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FEBRUARY 2025

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# Is it time to bring back the Sunday roast?

Is it time to bring back the Sunday roast? The ritual of the Sunday roast lamb is, for many of us, synonymous with a rural childhood.

In the 1980s, Alison Holst was the Queen of New Zealand cooking, baking tins were still well stocked with homemade biscuits for smoko, and farming was going through one of its most challenging times to date.

Eating out was a treat and we were connected to our families instead of our phones.

The Sunday roast was more than a meal, it was an event.

My mother and grandmother would put the leg of lamb or mutton in the oven in the morning, where it would lazily cook, low and slow, until my father came in around noon from the farm.

The entire house would fill with the aroma of meat.

There would be always be roast vegetables, often from the garden, peas, gravy and mint sauce.

I would help prepare the side dishes, and there was always companionable chatter between my mother, my grandmother and me.

There was a sense of warmth and belonging.

There was no rush – just the slow rhythm of a Sunday, marked by the steady ticking of the clock, the hiss of meat sizzling in the oven, and the hearty clatter of knives and forks.

While cooking lamb was a job relegated to the women in the family, carving was my father's domain.

The right knife, the right angle, working

with the meat's grain.

Usually, the lamb leg was from a sheep he had butchered himself in the little killing shed on the farm.

Arguably, the best thing about the roast was the leftovers: thick lamb sandwiches with cheese on chunky, warm homemade bread.

The rhythmic tradition of it all was like being wrapped in a blanket of security as a child.

It was about family and connection; it was about celebrating the food produced on the farm.

In the busy chaos of life in 2025, when we are more connected to each other in so many ways yet incredibly disconnected in others, could the traditional Kiwi roast be the antidote to all that we have lost with modern life?

Working men's clubs, RSAs, and traditional Kiwi pubs still practice the art of the Sunday roast.

While this provides an affordable, filling meal for those living alone and can't justify the time and expense of cooking a roast themselves, how fantastic would it be if the roast returned to Kiwi home kitchens, too?

How can we blend tradition with the diverse global cultures that make up our population and whose cuisines we have embraced alongside the British one we brought here all those years ago?

With National Lamb Day on the horizon on February 15 we have an opportunity to celebrate our national dish and reimagine where it sits in our culture and kitchens.

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## Safety, quality and managing the weather

**For Aaron Brown and his ACL road sealing crew, their role is much more than just applying bitumen and gravel.**

It's about ensuring safety, delivering quality, and managing the unpredictable weather conditions for his road crew team at Ashburton Contracting Limited, which has been serving the Ashburton district since 1995.

"We get the contract each year, and we get all the sealing designs and things that we need to do for the roads," Aaron said.

"But the biggest priority is making sure everyone is safe on the job, especially with public roads involved."

That's why the team goes above and beyond to make sure the public is informed before work begins.

They conduct what he calls a "Letter drop" a few days in advance to alert residents that road sealing will take place. With speed zones set at 30 km/h, there's a need for cones and signs. That's because the crew wants to ensure that road users are aware and can drive safely around the work area.

"Our main focus is to let people know on the other roads where we are, what we're doing," Aaron said, emphasising that signs and cones were essential for public safety.

"Unfortunately for the public, they

probably get sick of it, but it's just to let people know that someone's here working and what we're doing."

Though the sealing process can be messy and require patience, they know it's worth it when they see the finished product, with Aaron and his team loving the satisfaction of a job well done.

But it's a job not without its challenges, with weather conditions and the physical toll of working with hot asphalt all coming into play. But the team is well-prepared and backed by a company where safety and culture has always been paramount.

"The company really look after us. They're fantastic," he said.

"We've got all the PPE (personal

protective equipment) gear we need to do the job."

And, as Aaron says, he's lucky to have such a professional and tight-knit team ready and able to tackle Ashburton's road sealing and maintenance needs in all conditions.

"This crew are a great bunch of guys," Aaron said.

"You couldn't ask for anyone better."



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# Peta's footage sparks backlash

“It's not necessarily to expose bad behaviour; it's to get people away from livestock farming altogether.”

That's the response from Federated Farmers Mid Canterbury meat and wool chairperson Ross Bowmar to the footage released by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta) of mistreatment of sheep during shearing.

The footage, which Peta described as “explosive”, was filmed in 11 different sheds across New Zealand from 2023 to the end of 2024.

The organisation says the footage shows “the workers beating and kicking terrified sheep, stomping and standing on their necks, and violently throwing the animals down chutes, among other cruel acts”.

“No farmer would want what was in those tapes to occur to their stock because it's not good for the welfare of their animal, nor is it good from a business perspective either,” Bowmar said.

He said the footage does not reflect what goes on behind woolshed doors.

“In any industry, you're always going to find people who don't meet the standards and expectations of the majority; you're always going to have a few people doing things they shouldn't be.”

“Peta is criticising everyone for the actions of a few.”

Bowmar said the treatment of stock shown in the videos, while not standard practice, should not be tolerated.

“Behaviour like that should be



Far left - The New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association have said “the issues presented by Peta are completely inconsistent with NZSCA members in shed practices and our animal welfare policy.”



Federated Farmers Mid Canterbury meat and wool chairperson Ross Bowmar said the footage released by Peta does not reflect what goes on behind woolshed doors. PHOTO SUPPLIED

called out.”

Following the release of the footage, Peta penned a letter to Minister of Agriculture Todd McClay, calling for the Government “to mandate live-streaming web cameras in all shearing sheds”.

In the letter, the organisation stated that webcams would provide transparency and accountability.

“The public has the right to know whether meaningful action is being taken or whether this investigation will show yet another attempt by the wool industry to sweep abuse under the rug.”

Farm lobby groups have deemed webcams as impractical. “Who is going to sit and watch the things?” Bowmar said.

He said that, as a farmer himself, he observes shearers in his shed to ensure individual shearers

are adhering to animal welfare standards.

If he isn't happy, he asks the contractors to make changes so that he gets a team that meets the standards required.

“That's the logical approach most farmers would take.”

The footage attacks a wool industry already struggling despite

the fibre's biodegradable and sustainable properties.

“The same people who are attacking farmers over shearing practices are the same people who are wearing plastic clothes and heating up the planet and causing climate change,” Bowmar said.

It's a sentiment echoed by Federated Farmers national meat and

wool chairperson Toby Williams, who has described the release of the footage by Peta as a “disgusting attack on New Zealand sheep farmers”.

“We don't actually make any money from shearing.”

“It's a cost we have to carry to keep our sheep healthy.”

“Selling the wool doesn't even cover the cost of the shearing these days.”

“This is a disgraceful hit job by Peta, who want people to think the footage in their video is what all farming practices in New Zealand look like, but that couldn't be further from the truth.”

Williams said the video was a montage showing some isolated examples of poor practice that most Kiwi farmers wouldn't put up with in their shearing shed.

“I think most people will see straight through [Peta] and realise it's all just an attempt to push their extreme anti-farming agenda.”

The New Zealand Shearing Contractors Association (NZSCA) released a statement saying the organisation was committed to investigating all allegations thoroughly.

“NZSCA members are constantly monitoring the shearing practices of their highly trained and professional employees to ensure the highest standards of ethical and animal welfare practices are maintained.”

“The issues presented by Peta are completely inconsistent with NZSCA members in shed practices and our animal welfare policy.”

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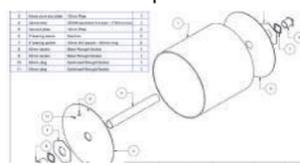


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# The day that lamb reigns supreme

CLAIRE INKSON

This February, New Zealand will raise a chop in honour of its heritage, with National Lamb Day set to shine brighter than ever, and Kiwis are encouraged to join the celebrations.

"New Zealanders should get behind the day as it's arguably the product for which New Zealand is best known globally and a proud part of Kiwi cuisine," says Federated Farmers Mid Canterbury meat and wool chairperson Ross Bowmar.

National Lamb Day on February 15 will pay homage to the origins of New Zealand's lamb industry, dating back to 1882, when the first shipment of frozen lamb was sent overseas, a milestone that sparked what would become the backbone of the New Zealand economy.

"National Lamb Day is important because it showcases the quality product that tens of thousands of NZ sheep farmers are immensely proud of and toil daily to produce," Bowmar said.

Kiwis are encouraged to cook their favourite lamb dish with friends and family and share their culinary creations online.

If a barbecue is what is on the menu at your house, you can register your barbecue on the National Lamb Day website for a chance to win one of five lamb boxes valued at over \$200.

Organisers hope social media platforms will be flooded with the hashtag #nationallambday by Kiwi households, chefs and restaurants.

The Bowmar family are celebrating the day at home with a Kiwi



classic.

"In our house, we will be enjoying a traditional slow-cooked roast leg of lamb with family."

National Lamb Day was reinvented last year by Ag Proud and Beef + Lamb New Zealand.

This year's campaign gains added strength with sponsors FMG and Rabobank helping amplify the event, which Ag Proud founder and chairperson of the newly-formed National Lamb Day committee Jon

Pemberton is "thrilled" about.

"Those partners are coming in with a long-term view. It feels like we are bringing a much better foundation to what we are going to achieve.

"Last year was more of a 'shoot from the hip and make it happen' approach.

"This year will be more structured, with the formation of a steering group and lamb day committee."



Above - On February 15, New Zealanders are encouraged to celebrate the history of the sheep industry in New Zealand by having lamb on the menu.

PHOTO BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND

Left - National Lamb Day committee chairperson and Ag Proud founder Jon Pemberton is encouraging Kiwis to get behind the celebrations on February 15.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

Last year's event was launched at the Southern Field Days in Waimumu.

National Lamb Day falls on a Saturday this year, and celebrations begin a fortnight before the official day.

"We've had support from central government, which has been fantastic.

"There will be a build-up two weeks prior, with a parliamentary lunch on the Wednesday.

"This year, we have had a few A&P shows on the Saturday reaching out to us to get involved as well."

A mix of chefs, farmers, influencers and industry leaders will work as "Lambassadors" to promote the event.

"We want everyone to get involved on February 15 and do their own thing.

"It's about celebrating food and fibre, and if we could have families, friends, and communities get together on the day and record what they are doing

"It would be great to see that on social media."

For more information, or to register your barbecue, visit [www.nationallambday.co.nz](http://www.nationallambday.co.nz).

