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# FROM THE EDITOR

WITH Claire Inkson – OPINION

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# A&P shows' future

It's A&P show season again, my absolute favourite time of the year.

A&P shows are more than just a great family day out; they are an opportunity to showcase all that is great about New Zealand's primary industry.

So often, we talk about the urban-rural divide and how our urban population has lost touch with farming and our agricultural heritage.

I have tried to get the good farming stories out into the world over the years, but I often feel like we are preaching to the converted.

Reaching the urban demographic and fixing the disconnect the general population has to food and fibre and those that produce it remains a constant challenge to our sector.

While they are not a complete fix, A&P shows are one tool we can use to tackle that challenge.

A&P societies, which originated in Britain, were initially more like farmer lobby groups with an educative arm.

That changed at the start of the 20th century when the Farmers Union took over the lobbying, and the Department of Agriculture oversaw education.

This left A&P societies to focus on shows, and since then, shows have evolved, with each area hosting an event with a distinctly local flavour, and the idea of bringing the country to town grew wings.

Each A&P show provides an opportunity to educate, inspire, and tell our story to a captive and willing urban audience.

It's a chance to engage the younger generation, both rural and urban, and



We need to look to the next generation to keep our shows alive.

PHOTO: CHRISTCHURCH NZ

highlight the many varied pathways into a career in primary industry.

It's an opportunity to showcase the most exciting and innovative agri-technology.

Unfortunately, it's an opportunity that is in danger of being lost.

So many A&P shows are struggling due to a lack of volunteers and the next generation's disinterest in carrying the baton forward.

Part of the problem lies in the very nature of A&P shows, the core thing that makes them unique – tradition.

Tradition is both a blessing and a curse.

The tradition of shows is about our agricultural heritage, something of which we should be very proud.

But often, this can translate into an unwillingness to embrace change and give the next generation some ownership, something essential for future-proofing these iconic and cherished events.

The next generation of farmers coming through the ranks are vibrant, future-focused and passionate.

If you have any doubt about that, then take a look at the recent FMG Young Farmer of the Year contest and the calibre of entrants.

If shows are to remain relevant, if they are to survive and be utilised as a key tool in battling the negative farming narrative, we have to be willing to let the next generation put their own stamp on these events.

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# Methane Science Accord wants scientific approach

By Claire Inkson  
[Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

The current proposed ruminant methane tax could see around 20 per cent of sheep and beef farms go out of business, says Otago farmer, environmentalist and co-chairperson of the newly founded Methane Science Accord, Jane Smith.

"It's generic, overbearing and economically quite treacherous, particularly to farming operations that are flourishing to a lesser degree economically."

The Methane Science Accord, founded by a group of like-minded farmers and industry stakeholders, aims to lobby the incoming Government for a methane tax policy based on current, unrefuted science.

The group says that methane science is evolving, and policy needs to take that into account.

The Global Warming Potential (GWP100) stated that methane was a strong absorber of heat, making farmers ruminants responsible for nearly half of New Zealand's emissions.

However, research findings from Oxford University found that the GWP100 overstated methane's

ruminant warming ability by 300-400 per cent.

The group is questioning why the new findings into methane are being ignored and that farmers have been left feeling "angry and bewildered."

Smith said the Methane Science Accord is science-focused and that the sector and Government need to address 'why' when looking at methane policy rather than the "how, what, when and who."

"We want to help politicians, urban people and our own sector understand the science, and try and educate the wider public and keep politicians on track."

The group said that the proposed methane tax policy could see one in five farmers gone, which it describes as "economic suicide for provincial New Zealand", and with New Zealand's trading partners not adopting a similar policy, we will become uncompetitive.

Smith said that New Zealand farmers are some of the most efficient in the world because the sector has chased efficiency, not targets.

"Let's carry on down the track of efficiency; let's get the carbon down even further, but let's do



Jane Smith, co-chairperson of the newly founded Methane Science Accord. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

it on exactly the same trajectory we have been using, which is breeding more efficient stock." Smith said that the rest of the

world is envious of New Zealand's position, and to make a difference in climate change globally, we need to share our knowledge.

"If we want to do something really heroic, why don't we help the rest of the world become as efficient in a pasture-raised system as we are?"

So far, support for the Methane Science Accord has come not just from the agriculture sector but also from the urban dwellers and business people, Smith said.

"They know that this will affect them, and it's been really heartening to see they understand the consequences as well."

Feedback from levy groups shows they are pleased the Methane Science Accord is sticking to the science and staying out of politics.

"We are not getting involved in politics; we are very clear on that. Politics is what got us into this mess in the first place."

The Methane Science Accord is independent of but fully supported by Groundswell N.Z., 50 Shades of Green, Facts About Ruminant Methane (FA.R.M.), Rural Advocacy Network and over 100 farming leaders.

People are encouraged to get behind the campaign even if they support other lobby groups.

Those wishing to support the campaign or learn more can go to [www.methane-accord.co.nz](http://www.methane-accord.co.nz).



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# Hope new government will bring positive change

By Claire Inkson  
[Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Farmers and lobbying groups are optimistic that the new government will ease regulations and back primary industry as the sector faces increasing red tape, low commodity prices and high on-farm inflation.

Mid Canterbury Federated Farmers president David Acland says the election result will allow lobbying groups to take a more positive attitude when engaging with the government.

"Over the last six years, we have been in defence mode, and now, if you look across the National party, Act and New Zealand First, we have a good cohort of rural representation."

Acland said the result will "lift the mood of rural New Zealand."

"Everyone has been a bit glum for a combination of reasons, especially in farming, so this will definitely help that."

With special votes yet to be counted, what the government cabinet will look like is still to be determined, but Acland feels Todd McClay would be a good pick for Minister of Agriculture, and his comparative inexperience

in the primary sector could be a positive.

Acland said McClay would be more likely to look at the sector as a whole rather than as individual components such as beef and lamb or dairy.

"He would have no bias to any farm type or system; he is a clean slate."

North Otago sheep and beef farmer and Methane Science Accord co-chairperson Jane Smith says the election result is a long overdue reflection of the silent majority regaining their voice.

"I hope that this brings with it accountability, fiscal responsibility, rational regulation and an end to choking the lifeblood out of small businesses, the provinces and the economy."

Smith said she hopes the incoming government will focus on rebuilding the health care system, education and restoring law, order and democracy and that New Zealand can once again be proud of our farmers.

"We need the ability to innovate and remain at the top of efficient global production and environmental enhancement without being stifled by irrational, unpalatable and ineffective rules."



It was all smiles for Christopher Luxon after the results of the election came in.

PHOTO: NZME

Smith said she would continue to focus on questioning the new government, sector leaders, banks and processing companies on proposed methane taxing and the

push for science-backed policy.

"The amount of farmers, ag-sector and taxpayer money we spend behind the scenes on research for methane emissions

is a disgrace. I intend to bring science and accountability to that conversation instead of wasting money on a solution looking for a problem," Smith said.

Groundswell NZ, whose Drive for Change tractor tour last month promoted a change of government, is pleased with the result, Groundswell NZ environmental spokesperson Jamie McFadden said.

"It's great for farmers, businesses, the environment, the economy, our democracy, our country – everything."

McFadden said the difference the new government will mean for farmers can't be overstated.

"It's a huge relief knowing how bad recent regulations are and what more was in the pipeline."

North Canterbury farmer Angie Mason, who has had four children move overseas this year looking for a "better lifestyle", hopes the change in government will make New Zealand a more appealing option for young people.

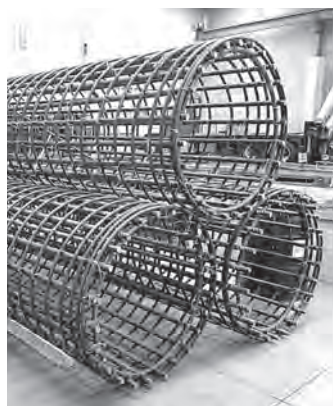
"Hopefully, we will see young professionals come back home shortly."

"Overall, the election results have given us a sense of relief and hope for the future," Mason said.

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# Getting better results, more value from spray programme

## Using adjuvants to boost profits and productivity

With spray programmes about to kick off, it's a good time to look at ways to maximise ROI.

Adjuvants are an affordable way to boost, and manage, spray programmes. Yet they often fly under farmers' and growers' radars.

That's according to UPL NZ Ltd.'s Adjuvant Product Manager, David Ligan. A passionate advocate of the products, David says adjuvants are undervalued. "Adjuvants don't have an active. But what they do is help extract every last cent of value from the herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides you use. They give a great return on investment."

David says that begins at spray-out.

He says this critical stage, pre-crop establishment can be a deal-breaker for the next crop. Traditionally, non-selective herbicides - glyphosate and glufosinates - are applied to kill the previous crop and clean out weeds, reducing competition for the in-coming seedlings.

David says, using an adjuvant can make the process even more effective.

"Naturally, you always want the best outcome from what you're doing on the land. If you're spraying-out, pre-planting, with non-selective herbicides, then adjuvant Unison® delivers drift control, along with providing the enhanced deposition, retention, and penetration you need."

David says the low foaming, non-petroleum-based product is a unique patented formulation - a blend of soybean oil ethoxylate and extract from pine tree stumps. "It helps the sprays to be absorbed through the natural pathways by opening the waxy and hairy cuticle of plants, that's rather than damaging them, which slows down uptake. With Unison, the uptake into the plant is excellent.

"Unison also helps reduce the risk of re-sprays. No-one wants to be doing things twice or holding up cultivation and re-sowing and incurring extra costs."

In addition, David says, the ability to manage spray drift effectively not only means less waste, it also avoids posing an environmental hazard or potentially threatening adjacent crops and plants.

"Ensuring non-selective herbicides land exactly on the target is part of running a good business, carrying out good land stewardship, and being a good neighbour."

While adjuvants are a very broad category, sustainable agricultural product provider UPL have it covered. Previously Elliott Chemicals Limited, they began work on adjuvants in this country more than two decades ago. Today, they are industry leaders with a portfolio of 22 proven adjuvant products - each with its own job to do.

"The ability to get sprays 'to, on and in' are what adjuvants bring to the spray application," David says. "They've got a lot to contribute. Their clever science can improve effectiveness of

sprays and add benefits."

Perhaps the best known, and most widely used adjuvant, is the super spreader Du-Wett®. David explains water, which makes up to 90% of sprays, has a high surface tension. "It doesn't give you real spread or coverage. Adding a spreader will definitely enhance the product's performance. It makes every droplet count."

There are other financial benefits too.

"Du-Wett has a significant impact in terms of time and cost-savings because it can be used at a much-reduced water application volume. That way, spraying is completed faster. Tank filling and travelling times are cut, especially if you're travelling between blocks, and diesel and labour expenses decrease.

"It more than pays for itself." An adjuvant important to spray hygiene, is All Clear® 2X tank cleaner and decontaminator. This removes even sticky products such as carfentrazone (e.g.,

Clout®) from spray units.

David says All Clear 2X is cheap insurance against accidental cross-contamination and mistakes. "Getting your spray equipment cleaned, and fully decontaminated prior to the start of the spraying season, should be part of a regular maintenance programme." Using All Clear 2X between spray products is also recommended.

David says "hard" water is another potential factor in spray efficacy that an adjuvant can tackle.

"People often forget is that water is actually an active chemical (H2O). Some chemicals, including glyphosates, are very susceptible to the effect of "hard" water. The positively charged cations in calcium, magnesium, iron etc. bind to the negatively charged glyphosate molecule. This slows up-take, reduces solubility, and can precipitate out of the solution, reducing the efficiency of glyphosate (in particular)."



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# Working with farmers to lower emissions levels

Our latest Rural Confidence Survey was out a few weeks back and the results were incredibly sobering, with farmer sentiment now sitting at its lowest level at any stage over the past 20 years.

These results highlight the incredibly challenging environment facing the sector.

Despite this, Rabobank remains optimistic about the contribution food and agri will continue to make to New Zealand. The sector underpins our national economy and we're proud of the work we do alongside our clients which helps to feed and clothe customers around the world.

To flourish in the future, one of the major challenges the sector must address is the need to increase food production to feed a growing population, while at the same time lowering greenhouse gas emissions and the other environmental impacts associated with food production systems.

Tackling these environmental impacts – including climate change – is a particularly complex challenge with food producers at different stages of the transition. But it's a challenge that the sector, and the country as a whole, must embrace.

New Zealand's economy incurred \$840 million in costs from climate change-related flooding and droughts between 2007 and 2017, while the flooding events of early 2023 cost the economy an estimated \$1.76 billion.

Unfortunately, such severe weather events will increase in number and severity due to our changing climate and slow global action. We all need to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Here, in New Zealand we face a unique challenge, with emissions from agriculture contributing just under half of our total emissions. At the same time, agriculture also underpins our national economy and is the cornerstone of rural communities where 16 per cent of New Zealanders live.

Rabobank's view is that policies to sustainably reduce emissions need to equally consider economic and social sustainability alongside the environment.

For this, we believe emissions efficiency – achieving emissions reduction on farms per output unit – is key to achieving this balance. The world needs highly efficient operators to continue to sustainably produce food and fibre and to avoid carbon leakage – the transfer of production to less-carbon efficient operators in other countries. We, therefore, want to support efficient New Zealand operators to grow.

Some of the work we're doing alongside farmers and growers to support emissions efficiency includes:

- In late 2022, Rabobank New Zealand joined a new joint venture between the Government and agribusinesses. The joint venture – now named AgriZeroNZ – aims to take pressure off New Zealand farmers by making sure they have access to affordable and effective tools and technology to cut their methane and nitrous oxide emissions.
- In recent years we've published industry 'white papers' exploring food security. Our most recent white paper was released in



Courtney Bidois, Chief Sustainability Officer, Rabobank.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

July at the Primary Industry Summit and is titled – The great New Zealand balancing act – delivering sustainable emissions reductions, food security and economic prosperity.

- Providing submissions on proposed government policies that reflect the views of our clients. Recent submissions include those on the

Emissions Trading Scheme Review, the Ministerial Inquiry into Land Use and Pricing Agricultural Emissions.

- Launching the Growing our future podcast series late last year which helps equip farmers and growers with the knowledge to support resilient farming systems.
- Running Carbon Farming and Integrated Farm Planning

workshops for clients in locations across New Zealand. As a team, Rabobank is proud of our work in supporting the resilience of rural communities, championing the role of food producers and promoting a just transition to a lower emissions economy.

*By Courtney Bidois,  
Chief Sustainability Officer,  
Rabobank New Zealand*



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# Public agencies challenged over freshwater science

A recent scientific report once again reveals why some people have lost trust and faith in public agencies like the Environment Canterbury regional council.

