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Te Puna Whakatongarewa

kua Utua e Irirangi Te Motu



What really matters



The work doesn't stop just because it's Christmas.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Christmas is on the horizon once again, making us all wonder where on earth the last year went.

It's a time when we gather together with friends and family.

There are work functions, parades and all manner of fetes, fairs and celebrations.

It is, by all accounts, a time of joy and gratitude.

It's also a time that can be emotionally charged, lonely and financially difficult.

This is nothing new.

Family feuds can float to the surface like bubbles in a festive champagne glass, loneliness is magnified, and finances can be stretched to breaking.

For farming families, the work doesn't stop just because it's Christmas day, and all the complications of succession planning can surface when families gather around the dinner table.

That, on top of one of the most challenging

years farming has faced in decades, means tensions could be running high.

All of this can become incredibly stressful, but only if we lose sight of what this day is supposed to be about.

There are universal Christmas values that go beyond the religious and the material.

Inclusivity, kindness, connection, gratitude and sharing.

We need to distil Christmas down to what matters, and once we do that, much of the stress dissipates.

We can leave the family disputes at the back door with the red bands for one day.

We can gather those who, for whatever reason, are alone at Christmas and welcome them to our table.

We can explain to our children that the gifts might be lighter this year, but there will be pancakes for breakfast and laughter and games all day long.

We can take a moment to remember

those we have lost, those who should be with us but aren't.

We can remind ourselves that it's okay to feel sad and that Christmas can be tricky like that, but we will get through and try to savour what we have in this moment.

And we can be proud.

The milk children leave out for Santa came from a New Zealand farmer.

As New Zealanders sit down for Christmas dinner this year, they share food that New Zealand farmers have produced.

From all of us at the Rural Guardian, we wish you and your family a safe and happy holiday season.

Thank you for all your support.

"Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store.

Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more."

– Dr Suess, How the Grinch stole Christmas.

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High school faces backlash over animal-free farm plan

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

Rangiora High School has faced a backlash from the agriculture community following a Local Democracy article stating the school is considering removing animals from its farm, and is looking at more sustainable options that better fit the community's growing urban population.

"The world is shifting to be more sustainable and away from meat, so we need to prepare our students for a changing world," Rangiora High School principal Bruce Kearney said in the article. North Otago farmer and Methane Science Accord co-chairperson Jane Smith says the school has sadly missed the point.

"New Zealand is the most efficient producer of pasture-raised, non-genetically modified, free-range red meat in the world - we should be teaching our students these sustainable methods of producing protein, not trying to make out that turning pasture into protein is something to be ashamed of, or something that is out-of-date."

Smith said we should let other

countries that don't have access to natural resources do their learning in the laboratory and let New Zealand excel at what it leads the world in.

"They should be incorporating technology into their livestock learning systems, but this doesn't mean getting rid of livestock."

"This school is doing New Zealand agriculture, and its students, a massive disservice by even considering this."

Federated Farmers North Canterbury provincial president Karl Dean says that the farm could be an educational tool for the urban sector to realise how sustainable farming can be.

"New Zealand is the most sustainable pasture system in the world."

Dean said that by removing livestock from the farm, students miss out on key skills that could lead to careers beyond the farm gate.

"They could be promoting the farm as a pathway to get students used to large animals and livestock farming systems, which could help them in their career prospects, if they want to be a vet or get into animal science."

Dean said the school could

explore options to allow the farm to benefit the wider community.

"I believe they have the ability to do a market garden, or a farm shop, or something that could return to the wider community."

"It's a massive opportunity. If they are looking for profitability, I'm sure the people of Rangiora would love some slightly cheaper fruit and veggies and to know where the produce comes from."

Principal Bruce Kearney says while the school is considering the best options for the farm, no decisions have been made yet.

"We need to consider if this is the best place for our school to sit in this current situation."

"We are now an urban school and less of a rural one."

Kearney said that meat is "incredibly important" and will be around a long time, but pressures on feeding a growing world population mean students need to consider alternatives.

"How do we feed a large population?"

"Are these things we want to start thinking about, and are there better and more sustainable ways for doing these things?"

Kearney said it isn't that the



PHOTO: SUPPLIED

school believes New Zealand sheep and beef farming is environmentally unsustainable but rather that the school is taking an educational approach and philosophy by continuously questioning whether there are other ways things can be done to achieve the same or better outcomes.

"We are not a farm; we are a school."

Kearney said their status as a school rather than a farm made

otherwise simple aspects of farming complicated, a factor that could influence their final decision on whether to retain livestock on the 65-acre property.

"If we have to euthanise an animal, for example, the paperwork and the risk assessment and management forms to be even able to do that in a school environment is highly complex."

Board of Trustees chairperson Simon Green said the farm was under great scrutiny from neighbouring urban dwellers.

"Everyone's watching us, and people are on our back door and think that if there is a dead lamb in a paddock, they think we are being cruel to animals."

"We are under a microscope."

When asked if the school farm was an opportunity to educate the urban demographic on the realities of farming, Kearney said the school was happy to educate but had to make sure they did it well.

"We are a school at heart."

"If we are going to show that, we have to make sure we show it in the kindest and best way possible for our students and community."

"And we are not averse to doing that."

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FARMINGFASTFIVE

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

The Farming Fast Five – where we ask farmers five quick questions about agriculture, and what farming means to them. Today we talk to North Otago farmer, environmentalist and Methane Science Accord co-chairperson **JANE SMITH**.

1. What did your journey into farming look like?

I'm a Ruddennklau from North Otago and grew up on the family farm. I attended Waitaki Girls' High School, then completed a B.Com Ag (FM) degree at Lincoln, followed by a career in the fertiliser industry and then rural banking before coming back to North Otago to farm. My husband Blair and I were farming a number of small lease blocks in Southland, while holding down careers at the same time (Blair was running a rural transport business in Southland), and so this gave us a good footing for further investment in stock, plant and land when we moved to North Otago. It was the work that we did outside our normal jobs that gave us some decent savings to go farming.

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

We farm in the hills of Five Forks, 35 km west of Oamaru. We run 9,500 stock units on 1300 hectares – including the Newhaven Perendale stud (producing Perendale, Romdale and Perendale-Texel rams that we

sell both here and in Australia) and the Fossil Creek Angus stud (producing Angus bulls, sold at auction in June each year to clients throughout the country). We also run a flock of commercial Perendale ewes.

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

Challenges and opportunities have gone hand in hand. When we entered farming in 2008 we were faced with high interest rates (higher than those at present but not as high as the 1980s of course), low product prices and drought. We have however set up our farming entity to be as resilient as possible in our harsh climate and our stock are bred to perform no matter what the weather throws at us. We have had some valuable mentors over the past decade of farming – the best advisors are your peers as well as wise farmers who have had the experience over time of the same challenges, and are able to put things in perspective.

The largest challenge however is now ahead of us with the



Jane Smith.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

looming burden of ill-conceived, impractical farming regulation. I spend almost every waking hour outside of my practical on-farm commitments attending meetings, zoom calls and lobbying for a change in direction to the overbearing, draconian regulation that threatens to overwhelm the future of farming as we know it. Our regulators

and many of our processing companies seem to have a belief that family farms are able to operate like corporate entities and commit a full-time person to be office-bound, yet still run complex farming businesses. This is simply not possible, and will lead to the demise of animal welfare, human welfare, volunteerism, and will stifle environmental innovation and the profitability of our provinces.

There are so many great things and innovation occurring in our sector. The government and local councils need to let us build our own positive trajectory instead of suffocating the life blood out of humble family farming operations.

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

Working alongside young people in our sector and encouraging them to work hard, remain focused and drive their own pathway forward is a continued highlight.

Another highlight has been seeing the 'Newhaven Nil-Drench' programme in our sheep

(developed by my parents David and Robyn Ruddenklaue over 30 years ago) come to fruition, with so many other sheep breeders in the industry struggling with drench-resistance. This remains an industry-leading concept and one that our ram clients are now reaping the benefits of as they are not facing the peril of overwhelming drench resistance in their sheep flocks.

Another highlight is that I was fortunate to be able to recently publish a book on '50 Years of the Newhaven Perendale Stud', which was a great milestone to be involved with.

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

Work hard from day one. Surround yourself with positive people who will tell you the best way to do something, not just the easiest. Open your own door for opportunities, don't wait for someone to do it for you. Getting ahead in life is not done in a 8 to 5 working day - it is done through extra work and commitment after hours. Keep focused. Save. Invest. Save again.

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The legacy of Hurricane Tim

On a beautiful day at the end of October, a great many people gathered at Wanaka Airport and via livestream to celebrate the extraordinary life of Sir Tim Wallis.

Despite some serious accidents over his lifetime that should, and could, have taken him much sooner, and many more close calls along the way, his attitude and tenacity to fit as much into his life as possible, despite the odds, got him to the age of 85.

I was watching an old documentary on Tim, in which one of his nurses asked him how much longer he was going to be heading into his office at their Wanaka hangar, to which he exclaimed 'twenty years!' She replied, 'Tim you'll be 85' to which he simply said, 'Why not?'

That can-do attitude was bang on as it turns out, with Tim being flown away for the last time from the office in his almost as iconic Hughes 500D ZK-HOT, in his 85th year.