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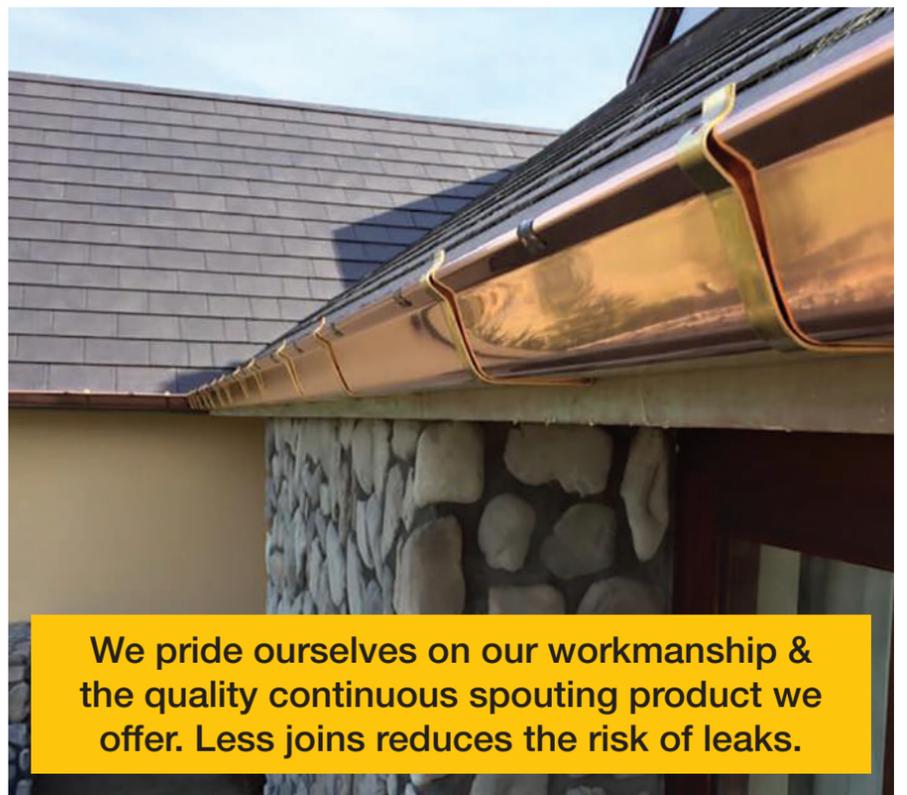
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# Stay safe on the water

We are a nation that loves our boats, and in the South Island, we're spoilt for choice with an abundance of idyllic braided rivers and crystal-clear lakes, perfect for recreational watersports or fishing.

But, as with any adventure, a day off the farm and on the water comes with its risks.

Last year, 17 New Zealanders tragically lost their lives in incidents involving recreational boats or watercraft, just one below the national average of 18.

In Canterbury, 2024 ended with two serious jet boat accidents in quick succession: one on the Rakaia River in November involving four people, followed by another just five days later on the Waimakariri River with two people.

Matt Wood, Maritime NZ's principal advisor for recreational craft, says the primary cause of these accidents is boats failing to follow the rules.

"We are seeing people exceeding speeds and not staying on the right side of the river," he said.

Knowing your limits is crucial, Wood said.

"There is a difference between perceived and actual ability."

With support from Maritime NZ, Jet Boat New Zealand has produced a series of "JetSmart" safe jet boating videos, now available on their YouTube channel, to help boaties stay safer on the water.

These videos cover a wide range of topics, from buying the right boat to safety tips and regulations.

Gordon McKay, deputy harbourmaster at ECan, stresses the importance of being aware of conditions.

"If the weather's not good, don't go out, and if the weather's going to turn bad, don't go out."

He also emphasised the need for lifejackets, particularly during summer.

While lifejackets are mandatory on all boats under six metres in many regions, including Canterbury, it's essential to ensure they're fit for purpose and in good condition.

"Check lifejackets at the start of each season for any rips, tears, or degradation from being left in the sun. Ensure buckles and straps are secure," McKay said. "If it's an inflatable jacket,

blow it up manually and leave it for 24 hours. If it's flat when you return, don't use it."

Communication is another vital aspect of boating safety.

While cellphone coverage is often limited on remote lakes, McKay recommends carrying a personal locator beacon on every vessel.

"It doesn't matter where you are. If you activate it, the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ) will pick it up in Wellington, and a helicopter can be on its way quickly."

While technically drinking while driving a boat isn't illegal in New Zealand, McKay has a clear message around skippers having a few beers on the boat: "Don't".

Those driving a boat can still be liable if found intoxicated during an accident, and it is a skipper's responsibility to know the rules and follow the boating safety code.

"If you crash and hurt somebody, and alcohol is a factor, it's still against the law.

"It's an offence to expose any other water users to unnecessary risk by any means."

## SAFETY TIPS

Tips from Maritime NZ:

- **Safety first:** Prioritise safety on the water. Ensure your boat is equipped with necessary safety gear and that everyone on board knows how to use it.
- **Life jackets save lives:** Make wearing a correctly fitted life jacket mandatory for everyone aboard. It's a simple but crucial safety measure.
- **Stay sober:** Avoid alcohol and drugs while boating. Impaired judgment increases the risk of accidents.
- **Weather awareness:** Always check the marine weather forecast before heading out and be prepared for sudden changes. If in doubt, don't go out.
- **Communication:** Inform someone of your boating plans and expected return time. Carry two forms of waterproof communication (e.g., VHF radio, mobile phone, distress beacon) in case of emergency.
- **Know the rules:** Familiarize yourself with local regulations and navigation rules. Download the Marine Mate App to stay updated on the boating code.
- **Regular maintenance:** Keep your boat in top condition with regular maintenance checks. A well-maintained boat is a safer boat.
- **Carry safety gear:** Ensure your boat is equipped with a fire extinguisher, a signal device like an air horn, and a baler.
- **Continuous learning:** Take a boating safety course to stay updated on best practices and new regulations.

**For more information, visit:**  
(<https://saferboating.org.nz/>)

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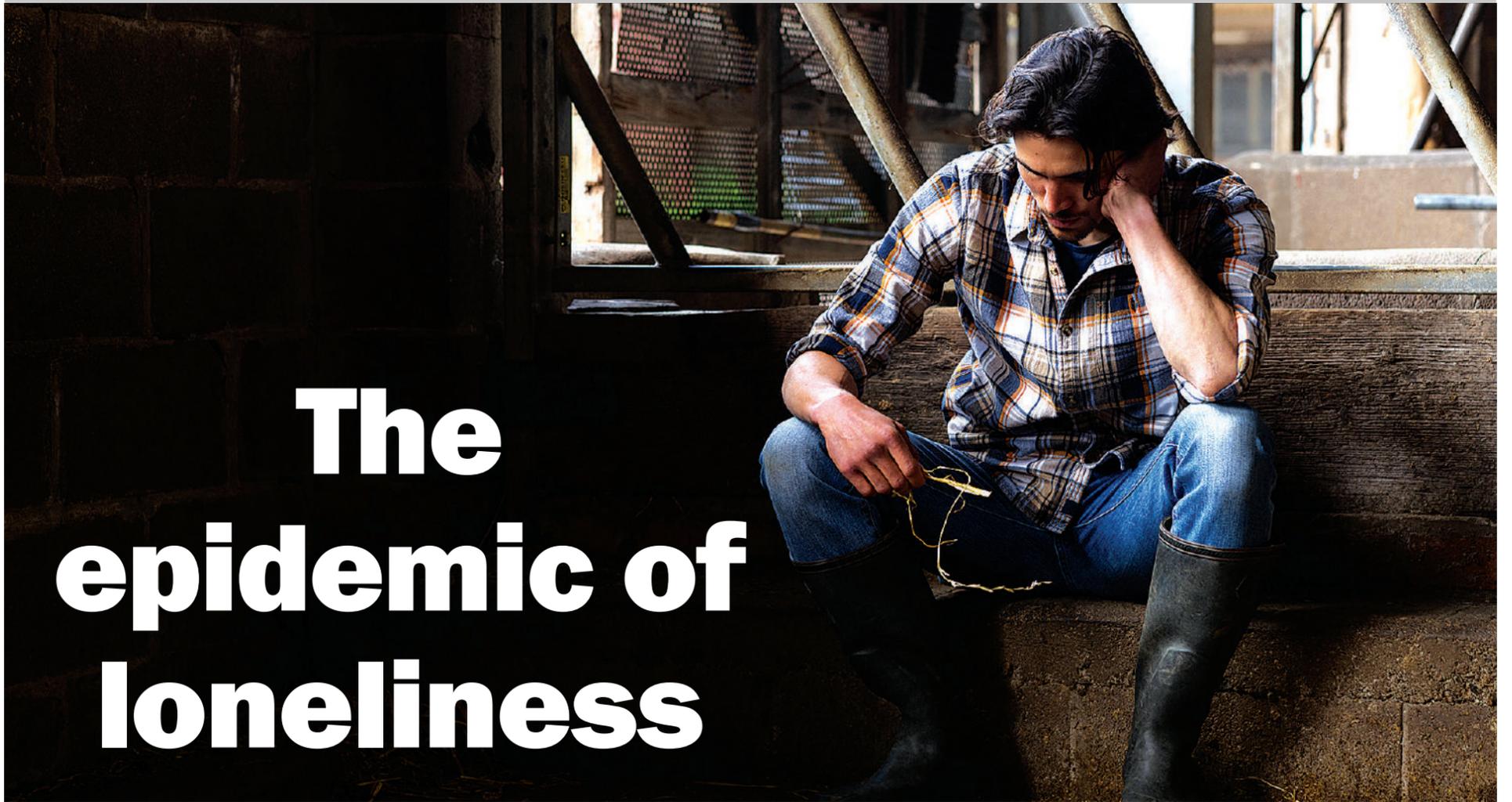
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# The epidemic of loneliness

**KATHRYN WRIGHT**

According to a multitude of studies, experiencing loneliness can be detrimental not only to our mental health, but also to our physical health, and it can eat away quietly in society like a black fog of discontent.

If you are experiencing loneliness, ironically you are not alone – up to half of all adults can feel the effects of loneliness in any given year.

A significant part of my doctoral research has been to investigate the effects of loneliness, particularly within rural communities.

Firstly, I want to distinguish the difference between loneliness and isolation: loneliness is an emotional state created within ourselves.

It is felt when you might lack any meaningful connection with other people – this is why you may

feel lonely even when you are in a room full of people.

Isolation is felt when you HAVE meaningful connections with people, but there are barriers to spending time with those who matter to you, because of time, distance, financial or any other barriers.

Isolation and loneliness are terms that are often used interchangeably but mean quite different things.

When loneliness is experienced, those at risk can have an elevated risk of irritability, depression, and it is responsible for a 26% increase in premature death.

There can be temptation to fill our lives with digital distraction, Netflix and empty relationships.

As individuals and societies have become more independent and insular, we have not matched this change with the honing of any skills of how to be alone with our

thoughts or to be content in our own company.

And yes, social media is partly to blame – communication is easy, but the relationships are often superficial, and they come at the cost of real friendships and connections.

Before solid and genuine connections are sought, it is more helpful to first learn to be ok with solitude: when we are content in our own company, we can begin to live in the moment, to study our surroundings in the here and now, to harness our thoughts and to feel our feet on the ground.