I'm referring to the river margins report that has emerged after our suspicions were first raised when we read a story in another media organisation. The article repeated ECan's claim of a huge loss of riverbed margin to intensive farming, with the worst river in Canterbury being the Blythe, with a massive 80% loss. But Blythe Valley landowners immediately raised concerns that the science was wrong, and they were being defamed.

Following a full analysis of the report, including an independent appraisal, and field assessment of the full length of the Blythe River, we discovered that there was no riverbed margin that had been converted to intensive farming, as claimed by ECan.

One explanation could be that the use of the aerial and satellite imagery mistakenly identified lush green from two unusually wet summers as being conversion to intensive farming. Some locals claim it was deliberate as part of an agenda by some within ECan that is "out to get farmers". Whether it is incompetence or deliberate, the net result is the public have been misled.

However, there was more.

The river margins report was peer reviewed by two senior scientists, independently reviewed by NIWA, and approved by ECan's chief scientist. An Official Information Act request was lodged for the NIWA review but both ECan and NIWA refused. That was challenged and ECan released a heavily redacted NIWA review but NIWA themselves still refused. After indicating the issue would go to the Ombudsman, ECan released the full NIWA review but NIWA remained steadfast, probably not realising that ECan had released the review in full.

Further research revealed that the ECan person overseeing the report, one of the ECan senior scientist



Blythe Valley river.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

peer reviewers, and the NIWA scientist, along with others, used the flawed river margins report in a submission on braided rivers to the environment select committee. That the NIWA scientist felt confident to put their name to this letter, referencing the ECan report, when their peer review excluded data review or interpretation, raises questions regarding the validity and lack of due process for conducting the review.

Despite proving the report and the processes behind it were flawed, we have been met with a stonewall from both ECan and NIWA. While some wording tweaks have been made to the original report,

neither organisation is owning up to the fact the report was flawed. No public correction, no apology to either the Blythe Valley landowners or the wider Canterbury farming community.

There are many aspects that are of significant concern to the public. If we cannot trust the science from our scientists, where does that leave us? Science from regional councils feed into national freshwater data and is used to inform policy and regulations. How much of the science is flawed and how many policies and regulations are being developed based on flawed science?

It all takes me back a year ago when I shared a video on social

media that demonstrated how ECan misled freshwater data for the Hurunui River in North Canterbury.

At each step – from data collection, analysis, and presentation of the data – I described how flawed processes led to conclusions that were false.

The Hurunui River was incorrectly deemed unswimmable, based on data collected from a stagnant side stream rather than the river itself. Increasing trends in phosphorus and nitrogen were found to be incorrect. Farmers were blamed for high E. coli readings when DNA analysis found it was coming from seagulls.

Now, 12 months on, and another flawed scientific report reinforces

why we continue to seriously doubt the science from ECan.

Through my work in both Groundswell and Rural Advocacy Network, we are finding misinformation and flawed science is prevalent among public agencies and the Government.

While it is extremely time consuming researching these issues, we will continue to hold public agencies accountable. But unfortunately for science, the damage is done. We no longer know who or what information is accurate. This situation is untenable and needs to change.

*By Jamie McFadden,  
Groundswell Environmental  
Spokesperson*

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# All Farm Engineering

# Family farming with the times



The Hobans' Corriedale stud has been in the family since 1925.



The Hobans run 240 Herford cattle on their Waipara property.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

By Claire Inkson

[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

For Amberley A&P Show president James Hoban, farming is a family affair.

James runs Glenafric farm, a 770-hectare property in Waipara, with his wife Maria and parents Pat and Judith.

"It wouldn't work if we didn't have all four of us at the moment," James says.

The family sold their fourth-generation family farm near Culverden to purchase Glenafric in February 2017.

While selling a farm that had been in the family for so long was a difficult decision, the need to farm on a bigger scale to retain the on-farm family dynamic, meant the move was necessary.

The Culverden property was smaller and relied on partial irrigation.

Staying on the property would have been farming intensively to remain viable.

"We wouldn't have to go dairy farming, but we would have had to do something different to traditional sheep and beef to make it stack up."

The Hobans looked at a range of different farms on the North Canterbury market before settling on Glenafric.

While the farm needed some work, everything that needed to be done was fixable, and the farm ticked the most important boxes.

"It had good rainfall, the right soil, location and scale," James said.

In the seven years the Hobans have been on the Waipara farm, they have worked on developing the property, from minor improvements such as re-fencing, planting poplars and fencing waterways, and, larger scale projects such as retiring 65ha of native bush, a stock water scheme and building a new wool shed and covered yards.

"We've swung a hell of a lot of gates," James laughs.

Glenafric's size, climate and dryland farm system allow the Hobans to focus on sheep and beef breeding and finishing.

The Hobans run 2500 Corriedale ewes and 240 Hereford cattle. They have also established a South Suffolk stud flock to complement their Corriedale stud, and host an annual on-farm ram sale.

Finishing can be flexible,

depending on the season.

"We've had years where we have sold quite a few store lambs at weaning when the market has been strong, but then last summer we finished them all.

"It's a bit like trying to use a crystal ball.

"We know we can finish lambs here, but it's whether that always makes sense."

James, Maria, Pat and Judith all share the practical farm work and administration while a casual worker is employed during busy periods.

While some family farming operations can be challenging, the Hobans have a good working relationship.

"We all work really well together, despite having some interesting moments, like families tend to."

James and Maria's children Alice, age 12, and William, age 9, enjoy being part of farm life and make the most of the farm's beachfront location.

"That's a big part of why we are farming.

"We wanted to bring our kids up on the farm."

James works part-time as a farm consultant, as well as writing for a farming publication and being involved in the Hurunui Landcare group.

Being president of the Amberley A&P Association has also put constraints on James' time on-farm, but he has found the position rewarding.

"There's a lot of frustrating little jobs that take time, but people keep reminding me that the show will happen, and it will all come together on the day."

The Hobans, whose Corriedale stud has been in the family since 1925, had been involved in the Amuri A&P show for four generations.

Joining the Amberley A&P Association after the move seemed a natural progression.

"We always went to the Amberley show; it's a great event. Grandad started exhibiting sheep at Amberley in the early 1960s."

"It's hard to get volunteers for these events and some shows are struggling. We've been lucky to have a good team at Amberley, with new faces stepping up as well as long-term supporters continuing to help the A&P succeed."

With Amberley so close to Christchurch and the town



Glenafric farm is situated in Waipara, backing onto Macintosh's beach – a popular spot for surfers and fossil hunters.



Farming is a family affair. Pat and Judith Hoban with Maria and James and children Alice and William.

serving as the gateway to the North Canterbury Wine Region, the show is an opportunity to showcase the region's meat and wine producers.

"Our district is the best in the

country at growing both of those, so it's a great way to have that all available and give people a chance to meet the growers."

The show's cancellation during COVID showed people just how

important the event is to the community, James said.

"The competitive side of things is really just a bit of fun, but in terms of the community getting together, that's the real purpose."

# FARMINGFASTFIVE

We ask a farmer five quick questions about agriculture and what farming means to them

Where we ask a farmer five quick questions about farming, and what agriculture means to them. Today we talk to *ROWENA McDIARMID* from Oturehua in the Ida Valley.

**1. What did your journey into farming look like? (backstory, family connection, or what/who inspired you)**

My farming journey started with following my grandmother around the farm in Turiwhate, in the Taramakua Valley on the West Coast.

Both of my parents worked full-time in their respective jobs, as did my grandfather.

Nana kept the farm running during the week.

Her strength and bloody-mindedness make me smile and still inspires me today.

**2. Tell us a little bit about your farming operation. (e.g. Type of farm, location, stock/crop varieties, size of property)**

The property has been in my husband's family for three generations.

Historically a sheep and beef farm, nowadays more a beef and sheep farm.

It is 1330 hectares of rolling valley floor at the Idaburn end of the Ida Valley.

We have a small irrigation right from the Hawkdun Idaburn Scheme, which we irrigate 150 ha with, under pivot.

We also run 150 ha of dry land Techno Bull grazing. (This is my



Rowena McDiarmid.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

baby and something I'm quite proud of).

The rest of the farm is extensive dry land country, with a range of different pastures, lucerne to prairie grass, mixed with a range of legumes.

**3. What challenges have you faced in your farming business, and how have you tackled those**

**challenges?**

When Karl and I first moved to the farm, commodity prices were pretty awful.

Lambs were worth about \$55 each, and we reckoned it cost us about \$50 each to finish them. The next year the price dropped to \$50/a head.

It was a pretty rough start, but

it taught us a lot.

What are the essentials to business? What can you do without?

We always budget for the worst case scenario, and try to keep our costs under control and profitability front of mind.

To be fair, I think we face challenges every day, some small, some big.

If there is one thing I've learnt over the years, it's to trust each other, and make sure you make time to discuss your options then make the decision and run with it.

Don't look back - hindsight will only give you a headache.

**4. What has been a major highlight for you in your farming journey? (e.g. achievements, community support, working with family, farm improvements, a favourite memory)**

It's not much of a highlight, but more something I'm most proud of - the fact we haven't been scared to innovate.

We have taken chances, bought more land, done irrigation projects, put in the dry land techno unit, sold down our ewe flock.

There have been some big risks in all of this, and some massive learnings, and personal growth, that we would have never had if we hadn't risked anything at all.

The old saying is very true - With risk comes reward.

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

Calculate your risks, trust your partner and build solid relationships with the people who you need to make your business tick.



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# Jeep Gladiator, the only convertible lifestyle truck



By Duncan Humm, NZ Farming

This definitely rates as the most unique new ute I've ever had the chance to drive.

Although I previously knew about these Jeeps since they came to the market, I hadn't really given them much of a second thought until I got the opportunity to get hold of one for this article.

While initially sceptical that I wouldn't find much to get excited

about, I enjoyed everything it had to offer, as I put it through its paces.

With pretty much every other Ute in the segment being very close in design to suit as many people as possible in as many markets, Jeep has flipped the script on the typical philosophy.

Beginning with all the things that would make a tough, capable off-road vehicle that still bears many rugged and practical features that have

made the marque iconic, but then Jeep added all the modern conveniences you'd find in other high-end offerings.

The first thing I noticed driving the Gladiator in central Christchurch was that despite its size (5.6m long and 1.9m wide), it really didn't feel like I was driving a big vehicle. It was interesting to note that it was a real head-turner with people on the street!

Once out of the city on the open

road it was good to see the usual mod cons like lane departure and adaptive cruise worked really well, and given I'm quite tall with a few joints that don't like long car rides, I felt fine after the hour and a half drive home.

Being the nice day that it was, the first thing I was keen to try out was popping the roof off, less than a minute to pop the front section of hard top off, a bit more involved to fold down the

windscreen and remove the doors for that authentic summer Jeep experience!

The unique convertible features of the Gladiator does mean some compromises in the cabin experience. Due to having less sound-proofing than a regular ute, the road noise is noticeable, but I quickly figured out the audio system is so good that once you crank it up it soon eliminates anything negative.

# FARMERS

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Would have to say the 9 speaker Alpine system with a Subwoofer is the best I've experienced of any late model vehicle; it even comes with a Bluetooth speaker that clips in & charges behind the back seat so you can carry on listening to your favourite tunes once you've arrived wherever adventure has taken you.

Once I got the Gladiator off the tar seal and onto shingle roads it was obvious this is what the Jeep is made for. At higher speed it felt stable and well planted, it ate up corrugations and potholes with ease.

The small amount of low speed off-road driving I tried left me wanting to take it much further to really push it, the capability is there with ground clearance of 249mm, disk brakes all round and coil spring suspension (Fox 2" shocks, front & rear diff locks and sway bar disconnect are standard on the Gladiator Rubicon) and in keeping with it's rugged DNA, it still has a manual transfer box.

The practicality also extends to easily

removable floor carpet to reveal drain bungs for those times you're playing in deep rivers.

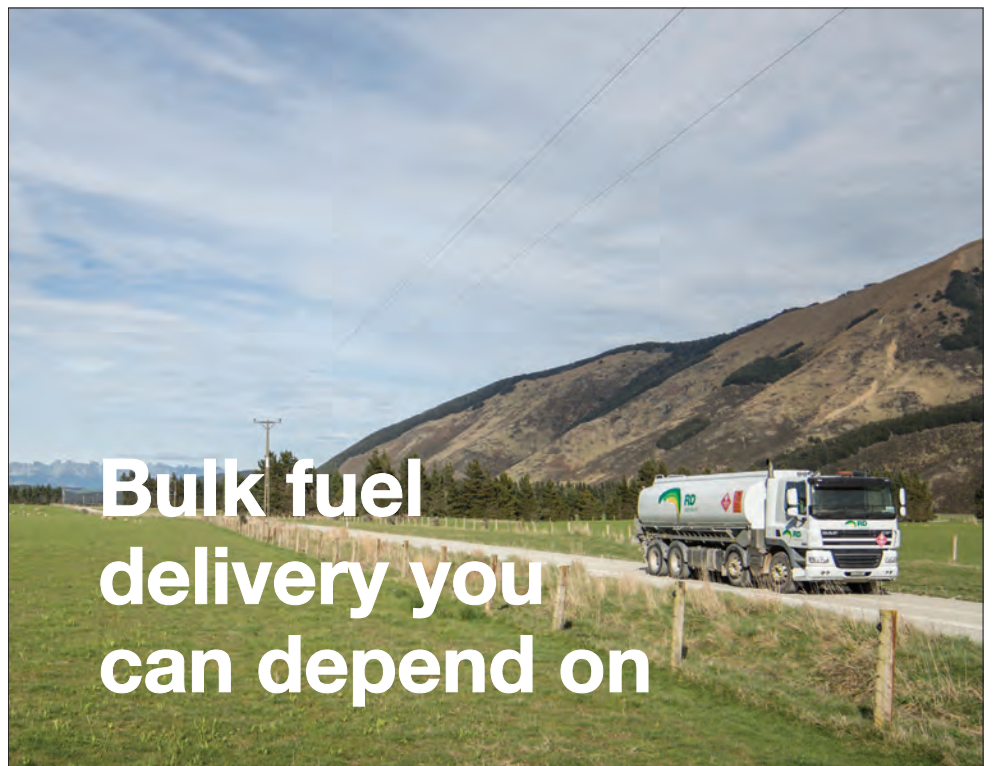
The motor is a 3.6L V6 petrol, putting out 209kw and 347Nm of torque.

The average fuel consumption in the time I had it was 11.2L/100km, much better than what was quoted on the specifications sheet!

I can admit to not trying to put any thought into driving the Gladiator frugally in the time I had with it, so no doubt that could come down much further. Yes that is a bit higher than normal, but that isn't the point of a vehicle like this when making memories in the great outdoors!

Price wise you can currently pick up a Gladiator in either the Night Eagle (the version I drove) for \$79990 or the Rubicon for \$93090.

They come with a three-year, 100,000 km warranty, roadside assist and service intervals of 12,000 km.