Like many deer farmers at this time of year it's a busy time so there were many, like me, who had to come home from the farm to pay our

respects to Tim by watching the funeral livestream before heading back out afterwards to carry on with our deer. (If you weren't aware the service is available online and well worth watching).

I'm one of many who have benefited from the exploits, adventures, ideas and achievements of people like Tim, who created a completely new industry off the back of what was a plague of deer in New Zealand, which were decimating our ecosystem.

Utilising hunting ability, the advent of helicopters and all the moving parts to get venison to market, the war was won so well we had to start farming deer to keep up with the demand for what is the best red meat on earth.

I caught my passion for deer farming back when I was at school and I found a book in the library written by Rex Forrester called The Chopper Boys, which really set me alight to know how it came to be that the relatively young deer industry existed.

It was a time in our nations history where it seemed anyone prepared to take some big risks was able to be successful in building their own fortunes, while also

building a huge legacy and prosperity for the country that we get to enjoy today.

Tim, along with the many people and enterprises he was involved with, pop up often through the book owing to the scale, how they operated and the technology and innovation they pushed to the limits to hunt deer from helicopters.

Luckily many of the stories to do with the provenance of the deer industry have been well recorded in numerous books and documentaries over the years. Those days will almost certainly never be able to be repeated.

One of the profound quotes from Tim was when he was featured on Country Calendar and speaking about having limited mobility due to his most serious helicopter crash.

'Don't let what you can't do stop you doing what you can'.

He was certainly living proof of that.

Sir Timothy William Wallis 9/9/1938 – 17/10/2023.



Sir Tim Wallis - an extraordinary life.

PHOTO: NZ HERALD

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Vet students' barely there calendar is back again

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

Third-year vet students at Massey University have reinstated a tradition this year by baring (nearly) all for a fundraising calendar.

Backlash and threats to the students of the Royal Veterinary College in England after producing a similar calendar in 2019 prompted Massey to halt the fundraiser.

After a three-year break, the calendar is back, and students have welcomed its return, vet school student Charlotte Roberts says.

Roberts, who grew up on a dairy farm near Methven, said the rules around using animals in images have changed, and the light-hearted "tasteful" calendar now has the university's support.

"We convinced the vet school to bring it back this year.

"It's not meant to be raunchy; it's just a bit of fun."

Proceeds from the calendar will help fund 'halfway day', a tradition where vet students celebrate the halfway point in their degree with a class trip to

Taupo.

Five dollars from every calendar sold will also go to the students' chosen charity, "Whatever with Wiggy", which helps to support rural mental health.

"In the farming and vet community, mental health is such a big issue, and we wanted to choose a charity that aligned with that and the way the vet school is moving.

"Massey has some great well-being initiatives, and it's way more of a focus than it used to be."

The students have been working on the calendar since July, with students being photographed on farms throughout the country by a photographer of their choice.

Roberts said that most of the Vet School's 130 students were involved in making the calendar, whether they were modelling for photos or helping with production and sales.

"Basically, everyone has been into it, which is great."

Roberts says her family, who run a dairy farm near Methven, have been supportive of the calendar, although her father has

some misgivings.

"I think Dad's a bit mortified.

"I couldn't show him the photo; I was too embarrassed.

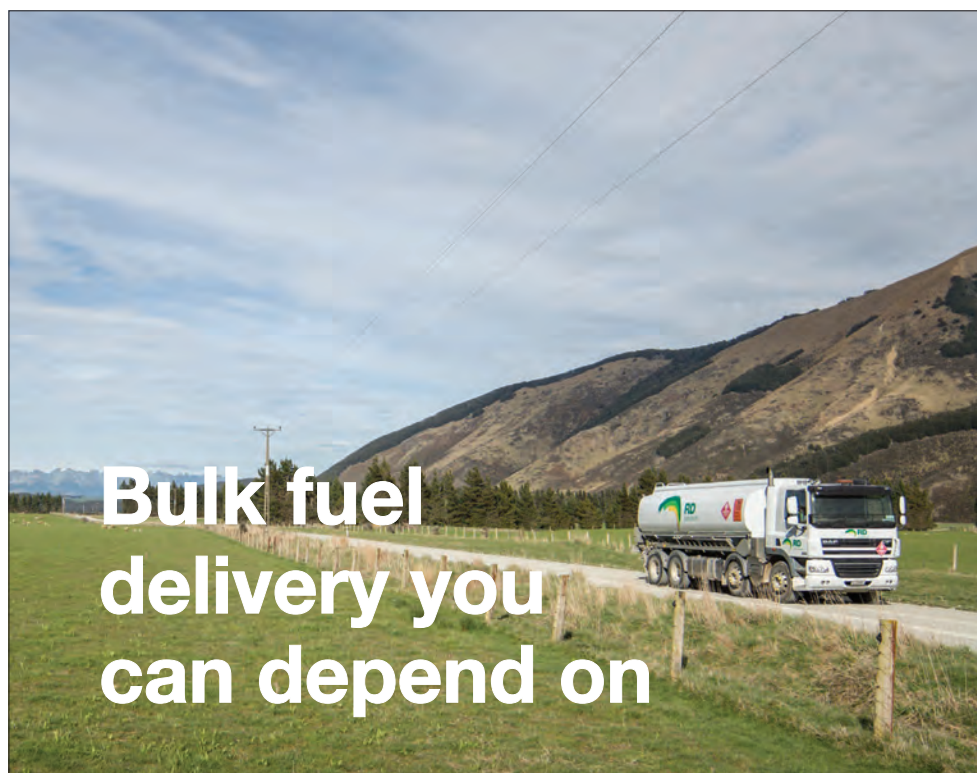
"Mum thinks it's funny, but they both just sort of roll their eyes.

"Dad was joking about putting one up in the dairy shed, but I'm not sure how I feel about that," Roberts laughs.

Copies of "The 2024 Barely There Vet Calendar" can be purchased directly from students or via a Shopify web store throughout November and December.



PHOTOS: SUPPLIED



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Growth spurt for PMR Grains

Hinds-based PMR Grain Systems has had an injection of enthusiasm, energy and innovation with new owners behind the established crop storage, handling systems and engineering business.

Locals, Tom and Kate Burke, purchased the company in May.

An engineer by trade, Tom was the general manager of PMR prior to taking over the business. He is joined by his wife Kate, who has put her career as an anaesthetic technician at Christchurch Hospital aside to assist with the administration.

When not in work mode, Tom and Kate enjoy hiking the hills with their two young children and are volunteer firefighters for the Hinds Rural Fire Brigade.

The Burkes plan to take the foundations laid by the previous owners and build on that with a modern approach embracing new technology and innovation. With their fully equipped engineering workshop in Hinds, the company designs and manufactures parts for a wide variety of grain systems.

PMR also imports feed handling and storage equipment, seed cleaning

equipment, and dairy shed feed systems.

While most of the engineering work is done at PMR's workshop, the company also has a fully equipped mobile service, and offers on-farm maintenance and repairs as needed.

"We're working with the same key suppliers and adding exciting new suppliers from the UK, US and Europe."

With the couple's youthful enthusiasm, the business is in a growth phase with plans to expand the workshop next year to meet growing demand.

"We've taken on more qualified maintenance and service engineers and developed a new website," Tom said.

For the Burkes, their team is an important part of their success.

"We have a great, trustworthy and capable team from engineers to site and office staff. At PMR we take pride in our work and stand by our service," they said.

With harvest just around the corner, PMR is gearing up to help local farmers and seed companies with their crop drying, storage and cleaning needs.



PMR Grain Systems new owners Tom and Kate Burke.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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Time for community-led answers to rural problems

Recent council planning proposals around the country highlight why our environmental legislation is in need of reform.

On the West Coast landowners were shocked to receive notification from the local council that, in many cases, their entire properties had been classified as sites and areas of significance to Maori (SASMs). The rules took immediate legal effect and there was no prior consultation. For some landowners subject to the strictest rules, they immediately became non-compliant, throwing them into turmoil.

In Waimate District a whopping 35,000 hectares, affecting 1,638 landowners was classified as SASMs. This was surpassed by Timaru District which captured 143,000 hectares (over half the district's land area) affecting 4,500 landowners.

Whether it is SNAs, SASMs, outstanding landscapes, wetlands – they all stem from the same piece of legislation – Section 6 of the Resource Management Act. The inherent failing of this legislation is there is no respect for landowners, no protocols around private information, no requirement for consultation with affected landowners, and no compensation for loss of rights or drop in property values.

Councils and environmental lobby groups argue that regulation is needed to protect natural values. But they fail to recognise that to protect these values requires the buy-in of landowners and active management, particularly around the biggest threat to biodiversity – pest and weeds. It is the actions and inactions of landowners, not the rules, that ultimately determine protection. Actions to



The forming of a new government is the perfect opportunity for legislative change.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

protect result from motivated and empowered landowners who have sufficient funds and resources.

Another argument that councils and lobby groups often use, is to protect natural and cultural values – regulation is needed to stop 'bad' landowners destroying these values. However, the role of councils is not to stop bad landowners, it is to find the most effective and efficient way overall to achieve the desired outcomes. A focus on bad landowners automatically means putting rules in place that inevitably penalize all the good landowners. And the odd bad landowner, who are becoming fewer, break the rules anyway. By taking such an approach, councils are turning the values they are trying to protect into a liability and

putting themselves against their communities. This legislation delivers multiple downsides and perverse outcomes.