Self-awareness becomes the focus.

Being in this state gives our minds and brains a chance to rest.

We feel uncomfortable with both loneliness and isolation, because humans are hard-wired to connect – evolutionarily, we need to stick

together in groups or clans to give ourselves the best life expectancy through mutual protection and assistance.

The pain of loneliness is an aversive signal that tells us to seek out human connection – much like thirst and hunger motivates us to find water or food.

Unfortunately, feeling lonely can also make us hyper-vigilant in watching others for social ‘dangers’ such as rejection, which can make us behave in self-protective ways that can push others away.

This was all created to ‘protect’ us from dangers that do not exist in the modern world.

This can make us feel anxious about going out of our comfort zones to talk to someone new, or to try any new activity.

The best way to ‘override’ these hyper-vigilant responses and to counteract loneliness, is to begin to

create connection through making conversations, asking questions, putting yourself out there even when it feels scary to do so.

Think in advance about who you would like to approach and what you’d like to say to them. Acknowledge your discomfort and allow the sensations to pass in their own time, but carry on with your important committed action, no matter what.

After doing this multiple times, you are well on your way to building new neural pathways that will make this feel easier and easier.

And your nervous system will begin to feel safer and eventually, this will become normal.

Building meaningful connections is the antidote of loneliness.

*Kathryn Wright is a registered counsellor, MNZAC [www.kathrynwright.co.nz](http://www.kathrynwright.co.nz)*



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**Young Farmers are the future of New Zealand Agriculture, so each issue we shine a spotlight on a Young Farmers Club member. Today we talk to Balfour Young Farmer Anthony Tutty.**

**What is the name of your club, and how long have you been a member?**  
I've been with Balfour Young Farmers Club since January 2024.

**What has been the highlight for you of joining Young Farmers? What are the benefits and experiences that you feel have helped you most?**  
The highlights for me are meeting new people and getting involved with the community.

The benefits of young farmers are a good social club and gets me off farm to have a few drinks with the club and good mates.

**How did you become involved in agriculture?**  
I have been in the agricultural industry all my life.

My parents, brother and sister are all farming from sheep, beef and dairy so it was natural to go into farming.

**What is your job now? Tell us about your role, and what your journey has been like so far. If you are farming, please tell us about your farming operation?**  
I work on a mixed cropping with sheep and beef in northern Southland. We do about 330 hectares of cropping and have about 900 sheep and a handful of cattle.

The journey so far has been up and down like all farming jobs, but I just get on and do the task at hand.

**What do you think the future of farming will look like, and what would you like to see happening in New Zealand agriculture going forward?**  
It's hard to say what farming will be like in five or 10 years' time, everything is changing so fast as time goes on.

But as Kiwis, we've always been great at adapting and tackling challenges head-on.

All I can say is, time will tell.

**What are your future plans?**  
My plan is to stick with Young Farmers, but I'm also keen to head over to Australia for work and to see how they do farming over there.

After that, I'll come back to the Balfour area and look for a job around here.

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

My inspiration for farming comes from my family and friends, and Young Farmers as well who encourage me to keep pushing myself and always trying new things. Farming is just the way of life.



Anthony Tutty says for him, farming is just a way of life.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

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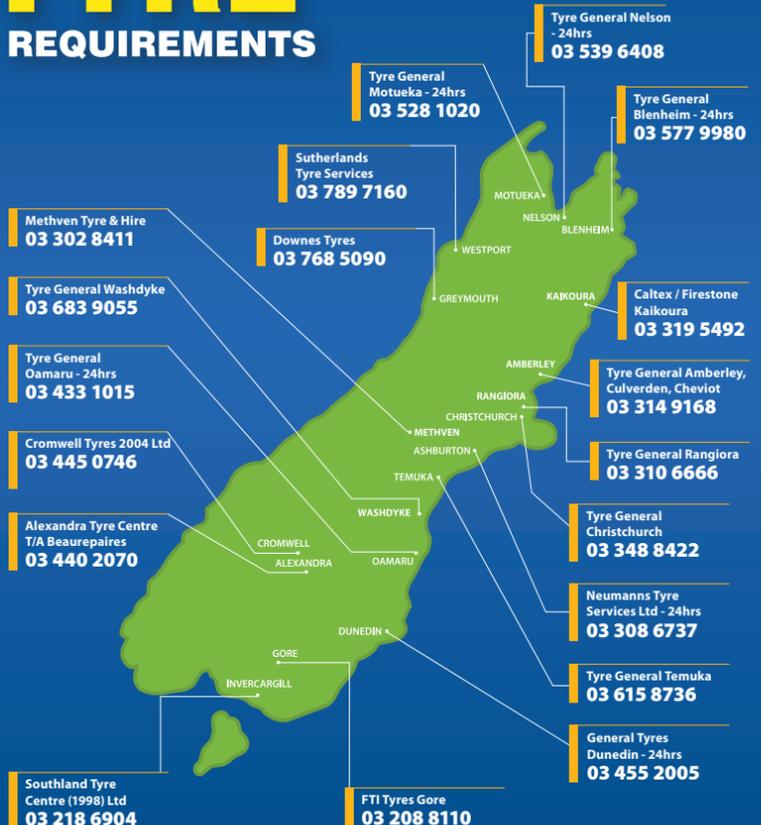
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# Understanding credit risk

ANDREW LAMING

Farmers are leaving too much interest cost to chance. Let's begin with two all-too-familiar examples.

Two neighbouring farmers, side by side with largely the same resources, productive performance and financial history.

They both have similar levels of debt and might even both be with the same bank.

But one farmer has an interest rate that is 0.50% different than the other.

In some cases, this can be over +1% different.

On an average loan, this could equate to \$50,000 to \$100,000 per year.

It can also mean the difference between acting on further growth investment or not.

Over time, this can have million-dollar implications as growth opportunities are passed by, having intergenerational effects on the family business.

In another example, we might see a farmer where a bank has effectively stopped offering them any further credit or has asked them to repay their borrowing under unfavourable terms with high interest rates – only to then be (once the credit risk is presented optimally) offered market leading terms by another bank.

So, why do we see this?

Whilst competition is part of this, the difference is also due to farmers not understanding their credit risk well enough (the way a bank does), and then not presenting it well enough to the banking market to create a “market for their loan”.

Understanding credit risk is not straight forward.

A bank will make both objective (numbers) and subjective (judgement) assessments on your credit. Often these two overlap (eg past financial performance coupled with an explanation on strategy during that period).

If a farmer does not provide accurate guidance to a bank on the objective and subjective factors that make up their credit risk, a bank will lead this themselves and assumptions are made.

Where banks are reducing head count and have less time to



Left – NZAB director and co-founder Andrew Laming says farmers need better understanding of credit risk. PHOTO SUPPLIED

dive deep enough to understand a farmer's risk factors, a large amount of this process is left to chance.

That means the outcome of that credit process is left to chance, as is the cost.

Credit risk is not just financial history, operating performance,

budgets and balance sheets.

It's also strategy, governance, past decision making, resource development, interpretation and justification of past strategy (and performance) and future options for growth or divestments.

Credit risk also involves transi-

tion. How will a farmer's performance continue to evolve or optimise over time as conditions change, ensuring they remain a good risk in the future?

A bank completes a credit assessment for two main reasons.

The first is simply to decide whether they advance you the

money or not.

The second reason is for “risk weighting”.

In layman's terms, this means the riskier the loan, the more of the bank's own capital they will put beside the loan and therefore, the more they will have to charge for the loan to achieve an “economic return”.

Banks often talk about this as their Return on Equity (ROE) and they usually look for an average of 12-15%.

But would it surprise you to know that their portfolio is not made up of all loans being 12% each?

Instead, it is made up of loans with ROE's that range from 5% to 30%.

The difference often comes down to competition (bank's looking to acquire) or loans where the risk has improved over time, but the pricing hasn't changed with it.

When a farmer owns their credit risk, they then have the confidence to create a market for their loan. They can interact quickly with the banking market, get swift outcomes and the best possible rates and terms.

Understanding and presenting credit risk is not simple.

Given the range of outcomes and what it means for future business success, it is not a process that you want to DIY. It is also dynamic.

The credit tolerance and pricing for a bank were different last year and it will be different again next year.

Staying abreast of this is challenging.

It is certainly not something you want to simply “leave with the bank”.

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*Andrew Laming is director and co-founder of NZAB [www.nzab.co.nz](http://www.nzab.co.nz), a nationwide specialist Agri banking advisory firm*

## Festival of soil launches in NZ

Tickets are now available for the Underground Festival, Aotearoa New Zealand's inaugural celebration of soil, food and farming.

The February 19-20 event, held at Greystone organic vineyard in the Waipara Valley, is aimed at farmers, growers and those passionate about regenerative farming.

It features over 30 transformative sessions with notable speakers, including agroecologist Nicole Masters, Professor Felice Jacka on nutritional psychiatry, and farmer and TV personality Matthew Evans. Topics span regenerative food systems, agroforestry, and drought resilience.

Hands-on demonstrations will include multi-species pastures, soil

building, and biochar, while food offerings include North Canterbury farm-to-table delights and drinks.

Guests can also enjoy live music, watercolour workshops and communal feasts.

The festival grew from the success of similar events overseas and aims to create a space for New Zealand's farmers and food system changemakers to connect, share ideas and celebrate the land.

Tickets start at \$325, with options for onsite camping and glamping.

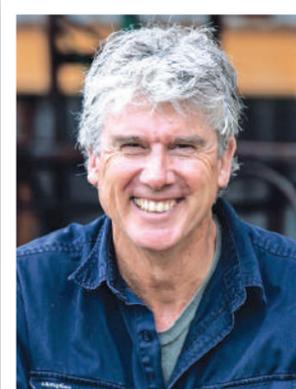
The event is supported by key partners such as Biome Trust, Mangaroa Farms, and Eat New Zealand.

For more information, contact Fran Bailey at [fran@franbaileyp.com](mailto:fran@franbaileyp.com).



Agroecologist Nicole Masters

Farmer and TV personality Matthew Evans



Professor Felice Jacka

# Sharemilking system still works

Where we ask a farmer five quick questions about farming, and what agriculture means to them. Today we talk to Mt Somers farmer Richard Wright.

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

I started dairying at 17 years old.

I followed the traditional dairy path, sharemilking in Northland.

My wife Chrissie and I then entered into equity partnerships in Canterbury before purchasing our own property in 2002 at Mt Somers.

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

We own Tamar Farm, a 2000 hectare mixed farming operation in Mt Somers of beef, dairying, cropping and lambs.

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

Challenges are usually weather related – the usual snow, droughts, winds, floods.

Our biggest challenge to date has been the 2021 floods when we lost 200 hectares of farmland.

To get through, you just have to dig deep, keep going and take a concrete pill.

