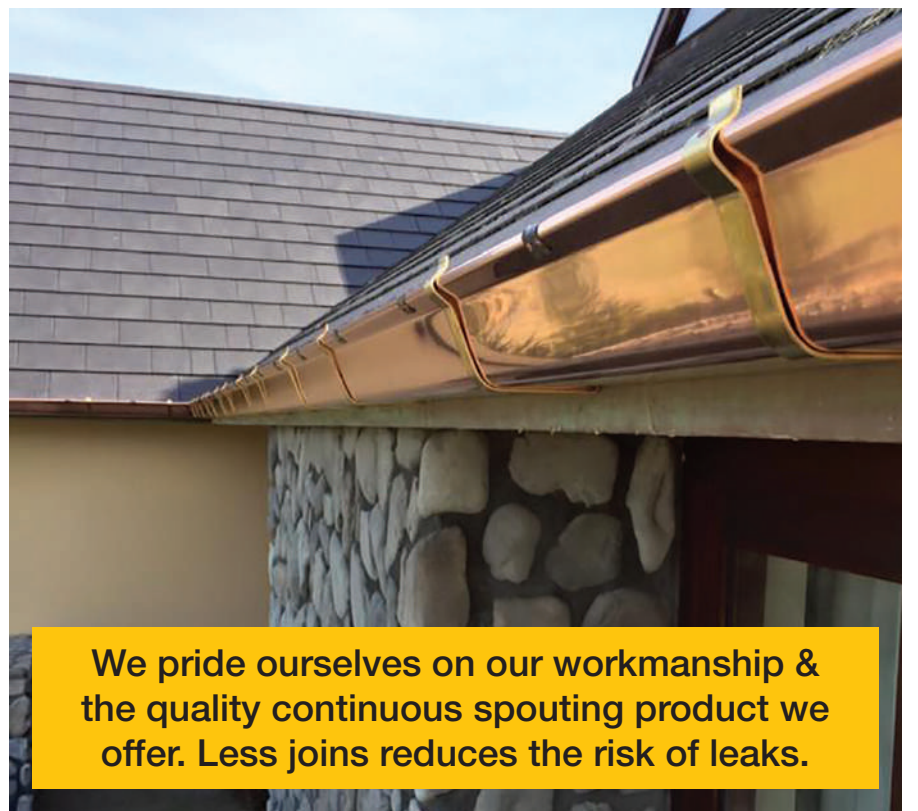
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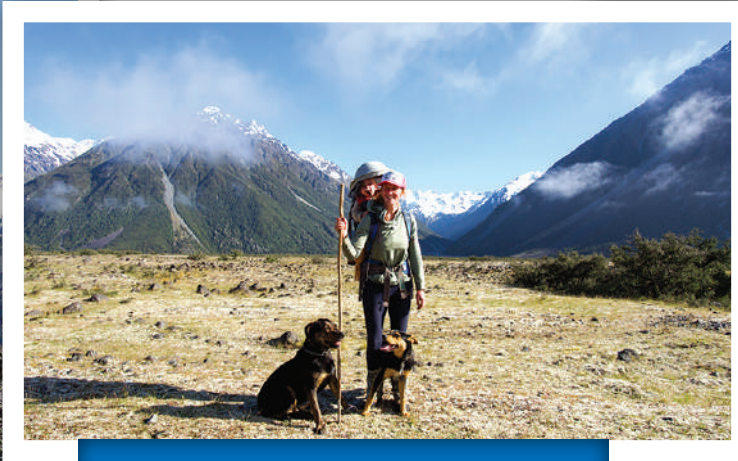
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Far left (P12) – Despite a tough winter, the wethers looked pretty good and crossed the rivers well, despite the high water levels.

Left – Anna Munro's sister Nina Erasmus takes in the views up the Rakaia with her dogs Mildred and Doris.

Above – Anna takes one-year-old son Charlie with her on the second day of the muster and they got to enjoy a chopper ride. Anna said she could barely walk the next day, but it was worth it.

Below – The helicopter safety briefing with Scott Rodgers and Simon Bertenshaw from Helirural.