Some more enlightened councils have recognized that times have changed. The Hurunui District Council in a 2016 plan review, removed all mapped SNAs because the regulation SNA policy was deemed counterproductive and ineffective. Their view was that the attitude of landowners was changing, and that community-led solutions were coming to the fore. With one of the country's largest landcare groups, several catchment groups, a landowner-initiated Hurunui Biodiversity Trust, wilding tree trust, several landowner-funded helicopter pest operations, and hundreds

of other community and private initiatives, the people of Hurunui have proved their council right.

In a similar vein, when faced with a request to map cultural values, the Hurunui District Council turned it down. They said they would not embark on a cultural mapping exercise without first consulting the community on the merits of that policy. Something other councils have failed to do.

The lack of recognition of community-led solutions is in regional councils too. Recently I drafted Groundswell's submission on the draft Otago Land and Water Regional Plan. Farming groups have been vocal on heavy-handed regulatory approach, but what surprised me was no recognition of community-led

solutions. Particularly given there are world-leading initiatives in their region, such as the acclaimed Pomahaka Water Care Group. Councils are always guided by their policy advisors, and they too have failed to change with the times, locked in a mindset that rules are the answer to everything.

For the past 30 years the SNA policy has, and continues to, cause upheaval among communities the length of New Zealand and waste millions of dollars on protracted planning and environment court processes. Councils are repeating the same failed process all over again with the Sites and Areas of Significance to Maori (SASMs). For 30 years local government and farming groups have lived in the fantasy that tweaks to criteria will fix the problems, when wholesale legislative change is required.

Fortunately, with a new government in power, now is the perfect opportunity for legislative change. National is adamant that the RMA reforms of the previous government will be repealed. The ACT party campaigned on getting rid of policies like SNAs and replacing it with an enhanced QEII Trust covenant model that works in partnership with landowners.

Now is also the perfect opportunity for local government and farming advocacy to step up and call for the legislative change that is desperately needed. We will know in the next few months whether they have the courage.

Jamie McFadden
Groundswell environmental
spokesperson



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Upper Clutha spearheads drive for fresh water

By Sharon Davis

Communities in the Upper Clutha Basin near Wanaka are taking a fresh approach to water quality.

WAI Wanaka is building on rural catchment groups and developing an equivalent based on drains and streams in the urban environment.

Project manager Prue Kane said the community-driven water care group grew out of a couple of organisations formed in 2016 to protect freshwater quality including community groups, residents, businesses and landowners concerned about freshwater.

Everyone agreed that freshwater quality was important to the region and recognised that the threat to water quality came from a combination of different communities.

"We identified the risks and our aims for the future – and came up with 60 different action points to ensure not only community wellbeing but that of the various ecosystems," she said.

The result was an integrated community catchment plan that provided a roadmap for regenerative action, communication across different

sectors, and a sharing of knowledge and tools.

In 2019, WAI Wanaka was given funding to set up rural catchment groups. The catchment has five groups of large landowners who meet regularly to discuss issues and best practices on topics such as winter grazing, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, biodiversity and soil health.

"They've also co-ordinated quarterly water tests for three years to understand the effect of land use on farm streams."

Each group identified the objectives for their catchment and worked out what they needed to do to meet those objectives.

"They are in their fourth year now and the groups are still going and refreshing their work plans."

On-farm work in the area was helped by Jobs for Nature Funding, which allowed work teams to go on farms to monitor biodiversity and help with native planting, plant maintenance, wilding pine control and animal pest control.

"It gave farmers a huge boost for three years."

WAI Wanaka is now working to grow a network of urban groups to look after the local water sources and broader ecosystems



Volunteers planting natives with the Lakeside Rd Enhancement urban group. PHOTO: TE KAKANO AOTEAROA TRUST

in the Upper Clutha townships.

"It's great that both urban and rural are working towards understanding their impact and taking action to reduce it."

We treat our urban drains as streams that neighbours come together to protect.

However, Kane said facilitating an urban meeting was more challenging.

Farmers have a common interest and usually know their neighbours well enough to invite them along to a meeting. But this wasn't the case in an urban environment, she said.

"We're still less than a year into the programme and we've seen

some success."

Kane said the Lakeside Road Enhancement Group in collaboration with Te Kakano and Wanaka Backyard Trapping had removed invasive plants, including willows and lupin, replanted the lakefront with natives and started a trapping network.

The group was now working on a stormwater monitoring programme to understand what was entering the lake and work out a plan to mitigate it.

Kane said WAI Wanaka wasn't looking to replace existing groups but hoped to encourage more people to work together for a bigger impact.

The purpose is to give urban action groups the knowledge and tools they need to preserve and improve the health of urban streams or stormwater - and the surrounding ecosystems.

The Young Environmental Collective, known as yo.eco, also approached WAI Wanaka about starting a group and WAI Wanaka provided facilitation and coordination for the group to get started and develop a work plan.

They are a group of 18 to 30-year-olds who rent and are unlikely to stay in the same location for years – but they care about the local environment and formed a group so they could weigh in on issues, said Kane.

Kane said Lake Wanaka Tourism was leading this with WAI Wanaka supporting the initiative.

Many farmers are already running tourism businesses and there is an opportunity to expand this to environmental work, including biodiversity monitoring.

WAI Wanaka has played a role in ensuring that the group has access to the latest research and has helped to develop catchment-wide tools to help landowners understand the influences their actions have on water quality, Kane said.



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Lakes remediation plan expected before year end

By Sharon Davis

An action plan to improve the water quality in the Ashburton Lakes in Mid Canterbury's high country will be ready before the end of the year.

The Ministry for the Environment had earlier indicated the plan would be available

shortly after it released a report on the continued deterioration of the network of wetlands and lakes.

According to the Otuwharekai/Ashburton Lakes lessons-learned report released on May 24, the lakes are close to flipping from clear weed-dominated water to turbid algae-dominated water - which would have a

detrimental impact on lake ecosystems.

The report said "90% or more" of the drop in water quality was due to leaching and run-off of nitrogen and phosphorous from surrounding farm land.

However, the report also found that the neighbouring farms had met or exceeded the latest regulations - and suggested the regulations that had been set were not enough to save the lakes.

A working group was set up to create a plan for the lakes' catchment area to stop the lakes from flipping.

The working group is made up of local runanga with a connection to the area, Environment Canterbury (ECan), farmers in the area, the Department of Conservation, Land Information NZ, the Ashburton District Council, Central South Island Fish & Game, the Ministry for the Environment and the Ministry for Primary Industries.

ECan expects the plan will be ready before the end of the year.

Science director Dr Tim Davie said work on the plan had started under an independent contractor.

"Environment Canterbury is supporting the Otuwharekai Working Group to develop an integrated catchment plan for the Otuwharekai Lakes.

"The catchment plan will take in all of the research to date and set out a clear path forward to restore biodiversity and ecosystem health in this area.

He expected the report to be complete before the end of the year.

Once complete, the plan would be shared with key stakeholders and the public, Davie said.

The plan will use data from national studies, such as the Lakes380 project, alongside modelling from monitored lakes in the catchment to set a baseline for measuring water quality.

Davie said a local "reference lake"

in pristine condition would show the natural state for the lakes as well as reference for climatic influences and natural variability.

However, the reference lake would need to be at a similar altitude and have a similar depth and size to the "impacted" lakes.

This ruled out an option such as Mystery Lake, he said.

While Mystery Lake was entirely within DOC land and not in a farm catchment, the lake was about 300m higher and much smaller than the larger lakes in the catchment.

"Unfortunately, we do not have a true, unimpacted reference lake available that would be directly comparable to the likes of lakes Clearwater and Heron.

"We monitor a number of lakes in the high-country that are mostly, or exclusively, on conservation estate.

However, some have a history of farming land use - for example, Lake Emma," he said.

ECan used data from national studies that sampled lake cores to hindcast past water quality and a study modelling past trophic levels along with what little data was available from previous decades to estimate a natural state for the Ashburton lakes.

"We believe this provides us with an effective baseline to assess the trophic levels and overall health of the lakes in Otuwharekai," he said.

Eight of the lakes are monitored. Lake Denny has the worst trophic level index, meaning it had the poorest water quality.

Neighbouring Lake Emma has ranked second for poor water quality followed by Lake Heron and the two Maori Lakes.

Lake Camp had the best water quality, followed by Lakes Emily and Clearwater.

None meet the freshwater management goals for trophic levels.

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Catchment group launched in Hekeao Hinds hill country



Blands Bluff - Inverary Station/ Lincoln Hills is an important historic landmark at the entrance to Ashburton Gorge and was a route used by early Maori travelling to the Ashburton lakes. It is the site of Maori rock drawings and is home to significant indigenous biodiversity, as well as a Geo Conservation Site. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

By Nicole Lang, facilitator, HHHCG

A small but mighty catchment group has been formed. The members have been bubbling away with excitement following initial conversations two years ago.

The Hekeao Hinds Hill Country Group (HHHCG) encompasses 13 properties.

Situated between the north and south branches of the Hinds/Hekeao River, the catchment spans a huge 13,200ha with sheep, beef and deer farm systems on intensive downlands through to extensive tussock hill country.

An exceptional number of significant natural areas exist on these properties, intertwined with a number of examples of created environmental land stewardship.

There is a huge hub of knowledge of the land, which the catchment group aims to share for future continuous improvement.