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# Sealing seeds securely in pod boosts productivity

## Pod-lock® reduces losses in high-value crops

Achieving a greater certainty of Acrop yield is money well spent.

That's according to Mike Goodwin, UPL NZ Ltd's central South Island regional manager. Mike says, particularly considering recent extreme weather events, taking precautions makes a lot of sense.

Pod-lock, a pod protecting sealer from the sustainable agriculture solutions provider UPL, has a unique latex polymer blend. That - as the name suggests - keeps seeds securely in the pod. The adjuvant's specialised polymer blend works by forming a pliable netting that dries on the pod, creating a seal that helps keep the pod intact and strengthens the pod wall itself.

High value brassica seed crops including oilseed rape are particularly susceptible to seed loss through shedding - also known as shattering. Mike says the naturally occurring process is made worse by factors including severe weather, and even harvesting itself.

"When you've got rain followed by the dry heat which we tend to get a lot in Mid Canterbury, then shedding/shattering can become a

real problem. That makes Pod-lock a really good fit for our local farmers' needs and growing conditions."

Widely used in the UK, Europe, North America, and Australia, Pod-lock was launched in New Zealand ahead of the 2009/10 harvest. Mike says it was with Mid Canterbury farmers particularly, in mind. "It's been good to see there's now really good uptake here."

He says awareness of the product, appreciation of the difference Pod-lock can make to the final harvested yield, and the recent number of extreme weather events have sharpened farmers' and growers' focus.

"Knowing that they've got that backstop there takes away a bit of stress.

"Costs in agriculture have also been rising, which makes optimising yield a priority."

He says with seed crops for export markets, especially, the stakes are high.

"They have a lot of inputs and a lot of spray, resources, and time going into those crops. You don't want to lose a single seed pod, if you can help it.

"Seed losses, as a result of split pods, of 10-25% are common. In more extreme examples, you can get losses of up to 70%. Protecting seed resources and worldwide food security are urgent issues too."

Mike says Pod-lock is more than paying for itself with ROIs of 50 to 60%.

"Using Pod-lock, you just don't get those big seed losses. And enhancing the profitability of the crop is what agriculture is all about right now."

Trials in the UK (where the product is marketed as PODSTIK®) have shown a 200-500 kg/ha seed saving when the product is used. "When you're looking at a crop yielding 4 tonne/ha that's pretty significant."

As a bonus, Mike says, Pod-lock helps deliver cleaner paddocks post-harvest, with fewer volunteer plants germinating from lost seed. "You don't have the potential seed burden that needs to be sorted out next season - which can be a saving in itself."

He says fewer seeds on the ground may also mean the crop is less attractive to birds.

"It's anecdotal, but it certainly makes sense."

Mike says Pod-lock does not impact plant senescence and has no adverse effects on seed maturity or, importantly, on the quality of the seed produced.

Pod-lock can be applied between BBCH 80 (when pods are still green and bendy) through to BBCH 89 (when pods are fully ripe and seeds have hardened). It can be mixed with a range of commonly used desiccants, including glyphosate.

Mike says the product is effective for about a month, although some UK field trials show efficacy for up to 8 weeks after application. Mike also recommends re-spraying if heavy rain occurs.

Pod-lock should be applied in 150-300 L/ha of water, with 300 L/ha water volume recommended for use on dense crops for maximum benefit. Pod-lock is effective at such low use rates, as it bridges the upper pod suture line. This is the point where the pod starts to split when mature, or when repeatedly wetted and dried. By essentially 'sticking' this

area together the upper suture is prevented from opening, which prevents seed loss. Pod-lock does not have to cover the whole pod to be effective.

Pod-lock doesn't translocate within the plant but sticks where it lands. Moreover, Pod-Lock has no residue limit and is broken down naturally over time by weathering and sunlight.

Immediately after application, the sprayer must be rinsed thoroughly with water. Then add All Clear® 2X tank cleaner to ensure Pod-lock is removed from the sides of the tank, pump and spray lines and spray nozzles.

Talk to your local technical representative for more details on using Pod-lock - the convenient, effective way to maximise the value of your valuable brassica seed crops.

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## Major seed event comes to Canterbury

This year Christchurch will host the annual Asian Seed Congress, one of the most significant events on the seed industry calendar.

Hosted by the Asia Pacific Seed Alliance (APSA) and the New Zealand Grain, Seed & Trade Association (NSGTA), the event will run from November 20-24th, and will be the biggest conference so far to be held at the Te Pae convention centre.

"The event has never been to New Zealand, so to host it is a real coup", says NSGTA general manager Thomas Chin.

With more than 1000 APSA members attending from all around the world, Christchurch was chosen as a central location for New Zealand's biggest seed producing regions.

Chin said the event is of critical importance for developing New Zealand's seed export market.

"I'm fully expecting that New Zealand seed companies who are producing seed for companies off shore will get a significant uplift in business from this event."

Trading will be a key aspect of the congress, with 176 tables on the exhibition floor where delegates will have the opportunity to negotiate business-to-business and connect with key contacts.

Technical workshops and forums will cover the latest industry development and technology and topics such as intellectual property issues and trade access.

Four post congress tours will cover the seed production chain from breeding right through to growers and seed processing.

The first tour will include a visit to Plant & Food research in Lincoln, Birkett Farm and South Island Seed Dressing.



Thomas Chin

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

The second tour will visit North Canterbury vineyards and dairy grazing farms with a focus on 'seed to plate', the end result of how seed in New Zealand generates food for human and animal consumption.

The third tour will give delegates a scenic journey through Mid Canterbury, ending with a farm tour and lunch at Middle Rock Station.

The final tour will feature a visit to Barenbrug Processing and Distribution centre, focusing on the seed coating line.

The purpose of the tour is to demonstrate the seed production prowess of the industry, and to show New Zealand is a top quality producer of seed, Chin said.

"We are not as cheap as other Southern hemisphere suppliers, such as Chile and South Africa.

"But what New Zealand excels at is reliability and trustworthiness, and those intangibles are sought after."

# Freedom is coming to Ashburton

Katy Moore and Wesley Smith started Freedom Property Management just six months ago and are already expanding out from Christchurch to the heartland. They have an infectious enthusiasm for their work which, together with their decades of experience, is pushing them along at a sizzling pace.

Freedom is coming to Ashburton! They are looking to open an office shortly to service their growing number of rental properties and clients in the town. There are already a number of homes under management, including new and older, two of which have set new benchmarks for rent in the town. Katy and Wez do property management a little differently - by tailoring their services to the client's particular needs, the clients can go free. Freedom looks after all residential rental property matters, such as finding and selecting tenants, looking after rental income, managing maintenance and repairs, ensuring healthy home compliance, keeping landlords abreast of changing regulatory requirements, and dealing with the various difficulties that can arise at times. In fact, Katy prides herself on her good tenant relations, for which she is well known in the sector.

Freedom is also at the leading

edge of the new Residential Property Managers Bill which is currently before Parliament. The Bill aims to regulate the sector to provide greater security for landlords and tenants. It will ensure property managers meet competency and conduct standards, and are qualified and accountable. Freedom welcomes these changes and is ready at the start line.

Katy has won many industry awards including Independent Property Manager of the Year at the Tenancy Master Class (TMC) Awards in 2022. Wez has been in the property sector for the last twenty years, in both management and compliance, which suits his eye for detail perfectly. They are looking to spark up the property management sector in Ashburton so keep an eye out for their distinctive vehicles, signs and enthusiastic smiles.

**INTRODUCING KATY AND WESLEY**

Katy Moore and Wesley Smith have combined experience of more than 40

years in the property sector.

Katy started managing her own rental properties 20 years ago, growing her portfolio to 25 rentals over the next decade. She then took that passion to one of New Zealand's largest property management companies, winning many awards along the way including Independent Property Manager of the Year at the Tenancy Master Class Awards in 2022.

Katy is unstoppable. She is known in the industry for her kindness and is loved by a wide circle of close family and friends. She has two sons and spends free time with her partner either enjoying Christchurch's exciting central city environs or exploring wild and remote parts of the West Coast.

As for Wesley, he has also worked in property management for more than 20 years, both in New Zealand and internationally.

He has a passion for detail and perfection which also saw him successfully grow his own business Just Property Services in the healthy homes and compliance sector.

He subsequently sold the business before returning to property management full time.

He is now very excited to come across to Freedom and share his skills and infectious outlook on life.



Wesley Smith and Katy Moore. PHOTO: PRODUCT PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO

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# Cycling initiative gaining traction in second year

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Rural Riders, a mountain biking initiative aimed at getting farmers off-farm, is entering its second year and is set to kick off again for summer.

Rural Riders chairperson Hamish Clausen says the initiative is gaining traction, complementing Surfing for Farmers, which operates in coastal regions nationwide.

"A lot of people don't have surfboards or access to the beach, but they do have bikes," Clausen says.

Originating in Taupo in 2021, Rural Riders now has groups with facilitators across the country, including three South Island locations – Ashburton, Naseby and Alexandra.

All that is required is a bike and a helmet, and if you don't have access to a bike, Rural Riders can often hire one for you.

Riders of all ages and levels of experience are welcome to attend, with weekly sessions starting in late October.

"We have people showing up with their whole family; our youngest kids would be six, seven

or eight years old."

Riders can follow the main group or choose another track more suited to their experience level.

Riders then meet up at the end of the session for a BBQ and a chance to connect.

While the initiative is not directly aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing, the benefits are obvious.

"It's promoting good health and wellbeing in the rural community.

"Just being out there and being able to vent and talk to like-minded people does so much for the brain," Clausen said.

Alexandra facilitator Latoya Grant said the turnout at last year's rides was good considering the initiative was in its first year and expects numbers to continue to grow.

Grant became involved with Rural Riders after seeing the pressure farmers were under daily in her role as a fertiliser rep.

The concentration required for physical activity provides people with a healthy distraction from the stress they may be facing on their farm or in their home life.

"Getting people off the farm changes their perspective,



Rural Riders is open to all ages and experience levels.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

especially if they are doing something completely different and not thinking or talking about

farming. "Biking and surfing are a classic example.

"You have to focus on what you are doing in that moment, or it can end badly."

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Rural Riders has riding meetings throughout the country.

## Where to find Rural Riders in the South Island:

The Rural Riders Facebook page, also:

**Ashburton:**  
**Contact:** Caitlin Adam 0274661049  
**Meeting Day:** Mondays  
**Venue:** The Mountain Bike Park  
**Start Date:** October 30  
**Naseby:**  
**Contact:** Rowena Mcdiarmid  
 0275009992

**Meeting:** Thursday Nights, 5:30 pm  
**Venue:** Naseby Forest at the Royal Hotel  
**Start Date:** October 30  
**Alexandra:**  
**Contact:** Latoya Grant 0278052633  
**Meetings:** Tuesdays, fortnightly  
**Venue:** Pioneer Park, Alexandra  
**Start date:** October 17



# LIVE AN OPULENT *Lifestyle*

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# Finding a country career

By Claire Inkson

[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

For some people, finding your purpose can take a lifetime.

For country musician Jody Direen, that purpose became apparent at a young age.

"I think I was 8 or 9 when I got this fire in my belly for music.

"I remember it was really clear that this was what I wanted to do with my life," Direen says.

Direen grew up in Wanaka, attending Mt Aspiring College, which she said had a strong music culture and provided a good starting point for her career and honing her singing skills.

"I wasn't the most talented of singers when I was in primary school, to be completely honest.

"But I just really wanted to do it." Although Direen doubted her ability at times, she persevered throughout her teens to improve her skill to a level that she felt would reach a global audience.

As a career backup, Direen completed a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture at Lincoln University.

With a love of animals and the outdoors and a family farming heritage, it seemed like a natural choice.

"My Mother was brought up on a farm in Middlesmarch, so I guess it's in our family culture a little bit, and I felt at home in rural New Zealand."

In an unexpected twist, Direen's

time at Lincoln, which naturally has a large number of country music fans, also provided her with an audience for her music.

Direen began playing at local bars and iconic Lincoln University events such as the Garden Party.

After graduating from Lincoln, Direen felt societal pressure to focus on having a 'real job' and spent some time working on high country stations in New Zealand before working in Australia over the harvest season.

The stint in Australia funded Direen's first album.

Direen then focused on touring as a solo act.

In 2013, she entered the Country Music Awards in Hamilton and won the Horizon Up Award.

The win attracted the interest of Australian country music promoter Rob Potts, who took Direen under his wing.

"Rob opened up quite a few doors for me in Australia, and I lived there for quite a while and played a lot of festivals."

Potts encouraged Direen to move to Nashville, the global capital of country music, to develop her career.

Direen lived in Nashville for a year, where she recorded her second album.

Direen was offered a contract, but feeling too young and without her support network, she turned the contract down and returned to New Zealand in 2015.



Musician Jody Direen.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



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"I think that everything happened for a reason, and if I had signed that contract, everything would have taken off really quickly, and I think I would have crashed."

"It wouldn't have been good long term."

With the support of Potts, Direen decided to focus on the Australasian market, where she felt safer and more at home.

Direen was signed to the Australian label ABC Music and

spent the next six years touring and releasing songs.

Direen played larger festivals, including CMC Rocks and the C2C festival, and met some of country music's biggest names, which stand out as career highlights for the singer.

"Being backstage at CMC rocks and drinking whiskey with Jason Aldean, or literally being in the same room as Tim McGraw."

"I got to play a show in New

Zealand with LeAnn Rimes, and I did a couple of shows with Kenny Rogers.

"A lot of these moments seem quite surreal because you see these people on social media, and all of a sudden, you are in the same room as them."

With audiences as large as 25,000, Direen had to work through pre-show nerves before performances.

"I've met artists who just didn't seem to suffer from pre-show

anxiety, but I did.

"It's something I've definitely had to work through."

"Honestly, for me, it's just been time in the saddle."

Covid restrictions meant a temporary halt to touring and events, but the time out allowed Direen to slow down and reflect.

During this time, Direen purchased a 30-acre wilderness block near Franz Josef with her partner, Barney.

"It's very private and secluded and has a gorgeous man-made lake, which we have built on the edge of."

In her downtime, when she isn't writing songs or touring, Direen relaxes by spending time with her dog Ruby and tries to set time aside for mindfulness and meditation.

"It's remembering to hit that pause button, which I'm not very good at sometimes, but it's important," Direen said.

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# Summertime hair care

By Claire Inkson

[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Being outdoors over the summer can play havoc with your hair, and while we often think to protect our skin, it's easy to forget our hair can get sun damaged, too.

Salon owner and director Hannah Wilkes from Wilkes & Co in Culverden, who has a clientele of predominantly rural women, is on hand with some great advice for keeping your tresses looking their best this summer.

First and foremost, Wilkes recommends choosing a hairdresser you feel you can trust and then build a relationship so that the stylist gets to know you and your hair goals.