PHOTOS ANNA MUNRO

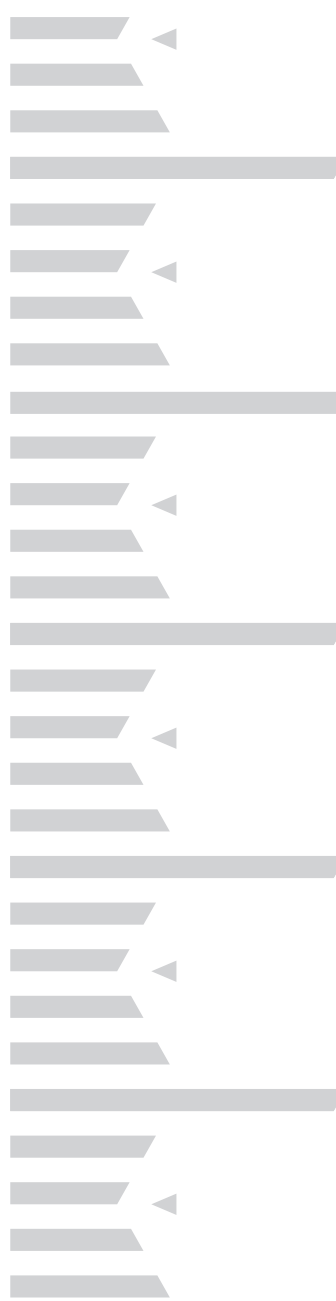


Above – Lake Heron shepherd Noah McLean stops for a breather on the climb up Cascade Hill.  
PHOTO ANNA MUNRO

the rivers but the merinos crossed well with some keen encouragement from the huntaways.

Eventually we crossed Washbourne Creek and met up with the mustering crew lower down the river, sending the sheep zig-zagging up the final face.

Sheep and shepherds covered 20-30km over the day, the nor'wester whipping up in the afternoon in tune with a classic spring day in the high country.



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# Taking the road less travelled

CLAIRE INKSON

Get A Grip Training Solutions managing director Adrian Bowen says complacency and distractions are two of the biggest dangers to farm vehicle safety.

"Farmers are on their farms all the time, so the main thing is to be aware of what is different today than yesterday.

"It could be that there has been rain, the track is more slippery.

"So it's about always being mindful and never getting to the point of thinking 'she'll be right'."

Bowen said disaster can strike when people focus on the task at hand rather than driving their vehicle.

"Accidents can happen because they are focusing on their job, mustering sheep, and they are not aware of what's happening on the terrain around them at the time."

Bowen teaches driver skills for heavy vehicles and 4WDs on off-road terrain to individuals and corporate groups.

Endorsed by the New Zealand Transport Authority and Primary Industry Training Organisation, Bowen's clients include Growing Future Farmers, Young Farmers, government agencies and agri-businesses.

Bad driving habits can be passed down generations and Bowen believes all farmers and rural professionals whose jobs involve off-road terrain in



Get A Grip Training Solutions managing director Adrian Bowen believes all farmers and rural professionals should have off-road vehicle training. PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

tractors, side-by-sides, ATVs, and utes should undergo specialist training.

"Who taught them? Probably their dad or grandad, and who is to say they had the best practices?"

Bowen's students start with the basics and by the end of the day, they can safely drive down 40-50 degree slopes.

He utilises the Parkley 4WD

training track just out of Amberley in North Canterbury.

The track, owned by rural motoring journalist and 4WD enthusiast Ken Strugnell, was purpose-built as an all-weather training course covering around 70 acres.

The facility includes a conference room where Bowen can take students through health and safety and theory before they get

out in their vehicles.

"Our goal is to build up their skills and get them to a point where they can be competent to operate the vehicle.

"The vehicle will outdo what they believe it could do."

It often comes down to less is more when it comes to throttle.

"We have a saying: 'If you have traction, you have control, and as slow as necessary but as fast as

possible."

Bowen said that when you are going fast, things can go wrong fast.

"If you are taking your time, you can fix it and back off something."

More information from organisations like Work Safe following on-farm accidents and fatalities would mean trainers like Bowen could tailor their training around

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# d ... carefully



Above – The Parkley four wheel drive track, owned by rural motoring journalist and four-wheel drive enthusiast Ken Strugnell, was purpose-built as an all-weather training course covering around 70 acres.  
Below – Adrian Bowen teaches driver skills for heavy vehicles and four-wheel drives on off-road terrain to individuals and corporate groups.

real-life scenarios, hopefully creating better outcomes.

“From the middle of November to December last year, we had four vehicle fatalities on farms, but we didn’t find out enough about those incidents.

“We don’t know if they were similar or poles apart.

“That information is great for us trainers because we can implement that knowledge into our courses.

“More people will perish without that knowledge.”

Despite the knowledge gaps around on-farm accidents, Bowen supports crush protection devices on four-wheelers, saying, “Every farm should have them on their bikes.” However, side-by-sides are safe by default, with built-in crush protection – provided they are used correctly.

“They have doors and nets, but the nets are often not engaged because farmers need to get in and out of the vehicle constantly, which can be a pain when mustering.