Clearly understanding the current state of the environment we operate in is vital.

We're looking at the relationships between the level of biodiversity, water quality and impacts seen during times of flooding and summer dry periods, as well as the influence of various farm systems.

HHHCG's vision is to guide our environmental future while allowing our farms to remain productive and profitable.

Our key objectives are:

- Facilitate a collective community to face and navigate future regulations
- Establish an evidential baseline and illustrate how environmental improvement is completed for our catchment community
- Collaborate with stakeholders on our pathway for improvement
- Improve capability while delivering on the ground action

We are four months into an independent water quality testing

programme with group members determining testing locations.

The group is actively working with Environment Canterbury and ECS Ltd to ensure robust information is collected which will provide a more detailed picture of the catchment's water quality interactions.

Acknowledging influences on water quality has already led to practical conversations around environmental risk management on-farm.

The water quality baseline collation is costly; however there is an evident gap of information across the catchment. Currently this work is being funded by catchment members with support from the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective. This is a critical investment in our catchment community's future.

The group was recently granted 1000 native plants through Synlait's Whakapuawai Initiative.

Each member took a small number of plants to identify areas on-farm to benefit from planting and fencing.

Members are recording before and after photos of planting sites which will be a powerful tool for the group over time to understand environmental risks and discuss further mitigations to put in place.

This is a simple, yet powerful, activity that will directly benefit the catchment and the surrounding community that we influence.

Next steps are to further engage with stakeholders across our catchment while continuing baseline water quality collection.

Ideally, we will add ecological monitoring to understand populations and influencing effects of the environment, as well as further activities around biocontrol weed management and integrated pest planning.

If you would like to know more about the Hekeao Hinds Hill Country Catchment Group, please contact me on 022 101 9225 or email langsustainability@gmail.com

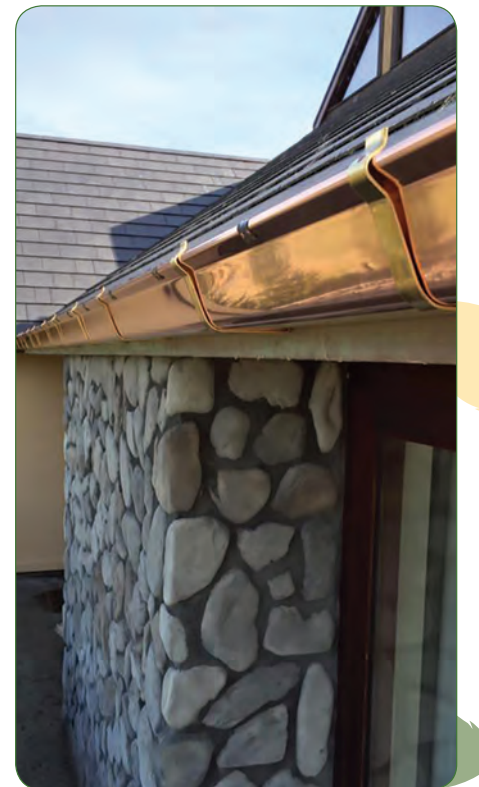
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Grain and seed association has first female president

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

The New Zealand Grain and Seed Trade Association (NZGSTA) has elected its first female president, Charlotte Connoley.

Connoley was elected at the association's annual general meeting in Auckland in October, taking over from former president Michael Hales.

Connoley says it's good for the industry as a whole to have a female in the role.

"I think it's important for all women in the industry to see this as something that is achievable.

"The days where the seed was male-dominated have definitely changed."

Connoley, who grew up on a farm in the Hukataramea Valley, now lives in the Bay of Plenty and is co-owner and general manager of Kings Seeds.

Connoley brings 20 years of experience in the seed industry to the president's role and joined the NZGSTA executive in 2018, the first female executive in the association's 100-year history.

Connoley said it is heartening to see so many women taking on roles within the industry and points to the Women in Seed forum held in Christchurch this year, that saw 150 attendees, as a positive sign for diversity within the sector.

Connoley said the challenge remains as to how to get more women into executive positions in businesses and organisations in the industry.

"The challenge remains as to understanding what some of the impediments are, why these women start in this industry and don't progress their careers."

Connoley said that the demands of motherhood could be a factor, but the industry needed to look at ways to encourage women to return to the workforce after having children.

"We don't want to lose that knowledge from our industry."

With strong demand for primary sector employees from tractor drivers right through to professionals, Connoley said the seed industry needs to be an attractive employer of diverse talent when it comes to competing for staff with other



Charlotte Connoley.

sectors.

Connoley said it's not about filling a quota or ticking a box.

"We still want really good people and people who can contribute.

"But I know from my interactions and experiences with a lot of these women that there are plenty of those around.

investment.

"It will be great to see those brought to fruition and see the difference it makes for the industry for the long term future."

The association would continue building on the good relationship the association has with the Ministry for Primary Industry and looking at seed trade and market access.

"We are also looking at the import side of things as well – how we make things more efficient at the border and make sure we are meeting our biosecurity requirements."

Connoley said the association's membership is "highly engaged", and the NZGSTA would be canvassing members to understand their concerns and issues regarding policy and regulations.

With a new government coming in, Connoley said the association would have to stay across that and see what impact that may have on the industry.

"We have a great strategic plan, and it's just going back to our core purpose as an organisation, which is to provide value to our membership."

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A CANTERBURY CHRISTMAS TALE

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A Canterbury Christmas tale

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

If you live near Christchurch or Timaru, Christmas hasn't begun until you've visited Ballantynes department store's iconic Christmas window displays.

"The tradition is so special to Ballantynes, and we are always excited to share this with our community," Ballantynes visual design and merchandise supervisor Pearl Schwalger-Smith says.

Planning for the window displays and grotto begins as early as February.

"This starts off with lots of brainstorming, movie watching, research, and messy drawings until we have three solid concepts, which include a storyline, what our sets could look like, mood boards, and in-store theming ideas."

The concepts are then presented to the executive team, who choose the theme for the year.

Past concepts have included letters to Santa getting lost at the North Pole and needing to make their way back to Santa, a heartfelt story about a little snowman who wants to spend Christmas inside with his family, and, more recently, animals celebrating Christmas all around the world.

"For most of the year, Christmas is ticking along in the background, and then as we draw

closer to the season, the full visual design team are all hands on deck to bring it all together, creating magical displays."

Installation of the displays and the grotto takes around five weeks for both stores.

Although the Christmas shop opens in September, the window displays are kept a closely guarded secret until their unveiling on November 25.

Schwalger-Smith said keeping the windows a secret is all part of the fun.

"We love it.

"The secret helps to keep the launch magical for everybody."

Santa will be in the Christchurch store from November 25 to help launch the windows and will be taking time out of his busy schedule to see children in the grotto.

Parents can book a time for their children to meet Santa and have a photo taken with the man himself by booking through the Ballantynes website.

Santa will also be making appearances throughout December at the Timaru store.

Styling your house for Christmas

Ballantynes home & gift buyer Rachel Martin says having fun with your Christmas decorations is important and that holidays should be a time for relaxation and joy.

"Your home should reflect your

personality," Martin said.

Martin suggests picking a theme that can be built upon every year and not to feel pressured by Christmas imagery that pops up on social media and in magazines.

"Some people love their homes to be colour-co-ordinated, others are more eclectic.

"You should choose decorations that reflect your personality rather than trying to follow somebody else's themes to the letter."

Vintage has been a popular theme recently, which Martin says is a perfect way of including your older, treasured decorations.

"By adding some newer vintage-inspired decorations in with your older ones, you can give them a whole new look, and you'll still have your memories on show."

"Sweet treats", which combine pastel colours with decorations in the form of cupcakes, macarons, and sprinkles, have been a popular trend in Europe.

Enchanted forest themes with woodland creatures have also been popular.

"Of course, traditional themes of red, green and gold with snow and Santa will never go out of style."

Pick a theme that reflects summery colours rather than dark, cosy tones, to embrace a more New Zealand-style Christmas.

Locally made decorations that don't feature winter imagery and integrating native greenery into wreaths and arrangements can bring the outside in and provide a more Kiwi flavour.

Styling your table

Martin says the best place to start is with a table runner, creating a central anchor for all your decorations.

"A look that's very on-trend right now is bringing the outdoors in by creating a living runner down the centre of the Christmas table."

Add seasonal florals, fruit and woody elements such as pinecones, acorns and cinnamon sticks for a more festive feel.

"Tall candles in the centre will also add a touch of elegance.

"You could extend this further by tying napkins with ribbon or

string and a sprig of berries or orange slices."

For a personal touch, place cards are an effortless and inexpensive way to make guests feel special.

Gift wrapping

Gift wrap can be expensive, but there are some unique and environmentally friendly solutions that are good alternatives to traditional wrapping.

Martin suggests using patterned tea towels as a useful alternative to paper.

"This works particularly well with a foodie gift like a bottle of wine, olive oil or sauce."

Fabric scraps can also work well if you are a sewer, or keep it simple with solid coloured paper prettied up with twine, sprigs of eucalyptus or berries.



The Ballantynes Christmas window is kept a closely guarded secret until its unveiling on November 25.



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The Christmas store at Ballantynes opens in September.