"Building a relationship with your hairdresser and being consistent with the same stylist is beneficial.

"They get to know your hair type, preferences and any specific issues you may have," Wilkes says.

A stylist can also get to know your hair and recommend the right products tailored for you.

While it's tempting to grab a cheaper product off the supermarket shelf, salon-only products are often more concentrated, have better quality ingredients and undergo more testing than over-the-counter products.



Hannah Wilkes owns Wilkes & Co in the rural service town of Culverden, and is well-versed in keeping farming women's hair looking its best.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

When it comes to washing, Wilkes says less is more.

"An excellent weekly hair regime for women is trying not to shampoo and condition more

than two or three times per week."

It's important to shampoo your hair twice at every wash, as it is the second shampoo that

removes dirt and excess oil.

Conditioning is an important step that shouldn't be skipped, even if your hair is prone to being oily.

"Conditioner is vital to the hair and ultimately assists the hair cuticle, hydrates the scalp, detangles hair and makes it easy to comb.

"It makes hair healthier and stronger."

Wilkes recommends a dry shampoo for in-between washes if your hair feels oily.

Just like our skin, hair requires protection from the sun to prevent damage and premature colour fade.

"The best way to protect your hair from the sun is using salon products with a UV filter."

Heated styling tools can also cause damage, so Wilkes recommends leaving hair in natural waves wherever possible.

"I recommend not using heat regularly.

"If you are growing your hair, it is essential to avoid it altogether

or no more than twice per week.

"With the right products and haircut, and with hair in good condition, most people with wavy and curly hair can embrace their natural hair."

Wilkes recommends getting a trim every six weeks if your hair is short, but longer styles can go as long as twelve weeks between cuts.

Silk pillowcases are an excellent option for reducing breakage and split ends, especially when growing your hair.

Masques and bond fusion treatments can also help keep hair in good condition.

Hard water and copper pipes are common in rural areas and can cause hair to feel brittle and dry and even cause a build-up on the hair shaft that can react with hair dyes.

A chelating shampoo can help remove build-up, and Wilkes recommends good quality products to restore hair health and encourages the use of shower filters.

Hannah Wilkes has been hairdressing for 21 years and has worked in some of Christchurch's most prestigious salons before becoming self-employed.

Wilkes opened her own salon in Christchurch, Felix

Culpa, which was a finalist in the L'Oréal Salon of the Year awards. In 2016, Wilkes won the L'Oréal NZ Colourist Award.

Today, she lives in Culverden with her husband and three children and owns Wilkes & Co. salon.

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# The sharing shed: Why we must save it

**OPINION:** Community halls are the beating heart of rural districts, **Glenn Dwight** argues.



I'm not talking about those red corrugated iron Kiwi icons, no, I'm talking about the community town hall. A place where stories are shared, laughter is shared, ideas are shared, maybe a sneaky pash behind the hall is shared at Megan Johnson's 21st ... let's just say there is a lot of sharing.

And this is why it's important to protect these community icons from decay, or worse, rich townies gee'd up by Kevin McCloud and his grand design DVD box set who want to convert them into elaborate Airbnbs complete with outdoor bathtubs, designed not for practical bathing purposes, but for Onsen Hot Pools Instagram likes and butt pics.

And given we have just had an election, let's not forget the importance of the community hall has in the power of change. It's where ideas can be debated, and every three years we can vote for change.

So here is the issue with losing our local community halls. If they go or are forgotten, we risk losing more than just a building. We risk losing a connection with each other. A hub. A home. A place where the community can get together to bitch about the community. And if I am completely honest, if we lose our community halls, there is a risk that we lose the recorder recital from the under-7s. And no one wants to go cochlea deep with that group and their devil instruments outside the safety of a hall and its natural reverb.



**If community halls go or are forgotten, we risk losing more than just a building. We risk losing a connection with each other. A hub. A home. A place where the community can get together to bitch about the community.**



But what makes these New Zealand community buildings so great? Worth protecting like the kiwi and that old '69 Holden you are protecting from the wreckers by offering it sanctuary in your shed.

Let's start with some town hall essentials ... and nothing is more essential to the community hall than the Arcoroc cup collection. These amazingly versatile vessels can hold

everything from a white tea with two to a sneaky gin. Throw into the vessel mix a couple of old New Zealand Railway Cups (if they haven't been stolen and placed on Trade Me at an exorbitant price) and you have the complete and perfect cup collection.

A natural and harmonious extension of the Arcoroc cup is the Zip. When you see this LPG cylinder-inspired shape on the wall you know the hot drinks will flow at the end of any event and the dishes will be done to Karen's exacting standards. You can also be assured that the water will be close to magma temperatures.

This is a nice segue to committee Karen. Yes, in recent times Karens have come under attack for their standards and attention to those standards. But without Karen from the committee, would the lawns get mowed, the tables stacked correctly (no more than five high) and would Bob know that his hall deposit is due on the 15th? No!

This one might be more for the

men, but the purple urinal lolly is also a community hall must. While the naming of this fragrant delight might miss the mark, these little targets ensure the men using this stainless-steel gather point are kept on the straight and narrow, all while battling the evils of stale urile odour.

No clever segue here, but next on this list, is the holder of lists, the protector of information, the noticeboard. And because the noticeboard is Karen's jurisdiction (an issue that was brought up at the last committee meeting agenda item 56), the noticeboard is more a time capsule of the great events that have been, than an up-to-date information provider... So, it still proudly displays the posters for the Eagles Covers Band that played in 2003.

So, while a lot must change for progress, I say the one foundation of the community should be its hall. Except maybe the urinal lollies, they might be due a change and a heavy crop dusting of Glen 20. ■

**The interior of a typical rural community hall, set up just the way committee Karen wants it.**

**Inset, Arcoroc mugs are an integral part of such halls.**

## Farm planning essential for El Nino

Brace for a variety of challenges and remember, contractors can play a part, writes **Kem Ormond**



I usually enjoy the change in seasons, I especially enjoy spring, when all that fresh limey-green foliage appears.

But then comes the wind and, once I have finished cleaning up the branches and staking up the broad beans, summer usually starts to show its strength.

After Cyclone Gabrielle, I guess the thought of an unexpected El Nino weather pattern making its appearance is not what we wanted to hear.

Potentially bringing a variety of challenges, such a wether system will require on-farm planning by farmers

to get through the months ahead.

You could call El Nino a temperature rollercoaster which has already led to Hawke's Bay having a 29.6C day in September (the third-warmest temperature for September nationally on record) while at the same time down south there was snow!

Farmers need to focus on what they know best and that is growing and utilising as much pasture as possible because this has to be the cheapest form of feed possible.

Planning for adequate feed in what will be a dry season is what farmers do, but they need to be thinking about next season as well. Getting cows or ewes back in calf or lamb will certainly determine financial outcomes for next season.

Looking for the most cost-effective ways to meet feed shortfalls requires careful planning and it certainly becomes a balancing act as the days grow longer and the heat more intense.

Buying in supplementary feed will be more of a necessity rather than an option, especially if silage pits are looking depleted and the grass start to vanish before your eyes.

Already I see contractors hard at work, preparing soil for summer crops which will be vital for farmers to keep their stock in good health.

So long as paddocks are locked up well before the soil starts to get parched, there is hay and silage to be made. It won't take long before tractors and huge balers are being trundled up and down the rural roads.

Dams are another consideration. Do you need a new one to get you through this El Nino summer or maybe you can employ a local contractor to clean existing dams out?

Come summer, you will notice how more determined stock seem to get when feed starts to get short, a gap in the fence is always found, so keeping fences tight and battens in place will help prevent having strangers in the flower garden – the last thing you want to do is get offside with the gardener in your family.



A real El Nino comes only every couple of decades, the last true one being 2015/16. This October will see higher temperatures, less rainfall and wind. Mind you other areas could endure hail or snow – El Nino is a real teaser when it comes to playing with the weather.

To help with managing El Nino, NIWA and the Ministry for Primary Industries have produced a tool to assist with future planning to ensure you are ready to take El Nino head on.

Check it out: [shiny.niwa.co.nz/drought-forecast/](http://shiny.niwa.co.nz/drought-forecast/)

**El Nino is coming. Depending on where you live, that could mean drought or, as some witnessed this month, hail and snow.**

Photo / Getty images

**Looking for the most cost-effective ways to meet feed shortfalls requires careful planning ...**

SPONSORED CONTENT

# Maximise Results - Drench with Confidence - Use Vetmed Triplemax Oral

**Ground breaking products come from a shared passion.**

**V**etmed was launched in 2011 and is owned and operated by Nexan Limited. Co-owners/operators Doug Halligan, Jon Petherick and Gary Harrison, saw multi-national companies purchasing local animal health manufacturers, with all the research and development going offshore.

There wasn't a product being made to meet the specific challenges being met by farmers in New Zealand as the market was too small for the bigger players.

With both Jon and Gary being chemists, along with Doug's sales background input, they decided they could make a real difference and came up with their first product which was Vetmed Flumethrin Pour-on. In fact, the demand for it was so great that they had to fly in more actives to meet the demand for tick control that first season.

With their expertise as well as flexibility Nexan has recently released Cervidae Oral, New Zealand's first triple active oral drench registered for use in deer. Working in conjunction with Deer Industry NZ, developed and tested locally, Cervidae Oral has 98.5% efficacy gastrointestinal parasites and a 28-day meat with hold and this product has revolutionised the deer industry.

Along with a network of industry experts who are on farm full time and with centralised research and development, they are able to put their time and their knowledge into creating some ground breaking products, especially manufactured for the New Zealand farmer. They like to be involved in the product



Vetmed products came from a passion for wanting to help New Zealand livestock to thrive.

from start to finish and are always active in pursuing new products needed in the market.

This includes looking for ways to make improvements to their current actives and they have found that the single-phase formulation of the Vetmed Triplemax family of oral drenches helps to improve stability. Ensuring that every dose has the required concentration of each active.

Rigorous testing of their products means having to maintain high standards, which in turn results in better performance compared to generic solutions. The last ten years has seen their product range expand to meet the requirements of local farmers. Ongoing trials ensure their products are efficacious.

We are all time short, so when it comes to drenching you want to drench your animals knowing that what you use is going to be highly effective as well as slowing down the development of drench resistance.

Treating with a single or dual active combination drench

increases the possibility of the drench only being moderately effective. This results in the spread of drench resistant worms as well lower lamb growth rates.

**What is recommended** is a triple active combination of macrocyclic lactone combined with both levamisole and benzimidazole.

This is where Vetmed Triplemax Oral will shine in your animal health programme. Suitable for both cattle and sheep, this makes for a convenient option as well as only having a 14-day meat withholding period with a 1mL/10kg dose rate for sheep 20kg+ and cattle 100kg+.

Vetmed have three other sheep oral products available that make up the Triplemax family.

Triplemax Sheep Oral, Triplemax iTape Oral and Triplemax aTape Oral which all have a 1mL / 5kg dose rate and 14-day meat withholding period.

Available from PGG Wrightson and Vets nationwide in a range of pack sizes, all Vetmed products are part of the AgRecovery Rural



Recycling programme aimed at reducing plastic waste. As recommended by all animal product suppliers, a post drench faecal egg count is encouraged to ensure the worms on your farm are susceptible to the drenches being administered.

Visit [Vetmed.co.nz](http://Vetmed.co.nz) to learn more about their comprehensive range. Always refer to the label. Registered pursuant to the ACVM Act. 1997 A011076, A011110, A011111, A011735.



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# Livewire auctioneer is sold on his job

**PROFILE:** Cam Heggie is a character, full of humour, but takes his job seriously, **Kem Ormond** writes.



**W**hen I decided to profile an auctioneer, I googled a few. I had just watched a programme on Australian high-country cattleman and there was Cam Heggie, in an oilskin coat and hat, bushy moustache with a photo of Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp and his brothers on his work Facebook page.

I thought, this will have to be an interesting auctioneer with a sense of humour – and I wasn't wrong.

An ex-Palmerston North High School boy, he met a lot of the boarders who came from places like Taihape and Hunterville and thought they were a great bunch of guys. He decided he would like to work with such types and, after finishing high school, went off for a short stint as a farm cadet... but decided that he wasn't cut out to be a farmer.

In 1986, he moved to Dalgety Crown to set off on his pathway into the rural sector. Come 2010, that experience made him readily accept the position at PGG Wrightson, as a livestock genetics representative and auctioneer for the northern North Island. A job tailor-made for a character like Heggie, who appreciates livestock and enjoys people and travel.

His job is not to just turn up on the day to sell the livestock for the best price possible, it is to become a part of each client's business, guiding them through their breeding programmes, advising on and helping source the bulls and rams that farmers rely on. It is this part of the job that Heggie finds extremely enjoyable and takes extremely seriously.

There is also a lot of satisfaction of being part of a small, tight-knit genetics team of about eight, scattered throughout the country, with a great culture that Heggie enjoys being part of.

### Challenges and highlights

Challenges Heggie has come across are the continuing change of land use and the declining numbers of breeding cows and ewes. This is where building strong relationships with farmers becomes increasingly important.

Reduced numbers mean some buyers have to travel up from further away, so making sure their trip is worthwhile is always on the auction-



Cam Heggie in full flight.

eer's mind.

Being an auctioneer is a big responsibility because, if the sale goes well, he has contributed to that farmer's income for the year. The auctioneer has to know what he is selling, understand his client and understand the buyers and how to move in their interest.

The biggest changes that Heggie has seen over the past years has been in technology, both as far as breeding cattle with DNA genomics and the like and also the introduction of Bidr on PGG's online selling platform, which has been integrated into the whole auction system.

A highlight of Heggie's career was

**Honest, hardworking, down-to-earth people who have a passion for the land and their animals.**

– Cam Heggie, on the people he meets in his job

selling a NZ-record bull for \$104,000 in 2020 at an on-farm sale for Tuiriroa Stud in Wairoa.

Another highlight is the people he meets: "Honest, hardworking, down-to-earth people who have a passion for the land and their animals."

The job has also given him the chance to travel the North and South Islands and see scenery and sights

that many will never get the opportunity to see.

And when Heggie is not auctioneering, he can be found on his small block in Waikato with his wife Sara, busy planting native trees or making stock and hiking sticks. He is also a dab hand at passing the tray of sandwiches when he helps Sara out with her catering business. ■



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# Silver Fern Farms leading the way with Net Carbon Zero certified products

## Championing transparency by displaying full carbon labels on packaging

Following a successful US release last year, Silver Fern Farms' Net Carbon Zero Toitū certified products are now rolling out across New Zealand and feature a world-first carbon label on a red meat product.

A selection of the company's existing retail beef and lamb products are becoming 'Net Carbon Zero', meaning that Silver Fern Farms has measured the product emissions across the full product life cycle, developed an emissions reduction plan, and 100 percent of product emissions have been balanced out by verified carbon removals via trees growing on the farms where the animals were raised.