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

There has been a few:

Purchasing our own farm after years of milking cows and saving.

Winning the Westpac Farmer of the Year in 2002, and the Ballance Farm Environment awards in 2020.

Seeing our sharemilkers purchase their own farm – which shows the traditional sharemilking system works and keeps young farmers in our sector, which makes the world go around.

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

Work hard  
Borrow money.  
Keep it interesting.  
Stay profitable and sustainable.  
Enjoy the journey.



Right – Richard Wright with wife Chrissie showcasing Tamar beef at the Ashburton show last year. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

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# Water zone groups to be flushed

JONATHAN LEASK

The axe is hanging over Canterbury's 10 water zone committees, which have helped apply the regional strategy for managing local water resources for over 10 years.

Ashburton Water Zone committee chairperson Bill Thomas said the proposal from the Canterbury Mayoral Forum's review process to dismantle the committees raises questions of accountability and community input.

"They don't think [zone committees] are fit for purpose any more and will restructure them out of existence.

"The new model - the way I see it - is like an inner circle of territorial authorities, ECan and mana whenua, and everyone else sits on the outside.

"I don't know where the accountability is going to be."

Thomas said the committees are a conduit between the community and the councils.

"I'm not saying zone committees have to stay, maybe they have served their purpose, but what's going to go in their place is a big question around how the community will question and challenge decisions on water issues."

The zone committees, joint committee of the local district council and ECan, were formed in 2010 as part of the Canterbury Water Management Strategy.

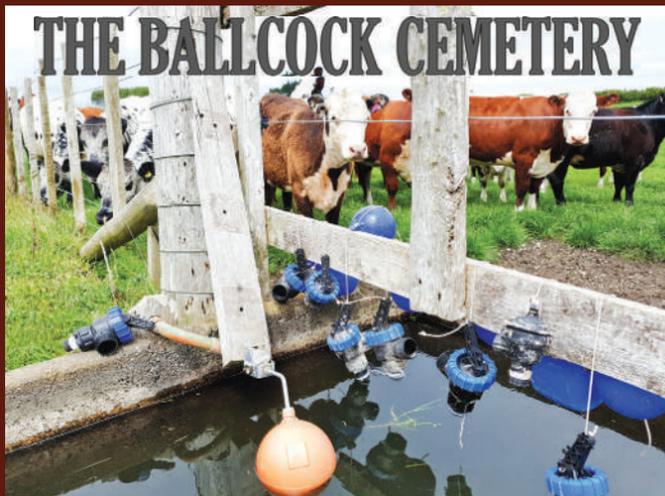
Canterbury Mayoral Forum chairperson Nigel Bowen said the review of the committees started in 2023 to consider how best to include local leadership in freshwater decision-making.



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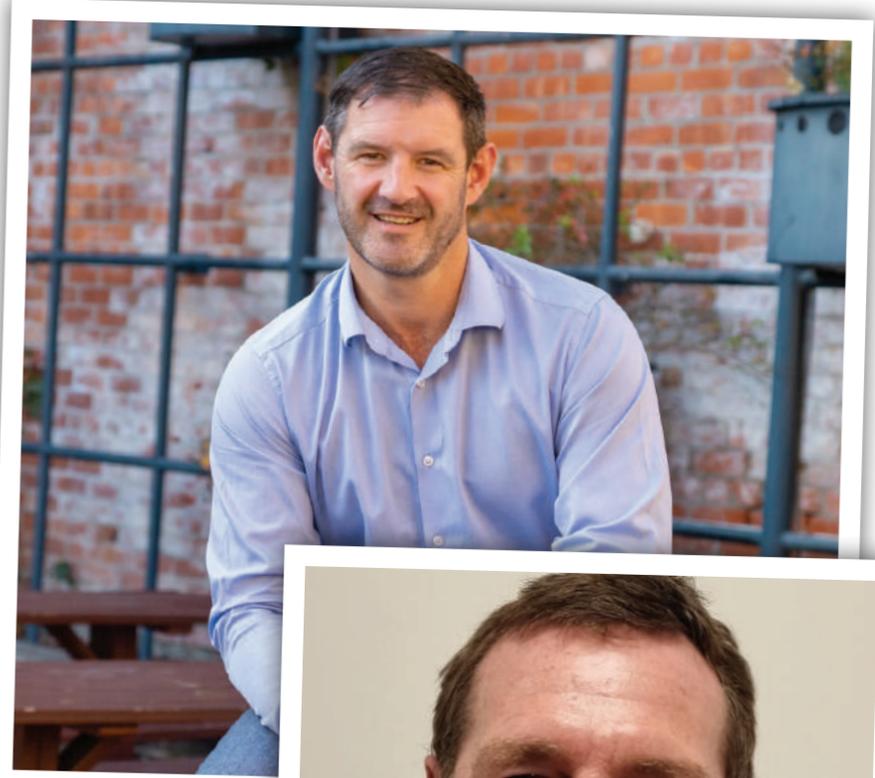


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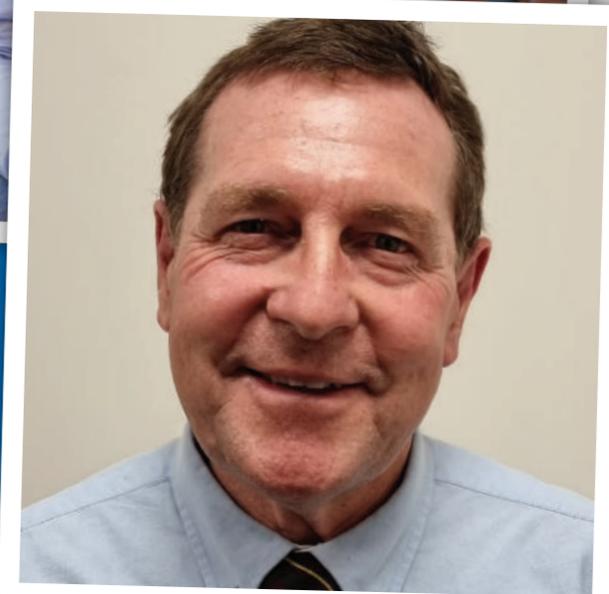
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Above – Canterbury Mayor Forum chairperson, Tamaru Mayor Nigel Bowen says an improved model is needed with the water zone committee's "no longer the preferred option in some places". PHOTOS SUPPLIED



Right – Ashburton Water Zone committee chairperson Bill Thomas.

"Since then, extensive workshops and discussions have been held with Territorial Authorities, Papatipu Rūnanga, Environment Canterbury and zone committee members."

The review report presented to the Forum on November 29 noted zone committees' contributions in the last decade but concluded evolving freshwater leadership requires a new model Bowen said

The Forum agreed zone committees "are in some places no longer the preferred option to support effective local freshwater leadership"

"A key finding from the review is that while some zone committees work well, an improved model is needed to better connect Territorial Authorities, Rūnanga and Regional Council at a leadership level, while providing connections to local communities and groups to reflect and meet local needs.

"Further work is needed to refine what an improved model might look like, with another report planned to

go to the Forum in May seeking agreement to a proposed model."

ECan will lead this work with councils and Papatipu Rūnanga and assist with how to transition from zone committee to any new model Bowen said.

"In the interim period, zone committees will continue to operate as per the existing model."

The proposed model supported by the Forum is for the zone committees to be replaced by core leadership groups in a model that creates regionally consistent membership and function.

Ashburton Mayor Neil Brown said the zone committees have potential but "need a purpose".

The rise of the catchment collectives across Mid Canterbury is also a factor to consider, Brown said.

"What is the relationship between them and the zone committee, are they doing the same job and do you need both?"

**LDR** Local Democracy Reporting  
LDR is local body journalism co-funded by RNZ and NZ On Air

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# Pest trapping producing results

JANINE HOLLAND

For a community group only 18 months old, the Ashburton Forks Catchment Group has plenty to be proud of.

With technologies under exploration and projects started, they've come a long way since 2023 when four farmers started yarning about environmental solutions for their backyard.

The late Chris Allen was instrumental in forming the group's vision alongside Richard Wright, Baden Somerville and Sarah Barker.

Accelerating predator control between the forks of the Ashburton River is the latest focus. North branch farmer Mark McDonald is one of those spearheading the campaign.

Mark has been predator trapping his property for a decade. Being in the catchment group has helped him take more notice of what he's doing and its impact.

Recently the catchment group received funding from Mayfield Lions, Carrfields and the Ashburton Water Zone Committee for auto traps.

Around \$10,000 of funding helped the group purchase 20 traps. (One trap from Carrfields, four from the Lions and 15 funded by the Zone Committee).

Getting in expert advisors, says Mark, was a game changer.

The catchment group invited Tim Exton from DOC Geraldine and Sean Ellis, local trapping legend, to educate members about



Left - Mark McDonald checks a trap protecting habitat alongside the spring-fed stream. PHOTOS SUPPLIED Above - Where there was once gorse, broom and willows, Mark McDonald's plantings since 2008 have resulted in a beautifully shaded stream.

trapping techniques.

Learning the habits of pests like possums, rats and stoats and adjusting traplines to fit their natural pathways means Mark is more targeted in placement with better results.

Going from older DOC 100 traps to a newer A220 auto model also

means trapping continues while he's away.

Mark recently returned from four days leave to find four rats captured with another two caught soon after.

The next step is to install mobile alerts so members are notified of trapping kills immediately and can

share data with others.

Trapping is important to Mark because he's spent the past decade building biodiversity habitat on farm and protecting birdlife in his wetland and stream corridor motivates him.

After investing in native plants around these waterways, birdsong has grown with grey warblers, silver eyes and pukekos regular

visitors.

The true measure of success for Mark will come when tui and bellbird song fills the area.

The Ashburton Forks Catchment Group's broad footprint lies in the Ashburton Forks, Staveley, and Alford Forest areas, with a rough boundary of the Rangitata Diverision Race to the west, Thompsons Track to the east, and either side of the north and south branches of the Ashburton River.

The group has developed an action plan that signals where it wants to get to with environmental improvements.

As of July, 2024, the group had removed 3568 pests and predators. With a land area covering approximately 11400ha, that's roughly an animal every 3.2 hectares.

Group members have been monitoring water quality in the river and streams that run through their properties for over a year now with 30-40 samples collected every month.

Working closely with the adjacent Foothills and Green Street Catchment Groups is helping these farmers better understand the water quality and biodiversity opportunities for this part of the district.

If you are interested in learning more about the group or want to get involved, please contact Ashburton Forks Catchment Group facilitator Will Wright on 027 551-0344.

Janine Holland  
Mid Canterbury  
Catchment Collective



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Left – The Texas-assembled Air Tractor 402B is Duncan Hart’s main plane for spraying, fertiliser spreading and fire-fighting. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

# High skies and higher stakes

CLAIRE INKSON

“His dives were like something out of a war movie,” a plane spotter commented on Facebook when querying what the mystery plane was flying “aggressively” over Kirwee recently.