“But they are there for a reason.”

Bowen said nets can stay off if the vehicle is on flat ground and speed is kept to a minimum.

“As soon as you are moving with a bit more speed, the nets need to go back on.”

When it comes to seatbelts on side-by-sides, Bowen recommends wearing them, even if it seems inconvenient, saying they are also there for a reason.

As for helmets – Bowen’s message is clear.

“Helmets definitely, all of the time.

“You’ve only got one brain.”



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# Crunch time for vege growers

CLAIRE INKSON

Kiwis aren't getting their five-plus servings of veges a day, but that's no surprise to longstanding North Canterbury vegetable grower Cam Booker.

"All the growers around the country are asking the same question - 'What are people eating?'"

"Because it's not fruit and vegetables."

The 2023/24 New Zealand health survey, conducted by the Ministry of Health and published recently, showed that only 8.2% of children aged 2-14 years ate the recommended 2-5.5 servings per day.

Adults didn't fare much better. Only one in 11 adults (9.1%) ate the recommended amount of vegetables (five to six servings, depending on age and gender).

Booker, who sells produce directly to consumers via farmer's markets, said that with vegetable sales down, low prices and high input costs, times are particularly tough for growers.

"It's getting tougher and tougher, with the costs of all the inputs and interest rates, and farmer's markets are not what they were."

Booker said it wasn't just small growers that were suffering. Bigger operations were also struggling.

"We want people to eat vegetables wherever they get them from because all growers are in the same boat and there are next to no small growers left."

Booker believes consumer buying habits changed after Covid and weather events affected supply,



Cam Booker is thinking outside the square and plans to create a multi-media platform teaching Kiwis how to grow vegetables in their own back yard. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

pushing prices up.

"There weren't many vegetables around, so they were expensive, and people got out of the habit of eating them."

"But this year, prices have been so low, not even the bigger growers would be making anything."

Booker said it comes down to simple supply and demand.

"When they are in short supply, they are expensive, and when there are heaps around, they are cheap."

While vegetables are affordable at the moment, a recent report by the NZ Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) commissioned by Horticulture New Zealand (HortNZ) in

October warns fresh vegetable prices could increase dramatically if the Government doesn't move quickly to provide a clear and workable regulatory pathway for vegetable production.

The report said broccoli could go as high as \$27 a kilo, or about \$9 a head, if vegetable production is cut by 20% due to proposed regulations aimed at reducing nitrogen run-off.

It suggests that a 20% reduction in supply could raise vegetable prices by at least 20%, potentially doubling them.

NZIER principal economist Chris Nixon says the report shows how the National Policy Statement

for Freshwater (NPS-FM) is being interpreted and translated into freshwater regulations by councils, which could severely impact vegetable production and lead to sharp price increases for consumers.

Michelle Sands, HortNZ's general manager of strategy and policy, is calling for the Government to prioritise commercial vegetable growing to ensure a steady, affordable vegetable supply.

Sands said that 80% of vegetables grown in New Zealand are sold for domestic consumption and that we cannot import enough vegetables to meet New Zealanders' requirements.

"For New Zealanders to have a secure supply of healthy and reasonably priced vegetables, we need fit-for-purpose regulation."

HortNZ says that the current freshwater regulations and regional council rules are one-size-fits-all and do not reflect the different conditions and requirements of vegetable growing.

It is seeking new national direction to recognise vegetable production as a matter of national importance and to make it a permitted activity, provided growers meet Freshwater Farm Plan requirements, which include reducing the impact of nitrogen leaching and sediment discharges.

"Healthy water and access to healthy vegetables are both nationally important, and we think achieving them both should be made a priority for New Zealanders," Sands said.

She said most growers are already

meeting environmental standards through industry certifications and called for a balanced and consistent approach to improving water quality.

"It is essential to take a nationally consistent approach because while only some areas have the specific combination of soil, climate and resources that vegetables need to grow, these areas supply the whole country."

While none of this is good news for the bank balances of Kiwi shoppers and growers alike, the Bookers are thinking outside the square to make ends meet and get more veges on New Zealand plates.

Booker plans to create a platform to give people the skills and knowledge to grow their own vegetables.

"There has been a massive growth in people growing their own vegetables in their home garden, but often they are forging head blindly, and not knowing what they are doing."

Booker is planning a website and YouTube channel where subscribers can get tips on when to plant, where to source plants and seeds, and the best varieties for growing tasty veges in abundance.

"Unfortunately, you can go to a garden centre or a nursery and buy plants that are not suitable for the season, and you are completely wasting your money."