Silver Fern Farms has achieved Toitū net carbonzero product certification from Aotearoa New Zealand's leading certification body, Toitū Envirocare.

The certification requires organisations to demonstrate they've measured their greenhouse gas emissions to ISO 14067, which is the global framework for measuring and reporting product carbon footprints, ensuring consistent and comparable results across the board.

Beyond measurement, Silver Fern Farms was required to demonstrate a tangible emissions reduction plan was in place and conduct on-site farm audits to grasp the nuances of carbon sequestration at the grassroots level. This hands-on approach ensures they have real, actionable data to inform their carbon removals when contracting and purchasing carbon removals from supplying farmers.

Silver Fern Farms Chief Executive Simon Limmer says Net Carbon Zero products help link discerning

consumers and farmers together in a way that supports nature-positive food production.

"When shoppers buy our Net Carbon Zero products, they're actually incentivising our farmers for their efforts to create farm environments that are better able to capture carbon, increase

Chief Sustainability & Risk Officer Kate Beddoe, says the company has worked closely with Toitū Envirocare to ensure that the labelling meets global best practice, and accounts for all emissions from when the animal is born to when cooking takes place and packaging is disposed of at home.



## Doing right by people, animals and the environment is part of who Silver Fern Farms are - it's in their nature.

biodiversity, and support nature-positive food production," says Limmer.

"We know that the attributes of our pastoral-based farming system resonate with consumers globally. Products like Net Carbon Zero help to create new forms of value for our farmers and position them as climate innovators," he says.

For the first time full carbon labels are displayed on-pack, on the front the total carbon footprint of the product is stated along with the removals required, and the back gives shoppers a full breakdown of that footprint by emissions sources.

"Accurate and independent carbon-labelling is a transparent tool which will help to build trust with consumers and reinforce the benefits of our pastoral-based farming system," she says.

"We know that there is increasing global scrutiny of carbon claims, and some consumers are confused around about what certain claims mean. That's why our Net Carbon Zero product is independently certified by Toitū Envirocare, based on the very highest international standards.

"What's unique about Net Carbon Zero and our farming system is that



this is achieved by what our farmers do on their own farms to balance-out emissions, rather than by simply purchasing carbon offsets as is the case for other products," she says.

Beddoe says Silver Fern Farms is also taking steps to reduce gross emissions across their whole supply chain

"We have committed to a 1.5 degree science-aligned reduction target to reduce our combined Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 42% by 2030 from a 2020 base year, and we will set a Scope 3 target by the end of the year," says Beddoe.

"We're also one of the partners in AgriZero, the Government and agribusiness joint venture which is investing in methane reduction technology. Agrizero means the agribusiness sector now has real skin-in-the-game for methane reduction technology and can help accelerate solutions into the hands of our farmers," she says.

Belinda Mathers, Chief Science & Advisory Officer at Toitū Envirocare commented, "In taking the step of displaying full carbon labels on packaging, Silver Fern Farms is not just marking an industry milestone, but also championing transparency and consumer empowerment in New Zealand.



**NEW NET CARBON ZERO BY NATURE**



Now available in New Zealand supermarkets.

# Girls who Grow sows seeds of success

**EDUCATION:** Initiative is helping forge a career pathway for females, writes **Kem Ormond**



**'N**ow is the time to grow the next generation of female change-makers, leaders and environmental guardians in agriculture," says Entrepreneurial Women with Purpose founder Catherine van der Meulen.

The Girls who Grow programme is set "to spark young women's imaginations, to envisage a future where all stakeholders win, especially the environment".

Van der Meulen says the initiative is turning traditional narrative about farming on its head, with a future-focused, climate-positive approach to inspire young women into a career they can mould into their own.

Girls who Grow comes up with real-world immersive experiences and connects 15- to 17-year-old girls to planned workshops, imagination challenges, on-farm experience, and scholarships.

Girls who Grow is providing pathways for young women to enter NZ's food and fibre sector, which accounts for 81% of the country's exports but involves only 6 per cent of school leavers.

Women make up 32 per cent of the workforce and face significant barriers in agriculture. Girls who Grow



connects youth back to NZ's landscapes and creates a safe space for them to explore food and fibre.

**Wakatipu: A case study**

Wakatipu High School is one college which joined the pilot scheme this year and took part in courses run by Girls who Grow.

Rose Kidd, the teacher in charge of biology, says the school values the importance of the STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects for tertiary education and career pathways but these subjects can have a lower uptake by female students.

Also the school's values include "responsibility", and "environmental

sustainability" is part of the student's "active citizenship".

"So, choosing their responses and being accountable for their decisions, actions, and consequences links well with this programme, especially considering our future planet, with the effect of climate change on sustainability such as food production."

Kidd says 60 to 80 female students, mostly with an interest in science, hard technology or agricultural, took part in the first stage of creative problem solving. Then, for stage two, 12 students were selected to be part of an inter-school Girls who Grow imagination challenge. And this month, 10 junior girls will be having an on-farm lunch-and-learn experi-

**Wakatipu High School students take part in a Girls who Grow creative-thinking exercise.**

ence from innovative horticultural businesses in the area.

Student feedback has been very positive, says Kidd.

"They enjoyed being able to voice their concerns for a NZ issue or the planet, come up with ideas to enable a possible solution and apply this in hypothetical practice. Part of the workshops also incorporated a presentation of ideas to the wider industry which include local experts and government representatives."

The students who took part in the programme will likely continue with STEM subjects at Wakatipu, she says. "But, most importantly, they are now more aware of current NZ and planet issues that are affecting the agriculture sector, which has an impact on sustainability in the future."

The students can be creative problem solvers: "Ask them a big question and they come up with some unique ideas or solutions."

The school is hoping Girls who Grow will inspire a diverse range of female creative problem solvers who will see value in studying in STEM subjects and realise "that they can each make a difference". ■

Girls who Grow hopes to scale these workshops into 10 regions across the country over the next three years, with long-term visions including open-access educational farms with ownership and management led by female collectives.

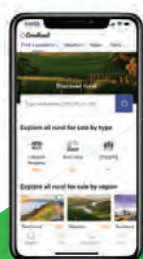
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# Farmers help Northland kiwi to thrive

**CONSERVATION:** A drought that forced kiwi out changed couple's lives, **Kem Ormond** writes.



**W**hen I first tried to make contact with Jane Hutchings, I found it hard to be heard over the delightful bellow of calves. She is one busy woman, but still found time to sit and have a chat with me about one of her passions, the brown kiwi.

Jane and her husband Roger milk 700 cows on their 480ha property in Northland. They obviously love their lifestyle but, in 2009, during a drought, the kiwi they knew existed on their property finally made an appearance – and this had a wonderful impact on them.

Lack of water and food brought the kiwi out at night from the safety of the bush, to graze on farm pasture in the hunt for worms, insects and water.

This started a journey that has grown in size and increased the number of brown kiwi, and is still going strong today.

They want to have thriving kiwi roaming freely throughout Northland and, every year, with the help of neighbours and various organisations such as Northland Regional Council, Puketotara Landcare, Kiwi Coast and the Department of Conservation, they are seeing the kiwi numbers grow in size.

Over the past 10 years, 708,536 pests have been trapped by Kiwi Coast groups and in projects throughout the Northland region.

"Stoats are by far the worst pest killing up to 95 per cent of kiwi chicks before they reach their first birthday," Hutchings says. "They are such prolific breeders. They need to be eradicated before the breeding season."

The other predator that plagues kiwi is the household dog. Don't think aversion training will stop dogs from destroying kiwi – owners really need to know more about how man's best friends tick.

Kiwi Coast run free dog workshops on how to keep both kiwi and dogs safe. Check out their website [kiwicoast.org.nz](http://kiwicoast.org.nz) to find out when the next class is to be run.

To keep track of the growing num-



bers of kiwi, Kiwi Coast groups take part in DoC's Northland kiwi call count survey which is carried out in early every winter.

For four nights in a row, usually from 6-8pm, participating groups get themselves comfortable and listen for kiwi to call their mates. Usually each bird makes 20 calls in suc-

cession. After four days, all the reporting is compiled, just like a census, and this gives an approximate result on the number of females and males in that particular area.

"I am always happy when the four pairs that live in our gully give their calls," Hutchings says.

Male and female kiwi have distinctive calls so they are easy to differentiate.

While some members of the group involved are happy to check their own traps, some busy farmers who have cows to milk will happily pay



for a trapper to check their traps for them.

All the hard work has paid off for the Hutchings, with more kiwi roaming their land, regrowth happening in their bush and seedlings now surviving. There has been a marked increase in birdlife with more kereru (or kukupa in Northland) and weka making an appearance.

"We know how lucky we are having these beautiful kiwi roaming our land and you never get tired of that beautiful distinctive call on a moonlit night," Hutchings says. ■

**Jane Hutchings with a kiwi; caught thriving on camera; farm signs warning of the presence of kiwi.**

**I am always happy when the four pairs that live in our gully give their calls**

– Jane Hutchings

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Save the kiwi

# Managing sleep and fatigue

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Dr Kelly Dale, managing director of Healthy Lifestyle NZ, is passionate about the value of sleep, with her research published in many top international medical journals.

Through Healthy Lifestyle NZ, Dr Dale has helped numerous workplaces and organisations, including Dairy NZ, look at ways to aid workers in improving sleep quality and managing fatigue.

Her recent study with Dairy NZ, with funding from ACC, has focused on the changing sleep patterns in dairy farmers using wearable sleep trackers, particularly during and after calving.

"We have been capturing that data for quite a few years now, and we focused primarily on calving because we knew that was a particularly risky kind of period," Dale says.

"And, no surprise, we saw that farmers were getting insufficient sleep during calving."

Sleep deprivation worsened as calving progressed, with workers unable to offset the lack of sleep by going to bed early enough to counteract the early starts, due to family commitments and the need to have 'downtime' before bed.

One of our earlier studies showed that post-calving, workers were not experiencing a recovery period when they caught up on the loss of sleep, but instead moved on

to other time-consuming jobs on-farm that had possibly taken a backseat during calving.

"They weren't suddenly getting extra sleep and restoring themselves.

"They were just on to the next task, which meant they were still getting insufficient sleep."

The results of the study, which are soon to be published, are particularly valuable given that even in the international arena there are no studies that look at what sleep looks like for farmers, Dale said.

The research is important because studies have shown that sleep deprivation significantly impacts mental health and cognitive ability, including memory, reaction time and coordination, potentially increasing the incidence of workplace accidents and injuries.

The time for complete recovery from sleep deprivation proved to be longer than most people would anticipate.

"The studies show that even after four nights of good sleep, people still hadn't fully recovered.

"There's this belief that you can push yourself, and then you might have a day or two off and have a really long sleep, and that will set you up for the week to go again.

"But actually, it's potentially up to seven days before a person can fully recover from being in sleep debt."

#### Improving sleep quality

In busy periods, such as calving, where sleep deprivation



Through Healthy Lifestyle NZ, Dr Kelly Dale has helped numerous workplaces and organisations, including Dairy NZ, look at ways to aid workers in improving sleep quality and manage fatigue. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

is difficult to avoid, Dale says to focus on making sure the sleep you do get is good quality.

Sleep apnoea is one area Dale suggests looking at, with approximately 80% per cent of people suffering from the condition undiagnosed and, therefore, not getting treatment.

Those suffering from sleep apnoea have poor sleep quality, leaving them at risk of fatigue and impairment. Put simply, if you snore and don't feel as refreshed as you think you should when you wake up.

"If someone notices their partner pauses in their breathing while asleep, or wakes up choking

or gasping, they potentially have a sleep condition and need to see someone about that.

"Your GP would be their first port of call, and they can guide them on whether to go and have a sleep test."

While it's tempting to have a wine or beer at the end of the day to unwind, to maximise sleep quality, Dale recommends avoiding alcohol, which can increase snoring, worsens apnoea and raises stress hormones.

"It leads to sleep fragmentation, which is essentially disrupted sleep.

"So if you are going through a period where you know you aren't going to get enough sleep, definitely lay off the alcohol so you can maximise the sleep you do get."

While it can be difficult to find the time, Dale said a quick nap of around 15-20 minutes at lunchtime, for example, can help with reaction time, coordination and mental alertness.

"15-20 minutes is ideal because once you go over that, into half an hour, you start going into a deep sleep."

This can lead to a feeling of grogginess, known as sleep inertia.

Dale also recommends staying hydrated and not relying on sugar, caffeine or energy drinks to get through the day, which can worsen fatigue through blood sugar and caffeine highs and lows.

While not as detrimental as once thought, screen time before bed is another factor, due to the

dopamine hit people get from scrolling and sensitivity to light.

However, sunlight first thing in the morning can help set us up for a night of good sleep. The morning sunlight turns over a sand clock in our brains, starting a countdown for sleep time.

"When we get that bright light exposure in the morning, it's like flipping that clock and creating a countdown to when we initiate sleep.

"We know from studies that it is about 16 hours.

"So if we are getting that nice bright sunlight exposure first thing in the morning, we are turning over the clock and helping sleep at the other end of the day," Dale said.

This is easy in summer when Dale recommends heading outside first thing in the morning and getting exposure to natural light.

Winter can be more difficult, with some people using light therapy glasses to mimic what the sun does.

A hot shower an hour before bed can also be beneficial, supercharging what melatonin does, which is essentially helping our core body temperature to drop in preparation for sleep.

#### So why is sleep so important?

Apart from increasing our chances of injury and accident in the workplace, if we aren't getting enough sleep, our mental and physical well-being can be affected, Dale said.

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# Art in the Waipara Valley



By **Claire Inkson**  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Sculpture. North Canterbury has opened at North

Canterbury's Pegasus Bay Winery.

The exhibition kicked off with an opening night celebration on October 13, and will run through

until October 29.

Exhibition manager and curator Laura Forbes was happy with the sold-out opening event, which gave guests a first look

at the art, and the opportunity to meet the artist behind the works, whilst enjoying a glass of Pegasus Bay wine in the extensive gardens.

"I love selling, and it's great for art. "It brings a lot of people to Pegasus Bay too, it's a beautiful venue."



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Artist Nathan Ingram's Superimposition Loop 1, 2 and 3.



Katie Croft, Edward Donaldson, Pip Blyth and Christine Hodge.

PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON



# New Lockwood Show Home Now Open in Cromwell

While the formal opening of Lockwood's first show home in the region will be celebrated in early November, local contractor, Chris Fraser, is already welcoming devotees of the solid timber building system to enjoy a sneak preview. "It's always exciting for us to meet current and former Lockwood owners, along with those considering options, prior to the opening' he says.

The 'Nevis' plan is a three bedroom, two bathroom modern iteration of a national favourite and Chris's approach to design, décor and outdoor living is sure to inspire.