The plane was not, however, one of the Royal New Zealand Airforce Black Falcons.

The distinctive yellow aircraft was an Air Tractor 504 topdressing plane, and the pilot was Skyfarmer Aviation’s Duncan Hart from Methven.

Hart says that although his antics in the sky might look like reckless aerobatics, that couldn’t be further

from the truth.

“Other people in aviation think our industry is a bunch of cowboys, but you can’t be a cowboy in a \$2 million aeroplane because you’ll go broke and you won’t be here.

“I’m a risk-taker. But it’s a calculated risk, or I wouldn’t still be alive.”

That’s not to say Hart hasn’t had his fair share of scares, one of the most memorable being when his plane clipped a powerline.

“It was across a gully in Banks Peninsula.

“I knew the wire was there, and then it was getting a bit windy, so I thought I’d go a bit lower.

Hart hit the wire, causing it to

break.

Luckily, he landed the plane shortly after with no damage.

“It was a good lesson.

“But as stupid as it sounds, most of the wires that pilots hit are ones they know are there.”

Hart has been flying for more than 25 years and says the industry has changed significantly.

“Training is a lot better than it used to be and fatalities in ag-aviation are rare, and we want to keep it that way.

“The last fatality was four years ago now.”

Hart’s father, Don, started Skyfarmers in 1982 in partnership with pilot Col Bolgar when the family

was farming in Waimate.

Bolgar died tragically in 1985 in an aviation accident and Don became sole owner of the business in 1987.

The economic reforms rolled out in 1984 by the Labour government, later known as Rogernomics, meant it was a challenging time for the agriculture industry.

“We were farming ourselves then.

“Interest rates went through the roof, and you couldn’t have picked a worse time to start the business because fertiliser subsidies came off.”

To survive, a “lean and mean” approach was required.

“I could tell you a few stories about how we survived, but we managed to scrape through.”

The Harts sold up in Waimate, bought a farm in Mid Canterbury, and relocated the aviation business.

Hart had been involved in his father’s topdressing since his school days when he would operate the loader “whether it was legal or not”.

Rather than pursue a career in farming, he decided his future would be in the cockpit while his brother Andrew ran the family farm.

“I was always interested in flying.”

Hart began flying when he was

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Above – Skyfarmers work takes Duncan all over Mid Canterbury and Banks Peninsula.  
PHOTO RYAN WILLIAMS

Left – Duncan Hart (left) said one of his career highlights was training Ryan Williams (right) who passed his grade 2 Ag flight test in November.  
PHOTO SUPPLIED

Below – Duncan Hart has had over 25 years in the cockpit.  
PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON



23, learning from his father and eventually buying the business in 2007.

“He taught me how to work hard, and there is nothing like a bit of debt to get you out of bed early in the morning.

“He was pretty tough, but you don’t want to be babysited.”

There are two aircraft in Hart’s fleet: A Texas-assembled Air Tractor 402B and a Pacific Aerospace Fletcher.

The business covers all of Mid Canterbury and Banks Peninsula.

Hart says he enjoys the variety of the job the most.

“We go to different places every day, and the variety of work we do.

“We go to high country stations, and then we do vegetable crop spraying and firefighting.”

Firefighting is the most challenging aspect of the job, with pilots contending with downdrafts, updrafts and poor visibility due to smoke.

“It’s always interesting with fires; it’s challenging work.

“It’s always blowing a gale; it’s never calm.”

Hart said one of the proudest moments of his career was training Skyfarmer’s newest pilot, Ryan Williams, who recently received his grade 2 licence.

“I learned a few things about myself in the process and he probably learned a few things about me, but I really enjoyed it.”

Although it’s heartening to see

new pilots coming into the agricultural aviation, Hart said the industry’s future remains a grey area, with incoming regulations regarding flight movements putting agricultural aviation at risk.

“The biggest threat to our industry is district plans the council are delivering.

“They are so restrictive and made by planners that haven’t got a clue.”

Tough times for farmers also mean tough times for aerial spreading as farmers reduce fertiliser spending.

“Business has been back about 60% because hill country farmers have high interest rates, high fertiliser prices and low input costs.

“It’s a perfect storm, so we are lucky we have the cropping work.”

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Simon started his career in Rangiora, completing an apprenticeship and qualifying in Automotive Engineering (Heavy Equipment). He later became workshop foreman at Advantage Ford Rangiora. When the business closed in 1996, Simon started his own machinery maintenance and repair service. His focus on quality work and customer service helped him build a loyal client base, eventually leading to the expansion of his team to meet demand.

Today, NTS has a skilled team working in both the workshop and the field. Simon primarily handles sales and business management but continues to train apprentices and occasionally works hands-on. NTS provides services ranging from basic maintenance to complex engine overhauls, transmission repairs, and engineering work on farm Utes, loaders, and diggers. Their approach is simple: "No job is too big or too small."

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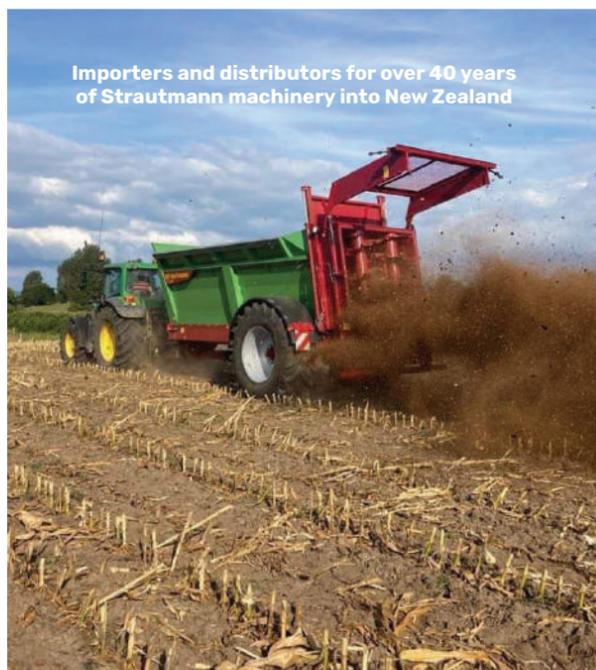
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# The little show that could

CLAIRE INKSON

The world-famous annual pig race is set to hog the limelight once again at this year's Mayfield A&P Show, and race convenor Matt Sinton has been busy getting the unlikely athletes ready for the big event.

"We spend five to six weeks training them at home on the farm.

"We slowly introduce them to the course and then on show day on March 8, they are ready to race."

All 10 pigs are donated to the show and each pig has a sponsor and a number.

Spectators can buy a ticket to back their pig of choice at the event, with races running on the hour from 11am until 3pm.

Pigs are rewarded for their efforts after the event finale with treats from Sims Bakery.

"We make up a banquet in the middle of the course with custard squares and cakes, and after the final race, we put all the pigs in there, and they have a great old time."

In addition to the pig racing, the event will include all the show staples, such as trade sites, a produce pavilion, a pet tent and live entertainment.

Show president Tim Rowe has been involved with the A&P show for 11 years and describes it as "the best show around".

"It's important we keep it going for the community; it's a really affordable day out for families,"



The annual pig race is always a crowd-pleaser at the Mayfield A&P Show. PHOTO ASHBURTON GUARDIAN

Rowe said.

Children will be treated to a performance by Elgregoe the Magician and the usual assortment of rides and games.

"It's a great show for kids, there's so much for them to do."

Rowe's passion is the tractor pull, which Rowe says "draws a hell of a crowd".

"It's pretty well supported by contractors and farmers around the place.

"There is generally a crowd

## MAYFIELD A&P SHOW

- **Show location:** Mayfield Showgrounds
- **Show date:** March 8
- **Parking:** Entrance off Highway 72
- **President:** Tim Rowe
- **Vice president:** James Murdoch
- **Opening times:** 9am-4pm
- **Ticket sales:** \$15pp, school-age children free
- **Key highlights:** Elgregoe the Magician, pig racing, tractor pull, live music in the village green.
- **The best place to follow for information:** Mayfield Show Facebook page
- **Entries** through Showday Online.

standing at the bar all day watching."

The show, which will celebrate its 100th event next year, has a long history of punching above its weight with an enthusiastic, innovative and determined committee at its helm.

The first Mayfield show was in 1920.

An article in the Ashburton

Guardian at the time reported a large crowd at the inaugural event and "favourable weather", stating: "The idea of holding a show at Mayfield is not, many months old, but the energy, initiative and optimism of the local enthusiasts transformed that idea into fact, the result being the really creditable exhibition at Mayfield to-day."

Two years later, the show was deemed an annual fixture on the Mid Canterbury calendar, with the Ashburton Guardian calling the programme of events, which included car driving, sheaf throwing and chain stepping, "ambitious" and declared it "the social event of the year".

The show hasn't been without its challenges, though.

In 1925, it was cancelled due to the polio epidemic as "a precautionary measure".

During the war, it was cancelled between 1941 and 1946 for five years because of reductions in petrol allowances and "the need for manpower to be devoted to production".

In 2022, a resurgence of Covid led to the show once again being called off.

Despite these setbacks, the show has always made a spectacular comeback.

Rowe says the secret to the show's success is its volunteers.

"The whole committee is amazing, the president doesn't really do anything, it's just a title.

"It's the convenors and the committee that make it what it is."

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# Reimagining food: New Zealand

CLAIRE INKSON

Our food system is fatally flawed, and it's time for a re-think, according to EatNZ chief executive and Food Farm owner Angela Gill-Clifford.

"I was listening to a podcast where an expert said the system was going to break.

"The retort to that was 'the system is already broken.'"

Food insecurity is one indicator of that broken system.

In New Zealand, a 2020/21 health survey showed that 14.9% of children lived in households where food runs out "sometimes" or "often", usually because of financial hardship.

"Good, healthy food has got really expensive for most families and people have to work hard to afford it."

While we look back at critical times in New Zealand's history, such as the war era or the depression, Kiwis became adept at growing and preserving their own food; times are much different now.

There is not a simple answer when the problem is complex.

Those experiencing poverty are often living in rental properties with an average tenancy agreement of 15 months, making it tricky to establish gardens long-term.

Angela said time was also an issue when people work long hours to make ends meet.

"Because people are working so hard, they don't have the time to grow food.

"So how do we reimagine that



system?"

Angela runs The Food Farm, a six-hectare block of land in North Canterbury that she has developed with her husband Nick.

The couple purchased the property 20 years ago after they moved to North Canterbury from South Australia, where they were involved in the wine industry.

"I spent my formative years in politics, which drove me to drink.

So wine seemed an appropriate outcome of that," Angela joked.

Nick accepted a job setting up what is now one of North Canterbury's most successful and highly regarded vineyards, Greystone, while they developed The Food Farm based on the permaculture principles they had learned in Australia.