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Get summer sorted with Lushingtons' top choices

Warm summer days have arrived and the much-anticipated holidays are just around the corner. Ashburton's local award-winning garden centre has got all you need – from Christmas gifts to seeds, plants, flowers and trees, and pots and garden supplies.

Lushingtons, at 5 Archibald Street in Tinwald, offers a tranquil garden destination shopping

experience, seven days a week. The sister-owned business has everything a garden aficionado could want, helpful staff for gardeners who need more guidance, and a range of gifts and homeware options.

You can also give a six-pack gift with a difference. Lushingtons has a range of flower and vegetable six-packs!

Visitors can also grab a tasty

breakfast or lunch at the café, while browsing the selection of shrubs, fruit trees, native plants – or summer watering solutions.

Lushingtons co-owner Miranda Sinton said December was a time to protect vegetables from white butterflies and insects and to use netting to save the strawberries as they ripen.

Ensuring plants had enough water through the hotter months

was also important.

"The main tasks for this month are watering, feeding, successional plantings, and maybe a touch of spraying, if necessary."

There was still time to plant out some annuals or potted colour to have the garden looking beautiful in time for Christmas.

Miranda recommends alyssum, lobelia, petunia, zinnia, salvia, verbena or marigolds.

It's also a good time to plant out hanging baskets.

"The smaller-flowered calibrachoa and Calipetites' petunias are ideal for this," Miranda said.

If you're game to think a little bigger, create a retreat from the summer heat and plant that shade tree that you've always wanted. It's going to be a long hot summer and a shade tree is very cool!"



Holiday Garden Tips

Ask a friend or neighbour to water your indoor and garden plants if you're going away.

Check that your watering system is working before you go on holiday, or install a new one.

A soaker hose is ideal for watering the vegetable garden - good soaking every two or three days is better than a daily light sprinkling.

Plan successional plantings of lettuces, beans, courgettes, cucumbers, radishes, beetroot, tomatoes, and sweet corn.

This is a good month to plant out warm-weather-loving plants like rock melons, watermelons, and pumpkins.

Mulch flower beds with compost or pea straw to conserve moisture and reduce the number of weeds.

Raise the cutting height on your lawn mower. The longer grass shades the roots and helps prevent drying out.



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RURAL RECHARGE

Take a smoko break for mental health

‘Lean on a gate’ goes global

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

Fencing Contractors Association of New Zealand patron and mental health advocate Craig “Wiggy” Wiggins has taken his ‘Lean on a gate, talk to a mate’ initiative to America’s mid-west.

Wiggins was invited to introduce the initiative to American fencing contractors at the 2023 Fall Fencing Forum held in Indiana last month after meeting forum organiser Luke Gibson at the National Fieldays in Hamilton earlier this year.

“Luke holds the forum on his ranch, and we struck up a friendship when he visited New Zealand.

“He saw similarities between what’s going on here and over there, so he asked me to bring ‘Lean on a gate’ to the conference.”

Wiggins began the ‘lean on a gate, talk to a mate’ initiative during COVID restrictions, when he noticed how isolated farmers and those living in rural areas were and how people’s mental health was suffering as a result.

The initiative encourages people to connect with their friends and neighbours and take five minutes daily to “lean on a gate, talk to a mate” like farmers traditionally



Craig Wiggins took his ‘lean on a Gate, talk to a mate’ initiative to Indiana in America’s mid-west. PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

did at sales yards and other events.

Wiggins said there are parallels between the struggles facing rural communities in America and those in New Zealand.

“There is a lot of isolation, financial pressure, family pressure, and a lot of pressure to live up to what’s expected.

“They have the same sort of

anxieties and issues.

“It doesn’t matter what country you live in; it’s just how you deal with it and how you get help.”

The Fall Fencing Forum, which ran over three days, was a culmination of workshops and competitions, with fencing contractors attending from all over the United States.

Wiggins was one of the workshop facilitators, holding a ‘speakeasy’ and encouraging conversations on mental health and wellbeing around a campfire in the evenings.

Wiggins said his experience with small communities, what they are, and their strength is the story he tries to tell.

“The fencing community over



Craig Wiggins was presented with a lever-action rifle as a token of appreciation.

there is a community in itself.

“The mantra I go on is strong communities make strong people and strong people make strong communities.”

Wiggins was well received and was presented with a lever action rifle trophy for the “person who delivered the most” at the forum as a token of appreciation.

Festive farming in Ohoka

By Claire Inkson

claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

While most farmers are growers of food and fibre, Andrew McAllister grows festive spirit by the acre in the form of around 20,000 perfectly shaped and bushy Christmas trees on his farm near Ohoka, North Canterbury.

His farm, Needle Fresh Christmas Trees, has become part of the Christmas tradition for countless Christchurch families since it began in around 2005.

“There are some customers who have been buying trees off me for fifteen years,” McAllister says.

McAllister, raised on a sheep farm near Oxford, learned how to grow trees after working on a Christmas tree farm in Scotland while on an overseas trip when he was 18.

That led to a six-year stint working seasonally on a tree farm in Denmark before making the journey home.

Once back, McAllister spent some time considering his business and career options.

“I’d spent so much time over there and was so happy, then I came back here and didn’t know where to start.

“Christmas trees were always on the cards, but that was going to take some time.”

McAllister says his farming background helped prepare him for growing trees.

“It’s just that knowledge of soil preparation for planting and all that. “It’s still farming.”

McAllister bought a smaller

block of land on Tram Road to put into trees but quickly “outgrew” the property.

The current 50-acre property came on the market, and once issues were ironed out with water, McAllister bought the farm in 2016 and has never looked back.

McAllister has renovated the house on the farm, where he lives with his two sons, Luca and Alex, and has spent the last seven years developing the property and growing the business.

“We’ve got maybe seven or eight hectares in trees.

“We got our first crop in the ground in Autumn, and then every year we keep planting, and every year we sell.

“It’s a rotational crop.”

The remainder of the property is utilised for grazing lambs, and selling standing grass.

The trees are mainly Monterey Pine (*Pinus Radiata*) with some Douglas fir, which are the stereotypical trees seen in movies but can be tricky to maintain in the New Zealand climate.

McAllister initially grew seedlings on-farm but now purchases them from the local Rangiora Nursery.

McAllister said demand for seedlings can be high, with people planting pines for carbon farming.

Trees are carefully trimmed during the year to give them the full shape people want in the perfect tree.

“We clean the needles off the bottom of the seedling when they get to a certain height, so they sit in the stand, and they have a big ball of branches coming out at



Every year Canterbury residents flock to Needle Fresh farm to pick their own trees, a tradition in many families. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

ground level.”

The trees, which take around four years to go from seedling to yule-tide ready, are sold at two locations in Christchurch and on-site, where customers can ‘pick their own’.

This year, McAllister is also trailing a small crop of Christmas lilies.

“We won’t sell them in town; we’ll just have them here for sale in buckets.”

McAllister said the biggest challenge for the business has been to get the volume of trees out the gate, with plastic trees still being a preferred consumer choice in most instances.

“Some people think they are doing the right thing by buying a plastic tree because they aren’t killing a real tree, but there is nothing environmentally sustainable about a plastic tree.

“It’s absolute nonsense; our trees are super environmentally friendly because it’s a rotational crop; you literally plant a new seedling next to the stump.”

Christmas in the McAllister household is surprisingly low-key. “We could easily get away without having a tree.

“It’s great when the season starts, but is like anything - it’s also good when it ends.

“It’s a busy five weeks, and you’re

pretty burnt out by the end of it.”

Keeping your Christmas tree looking it’s best:

- If buying a cut tree, trim an extra inch off the bottom when you get it home.
- Don’t keep a cut tree in sand or soil - instead, keep it in water.
- In the first few days, your tree will drink a lot of water before slowing down. Trees must have enough water in those first few days, or the tree will struggle to come back - so keep topping up the water.
- Purchase a good quality tree stand. McAllister recommends the New Zealand-made Cono stands.

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Way of Life!

A rich piece of history

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

Andrew and Angie Mason don't consider themselves owners of Amberley House, but custodians of a rich piece of North Canterbury History.

Amberley House, built in 1876, sits like a grand old dame overlooking 100 acres of farmland and 12 acres of park-like gardens with ponds and an established arboretum.

During its lifetime, the house, situated just outside Amberley township with views across the ocean, has had many different personas.

It began as an elegant homestead, known as Hursley, built by Yorkshire businessman John Woodhouse.

The house passed through another five owners before it was purchased in 1920, along with 144 acres, by a group of local farmers wishing to give their daughters a private education.

The property became Amberley House Girls Collegiate School, which it remained until 1943.

The initial intake was 22 girls, and peaked at 68 in 1937.

Andrew's grandmother, Mary Luckie, was a student at the school in 1931, but unfortunately passed away before the Masons purchased the property.

The school was heavily equestrian-focused, with its own

stables and nearly three-quarters of students kept horses on the grounds.

There were four classrooms, a gymnasium and eight dormitories.

The school prospered until its role began to drop in the early 1940s when parents began to withdraw their daughters from the school due to the war, and the possibility of scandal.

A rumour that suggested an improper relationship between a staff member (thought to be the gardener) and a student caused the school to lose credibility. However, the accusations were never substantiated, and the school denied any such scandal.

"There are a lot of different stories," Andrew said.

"Apparently, the gardener wasn't employed because it was mainly the girls who did the gardening.