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## Chondroitin Sulphate for sore joints (Part 1)

Chondroitin sulphate is classified as a Dietary Supplement in NZ but in Europe is available on prescription where it is classified as “a symptomatic slow-acting drug for osteoarthritis.” The drug classification then goes on to give specific information:

“Chondroitin sulphate, used with glucosamine, is indicated to alleviate pain and inflammation from primary osteoarthritis. This supplement is reported to improve joint function and slow disease progression.” (<https://www.drugbank.ca/drugs/DB09301>)

I recently read a health store flyer in my morning newspaper. One promotion was for a glucosamine based joint product. There is no doubt that glucosamine can help joints. That is why I include it in my joint formula. But why is there no mention of chondroitin?

The company is a large Hong Kong owned company that would clearly know about the benefits of chondroitin. What then could be the reason for not including therapeutic amounts of chondroitin? For that matter why do



most joint products sold in NZ have either no chondroitin or so little to have negligible impact on joint health? I think the answer is quite simple. Good quality chondroitin costs almost ten times that of glucosamine.

My preference is to have equal proportions of chondroitin and glucosamine and for most people to start at a double dose. With my joint product the standard daily dose delivers 800mg of both ingredients while the double dose 1600mg each. This combined with fully water soluble, high bioavailability BioSolve® curcumin (from turmeric) extract can quickly settle sore joints. I usually add Omega 3 fish oil rather than plant Omega 3 sources as only fish oil has EPA which is profoundly anti-inflammatory.

As an example, I have been helping someone for a number of years who contacted me with sore and swollen knees caused by osteoarthritis. She is now much more comfortable and mobile and feeling so much better about life in general.

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](mailto:john@abundant.co.nz). Join his all new newsletter at [www.abundant.co.nz](http://www.abundant.co.nz).



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- New BioSolve® bioavailable curcumin helps joint function while gentle on the stomach.
- Research indicates that chondroitin is highly effective at 800mg daily.

#### John Arts comments:

“My latest Bettaflex formula includes BioSolve® bioavailable curcumin for faster results. The normal dose is 2 capsules daily but I recommend an initial higher dose for 1-3 bottles to saturate joint tissue.”

John Arts, Founder, Abundant Health

Cautions: Do not take with anti-coagulant/platelet medication. If in doubt please consult your healthcare professional. Not suitable during pregnancy or lactation.



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## Spicy beef steak tacos



These spicy beef steak tacos with avocado and lime crema are a flavour explosion! Ready in less than half an hour, these tacos are the perfect stress-free meal solution to weeknight dinners, or a casual catch-up with friends.

#### Ingredients

- Tacos
- 1 pack (220g) Silver Fern Farms Beef Flat-Iron Steaks
- a wedge of red cabbage finely sliced
- 5 radishes thinly sliced
- 1 large avocado peeled and sliced
- 1/3 cup pumpkin seeds lightly toasted
- A small handful of fresh coriander leaves
- 1 red chilli deseeded and finely sliced
- 8-10 tortillas
- 1 cup whipped cream
- 2-3 limes
- slices of pickled jalapeño
- olive oil Spice Mix
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ½ tsp chilli flakes

#### Method

##### For the Spice Mix

Combine ground cumin, paprika, garlic powder, chilli flakes and salt and pepper. Remove the Silver Fern Farms Beef Flat-Iron Steaks from the packaging, rub the beef with the spice mix, cover and set aside.

##### For the Lime Crema

Whip the cream until it is just beginning to thicken.

Add the juice of half a lime, 2 tsp liquid from the jalapenos and half a tsp salt.

Continue to whip until it has thickened.

Transfer to a bowl and refrigerate until required.

##### For the Pickled Radish and Cabbage

In a bowl toss the shredded cabbage and sliced radish with juice of a lime, olive oil and a little salt.

Taste and add more lime or salt if required.

Set aside to marinate whilst you cook the beef.

##### To Assemble

Drizzle oil over the beef and season with salt and pepper.

Cook on a grill pan or BBQ at medium-high for 3-4 minutes on each side for medium-rare.

Transfer to a plate, cover with foil, and rest for 5 minutes.

While the beef is resting, in the same pan or BBQ, gently toast the tortillas to warm them slightly.

Slice your steaks thinly across the grain. Take a warmed flour tortilla, add a spoonful or two of cabbage and radish salad.

Add a large slice of avocado, some coriander and two beef slices.

Top with coriander leaves, some chopped chilli and one or two jalapeno slices.

Top with a spoonful of crema, a sprinkle of pumpkin seeds and a squeeze of lime if needed.

— *Recipe courtesy of Silver Fern Farms*

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# Lowlands Catchment Group improves the health of water

In 2013 the Ashburton Zone Committee tasked the Hinds Drain Working Party to develop, with the community, a set of recommendations to manage water quality and quantity in the Hinds Catchment.

The working group, which included membership from the local community, Ashburton Water Zone Committee, Arowhenua Runanga, Forest & Bird, Fish & Game and the Department of Conservation presented 16 recommendations targeted at "improving the health of the water bodies of Lower Hinds for all."

While many of the recommendations are underway, five years ago a group of younger farmers around the Eiffelton area started a small catchment group.

More recently this has been expanded to encompass an area from the Rangitata River to the Ashburton River, east of State Highway 1.

The Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group now has 33 active members.

We've been focused on how we can further enhance the quality of water and life in our drains.

This catchment is already part of an extensive water testing programme run by MHV Water.

The catchment group expanded that by testing further to build knowledge of levels of nitrate in drains and tiles.

Members have adopted many on-farm mitigations which enhance drain water quality from recommendations made by the Hinds Drains Working Party.

These include stock exclusion, cultivation setback areas and fertiliser placement away from waterways and these mitigations will continue to develop.

To learn more, the catchment group "adopted" one drain, Windemere Drain, where we can trial different techniques to further enhance the environment in the drains.

With assistance from Fish & Game officer, Mark Webb, over 20 rock weirs were installed.

This had an immediate impact of creating pools and fast flowing shallow water to provide an improved environment for instream habitat such as fish and invertebrates.

Shade and cover were other factors thought to be important.

The catchment group planted

more than 2500 native grasses over two years, supplied by Synlait's Whakapuawai Project.

These are now establishing, and the area is providing cover for species along the drain edge. With assistance from Fish & Game, we continue to monitor the number and size of species in the waterway to show what impact these enhancements have made. This is a long term project, but early signs are extremely promising.

Our catchment group has other projects underway to look at how we can continue to enhance the health of our lowlands streams and drains.

We are currently partnering with MPI/MfE and Canterbury University, and other community contributors, to evaluate a prototype biodigester.

The digester uses existing bacteria from the environment to "eat up" the nitrate in the water and release "cleaner" water into the drain.

This is an exciting initiative and our catchment group will hopefully have more to report over the next two years.

– By Lowlands Catchment Group Facilitator Phill Everest



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# Cooking the perfect steak

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

While what we define as the perfect steak can vary from person to person and is influenced by the cut of meat, Beef + Lamb New Zealand and Alliance Ambassador Chef Darren Wright says there are some basic guidelines to help achieve a tender and tasty steak.

Wright says the first step is to get your steak out of the fridge in advance and to season your cut right before cooking.

"I would recommend cooking from room temperature or ambient temperature.

"Season the steak just before it goes in the pan, and put it seasoned side down."

Seasoning too early will draw moisture out of the meat, causing it to be tough and leathery.

Wright doesn't recommend olive oil for cooking, but an oil with a high burn point, such as grape seed oil.

Steak should go onto a hot barbeque or pre-heated pan, and Wright suggests listening to the sizzle of the steak in the pan as a guide to temperature.

"You need to listen to the sizzling – the harder it's sizzling, the higher the temperature.

"You want to create caramelisation on the outside to create a bit of a crust before



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

turning the steak over and doing the same on the other side."

Once turning, Wright recommends adding more oil and a touch of butter and nappe (coat) the butter and oil over the

top of the meat.

Steak should ideally only be turned once, and thickness determines how long a steak needs to be in the pan or whether it needs to be finished in the oven.

"If it's a really thick piece of meat, you may need to finish it in the oven to cook it to your desired outcome."

Controlling the temperature is essential.

Too cool a pan or barbeque means the steak will not "seal", resulting in a stewed steak that is potentially tough.

Too aggressively hot can result in steak that is burned on the outside but not cooked in the middle.

Wright says it's best to cook meat just slightly less than you like, as the meat will continue to cook slightly as it rests.

"Resting is really important. "When it comes off the barbeque or pan, meat is tense because it has been on a 180 or 250-degree heat.

"When you rest meat, it has time to rest and relax, and it's suppler and a lot softer, and the eating quality will always be better."

When it comes to barbequing, Wright uses a Weber.

He prefers charcoal over gas when circumstances allow.

"In a perfect world, I would cook over charcoal because I like the flavour.

"It adds another dimension."

Whether you are cranking up the barbeque on these longer days or pan-frying up a storm in the kitchen, cooking the perfect steak is more of a culinary art form than most of us realise.

"It's actually hard to do it really well.

You actually have to have quite a bit of knowledge around the piece of meat and the outcomes you want," Wright said.

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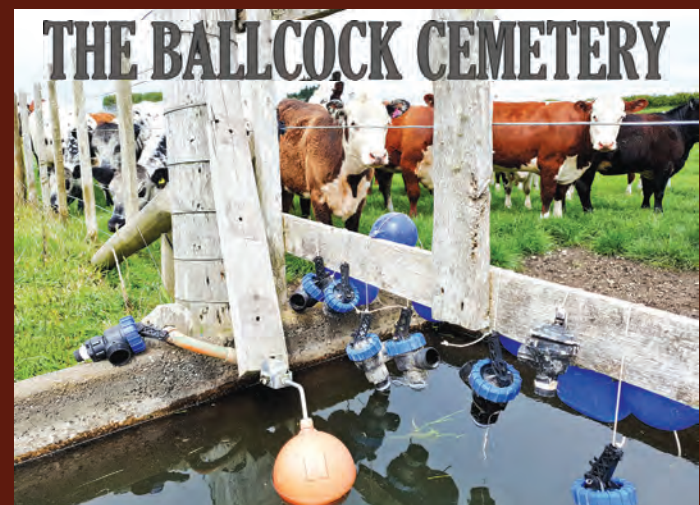
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# South Island winning meat



Shane Kingston.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

A South Island craft meat co-operative has won top honours in the prestigious World Steak Challenge.

The Alliance Group's Pure South Handpicked 55-day aged beef was awarded two gold medals and two silver medals by a panel of expert judges at the competition in the Netherlands.

The co-operative also won gold medals for ribeye and fillet steaks processed at the company's Pukeuri plant near Oamaru, while ribeye and fillet steaks processed at the Mataura plant in Southland won silver medals.

Sales and marketing manager Shane

Kingston said the global recognition validated the co-ops focus on excellence.

"The farmers who supply our Pure South Handpicked 55 Day Aged Beef programme deserve great credit for this very high quality award-winning product.

"This success will also help build confidence among consumers that we are continuing to create world-class products."

He said it was a proud moment for the co-operative and its farmer shareholders.

"Only a fraction of the very finest beef makes the grade and it is in demand by customers across the world," he said.



Pure South Handpicked beef.



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# The Bug Man championing a nature-literate future

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Ruud Kleinpaste, affectionately known as “The Bug Man”, is on a mission to educate the next generation of nature lovers.

“It was my generation that ruined the planet.

“I’m well beyond retirement, but I decided while I can, I will do something to try and change that.”

Kleinpaste, who immigrated to New Zealand from Holland in 1978, found fame globally through programs on the Discovery Channel’s Animal Planet and locally appearing on What Now and Maggie’s Garden Show in the 1990s.

His passion has always been inspiring people to appreciate the natural world on their doorstep.

These days, Kleinpaste has taken that passion from the small screen to the classroom, teaching what he describes as “nature literacy.”

“I am trying to create nature-literate New Zealanders, who become nature-literate voters.

“My journey is to create New Zealanders and kids that understand what the operation manual of planet Earth looks like.”

Kleinpaste believes the best way to do that is through the education system and has been working with the Peter Blake Trust

to hold professional development seminars to create nature-literate teachers.

“We get teachers together in a five-star hotel in Auckland and take them to off-shore islands, reserves and sustainable companies, so they learn from all directions what this planet needs.”

Teachers can then return to their school and look at ways to create a classroom outdoors.

Kleinpaste encourages teachers and children to create forests in their school grounds that can house native species of insects and birds.

He recommends using smartphone apps to help children identify animals and plants.

“We’re talking bugs, spiders, flowers, mushrooms—even skulls and bones.

“Kids love that.”

It’s not all about education; Kleinpaste prefers to think of it as “telling stories”, and he believes farmers have a role to play.

“Farmers can contribute to educating their kids and grandkids, and that could come about in the most amazing ways.

Kleinpaste says that it could be as simple as cutting up logs and leaving them on school grounds for students to investigate the insect world that forms underneath them.

“Watch what goes on under those dead logs.

“Biodiversity goes up.

“Kids can do a BioBlitz identification

session to discover what lives there now.”

Kleinpaste said he disagrees with the negativity directed towards farmers, but also believes we need to stop describing New Zealand in a clean and green context.

“Farmers get a bad rap, and I’m not a fan of bad rapping.

“I think we need to work together if

something needs to change.”

Kleinpaste believes farmers are moving in the right direction but not at the right tempo.

“We can do a lot better, and let’s work on that.

**Ruud Kleinpaste will be a guest speaker and hold workshops at the Ashburton Show on October 27 and 28.**



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# Ashburton show set to buzz



Ashburton A&P Show president Victor Schikker says the show is a link between town and country, and a chance to showcase rural excellence.

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Victor Schikker is in his second term as Ashburton A&P Show president, and despite being involved in the A&P association since the 1980s, he remains as enthusiastic as ever.

“The show is a link between town and country.

“It’s a chance to showcase rural excellence,” Schikker says.

The Ashburton Show, held on October 27 and 28 this year, has been a highlight of the Mid Canterbury rural calendar for 147 years.

The event is a chance for people to show off their produce and livestock, and for the community to get together and connect, Schikker said.

“It’s a social day, too.

“People can come to the show, wander around and have a yarn with their neighbours.”

The show will have a vast array of displays and stall holders, with the ‘Let’s

create a buzz: bugs, bees and butterflies’ theme adding another layer of excitement.

“The theme targets the home gardener through to the large scale crop farmer.”

“The Bug Man” and “Buggin’ with Ruud” star Ruud Kleinpaste will be guest speaker at the show, hosting one-hour workshops on backyard ecosystems, farm biodiversity and insects.

Show staples such as cattle showing and dog trials remain a key part of the event.

The Australia - New Zealand test dog trial, organised by the Methven Collie Club, returns to the show this year for the first time since 2011, and is set to be a crowd favourite.