"We knew that we wanted a place to grow our own food."

The property has evolved from a

market garden, where the Cliffords sold produce at farmers' markets, to what is now an educational tool with workshops teaching people how to grow their own food.

"The farm has expanded and contracted with our lives."

Angela believes that we can learn lessons from nature when it comes to fixing our food system.

"Nothing stands alone; if it does, it seldom thrives."

Community gardens and collaboration and sharing between small-scale food producers could make healthy food more accessible for New Zealanders.

"We need community sufficiency, not self-sufficiency."

Angela believes lifestyle blocks provide a solution, and with education, small-scale farmers could provide affordable food for communities.

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# d's system in crisis



Photos from left:

- Angela Clifford won the Food Champion Award at the Arable Awards in 2022 for her work with EatNZ.
- Angela Clifford believes we need to adopt a community- sufficiency instead of self sufficiency ethos to make healthy food affordable and accessible.
- The Food Farm has an abundance of fruit and vegetables growing according to permaculture principals.
- The Food Farm garden is a diverse and carefully planted ecosystem.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

"New Zealand is full of small farms and very few of them are about feeding people, but despite this, they sit on some of the best soil on the periphery of our towns and cities."

On a larger scale, Angela said land use change, particularly fertile land that had been used for food production being converted to forestry, is "a concern".

If we are going to have trees on a landscape, they should be incorporated in a clever and strategic way.

Angela sites agroforestry, where trees and shrubs are integrated into pasture-based farming practices.

"Our favourite quote here is from Charles Massey, who said, 'I didn't hear the question, but the answer is diversity.'"

"So whether it's forestry or solar farming, my answer will be diversity."

The Food Farm contains two different 'food forests', an edible forest garden planted in such a way as to create an organically grown ecosys-

tem using permaculture.

"Permaculture is basically a design system.

"It's not just a way of gardening; it's a way of systems thinking."

Angela's passion for food led her to be one of the founders and the chief executive of EatNZ, a not-for-profit food collective that sits across the food system in its 10th year.

Members include farmers, fishermen, academics, and those at the front line of food poverty, food waste, hospitality, and tourism.

"The purpose of EatNZ is to reconnect people with where their food comes from."

As well as supporting and celebrating a connected food system, the organisation has been lobbying, so far unsuccessfully, for the government to adopt a national food strategy.

Angela's work with EatNZ saw her receive the Food Champion award in 2022 at the Arable Awards in Christchurch.

"I like arable farmers because they

feel really connected to what they grow, but there is a big mismatch because what they grow has been totally commodified."

Angela has been working with the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) to amplify the New Zealand grain story.

"The most recent step is that we are working on a New Zealand grains mark.

"At the moment there is a lot of obscurity around where our grains come from."

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# FAR calls on arable farmers



**Anisha Satya**  
REPORTER

**F**armers know what's in their soil, but how much fertiliser goodness do our crops actually absorb?

That's the question the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR) has posed to Mid Canterbury's arable sector as they embark on a nationwide research project.

The project investigates "nutrient outputs" – the concentration of things like nitrogen and phosphorus in a crop – with the long-term goal of saving farmers time and money.

It's common practice to check soil nutrient levels, but once a crop is harvested, there's no knowing how much of those nutrients were absorbed, regional facilitator Donna Lill says.

"We're testing what you've harvested off that paddock – the actual wheat, the barley, or the linseed.

"This looks at the final result of all the decisions you've made while growing your crop."

To participate, all growers need is a handful of grain and seed samples from their harvest – specifically cereals, oilseed rape, linseed and peas.

Those get sent away to be ana-

lysed for 12 different nutrients, from the obvious nitrogen to boron and magnesium.

Data gets sent back to the farmer in two different reports.

"The first report they get back is called a nutrient offtake report."

The individualised report identifies the total nutrients removed from a paddock by crops, and Lill said that data is processed quick enough for farmers to make use of it during the season.

"They may want to change their base fertiliser before the harvest finishes.

"So the sooner they send in their samples, the sooner they get that information back."

The second piece is a comparative benchmarking report, which will be released to everyone in April.

"It compares a grower's grain samples to others that are harvested from this season."

It's this reporting which will help inform better fertiliser practice across the country, she said, but only if enough farmers send in samples.

"The larger that sample size, the more comparisons we get.

"And it gives us an idea, across New Zealand, of how people are going with their nutrient management."

FAR ran a pilot programme last year after a Methven-based group of growers pitched the idea.



Above – Farmers need to save a grain or seed sample from harvest to participate in the research project.

"They were really interested in better understanding their nutrient management, especially micronutrients."

And the project is a collaboration with an agricultural initiative from the United Kingdom, the Yield Enhancement Network (YEN), who process the data.

One-hundred-and-26 samples were processed during last year's pilot – a good start, but Lill is hoping this year's crowd will be larger.

"It's \$100 a sample, that covers the lab analysis.

"FAR and the Fertiliser Association of New Zealand cover the cost of the reporting and data analysis."

The programme will run until autumn.

"We're just encouraging people to get in touch."

If you want to participate in the project, email [donna.lill@far.org.nz](mailto:donna.lill@far.org.nz).



FAR regional facilitator Donna Lill said growers don't often investigate nutrient outputs. PHOTO SUPPLIED



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# Lifestyle

RURAL GUARDIAN | FEBRUARY 2025



## BRINGING THE GYM TO THE FARM

PAGES 21-22

A close-up shot of a person's legs running in a field. The person is wearing white sneakers and black shorts. The background is a field of tall grass under a bright sky.

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# From strength to strength:

CLAIRE INKSON

**K**ate Ivey turned her own fitness struggle into a solution for rural women, creating DediKate—an online program that helps them achieve sustainable health and fitness, no matter how busy or isolated.

Ivey had always been keen on sport and focused on fitness, but moving to Glentanner Station in the Mackenzie Country with her husband Mark and starting a family meant her own wellbeing took a back seat.

“I had all the background and the passion, but despite that, with the changes in my life, I sort of lost my way and my confidence. And lost my fitness.”

Ivey had a Bachelor of Physical Education and Bachelor of Science majoring in psychology from the University of Otago, but the isolation of station life coupled with the demands of motherhood made prioritising fitness a challenge.

“I was living remotely, had no access to the gym and couldn’t get away from the house with young kids,” Ivey says.

After having her third child, Ivey realised she needed to make changes.

“I needed to ditch the 100% all in or all out approach and start actually eating for fuel and I needed short, effective workouts I could do at home.”

Ivey ditched the scales and focused more on her health and wellbeing, an approach that proved to be more successful and sustainable.

She began to wonder if it was an approach other rural women, if faced the same fitness obstacles, might benefit from too.

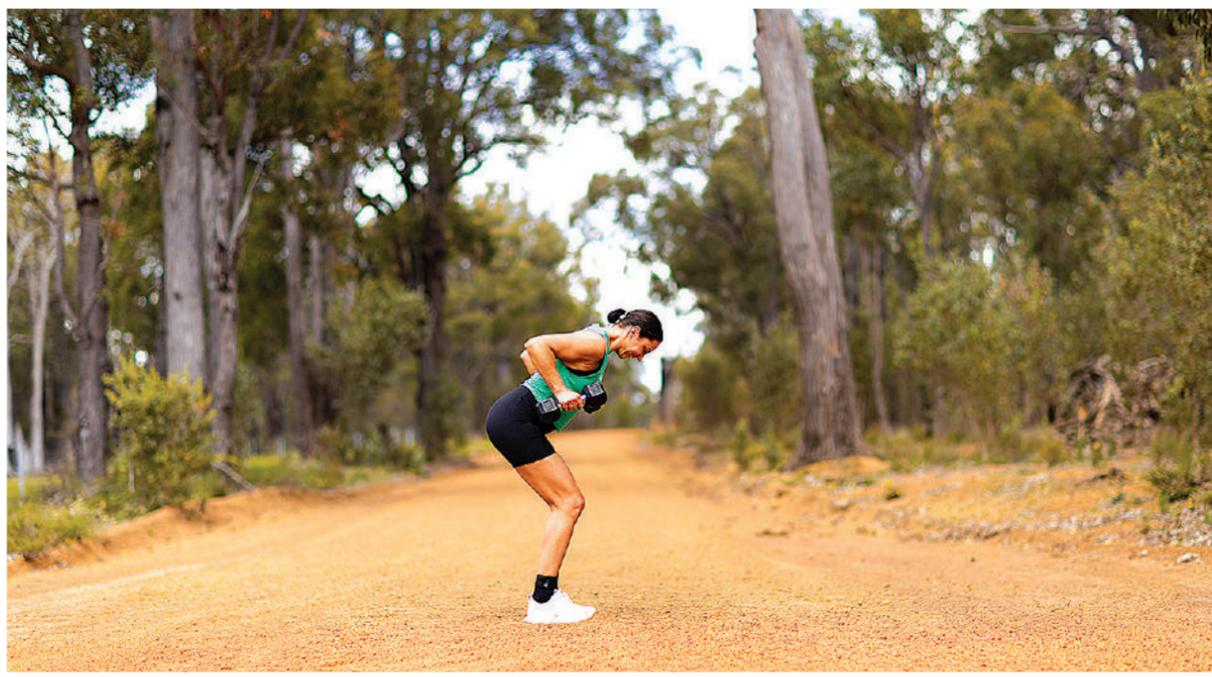
“I realised that with my qualifications and my own experiences, I could help others who were also struggling.”

And so the online health and fitness programme, DediKate, was born.

The programme started as E-books but quickly grew to a subscription-based app with online workouts, personal trainers, and wraparound nutrition support.

It now has 2300 members across New Zealand and Australia.

“It’s focused around exercise for busy women, and exercise for all the mental and physical benefits, not just weight loss.”



For Ivey, the all-or-nothing mindset that served her well in some areas of her life, hindered her long-term fitness goals.

She encourages people to have

a more realistic and sustainable approach to fitness.

“It’s that realisation that to be successful long-term, you have to be okay with missing workouts, not

always eating perfectly and with things not going to plan.”

Ivey said the key is to “just keep going”.

“It doesn’t have to be perfect, but

Above – DediKate was born out of rural mother-of-three Kate Ivey’s challenges with health and wellbeing while living on a remote station. PHOTOS SUPPLIED  
Left – Kate Ivey’s workout videos are often filmed on-farm or in the natural landscape instead of the confines of a studio.

all those little changes add up over time.”

The programme’s membership continues to grow, especially amongst rural women who are isolated from access to a gym and are often time-poor.

A collaboration with New World was what Ivey describes as a “pretty big” moment, and Covid lockdown driving membership numbers up.

“We doubled our membership through Covid when everybody was online.”

Ivey had never intended for the programme to be anything other than a success, though.

“I’ve always been highly motivated and driven, so I started with a vision for DediKate to be huge.