"The Board of Governors actually took ads out to try and talk the scandal down, but that just made it worse.

"80 years later, people still talk about it."

The rumours, the threat of coastal invasion during the war and challenging economic times for farmers saw the school close.

"Economic conditions were quite tough. A lot of men were away at war, which meant girls were needed back home to look



Amberley House has had many different personas since it was built in 1876, including housing a girls' country boarding school. PHOTOS: CLAIRE INKSON

after the farms.

"Then Pearl Harbour happened, and the fear of Japanese invasion from the beach became quite heightened."

With the school closed, the house was sold to a Christchurch accountant, Percival Neale, who then sold it to Blenheim builder

Frederick Musgrove.

Musgrove dismantled many of the additions that had accommodated the school pupils.

The house then passed through another five owners before being bought by Douglas Eaves in 1978, who converted the property into a plant nursery.

Hurunui District Mayor Garry Jackson bought the property in 2000, completing extensive renovations.

The house was then sold again before being purchased by the Masons in 2014 when they moved from Christchurch with their seven children.

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“We had made a wish list before we started looking at the house,” Angie said.

“I was desperate to get out to the country.”

The house was perfect for their big family, but the Masons thought it would be out of their reach.

When it passed over at auction, though, they were able to negotiate and purchase the property, which Angie describes as their ‘dream home’.

“I was so emotionally invested, I spent the whole time crying,” Angie said.

The Masons initially hosted weddings on the property, but after the couple purchasing St Leonards Station in Culverdon, their time is now much more limited.

Angie is also recovering from cancer treatment, having been diagnosed with lung cancer last year.

With the new farm and Angie’s recovery, keeping up with the farm work and gardens is a family affair, with the Masons’ children pitching in to help when they are home.

“It got pretty exhausting when I was sick, but it’s actually kept me going and given me a purpose,” Angie said.

“Andy and I sometimes fight over who mows the lawns because it’s actually quite a fun job.”

Amberley House now hosts pre-booked garden tours and recently held an open day.

“Some people just come for garden tours, but we have a range of tour groups that come

from all over the place, and sometimes they want to tour the whole lot – the garden, the farm and the house.”

The Masons accept tour groups in between busy periods on the farm.

“Sometimes we can’t do tours because we are calf marking, breeding horses, or foaling.

“It’s seasonal, and we just make whatever we can work.”

The ornamental garden has over 2500 specimen trees and ponds fed from natural springs and streams.

A fairy grove makes a magical heart of the garden, with wire fairies that were gifts from visiting woofers hanging in the trees.

A unicorn statue that was a surprise gift from Andrew to Angie on her birthday is a popular attraction for visitors.

In keeping with the property’s equestrian history, the Masons also run a sports horse breeding stud.

“We have a Hanoverian stallion, Remi Lion King.

“He is a darling.

“He was competing in the North Island in the Grand Prix show-jumping, and then we decided we wanted him home because he is like a family pet,” Angie said.

Amberley House has its fair share of ghost stories, like every old homestead.

“Sometimes you can hear girls giggling, and doors open and things like that,” Angie said.

“But everyone that visits says it feels like a nice energy.”



Angie and Andrew Mason with the unicorn statue which was a gift from Andrew to Angie on her birthday.



The Masons run a sports horse breeding stud, with Hanoverian stallion Remi Lion King.



Angus cattle which will be sent to the Masons’ Culverdon property, St Leonards Station.



Amberley House sits overlooking 12 acres of park-like gardens.

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Pavlova wreath

Kiwi classic dessert with a spin.
Serves 3-4

Prep time: 10 mins

Cook time 1 hour 5 minutes

Here's the ultimate pavlova, in wreath form, for your viewing pleasure. This visual twist on the Kiwi favourite gives it the point of difference to stand out from your average pavlova ... and it's just as delicious.

Pavlova Wreath

- 6 egg whites at room temperature (use size 7 eggs)
- 1 & 1/2 cups caster sugar
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 2 tsp cornflour
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- 300ml cream whipped (to serve)
- 200g strawberries
- 125g raspberries
- 125g blueberry
- 1/2 handful fresh mint

Method

For Pavlova

Heat the oven to 140°C. On a sheet of baking paper draw a 30cm (12 inch) circle, using a cake tin ring is perfect for this. Inside the circle draw another circle approximately 15cm in diameter. Turn the baking paper over and place on an oven tray.

Place egg whites in the bowl of a mixer (ensuring bowl and whisk are perfectly clean). Whisk until the whites are foamy. Continue to mix, gradually adding sugar at a tablespoon or so at a time and waiting between each addition, add cornflour with last of the sugar. Adding all of the sugar could take 5-6 minutes. Lastly add the vinegar, vanilla and cornflour and allow to mix a minute more.



Spoon the meringue onto the baking paper within the lines, try to keep height to your wreath as opposed to width. Gently make a small channel along the surface of the meringue to allow the cream to nestle in once the pavlova is cooked.

Place the tray in the oven and cook for 65 minutes until the meringue feels crisp. Turn the oven off without opening the door and allow to cool, preferably leave in the oven overnight.

When ready to serve, carefully lift the pavlova off the baking paper and onto a large plate.

Pour the cream into a bowl and whip until soft peaks.

Pile the whipped cream onto the pavlova and top with berries, mint leaves and edible flowers if you have any.

Serve at once.

– Recipe courtesy of Beef + Lamb NZ.
Recipe author: MenuAid

Cartilage loss (Part 2)

In theory osteoarthritis (OA) is one of the simplest diseases. For years we thought that cartilage in our joints just wore away over time. We now know that OA is a complex disease where the processes that reduce cartilage are affected by genetics, past joint trauma and nutrition, especially levels of important antioxidants.

Cartilage is very different from other tissue types. It has no nerve or blood supply, and it appears as lifeless tissue. Cartilage is dynamic tissue. It is a matrix of proteins (collagen and elastin), chondroitin sulphate, water and living cells called chondrocytes.

Research shows that the health of chondrocytes is central to the development of OA. Each chondrocyte looks after a small patch of cartilage repairing damage by secreting new cartilage matrix where needed. The problem is when chondrocytes are damaged or die. This means that cell can no longer maintain cartilage.



Eventually the cartilage thins leading to a (painful) bone on bone scenario.

One of the most annoying and painful arthritic joints are small hand joints. While

Nutritional Therapy can really help, these are among the slowest joints to respond. It seems counter-intuitive, but big weight-bearing joints especially knees tend to respond faster.

I have been helping someone with OA in their base thumb joint at the wrist. Within 3 months the pain had reduced, and now after a year, the discomfort is minor only when under heavy use.

I use a two-pronged approach to supporting cartilage. Firstly, we add compounds, especially chondroitin, that can support and repair cartilage. Secondly, we add curcumin from turmeric and Omega 3 fish oil to reduce inflammation. Often the inflammation causes more pain and mobility loss than the actual cartilage damage.

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



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New generation Can-Ams set the bar for farm ATVs

By Duncan Humm, NZ Farming

After a considerable amount of development by Can-Am on what could be done better to the outgoing models, much was taken into consideration from how New Zealand farmers use their ATVs, due to almost no other market working their bikes as hard, or putting as many hours on clocks, as we do here.

A few months ago I got to spend a day with the team from Can-Am learning about the new generation bikes and seeing the differences compared to the previous generation, of which they had one there to ride, so it was possible to see and feel in the same conditions.

One of the main changes is with the engines, which are actually the same 650cc motor, but with the HD5 being tuned so it makes 40 horsepower (similar to others in the 420-450cc class) and the HD7 puts out 50hp, which is equivalent to its 700-750cc competitors.

The other change is the powerplant is now a single cylinder, which makes the bike feel narrower and riding position more comfortable.

Particularly with the 40hp HD5, this engine should offer great longevity if it's not having to work as hard as a smaller cc motor. Transmission is a CVT that is factory calibrated to suit farming life, but with three selectable drive modes - Work, Standard and Sport, so it can adapt to whatever different tasks an operator is doing.

Cleverly incorporated into the design of the Outlanders is consideration of airflow for those times when you're working the farm on a hot day. Air moves in the front and out the rear well, so the build-up of heat on side panels and ultimately bare legs is minimised.

One of the main feedback points raised by Can-Am owners and mechanics was how could the new design make access to the inner workings of the bike as quick and easy as possible for things like daily checks, cleaning and servicing.

Most people would agree that it is a bit of a pain regardless of brand to get at hard to reach areas when cleaning bikes.

With only being shown once, Can-Am ambassador Sir David



Fagan was able to pull all the access panels off in about the same time he could shear a sheep, but with far less effort!

Despite this ease of access one thing people using the bikes won't have to do is pick up a grease gun, all drivelines and suspension are now sealed long-life components, so if you're not a fan of having to grease stuff that'll really be appealing, without the big repair bills later.

With how Kiwi farmers use their ATVs in mind, load and towing capacity is more in line with how they're often utilised. The tow rating is a whopping 750kg, front

carrier 55kg and rear 109kg.

While on features that improve safety, the Outlander Pros can have their keys programmed by your dealer to not exceed any given limit a farm may have in place, engine braking has three selectable modes to suit how a rider wants to be assisted when slowing down, and they have disc brakes all round for dependable stopping power in any conditions.

Tougher six-ply tyres come as standard whereas other brands typically come with 4 ply, so it is great to get higher quality rubber underfoot.