Schikker, who grew up in Mt Somers and has lived in Mid Canterbury all his life working as a stock agent for PGG Wrightsons, says being involved in the show is about “giving back”.

“We’re all volunteers; we just enjoy doing it, and it’s a bit social.

“The show has been going for 147 years; let’s see if we can keep it going for another 100 years.”



Equestrian events are always popular at the show.

PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

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# The Nelson A&P Show

**Show location:** Richmond Park Show Grounds

**Parking:** free parking on site.

**President:** Adrian Curtis

**Vice president:** Di Scott

**Opening Times:** show runs from 9am to 4pm both Saturday and Sunday.

**Ticket sales** (cost at gate) \$10 Adult, \$5 child. \$20 family, Six and under free.

**Key Highlights:** Wood Chopping, Equestrian Games, Animal Barn, Music entertainment from local talent, Shearing Saturday, the Breeze Doggy fashion show Saturday, CCNZ Excavator Operator Competition Saturday and Terrier Racing Sunday.

**Best place to follow for:**

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/NelsonAPShow>



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# Southern Canterbury Show

**Show location:** 26 Hakataramea Highway, Waimate Showgrounds, Waimate

**Parking:** available at no cost

**President:** Dave Studholme 027 433 0274

**Vice president:** John Mehrtens 027 688 5593

**Theme:** Acres of Fun

**Opening Times:** 8 am to 5pm

**Ticket sales :** \$15 / Kids under 16 FREE

**Key Highlights:** The Kinsman Contracting Southern Canterbury A&P Show is just half an hour from Timaru and Oamaru and offers a real country day out featuring sheep, cattle, poultry, sheep dog trials, produce, creative hub industries, photography, art, flowers, a

children's section plus Steam Tractors, Machinery and Vintage Cars.

Add to this a wonderful and varied selection of trade stalls, food, liquid refreshments, entertainment plus of course the fairground rides.

Stars in town this year are Levi Goodall (freestyle bike jumper) and the amazing World Pet Zoo.

This year's special guest at the Pet Zoo is the Otago Cavy Club with National winner Josh Wilson-Jones presenting his champion guinea pigs.

**Best place to follow for updates:**

[www.scsshow.co.nz](http://www.scsshow.co.nz)

[www.facebook.com/southerncanterburyshow](http://www.facebook.com/southerncanterburyshow)



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# Wool a feature of NZ Ag Show



**Show location:** 102 Curletts Road, Christchurch

**Parking:** Within the showgrounds

**President:** Anne Rogers

**Vice president:** Bryce Murray

**Theme:** Wool & Natural Fibre. Special display within our newly created Wool Zone – celebrating the history of wool, kindly donated by NZ Merino to the 2023 Show.

**Opening Times:**

- Wednesday 15 November 8:00am – 5:30pm
- Thursday 16 November 8:00am – 7:30pm
- Friday 17 November (Canterbury Show Day) 8:00am – 5:30pm

**Ticket sales :**

**We're currently at First Release prices:**

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  - Adult - \$30
  - Tertiary Student - \$30
  - Senior - \$30
  - VIP Thursday - \$199
- You can purchase your tickets at -**  
www.theshow.co.nz

**Key Highlights:**

- New look Hazlett's Children's Lawn
  - Axeman VIP Event
  - La Croix & The Breeze VIP Marquee
  - Barn Dance on first ever late night.
- Best place to follow for updates:**  
'The New Zealand Agricultural Show' on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn  
ChristchurchNZ Website.

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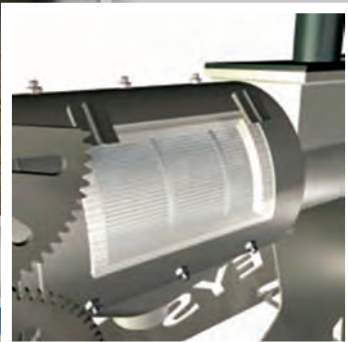
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# 160 years of bringing the country to town



All ages enjoy the show.

PHOTO: CHRISTCHURCH NZ

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

The New Zealand Agricultural Show, in its 160th year, is coming to Christchurch again this November 15-17.

Show general manager Tracey Ahern says the show, which is the biggest A&P show in the country, is special because it celebrates the region's rich agricultural heritage and brings the heart of the country to town.

"These events foster strong community connections, showcase our local produce and livestock, and, importantly, help educate everyone about the vital role agriculture plays in our nation's economy and culture."

The Canterbury A&P Association was formed in 1863 and hosted the first show in October of that year after purchasing 14 acres in Sydenham, which later became Sydenham Park.

The first event saw 1,500 attendees and it grew from there.

When the Sydenham site became too small, the Association purchased a 29-acre block in Addington.

New entries flooded in from outside of the region, and attendance grew.

In the 1950s, Canterbury Anniversary Day was shifted to the Friday of show week, with the holiday making it easier for both town and country people to attend.

In 1997, pressure on the Addington site saw the show move to its current

location at Canterbury Agricultural Park in Curletts Road.

In 2018, the Canterbury A&P Show was rebranded to The New Zealand Agricultural Show, cementing its importance on the national agricultural calendar.

"Sometimes, this is the only time farmers will come to town for a week, encouraging collaboration with industry bodies and enabling our Association to showcase rural leadership.

"It also serves as an opportunity to inspire and encourage youth to step into leadership roles within our community."

Weather has always been a challenge for the show, but the committee has implemented plans to mitigate inclement conditions.

"This year, our main challenge has been to design and set up spaces that can withstand a wide range of weather conditions, including rain, sun and wind.

"Our goal is to reduce the risk associated with these unpredictable elements, which have been a gamble to us over the last 160 years."

This year's show has something for everyone, and children under 16 can attend the show for free, thanks to the Kiwi Gaming Foundation.

"We're offering a nostalgic farm-to-plate artisan experience, a brand-new farmyard for kids to learn and enjoy, and an evening barn dance that guarantees a fantastic time for everyone," Ahern says.



Show general manager Tracey Ahern says the show celebrates the region's rich agricultural heritage and brings the heart of the country to town.  
 PHOTO: SUPPLIED



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OPINION with Craig Hickman. Brought to you by Power Farming Ashburton

# Fonterra on the right track

In the wake of Fonterra announcing their record \$1.6 billion profit, I was asked why the media and public seemed to celebrate such an achievement from the dairy processor, yet condemn similar sized profits from the banking sector.

I got the feeling the person asking the question thought the different treatment was unfair, but I think the answer is quite simple.

First and foremost, Fonterra's profit is almost entirely earned from overseas markets, not from households struggling to pay the bills after their mortgage payments have been ratcheted up yet again. Unlike with banks, New Zealanders themselves

contribute very little towards Fonterra's bottom line, as over 95% of Fonterra's product is exported out of the country.

Secondly, Fonterra is a cooperative owned by New Zealand farmers and any profit made by Fonterra is disbursed to shareholders as dividends. Farmers then use this money to pay their bills, be it their grazier, electrician, vet and others. While Fonterra's profit remains in the country, for a vast majority of our banks their profits are sent offshore to their overseas investors.

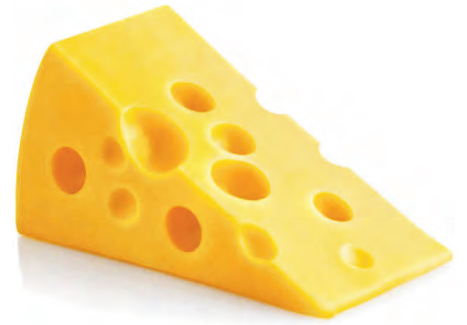
While Fonterra brings profits into the country, banks tend to send theirs in the opposite direction.

Quite apart from the last season's profit and this season's falling farmgate milk price grabbing the headlines, two things happened behind the scenes in early 2023. These two things cemented my view that Fonterra is on the right track and have the right people calling the shots.

Firstly, whole milk powder (WMP) began a dramatic slide from its historic high and other products began to follow suit. Then, inexplicably as WMP continued its slide, proteins like cheese shot up in value and the margin between the two products widened dramatically. Normally the margins between various products remains remarkably consistent and there was no simple explanation for this divergence. Fonterra's product optimisation team saw it coming and diverted as much milk as they could away from WMP and into the higher margin streams, contributing heavily to the record profit.

At the same time as the world market was acting out in a crazy fashion, our weather did much the same thing as Cyclone Gabrielle hit and devastated the east coast of the North Island. We've all seen the footage of roads and bridges washed away; animals, buildings and livelihoods left in ruins with isolated communities left to pick up the pieces as best they could.

At a recent Fonterra meeting discussing the cooperative's financial performance, CEO Miles Hurrell explained that amongst rising costs of fuel, wages and packaging, along with customers paying less for the product, there was another issue that made a



Proteins such as cheese shot up in value. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

contribution. It was the cost of milk that was not collected or processed, but still paid for.

The cooperative made the decision to continue paying their cyclone affected suppliers for the milk that they would have produced for the rest of the season, had they been able to keep milking and had tankers been able to collect it. That single act was a huge relief at a time of great stress for affected dairy farmers. One less thing to worry about and a steady source of income while they went about restoring their farms and homes.

That right there shows the strength of a cooperative, the brains and flexibility to take advantage of a fast-changing market and the heart to look after your members while you are doing it.



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# Keeping the wheels of the dairy industry turning

Fonterra drivers are the often unsung heroes of the dairy sector. We have a chat to driver *HEATHER DOUDLE* about what life is like behind the wheel.

**1. What does a typical day look like for you?**

My day starts at 6am. Our shift team has a brief morning meeting with our shift manager, then we head out to our trucks – we usually drive the same truck for the season.

After I've done all my truck safety checks, I'm all ready to go.

Our milk collection runs are on our in-cab computer, so we follow the map provided to take us to the dairy farms for their milk collection.

Our region is quite large, so we could be anywhere from Twizel to Oamaru, Ashburton, Darfield and sometimes beyond Christchurch. The Fonterra Clondeboyne site works closely with the Fonterra Darfield site, so often our trucks head into Darfield to unload.

Typically, I travel between 400-500km daily, and this takes anywhere from 8 to 10 hours, sometimes longer. I can visit several farms during the day,

and every farm has a different volume of milk to collect. There are quite a few big farm suppliers that need two tankers daily to collect their milk.

Once my tanker unit is full, I head back to the site to unload, then away out I go again on my next run.

At the end of the day, once my runs are complete, I wash down the truck, fuel it up and leave it ready for my shift partner to take over for his shift.

Every day is different!

**2. What do you love most about your job?**

The best thing about my job is getting out and about in our beautiful countryside, going on farms, and places I wouldn't normally go.

Another positive is my work colleagues, they are a great bunch of people. They're always supportive and we have lots of laughs and fun!

**3. What made you want to**

**drive trucks, and how did you come to work for Fonterra?**

I've always wanted to drive trucks, but it wasn't an easy industry to get into when I was younger.

I put myself through my licences in my 40s and worked for a couple of local transport companies gaining experience to get the skills required for Fonterra.

I always wanted to drive tankers, so four years ago I finally applied and succeeded.

**4. What advice would you have for young people wanting to join the industry?**

Just do it! Find someone who will give you a chance and just do it. Don't ever be afraid to up-skill.

There are lots of local transport companies that will help with getting you through the stages of licences required. Fonterra run a Class 4 to Class 5 program to help people succeed in gaining their licences.

**5. What is the most challenging**



Heather Doudle and her Fonterra milk truck.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

**thing about your job?**

There are challenges that come with sharing the road sometimes, for example it can be hard if

another road-user is impatient with a tanker. It's important that we're all considerate of each other on the road.

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**“** The course was brilliant- it was some of the best learning that I have ever had, I certainly feel more equipped to work with farmers and other vets in hoof trimming and treatment, as well as in a lameness advisory role. The experience has been invaluable to my future career. **Kate Mackersey, Massey University Vet Student**

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# Lameness in dairy cows: Breaking the cycle

Lameness is one of the primary conditions in dairy cows that can limit production and create animal welfare issues. Early identification through a formal on-farm process and early and effective treatment can help break the negative cycle

By Claire Inkson

[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Getting on top of lameness on the farm can be a struggle, but the key to faster recovery rates and reduced prevalence is early detection and effective treatment, says EpiVets epidemiologist Winston Mason.

The first step is identification, which needs to be a much more formal process than simply assessing cows from the back of the herd.

The best way to lameness score cows involves looking at specific gait factors such as weight bearing and stride length, Mason says.

"It doesn't need to be done every day or even every week.

"But it does need a process where every worker on the farm knows that based on these criteria, a cow is lame."

Farmers can use tools such as the Healthy Hoof app or scoring posters for the cow shed to make identifying and scoring lameness easier.

While identifying and treating lameness may add to the initial workload, it can save time and money down the track.

Agritech such as cow collars and livestock monitoring systems like OmniEye can also help farmers with quick and easy, less labour-intensive identification.

Mason said that while more time spent early on can reduce new cases of lameness in the future and speed up recovery, time and the availability of skilled labour are major limiting factors for farmers getting on top of lameness issues.

Mason recommends enlisting the help of vets and foot technicians to either help with treatment or to put a solid farm plan in place.

Early treatment ultimately means fewer lame cows and works as a prevention strategy.

"One of the biggest causes of lameness, ironically, is lameness," Mason said.

"We have this situation where if an animal gets lame once, she's so much more likely to get lame again and again."

Once a lame cow has been identified, she should receive treatment promptly.