“I had big dreams.”

Part of the programme’s success comes from its relatability.

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Left – Pip Moloney DediKate Aussie Trainer, Kate Ivey and Sarah Waldie, a DediKate Kiwi member, taking the fitness programme across the Tasman to Australia.

Right – Kate Ivey's fitness programme has grown to 2300 members across Australia and New Zealand.



Many in that community are rural women who face unique geographical barriers to fitness.

Often, a gym is miles away, or the gym that is on offer doesn't appeal.

"They may not get a sense of community from their gym

because it's not their tribe.

"They find their tribe with us."

Some rural women have physical jobs on-farm and so don't prioritise planned workouts.

"They have been out on the farm, had a busy day on their feet and think that is enough exercise.

"It's about balance, working on fitness for strength and health and wellbeing with the demands of country life."

unpolished and are often recorded on the farm with the hustle and bustle of kids in the background.

"It's not necessarily deliberate; it's just how I am and how it works.

"Anytime I try and make things glossy, it doesn't work because it's not who I am, and it's not the environment that I'm in, and the great thing is our members absolutely

love it."

The programme has taken on a life of its own, with DediKate becoming a community as much as a business.

"The women who do our programme are so supportive of each other, myself and my trainers.

"It's like having a big family, and it really motivates us to exercise as well, knowing everyone is out there doing it with us."

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2.3kg Quality Mark lamb leg or bone-in shoulder  
2t garlic powder  
2t onion powder  
2t smoked paprika  
1t dried oregano  
1t salt  
1t ground sumac or zest of half a lemon  
(Given its tart, acidic flavor, sumac is best substituted with lemon zest, lemon pepper seasoning, lemon juice, or vinegar. However, each of these substitutes has a more overpoweringly sour taste than sumac and should therefore be used sparingly as a replacement for the spice.)  
ground black pepper  
12 garlic cloves peeled  
2 onions sliced  
3 bay leaves  
1t dried red chilli flakes (optional)  
1 lemon peel and juice  
1C beef stock or wine, cider, or water

## METHOD

- Bring the lamb to room tem-

perature about an hour before cooking to help it cook evenly.

- Preheat the oven to 240°C and combine the garlic powder, onion powder, smoked paprika, oregano, salt, sumac and pepper in a bowl.
- Make 12 small incisions in the lamb, and tuck a garlic clove into each one. Drizzle the lamb with oil, and rub the spice mix all over it.
- Place it in the oven, fat side up and cook for 30 minutes to sear the outside.
- Remove the lamb from the oven and turn the temperature down to 180°C. Add the onions, bay leaves, chilli, lemon peel, lemon juice, and the liquid, then cover it tightly with baking paper and two layers of foil.
- Return the lamb to the oven and cook for 3.5-4.5 hours (even up to 6 hours). Check it occasionally to make sure the liquid hasn't dried out. You can add more if needed. It's ready when the meat pulls apart easily with a fork.
- After removing it from the oven, let it rest, still covered for at least 15 minutes. Remove the lemon peel and bay leaves and serve the lamb on a platter with the onions and pan juices.

Recipe courtesy of  
Beef + Lamb NZ



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## Benefits of a multi-nutritional supplement Part 2

If you take a multi type supplement you should carefully read the mineral contents on the label. Minerals are critical for the health and development of every cell in our body. Insufficient trace minerals can weaken immune response and leave people feeling tired and run down.

I find it interesting that Farmers and Vets are very aware of the importance of trace minerals for animal health. It is a shame that we do not also focus on the importance of trace minerals for human health.

Trace minerals, though required by the body in minute amounts, play a crucial role in maintaining overall health and well-being. These minerals include zinc, copper, selenium, manganese, molybdenum, and chromium. Each trace mineral contributes to various bodily functions essential for sustaining life.

Zinc supports the immune system, promotes wound healing, and is important for DNA synthesis. Copper aids in the production of red blood cells and the maintenance of nerve cells and the



immune system. Selenium acts as a powerful antioxidant, protecting cells from damage. Manganese supports bone health and metabolism. Chromium helps regulate blood sugar levels. Molybdenum is needed to make the enzymes that help remove harmful substances from the body.

While trace minerals are needed in small quantities, their impact on physiological processes and overall health is profound.

Ensuring an adequate intake of these essential nutrients through a balanced diet and a quality multi-mineral supplement is key to maintaining optimal health.

A quality multi-nutritional supplement will have these minerals at the right levels and in a form our body can absorb. Over the years I have seen profound health improvements by adding a multi that is a true multi-mineral. Try a good multi mineral/vitamin and antioxidant for 3 months and see 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.

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*John Arts, Founder, Abundant Health*

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# All's fair in love and farming

CLAIRE INKSON

They say you aren't supposed to keep score in relationships, but that's exactly what Sam Allen and his fiancé Steph Le Brocq will do when the couple competes in the FMG Young Farmer of the Year Aorangi regional final in Ashburton on March 29.

"We always push ourselves to be the best we can."

"I want to get the best out of her, and she wants to do the same with me."

Allen, who is 2IC on a dairy farm in Orari, encouraged Le Brocq to apply and said even though they're battling each other for the top spot, they're keeping no secrets at the dinner table.

"We've each got different strengths and weaknesses, so we're helping each other prepare."

"We figure it makes sense so we can both put our best foot forward."

Allen was runner-up in last year's regional finals and said he intends to prepare for this year's event by focusing on physical challenges rather than theory. However, which skills will be tested will not be revealed until the day.

"I'm going to focus on the practical side rather than the theory - things like doing a fence to setting up a trough."

"It's not just farming. There are other areas as well - last year, we had to fillet a fish."

"You never know what you are going to get."

Despite the pair being fierce-



Steph Le Brocq and Sam Allen, who are engaged, will compete against each other at the Aorangi regional finals. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Thirty-five per cent of this year's entrants are female, a 5% increase on last year, which Le Brocq said was a welcome sign of changing times.

"In my job, I go to a lot of different farms, and there are a lot more girls coming on as shepherds, managers and farm hands."

New Zealand Young Farmers CEO Lynda Coppersmith said the competition has had double the number of first-time entrants compared to last year.

"It's fantastic to see more people getting involved, and it goes to show how much interest and enthusiasm there is in the food and fibre sector - the future is looking bright."

Coppersmith said that as well as a test of physical strength and general knowledge, successful contestants have the added mental challenge of coping under pressure.

"It takes guts to throw your hat in the ring."

"The events themselves are one thing, but to be New Zealand's best, these young farmers have to commit themselves to over six months of hard work in the lead-up to July's grand final."

The seven regional finals will take place between February and April, 2025, before the grand final in Invercargill in early July.

ly competitive, Allen said he is looking forward to supporting Le Brocq in the competition.

"I would get more satisfaction out of her getting the top spot than myself," he said.

Le Brocq, a stock truck driver with Temuka Transport, said the pair would support each other when preparing for the event, but when crunch time came, the gloves would be off.

"We will support each other 100% and work together to develop each other's skills."

"But when it comes down to it, we won't hold back," Le Brocq said.



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# Visa changes may ease shortage

ANISHA SATYA

Mid Canterbury's dairy industry could see a boost in staff numbers following the Government's proposed visa changes.

A rejig of the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) criteria could make hiring migrant workers easier on the wallet for employers, and allow migrants to stay in the country for longer stints.

That could mean more staff for our local dairy sector, licensed immigration adviser Maria Jimenez said.

"It's very important to our dairy farmers, as it's a main industry for us.

"The changes are good for both employers and employees."

Jimenez, director of local service Jimenez Immigration, said the current hiring conditions aren't great for employers.

The median wage rate - the minimum pay a migrant on the AEWV can receive - sits at \$31.61 per hour, while the minimum wage for citizens is \$23.15 per hour.

"If [employers] have a resident who's earning just minimum wage, or \$25 per hour, with more experience, they're not very happy because someone who's on a work visa is earning more than them."

The obligation for employers to meet that rate will be removed as part of the changes, which would open up work and visa pathways alike.

For visa applicants, it could make obtaining residency harder.

"They'll have more chances to be hired on a work visa, but you still need to meet the median wage to achieve residency.

"It will be more challenging to get that."

Jimenez's advice to those applying for AEWVs was to prove they had a good work ethic.

"Show what you can offer your employers.

"If they can see you're really productive, they're willing to promote you and support you with your residency."

Client manager and marketer Ken Aguila said most contractors would help visa holders upskill, hold higher management positions and get them on the road to residency.

"All the employers we've talked to are willing to support their migrant workers, and value their work.

"Especially for dairy farmers, because the work's very hard."

Jimenez warned employers that there were two sides to the same coin; as workers needed employment, contractors needed skilled labour.

"The constant with immigration is change.



Licensed immigration adviser, and director of Jimenez Immigration Maria Jimenez.

"I'd like to emphasise that if you've got a migrant worker, and they're qualified, secure them now."

Immigration Minister Erica Stanford made the announcement in December.

"Our focus remains on attracting more higher-skilled workers while managing migration levels responsibly, so New Zealand has access to the skills we need to grow our economy.

"These changes will support a smarter, efficient and predictable immigration system."

The obligation for employers to meet the median wage rate of \$31.61 would be removed in March this year, Stanford said.

"It distorted wages and, in some cases, resulted in businesses paying migrant workers more than New Zealanders doing the same job," Stanford said.

In favour of migrants, the minimum experience requirement for low-skilled labour will be reduced to two years, and visas will last an extra year to align with the maximum continuous stay requirement.

Employers will be required to advertise jobs locally first, through the Ministry of Social Development, and prove they've tried recruiting Kiwis before they advertise abroad.

Jimenez stressed that the announcement was "still just news", and was not a concrete commitment.

Industry organisation DairyNZ believes the changes will help ease staffing pressure on farmers.

Research by the group claims 16% of farms across the nation are understaffed.

"While our sector employs significant numbers of New Zealanders, international workers have filled a genuine gap in the workforce,"

chief executive Campbell Parker said.

"Increasing the visa duration to three years for some workers will [add] certainty for farmers over the different seasons."

He said most migrant workers "start as entry-level farm assistants, making it challenging for businesses to justify paying the median wage", so the removal of median

wage requirements was welcome.

"These new changes will align wages with local workers while helping to create a pathway for migrants.

"The value of international workers should not be underestimated. They and their families contribute to the vibrancy and prosperity of rural communities."

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**PROBIOTIC  
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## A Profitable Solution for reducing mastitis culls and empties.

Written by Chris Collier

**D**airy farmers must be diligent to avoid the need for culling due to a flare up in mastitis or the sickening news of a high empty rate. The adoption of technologies and practices to avoid these issues is widespread. However, probiotics has been successfully implemented on an increasing number of farms to avoid being forced to cull for these issues.