The bike felt really smooth,

stable and well planted. Much to the concerned looks on the faces of the team from Can-Am, I did make sure to push the HD7 pretty hard to see that it would handle more than what most people would ask of it. Since it makes more power than the 700cc quad I own I was expecting it to be more of a fire breathing dragon, but the power delivery and whole package keeps it very safe, manageable and comparatively mellow. I was impressed.

The Outlander Pro HD5 and HD7 come with three-year engine & transmission warranty and one year unlimited KM unit warranty. Pricing for the Can-Am Outlander Pro XU is around \$20500 for the HD5 and \$21500 for the HD7. There is also a more basic STD HD5 model, without most of the bells and whistles, for around \$17500.

If you'd like to know more about this or any of my past reviews in more detail, please feel free to get in touch.



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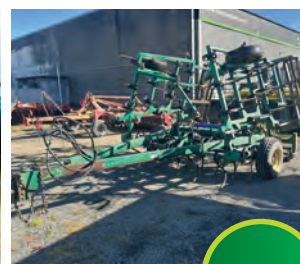
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Drummond and Etheridge story

No one knows John Deere tractors better than Peter Etheridge. Son of Drummond and Etheridge founder *ARTHUR ETHERIDGE*, Peter has been immersed in the world of John Deere since he was a boy.



Peter Etheridge is still a regular face at the Ashburton Drummond and Etheridge store. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

John Deere had already gained a reputation as a robust alternative to the British tractors on the New Zealand market when Drummond and Etheridge took over the franchise in 1973.

"Deere were reliable, and they were well priced, they didn't break down," Peter Etheridge says.

"We wouldn't have an ag business today if it wasn't for John Deere."

The Drummond and Etheridge story began with cars, not tractors when the business was formed in 1933 as a partnership between Bob Drummond and Arthur Etheridge.

The pair set up shop, initially selling and servicing cars in the agricultural service town of Ashburton, in the heart of New Zealand's grain bowl, Mid Canterbury.

In 1937, the business opened "Servrite" on the main street, which became the official AA service station.

In 1939, WWII saw the temporary closure of the station as staff were enlisted for the war effort.

With farming at the region's heart, Drummond and Etheridge branched out into agricultural

machinery after the war, obtaining first the Nuffield tractor franchise in 1949, followed by New Holland in 1951.

When the company added the John Deere brand to their stables in 1973, Drummond and Etheridge became almost as iconic in Canterbury as the John Deere brand itself.

John Deere had already dipped its toes in New Zealand soil, being sold by Goffs and later Cable Price before Drummond and Etheridge obtained the John Deere franchise.

Etheridge, now a sprightly 79-year-old, began as an apprentice mechanic in his father's business in 1959, but found fixing machinery was not his forte.

"I was the most useless bugger they employed."

"My father said you're bloody hopeless."

"You'd better see if you can sell a tractor."

As it turned out, Etheridge was a natural salesman, and his career selling John Deere tractors spanned forty years until his retirement in 2003 when his son

Nothing runs like a Deere

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

The birth of a legend

John Deere was born in 1804 in Rutland, Vermont.

Tragedy struck early for Deere when he lost his father in a maritime incident when he was just four years old.

Raised by his mother, Deere took up a career as a blacksmith and soon gained a reputation for

his quality of workmanship.

He moved to Illinois in the Midwest in the late 1830s after the collapse of the New England economy and started a blacksmith business in Grand Detour.

The business soon became an empire because of his innovative solution to farmers' difficulties ploughing the sticky Mid-Western soil.

Farmers were using cast iron

ploughs, and the rough surface of the implement meant that soil would stick to the bottom of the plough, meaning farmers had to stop to clear the blades frequently.

Deere developed a 'self-scouring' plough fashioned from steel with a smooth surface that shed the soil as it moved through the ground.

The plough was an instant success, and Deere upscaled his

operation, moving the business to Moline.

The new factory was on the East bank of the Mississippi River, allowing the factory to be hydro-powered and providing an efficient way to ship supplies and move stock.

John Deere went on to become the mayor of Moline before he died in 1886.

The company was continued and expanded by his heirs.

In 1912, John Deere introduced planters, buggies and grain drills to its line-up of agricultural machinery.

Tractors were added to the mix when John Deere purchased the Waterloo Gasoline Engine Company in 1918 and produced the Waterloo Boy N.

In 1924, the John Deere tractor got its iconic green body, yellow wheels and the leaping deer logo when the company produced the Model D.

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Mark and son-in-law Ashley Gordon took over the business.

Tragically, Gordon died less than a month later, leaving Mark the business' sole owner.

Although technically retired, Etheridge is still a familiar

face at the Drummond and Etheridge branch on East Street in Ashburton.

"I still go to work just about every day, have a yarn and wind the staff up and make sure they are working hard," Etheridge said.

The John Deere 4040

Peter Etheridge's favourite tractor from his decades selling the John Deere brand is still the JD4040.

"It was the second one to come out with a cab, which kept the farmers lovely and dry.

"It was reliable, with not too much technology.

"I'm no good with technology."

The JD4040 was produced in John Deere's Waterloo factory in Iowa in the American midwest from 1978-1982.

Equipped with a 6.6 litre, six-cylinder diesel engine, power steering and available in either two or four-wheel drive, the 4040 was from John Deere's Iron Horses Series.

Passing on a legacy

Nelson farmer and contractor Andrew Fry has 20 John Deere tractors, which showcase the brand's evolution.

Five tractors are newer models, which Fry uses in his contracting business; the rest are vintage two cylinders, some of which have been in his family since new.

"One of the tractors was my Grandfather's that he used on his tobacco farm.

"My dad remembers picking

that up when he was 16."

The oldest tractor in Fry's fleet is a 1936.

He favours the older tractors for their simplicity, if not for their good looks.

"They're quite ugly, but I like them old and ugly.

"They don't have bonnets or cabs; they are basically just a raw tractor."

Fry has a new John Deere, a 6230R, arriving later in the year.

"It's arriving in December, which is a bit late, but that's just how things are at the moment."

Fry's love affair with John Deere began whilst working on a friend's farm as a teenager.

"I was probably in my early-mid teens, and they had brought a new 6110, and I just fell in love with it.

"We never had a cab tractor on our farm, and I used to love going to the neighbours and driving theirs."

Fry is looking forward to passing the tractors down to his own sons.

"I have two little boys, and they are mad about tractors.

"I'm looking forward to being able to pass their great-grandfathers' tractor to them."

Makeover for iconic tractor

By Claire Inkson

Claire.inkson@theguardian.co.nz

The Mid Canterbury Machinery Club is raffling off a 1956 Ferguson FE35 Tractor to raise money for the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust.

Club secretary Ross Worner says the restoration has been a joint effort from club members and a labour of love.

"We purchased the tractor after a friend of mine who had begun restoring it passed away.

"We bought as a club, finished it off and decided to give the proceeds to the rescue helicopter."

The FE 35 has been restored in its original distinctive colour of grey metalwork, with gold wheels and castings.

"The FE 35 marked the transition from Ferguson to Massey Ferguson," Worner said.

"They made these in gold and grey for about a year before changing to red and grey."

The club estimates the tractor is worth around \$4000, with raffle tickets being sold for just \$5 each. The club will draw the raffle at the Wheat and Wheels Rally on April 6 and 7 at committee member Anthony Hampton's farm in Lauriston.

The rally is set to be a big event on the vintage machinery calendar, celebrating 100 years of the Farmall tractor.



The Ferguson FE 35 is being raffled to raise funds for the Canterbury West Coast Air Rescue Trust. PHOTO: CLAIRE INKSON

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Retired farmer recognised for community efforts

Retired farmer and Rakaia community stalwart Edward Oakley was recognised for his contribution to the Rakaia community in the latest local council honours last month. Sharon Davis caught up with him.

“I was always taking part in things. I like to have my say – Edward Oakley

By Sharon Davis

Hatfield Farm on the outskirts of Rakaia in Mid Canterbury has been in the Oakley family for 120 years.

Edward has lived on the farm all his life, except for a few years at St Andrew's College in Christchurch, and has served the area for most of his life.

He was involved in the Rakaia Pony Club, Lauriston Young Farmers' Club, Federated Farmers, Rakaia Rugby Club, Rakaia Lions, and spent nine years serving on the local council.

He was also responsible for organising the local ANZAC service for a period of about 10 years.

“I was always taking part in things. I like to have my say.”

After completing his schooling in Christchurch, he returned to the family farm and took over running the farm when his father died 18 months later.

His time with the Lauriston Young Farmers was a formative period for Edward as a young farmer. The meetings were always interesting “with fruity discussions”.

Sir Charles Hilgendorf was the advisory member.

He would “pontificate about things” and had an expansionist vision, said Edward.

In the 1960s, five local farmers started the first farm discussion group in the district.

“I wasn't the instigator,” said Edward.

“We'd walk over the farms, make suggestions and pool our

knowledge with the help of an advisor from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.”

When Edward became involved in Federated Farmers, the local Rakaia branch wasn't very active.

“It got to the stage where there were only two or three active in the Rakaia branch. In the late 1960s, we decided to run an annual field day to generate interest on the last Friday in November.

“We involved expertise from Crop and Food and picked out four or five local farms that had something people would be interested in.