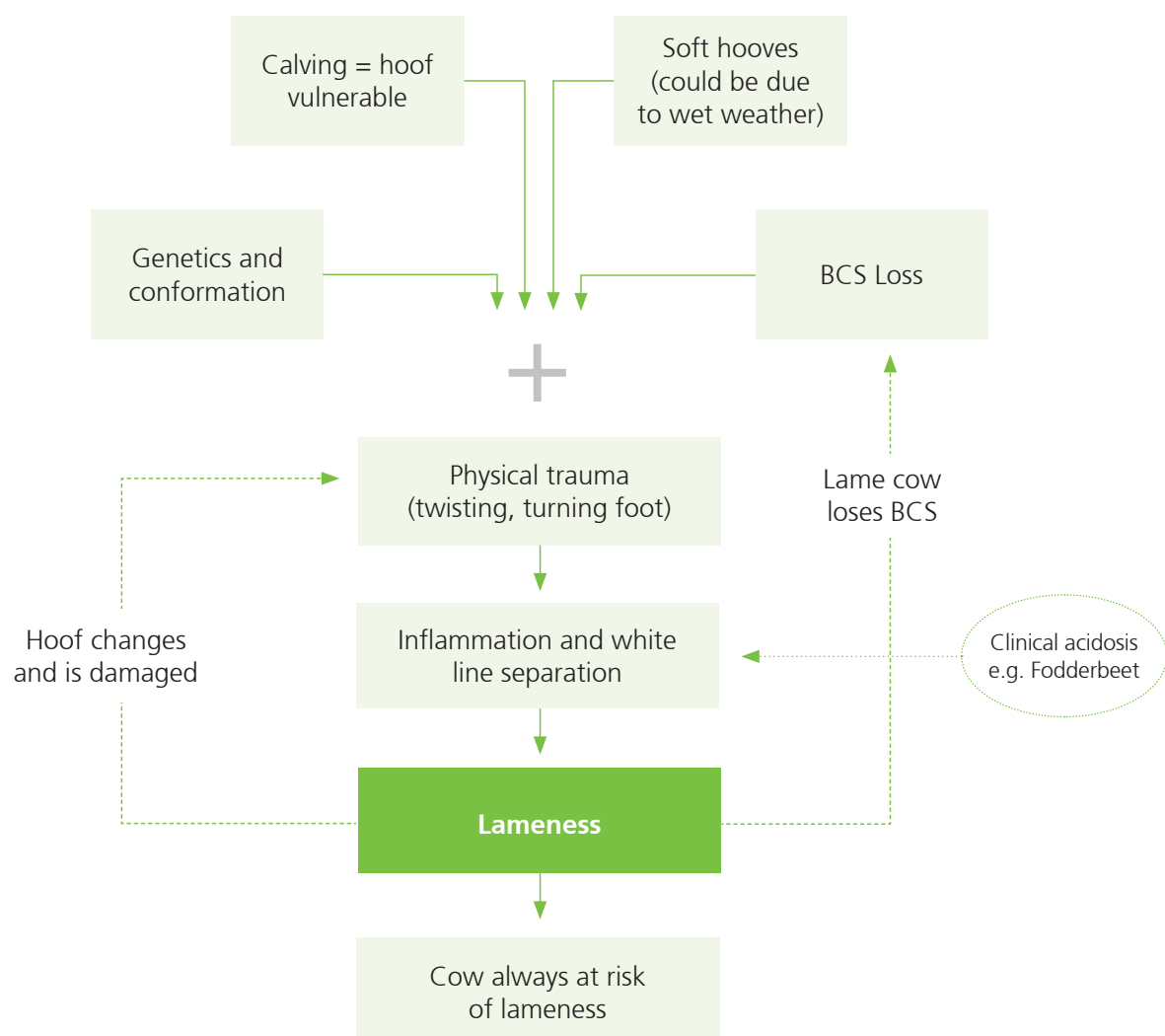
Since lameness isn't usually caused by an infection, antibiotics are rarely recommended, Mason said.

Picking up the hoof and trimming it is the most effective treatment.

"It's always good to get trained in hoof trimming, and there are some really good hoof technicians that can help farmers upskill."

Hoof blocks should be fitted to lame cows, which speeds up recovery, reduces pain and can

Figure 1. Lameness risk factors



## Lameness risk factors.

help prevent permanent damage.

Mason also recommends anti-inflammatory pain relief injections (NSAIDs) for affected cows.

"They make a cow feel better, which welfare-wise is incredibly important.

"But it also improves cure rate."

A cow in less pain will walk more, eat more and milk better.

"All of these things improve her healing rate," Mason said.

Another important factor in recovery is feed, since an animal can lose 61 kilograms of live weight during an episode of lameness.

Loss of condition can also increase the chances of lameness re-occurring as the cushioning fat pad in the hoof is diminished, contributing to the negative lameness cycle.

"We need to ensure lame cows are fed properly once we have identified them, and reduce the walking distance for cows accessing feed.

"We need to change where that feed comes in and add slightly higher energy feed for those lame cows that aren't moving."

PHOTOS: DAIRYNZ



# New technology is a win-win for cows and sharemilkers



Sara Russell estimates the smaXtec technology has saved them \$42,000 in direct costs this season for antibiotics and/or heat detection scratchies. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By Sharon Davis

A new cow health monitoring system has been a game changer for local sharemilkers.

Stu and Sara Russell saved \$42,000 in direct antibiotic and scratchie costs this season thanks to health data and monitoring with smaXtec boluses.

It has also given Sara the freedom to work off-farm this season. She joined smaXtec in a customer success role.

The couple sharemilk 750 cows in a 50/50 agreement with Sara's parents, Richard and Diana Bourke, at Longbeach.

In 2021 they decided to invest in technology to track animal health and settled on boluses from Austrian company smaXtec.

As an early adopter of the technology, Sara said she found the results astonishing.

The temperature function has proved to be the most valuable.

The technology sends an alert when a cow's temperature has a minor spike, often an indicator of mastitis. This allows the Russells to intervene early and treat a cow using a non-withhold anti-inflammatory or a mineral bolus – avoiding the need for antibiotics.

"We pick up mastitis three days earlier than normal with this system – so nine out of 10 times when we paddle test the milk, we can treat with a non-withhold anti-

inflammatory. That's kicking 75% of our mastitis straight off.

"You have that ability to triage cows at the top of the hill essentially, instead of meeting them at the bottom with the ambulance," Sara said.

She estimates the technology saved them \$36,000 in direct antibiotic costs and a further \$6500 in scratchies they didn't have to buy for heat detection this season.

That's before considering the income from milk which didn't have to be withheld, and production not impacted by illness, she said.

The temperature alert means the Russells do not have to test the entire herd because the system has already identified any cows about to get sick.

The ability to share a cow's health chart with the vet gives them a comprehensive and valuable snapshot of the cow's health history. They can make a treatment plan without making a call out.

"When it comes to Retained Foetal Membranes, in the past we've typically been torn about whether to leave it another day in the hope it will come out on its own, ease it out manually, or to treat her."

SmaXtec shows how often they run a temperature, and we have the information to confidently say in every case what our treatment plan is, said Sara.

The data has also improved conception rates for the Russell's 750-cow herd.

## How it works

The smaXtec bolus sits in the cow's reticulum and records data 24/7.

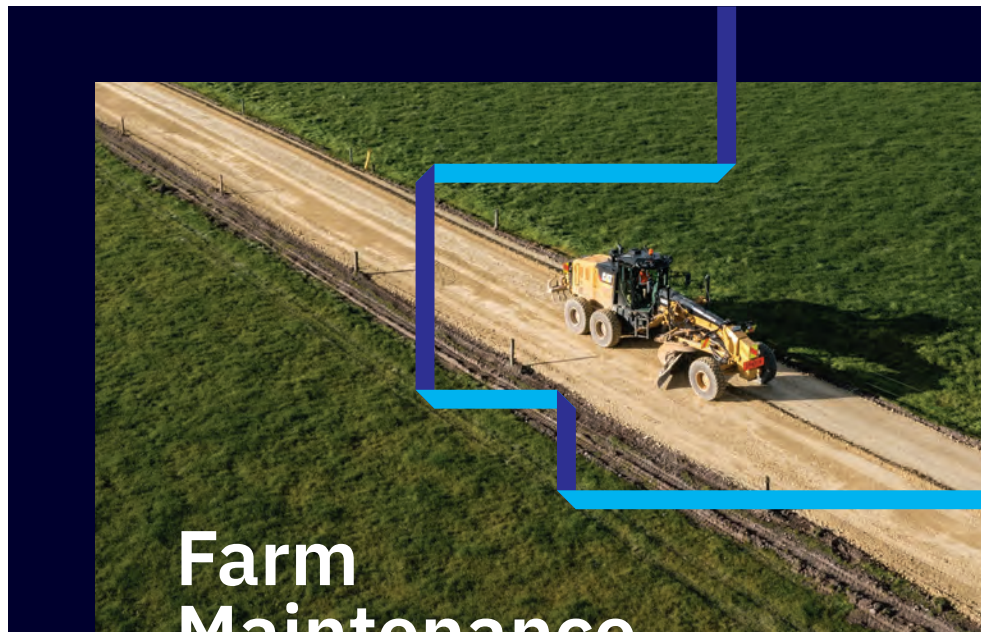
The bolus is 10.4cm long and 3.3cm wide.

It records the cow's internal temperature with 0.01degC accuracy, along with rumination data, as well

as how often, and how much, the cow drinks.

Data is sent via the internet to smaXtec for a comprehensive view of cow health.

Using a bolus with a pH monitor will also give calving alerts.



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# Price forecast is good news

By Sharon Davis

The increase in Fonterra's average farmgate milk price is good news for local farmers and the Ashburton economy.

In early October the dairy co-operative lifted its forecast farmgate milk price to between \$6.50 and \$8.00 per kg of milk solids (kgms), effectively increasing the midpoint payment by 50c to \$7.25 per kgms.

The news comes after Fonterra slashed its average price to \$6.75, down in August from a May forecast of \$8.00/kgms.

Mid Canterbury Federated Farmers dairy chair Nick Giera said the increase was positive for farmers and for the local economy that relied on farmers spending money.

"The 50c increase in the midpoint could mean the difference between a loss and a cash surplus for most farmers."

Giera said farmers with a high level of debt could still be looking at a loss, given the high interest rates. However, the 50c bump in price "should be enough to steady the ship in terms of the average farmer".

Fonterra chief executive Miles Hurrell said the improved price forecast reflected a drop in supply in New Zealand and increase in demand in recent global trade events.

"The El Niño weather pattern may have further impacts on supply, and this could be driving recent buyer sentiment."



The 50c increase is good news.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Hurrell said it was not yet clear whether the stronger demand from China would be sustained and Fonterra faced significant exposure to volatility in commodity prices and exchange rate.

"Our foreign exchange hedging strategy is designed to help lessen the impact of this, and also supports a higher advance rate level than would be possible without hedging," he said.

There had been fears about the impact of gloomy forecasts on the local economy, with some dairy farmers expected to make a loss.

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# AGRICALENDAR

This month's rural event round-up

## AGRICALENDAR November 2023

<b>NOVEMBER 1-30</b> <b>November Men's Health Month</b> For more information see <a href="https://nz.movember.com">nz.movember.com</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 3</b> <b>Telford Open Day</b> Held on the Telford Campus. For more information, visit the SIT Telford Campus Facebook page	<b>NOVEMBER 4</b> <b>Bottom Pub Bark Up</b> Hosted by Mackenzie Young Farmers <a href="https://www.facebook.com/MackenzieYoungFarmers">https://www.facebook.com/MackenzieYoungFarmers</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 4</b> <b>Southern Canterbury A&amp;P Show</b> Held at the Waimate A & P Showgrounds <a href="https://www.facebook.com/southerncanterburyshow">https://www.facebook.com/southerncanterburyshow</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 5</b> <b>Guy Fawkes</b> Held In Invercargill.	
<b>NOVEMBER 11</b> <b>Hororata Highland Games</b> Held in Hororata. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/hororatahighlandgames2023">https://www.facebook.com/hororatahighlandgames2023</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 14</b> <b>World Diabetes Day</b>	<b>NOVEMBER 14-17</b> <b>NZ Ag Show</b> Held in Christchurch. Visit <a href="http://www.theshow.co.nz">www.theshow.co.nz</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 24</b> <b>Rural Women New Zealand National Conference</b> Held In Christchurch. For more information, visit <a href="https://ruralwomennz.nz/national-conference/">https://ruralwomennz.nz/national-conference/</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 17</b> <b>Boar Breeders' Ball</b> Hosted by the BOAR Breeders Association. Held at The Blackhorse Hotel, Christchurch. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/boarbreeders">https://www.facebook.com/boarbreeders</a>	
<b>NOVEMBER 18</b> <b>West Otago A&amp;P Show</b> Taipanui Racing Club & Showgrounds. For more information, visit <a href="https://www.facebook.com/westotago.show">https://www.facebook.com/westotago.show</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 20-25</b> <b>Asia Pacific Seed Conference</b> Held in Christchurch. For more information visit <a href="https://web.apsaseed.org/asc2023">https://web.apsaseed.org/asc2023</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 25</b> <b>South Otago A&amp;P Show</b> Clutha Park Showgrounds For more information, visit <a href="https://www.facebook.com/southotagoap">https://www.facebook.com/southotagoap</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 25</b> <b>Nelson A&amp;P Show</b> Held at Richmond A&P Park. For more information visit <a href="https://www.facebook.com/NelsonAPShow">https://www.facebook.com/NelsonAPShow</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 26</b> <b>Mainfreight Christmas Show Parade</b> Held at Canterbury Agriculture Park, Christchurch. For more information visit : <a href="https://www.facebook.com/www.christmasshowparade">https://www.facebook.com/www.christmasshowparade</a>	<b>NOVEMBER 25</b> <b>White Ribbon Day</b> International Day for the elimination of violence against women. Visit <a href="http://whiteribbon.org.nz">whiteribbon.org.nz</a>

# Hunters giving fresh hope

By Claire Inkson  
[claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz](mailto:claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz)

Tracey Pirie from Hope Community Trust says that protein is an item that has gone off a lot of people's grocery lists as the cost of living crisis hits families across the country.

"There's no middle income any more.

"For middle-class, hardworking people, that dollar is not going as far as it used to, and it's not because of lack of budgeting.

"It's because there's just not enough money coming in."

Two North Canterbury hunters are trying to make a difference and have come up with a unique solution.

Steve Hill and Adam Kreisel have begun Hunters4Hope, which gives hunters the opportunity to donate excess venison to food banks.

The idea came about as Hill noticed how much meat was going to waste when he was hunting with mates and seeing a similar venture on social media overseas, Hill began making enquiries.

He contacted New Zealand Food Safety to see if there was a way to donate meat with current legislation.

"We've taken advice, and there are a few rules and regulations that we have to abide by, but if we meet those requirements, we can do this legitimately."

Hunters can drop excess venison to freezers at various drop off points throughout the



Hunter can donate surplus venison to freezers throughout the region to be processed into mince to help feed people in need. PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

region.

Hill, a livestock agent, keen hunter and former butcher, processes the venison into mince, which is donated to Hope Community Trust in Rangiora for distribution to local food banks.

"What we expect is somebody to go and shoot a deer, keep the prime cuts for themselves, and donate the residual trimmings to

the food bank," Hill says.

Hill approached the North Canterbury Hunting Competition and arranged for 50 deer to be donated from the event.

That resulted in around one tonne of meat donated to the trust.

Tracey Pirie said the donation had made a "huge difference".

"It's allowed us to give people more meat than we've been



Steve Hill hopes to donate 500 kilograms every month to the Hope Community Trust for distribution to local food banks.

able to.

"And it's good quality, low fat, easy to cook, and you can use it for anything you'd use normal meats for."

Pirie sees the trust as a vehicle to distribute the venison to other organisations and people in need.

Hill plans to supply 500 kilograms of meat per month, which Pirie describes as a "game

changer".

"Our job is to be a good steward and pass that on.

"We know other food banks are spending a fortune on meat each week."

Pirie says food banks need to look for solutions outside the box and describes Hill as a "visionary".

"He's not just happy to wait. He will make things happen."