"Or, you plant your garden, and everything starts coming ready when you are away at Christmas or New Year."

"Gardens need quite a lot of planning."

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# Lifestyle

RURAL GUARDIAN | CHRISTMAS 2024



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## Benefits of a good Multi-Supplement Part 1

A good multi supplement is one of the best health investments you can make. This will ensure your body has the nutrients needed to stay healthy. Unfortunately most are formulated as a 1 a day dose. This means that many of the bulkier compounds are either omitted or included in meaningless amounts. As an experienced formulator I know it is impossible to provide sufficient nutrients to fit in a one a day product.

A good multi should have all the important major and trace elements. I have real concern about low levels of critical minerals such as selenium, zinc, copper and manganese as these are needed to build our antioxidant defence systems. Many diseases are linked to low levels of trace minerals.

Your multi should have a full B vitamin complex in particular B6, folic acid and B12 as they combine to reduce homocysteine which is a risk factor for heart disease and some forms of dementia. It should have meaningful



levels of vitamin D for immunity.

The regulations governing vitamin D in supplements are archaic so we should add extra Vitamin D in winter. Vitamin E is the most important fat soluble antioxidant. This should be in the natural d-alpha tocopherol form not the less effective synthetic dl-alpha tocopherol.

Finally it should contain the most potent antioxidants especially grape seed extract. I know of only a few products that contain these potent antioxidants.

My preferred grape seed extract (OPC) is the well-researched and patented NZ made Oxifend®

OPC is unique among antioxidants in that it actively scavenges oxygen and nitrogen radicals. It also has an affinity to collagen making it a great cardiovascular protector. I know of no single botanical ingredient to have such a positive impact on health. Try a good multi mineral/vitamin/antioxidant for 3 months and find out what you have been missing.

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.



John Arts recommends **Cell eXtra**

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*John Arts, Founder, Abundant Health*

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## SIMPLE eggnog

6 eggs  
0.33C liquid honey or sugar  
0.125 t salt  
4C trim milk, divided  
1T vanilla extract  
Optional flavourings (see tips below)

- Whisk eggs, honey and salt in large saucepan. Gradually add 2C (500ml) milk. Cook and stir over medium-low heat until mixture coats back of spoon, 12 to 15 minutes. (Do not let mixture boil.)
- Pour into a large heatproof bowl; stir in remaining milk and vanilla. Place bowl in ice water, stirring frequently, until mixture is cool, about 15 minutes. Cover and refrigerate for at least 3 hours.
- When ready to serve, whisk in flavouring if desired.

### TIPS

Try adding these flavouring suggestions to prepared, cooled eggnog:

- Stir in 1/2 to 1C (125 to 250ml) rum or brandy, or a combination of both.
- Stir in 1-1/2 t instant coffee granules dissolved in 1T of hot water or 1 to 2t of rum extract.
- Stir in 2C softened vanilla ice cream and blend with whisk or mixer.
- Eggnog may be covered and stored in the refrigerator for several days.
- To serve, keep eggnog on ice and serve within two hours.
- For a creamy eggnog, fold in 2C (500ml) whipped cream or whipped topping.

*Recipe and image courtesy of Egg Farmers of Canada by NZ Eggs*



## RICH Christmas Cake

1 3/4 C orange juice  
3/4 C dark rum or brandy  
2T finely grated orange zest  
500g currants  
500g raisins  
2C sultanas  
2C chopped dates  
150g crystallised ginger, chopped  
150g mixed peel  
150g glacé cherries, halved  
1/2 t vanilla essence  
1/4 t almond essence  
2t finely-grated lemon zest  
1C blanched almonds  
2 1/2 C Edmonds High Grade Flour  
1/2 t Edmonds Baking Soda  
1t cinnamon  
1t mixed spice  
1/2 t ground nutmeg  
250g butter  
1 1/2 C Chelsea brown sugar  
2T treacle  
5 eggs, beaten

- Place the orange juice, rum and orange zest in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and add the dried fruit. Cover and leave the fruit to soak overnight.
- The next day stir the essences, lemon rind and almonds into the fruit mixture.

Sift the flour, soda and spices into a bowl.