### Reducing Mastitis Culls

For the last 7 years some farmers have treated clinical mastitis cases solely with a strong 5-day oral dose of probiotics, typically achieving over 80% cure rates while keeping mastitis-related cull rates to as low as 1%. This works by boosting cows immune systems and because some minerals are critical to immune function the mineral status of cows must be good to obtain the best results. Encouraged by these excellent results on clinical mastitis a program can be implemented to reduce clinical cases occurring, reducing and even eliminating the need for antibiotics.

In a Japanese trial cows with a history of mastitis in the previous lactation, as well as maiden heifers were treated daily with a probiotic 20-30 days pre calving and for 10 months of lactation. Cows were selected on the basis of having 1 or more cases of mastitis the previous season. Untreated, control cows had the same incidence of mastitis as in the previous lactation, but treatment cows had only a quarter of clinical cases. From days 51-75 of lactation treatment cows had a SCC of 10,000 compared with 1 million for untreated cows, demonstrating the ability of the probiotic to stop an infection flaring up. In heifers the lower cell counts of the treatment group demonstrated the probiotics ability to prevent a new infection.

### Enhancing Mating Performance

Probiotics can also support better reproductive outcomes, helping to lower empty rates to 5%. Empty rates will vary due to factors such as the length of mating and use of sexed semen, so a better indication of mating performance is the 6-week in-calf rate. The key drivers of the 6-week in-calf rate are the 3-week submission rate, non-return rate and conception rate. Factors that are critical to achieving good submission rates are heifer liveweights at calving and cow condition score.

Chris maintains that the first thing farmers can do with probiotics is raise bigger heifers. Probiotic Revolution has over 450 dairy farmers using their calf additive all the time their calves are on milk. It allows farmers to use higher rates of milk, while also stimulating meal hay and grass consumption, resulting in calves on average reaching weaning weights 11 days earlier. One farmer near Stratford used to feed his Friesian heifers 2 litres twice a day for 6 weeks. Now they get 7-8 litres once a day by day 10. His heifer milk production used to be 74% of mixed age cows production. Now it is 86%. In addition to the phenomenally high return from extra milk production it's easier to get these heifer in-calf and they stay in the herd longer.

The second step Chris advocates is the trough treatment of probiotics to springers. They have a vital role in minimizing health issues at calving - including negligible retained membranes and metritis, as well as substantially less difficult calvings

Chris cites examples of farmers achieving exceptional results, such as cows cycling 26 days after calving compared to the national average of 42 days. This accelerates mating success, surpassing Dairy NZ's target of 90% submission within three weeks. Improved conception rates naturally follow, because if nearly all cows are cycling before mating starts, they will be conceiving to the 2nd cycle which has a 7% higher conception rate than matings to the first cycle, and conception rates increase again at the third or fourth heats.

### A Profitable Alternative

Probiotics offer a practical, profitable way for farmers to reduce herd wastage from excessive culling for mastitis and empties. Many will want to test it out taking some small steps to see that it is working well on their farm. This can be done by:

- Use Calf Xtreme to increase milk intakes for calves
- Treat clinical cases of mastitis and high SCC cows.

For many farmers, these benefits align with both profitability and sustainability goals, offering a viable way to adapt to increasing compliance demands without compromising productivity.

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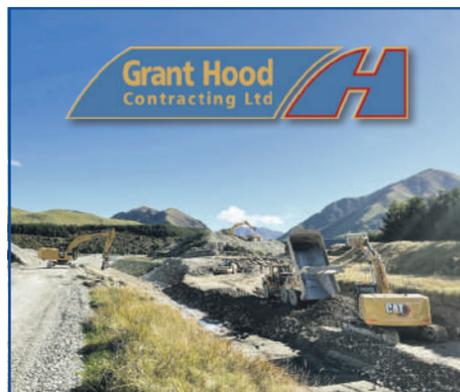


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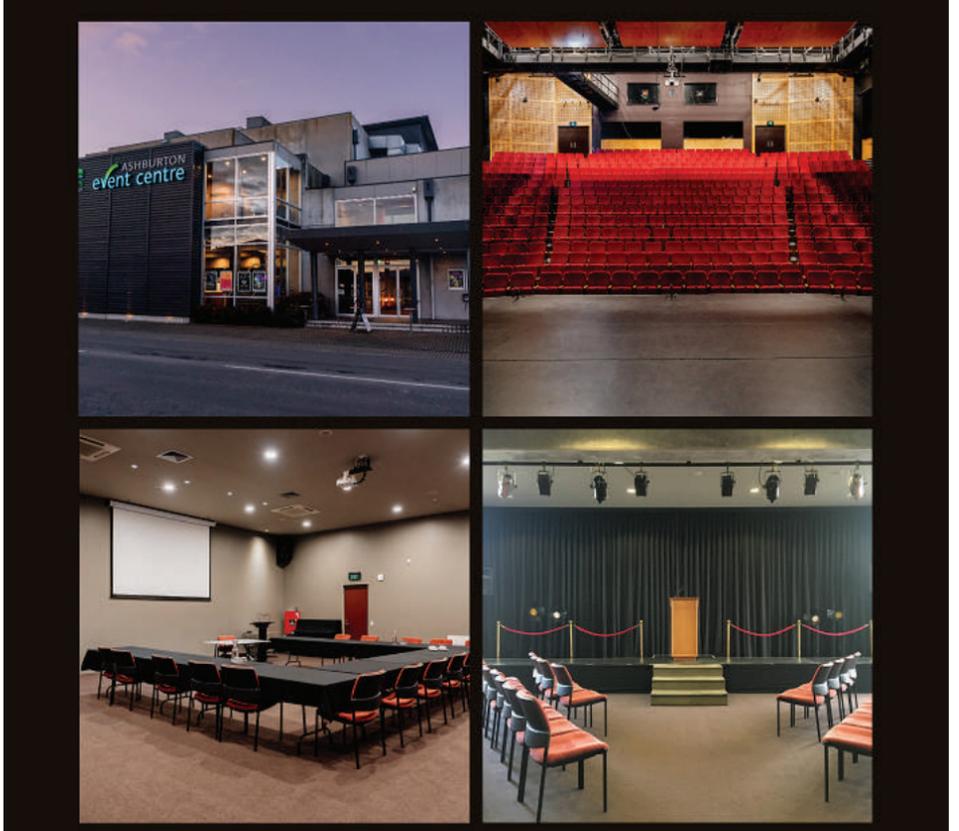
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# Stop the slime and give autumn-sown crops a fighting chance

## Ironmax Pro® slug protection protects your investment

Autumn-sown pasture maximises feed options. And, as you're paying good money for seed and drilling, Ash Pace, UPL NZ Ltd. Regional Manager, Central South Island, says that's the time to plan pest protection programmes.

"Autumn grass is popular for producing winter feed. Most people will spray-out or double spray-out an existing crop when they're re-grassing, starting late summer. You only really get once chance at planting, so you need a result or that's a paddock wasted when there are hungry mouths to feed – your stock's, and your family's."

He says for contracted crops, the impact can be even wider. "If you're growing ryegrass for seed, failure costs everyone. It's not only the farmer, it's the buyer, and on it goes. There's a knock-on effect."

Ash says while there's general awareness of the havoc slugs can wreak on seedlings, "people can get a bit casual from time to time".

"What you need to remember is that a young seedling is only a couple of bites for a slug, and they're phenomenal feeders – capable of consuming more than 50% of their own body weight. If your crop doesn't have a robust protection programme, damage to crops can happen surprisingly quickly.

"If you're re-grassing, you're likely to be spraying out six weeks or so before sowing, with a follow-up spray two weeks out, to get any weeds that have re-grown. At the first spray-out is the time you should start

monitoring for slugs that may be lurking around from the previous crop. Use a hessian slug mat. Or, some farmers prefer a large 'pet rock' which they put to the side of the paddock and regularly check under. If that monitoring shows up any slugs, you can make a plan."

Ash says 'pre-baiting' just after that first spray off will effectively reduce the adult population.

But he warns that slug eggs take just 10-14 days to hatch, in favourable warm and moist conditions. "It's the eggs that will catch you out. You can get a sudden population explosion."

Slug eggs are difficult to detect. "They are translucent and look a lot like frogs' spawn. We can't kill the eggs, but we can kill the hatchlings."

"Before seedling emergence, we'd recommend a second application of bait. Pastures with clover need longer monitoring because those plants are slower to establish."

While rain and irrigation increase the risk of high slug pressure, Ash says even a heavy dew at night can create a 'highway' for the pests. "I say to farmers 'when you go to sleep, the slugs go to work on your crops.'"

De Sangosse, world leaders in slug control technology, took their outstandingly effective should be Metarex Inov® slug bait and made it environmentally friendly, and future proofed. "The result; Ironmax Pro, treads very gently on the earth without losing anything in terms of potency. That's

a game changing achievement. Ironmax Pro is BioGro certified and offers the best of both worlds."

IPM-friendly, Ironmax Pro is proven to have limited impact on beneficials including earthworms, and the slug predator carabid beetle. It's also safer around stock, companion animals, and farm dogs and when you get stock break-outs, or gates left open.

Ash says both Ironmax Pro and Metarex Inov baits are particularly effective for slug control at all ages as they are exceptionally palatable. "Even young slugs will ingest enough active to stop them in their tracks. That's the difference in efficacy between both those baits, and a coated bait, which just has a lick of active round the outside."

He says rigorous trials have shown that slugs actively prefer Ironman Pro over seedlings. "That's a pretty solid endorsement!"

The reason for the baits' attractiveness and edibility is Colzactive® technology. Created by the research and development team from De Sangosse, Colzactive comprises specially selected oil seed rape extracts. The team evaluated 20 different plant species, identifying 50 potential molecules for their attractiveness to slugs, and ultimately selecting two molecules slugs found irresistible.

Ironmax Pro and Metarex Inov are manufactured using the finest durum wheat using a unique manufacturing process. The all-weather bait, is very rainfast, so it continues to perform in the



Slug damage can be severe as this grass paddock shows.

damp conditions that the slugs thrive in without deterioration. So particularly for Mid-Canterbury systems which rely on irrigation, or in Autumn when our weather can be unpredictable, Ash says that's essential.

"You can apply either bait by itself or with a fertiliser. The latter saves labour and fuel – if fertiliser is already scheduled."

Ash says, once established, pasture is usually out of danger, "but it pays to keep monitoring".

Ironmax Pro contains the optimized active ingredient 24.2 g/kg ferric phosphate anhydrous, referred to as IPMax. Iron (ferric) phosphate is a natural component of soil. In Ironmax Pro, it works as a stomach poison on slugs and is fatal once ingested. Ironmax Pro damages the digestion process and, ultimately, the ability of a slug to process food.

Talk to your local technical specialist for more details on Ironmax Pro or Metarex Inov or contact Ash Pace, UPL NZ Regional Manager Central South Island, on 021 987 735.

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