- Preheat the oven to 150°C bake. Line a deep 23-25cm square tin with baking paper, extending the baking paper a few centimetres above the top of the tin. Tie a double layer of brown paper around the outside of the tin.
- Cream the butter, sugar and treacle until light and fluffy and add the eggs a little at a time, beating well after each addition.
- Fold in the sifted ingredients alternately with the fruit mixture.
- Scoop the mixture into the prepared tin then wet your hand under the cold tap and smooth the surface.
- Bake for 2 1/2 - 3 hours or until an inserted skewer comes out clean. Cool in the tin on a wire rack, covered with a clean cloth
- Wrap in tinfoil and a cloth and store in a cool place.
- If you want a more flavoursome cake to pour 2-3 tablespoons of brandy or sherry over the cake after it has cooled and before storing it. If the top is crusty, make little holes with a skewer or toothpick to help the alcohol soak in

*courtesy of Edmonds*

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# Tis the season

## TO BE STYLISH

PIPPA BURNETT

Interior designer Pippa Burnett grew up on a farm in North Canterbury, but these days calls Christchurch home, where she runs a thriving interior design business.

We ask her what her take on this coming Christmas décor trends are and how she creates a festive home.

### WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE NEW CHRISTMAS 2024 DECORATION?

Honeycomb paper foldable trees are the latest festive décor to add to this season's collection definitely.

Big or small, they are easily foldable, therefore a great space saver in the off-season.

Place them on any flat surface large enough to keep them stable.

I like to create little wonderland forests using multiple sizes or bunch them together in twos or threes to create a Christmas tree feel.

### WHAT ARE THE FESTIVE COLOURS THIS COMING SEASON?

There are notable colours trends coming through for this season such as soft creams and brown tones: very gingerbread house-like.

However, in saying that you cannot beat the traditional Christmas colours of green and red.

You can always use pattern and texture to create depth with your aesthetic.

Try check or tartan fabrics to create a cosy festive feel.

Maybe even add a dash of gold or bronze to subtly soften bold colours you have



Pippa Burnett says that as long as your decorations have texture to them, be it a little bit of sparkle or tinsel you can drape, you will find you will keep your house timeless and therefore more cost-effective long term. PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

chosen.

### HOW CAN SEASONAL DECORATING BE AFFORDABLE?

Do it yourself ... why not!

Try making a centrepiece for your Christmas lunch table out of greenery you have in

your garden or a tree from your backyard.

You can always add pillar candles or other blooming flowers. Or even pine cones.

This can be changed out year after year with a new colour palette without any cost outlay.

Make it a talking point for guests.

Also, if you are wanting a festive aesthetic



that will stay timeless for years to come I would suggest narrowing down what colours would really enhance your home.

### DOES YOUR TREE HAVE TO BE GREEN?

Maybe you live in a home with mostly white interiors.

If you do, try a white tree with either gold or silver decorations.

Pick a colour palette and work to that.

As long as your decorations have texture to them, be it a little bit of sparkle or tinsel you can drape, you will find you will keep your house timeless and therefore more cost-effective long term

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE AREA IN YOUR HOME TO DECORATE?



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Left – Decorating the tree should be a family affair, becoming part of the memories of Christmas.  
 Above – Adding either silver or gold can give your Christmas decor a dazzle.  
 Right – Pippa Burnett makes her own wreaths.

The entryway for sure.

I really like the house to feel welcoming to guests, especially at Christmas time.

I like the reason for their visit to actually be greeting them at the door when they arrive.

It's a joyful time of year so why not make it fun and festive.

Following on from that, I cover my entry console table in décor as well.

I create my own wreaths.

The one I have currently hung on my front door I made out of a small faux Christmas tree I did not use anymore.

Some traditional coloured red and gold baubles, were added in, along with a few real pine cones I found. It made it look fuller and more flush.

I even pinned in a little gold bird.

HOW DO YOU CREATE A FESTIVE

AMBIENCE IN YOUR HOME?

Smell and touch are equally as important to creating a feeling as just purely looking at decorations.

Having guests ask 'what is the lovely smell?' or 'where did you get these Christmas crackers from?'

A gorgeous-smelling cinnamon candle can be just as effective in creating a Christmas feeling alongside the light heartedness of pulling the cracker at the Christmas table.

Candles also double as a great way to add twinkly ambience.

Even for us who celebrate Christmas in the Southern Hemisphere, it is still appropriate to light up your house.

Let it sparkle!

WHAT IS YOUR BEST PIECE OF ADVICE FOR DECORATING?

Your house, your rules: That would be my best advice.

If you want to go full out with decorations then go for it.

Create memories and traditions your family and friends will remember.

Christmas can have a different meaning to every household.

Some people love what Christmas Day means to them – enjoying December 25 with those they love and care for.

Others love the actual day, plus the 24 days leading up to Christmas, elongating the season for all its worth.

Why not celebrate the year that is finishing and the New Year to come with a little dazzle!

By Pippa Burnett  
 Pippa Burnett Interiors  
 @pippaburnettliving



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