“The agricultural industry is very good at sharing information. I think that is a good thing.”

People would travel from farm to farm, with farmers coming from as far as north and south Canterbury.

The Foundation for Arable Research eventually took over the field days - they still run them today, Edward said.

When Edward was in his late 30s he was approached by the retiring councillor for the then South Rakaia Ward and asked if he wanted to represent the ward.

“I was nominated. There was no election.”

Edward said he spent an enjoyable six years on the old County Council.

The council had a roading gang and a bridge gang.

“We did everything ourselves. It was a lot like farming.”

When the councils amalgamated, Edward did one term on the district council.

“We were pressured by the Borough to do away with the ward system.

“The predictable happened, and Rakaia had no representation for three years,” he said.

After he lost the next election, Edward, together with Bernie Caldwell, appealed to the Local Government Commission and

brought a case to “three crusty retired judges” to get wards back for rural areas.

About three months later, a “big fat letter” arrived in the post to say they had won the case.

“I did more off the council than when I was on it,” joked Edward.

When he left the council, Edward got involved in Federated Farmers.

He was with Federated Farmers for about nine or 10 years and served as arable vice chair for New Zealand during that time.

“It was a traumatic time for farming in the 1980s. Things were not too flash, and farmers were under threat.”

Edward believed that to make a point, you had to overstate the case.

“I got good at that and got a lot of publicity. The wheat and crop industry was battling and lots of farmers went under.

“It was all the luck of circumstances whether you survived or not.”

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Edward said he was lucky enough to survive.

"I could be quite acerbic at times. That worried some people and I got moved on."

He said he felt he'd "done his stint" and didn't mind.

Edward retired from farming 12 years ago. He still lives in the farmhouse, but leases out the land, to a neighbouring farm.

They farm lily bulbs along with a typical Canterbury farm mix of crops and finish lambs on the farm.

"In the past, farmers did everything themselves. Now we have contractors come in. It's a different operation. That's all specialisation and progress."

Looking back on years of community service, Edward said: "I did it because I enjoyed it. It was relaxation."

"A day off the farm doing something else – that extra stimulation."

He said too many people in positions of authority felt they were an indispensable cog in the wheel.

"Everyone's dispensable," Edward said.

He was also on the Board of Governors for his old school for about eight years.

"I was away from the farm a lot – it was all so enjoyable."

Edward's personal highlight was playing a role in brokering an impasse between the Rakaia Hut owners and the Catchment Board.

There had been an ongoing scrap between Rakaia Huts and the Catchment Board - the hut owners were facing eviction because of the flood risk.



Edward Oakley.

When a local roading contractor built a road and embankment in one weekend, the Catchment Board went berserk.

The two local ward councillors received a call to go to the Rakaia Huts immediately, said Edward.

"The board and the residents were ready to annihilate each other. We had to broker a deal."

The board eventually accepted

it was a done deal and too hard to remove, he said.

About six weeks later, the hut holders presented Edward with a "great big salmon" for helping with the board.

The embankment "is still there today with a road built on top of it. But for that, Rakaia Huts wouldn't be there today," he said.

Edward was also involved in the

publication of *Rakaia Our History*.

"I headed a committee of enthusiastic locals who decided to record the history of our district."

The result was a volume of 718 pages of text and photos recording 150 years of settlement in Rakaia. It took five years to complete.

"The result was a great success. Over 700 copies have found their

way into the wider community," said Edward who regards this as one of his greatest achievements.

"We employed a professional history writer, Janine Irvine, to put it together. The publication received commendation at the New Zealand Book Awards."

Along with good friend Peter Watson, Edward has also written a history of The Lions Club of Rakaia.

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Working to slash emissions

By Sharon Davis

Fonterra has set its sights on a 30% intensity reduction in on-farm emissions for the co-operative's dairy farmers.

The new target comes after a 10-month consultation with the 9000 dairy farmers who are part of Fonterra.

Mid Canterbury Federated Farmers dairy chair Nick Giera said the new targets would affect each farm differently.

Mid Canterbury farmers who had access to irrigation water and good soils for growing grass would be less impacted than regions that relied on imported feed.

While he felt no-one would be "happy" with the targets the good thing was the focus on emissions intensity.

"That is a proxy for efficiency - and New Zealand's dairy farmer were one of the most emissions efficient produces in the world."

Giera said if the target was to reduce total emissions, then milk production would fall and the gap in the global market would be filled by less efficient milk from other producers.

Dorie dairy farmer and Fonterra Co-operative Councillor Mark Cressey said the announcement did not come as a surprise.

He said Fonterra had announced plans to introduce an emissions target 12 months ago and had been

talking to farmers all year explaining what competitors were doing.

The 30% was similar to competitors' targets but would be a challenge.

"Most of it comes down to on-farm efficiencies and new and novel technology."

If a farmer got rid of the poorest performing 10% of the herd they would come close to the on-farm emission target.

Farmers had achieved 2% of the required 7% reduction in on-farm emissions since 2018 through normal efficiency gains - when there wasn't a target.

Now farmers would need to make changes a bit faster, he said.

Cressey said the reductions from new technology was the biggest grey area.

"Novel technology has to come in at an affordable price."

Cressey said the emissions target was a consequence of asking Fonterra to sell New Zealand milk at top prices.

"If we want that we have to supply what the customers are demanding," he said.

Shareholders were told at a general meeting in Methven on Thursday that the emissions target was needed to future-proof the business as customers - and lenders - were increasingly interested in sustainability and carbon emissions.

Fonterra chief executive

Miles Hurrell told shareholders that "sustainability was the top concern for customers overseas" and Fonterra's emissions target would help "future proof the co-operative and your business".

Fonterra's 30% reduction was co-operative-wide and would not be measured on a farm by farm basis. However, every member had a part to play.

Hurrell said every farm would be expected to have an action plan and the plan would look different for each farm.

The co-op hopes to reduce emission intensity per ton of fat and protein-corrected milk collected by Fonterra.

The emissions target was from a 2018 baseline through to 2030, and progress made since 2018 would be taken into account.

Hurrell said that Fonterra had already seen a 2% on-farm emissions savings across the co-operative since 2018.

"The good work already done by farmers does count," said Fonterra chairman Peter McBride.

He promised that the co-operative would work alongside farmers, not against them, to achieve the target.

McBride said the need for an on-farm emissions target did not change with the election - it was driven by Fonterra's key customers.

"Sustainability and emissions are the new trade barriers," he said.

The future access to funding and capital from banks could also depend on farm emissions.

"Many banks have already set emission reduction targets."

McBride said a focus on sustainability and emissions was the "commercial reality of doing business" and would "catch up with everyone eventually".

In response to a shareholder question whether the emissions target was based on science or market politics, Hurrell said the target was "driven by what our customers are seeking".

McBride said it was science-based but definitely driven by customers and the future need to source capital.

Achieving the target would require a combination of sharing best farming practices and technology to reduce emissions, he said.

Chair of Fonterra's Co-operative Council, John Stevenson, said there had been an increase in tension as the focus on sustainability had encouraged a look "behind the farm gate".

Fonterra had met all but one of the 10 performance measures - the farmgate milk price - in the last year.

Stevenson said there was a drop in shareholder confidence in both Fonterra and the future of the dairy industry. However, he noted some of the causes of that would be out of Fonterra's scope of influence.

Fonterra expects to reduce emissions by about 22% through improved farm practices, new technology and offsetting emissions with planting.

The remaining 8% would come from no longer needing to account for emissions created by land use change to dairy farms earlier this century, by the time 2030 rolls around.

Greenpeace Aotearoa has labelled Fonterra's plans as "woefully insufficient" saying there are no real measures to reduce emissions.

Fonterra and emissions

86% of Fonterra's emissions are generated on-farm

Earlier this year Fonterra increased its emissions reduction target across its manufacturing and supply chain from 30% to 50% by 2030 - also from a 2018 baseline.

The co-operative has also committed to end coal use for industrial heat by 2037 as part of its ambition to be net zero by 2050.

One of Fonterra's rivals, Synlait Milk, announced its on-farm climate goals in mid-2018.



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ELBOWDEEP

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

Oranges and one apple

I admire Tatua Dairy Company, the little dairy cooperative on State Highway 26 just outside of Morrinsville. In 2001 their shareholders, along with shareholders of fellow dairy cooperative Westland, voted not to join the newly created Fonterra. They backed themselves that they could do a better job alone, and they were right. Their last three years of milk payouts have been substantially higher than that paid by Fonterra.

Westland, unfortunately, have not fared so well and was sold to Chinese dairy company Yili Group in 2015.

Many others in New Zealand must also admire Tatua as it is next to impossible for me to praise Fonterra's performance without comparisons being made to the tiny processor. Some comments are tongue in cheek, made by people with a working knowledge of the dairy industry, and others are sanctimonious and immediately betray the ignorance of the person making the comparison.

Comparing Tatua and Fonterra is like comparing apples and oranges; both are fruit, or in this case cooperative dairy processors, and that is where the similarities end. Last season Tatua collected 1.48 million kg of milk solids while Fonterra collected 1,480 million. Due to the difference in size, it is perhaps more accurate

to describe it as comparing a single apple to a pallet of oranges.

Imagine if you will, through a stroke of legislation, that Tatua had to operate under the same rules as Fonterra. The closed cooperative that tightly controls the entry of new milk supply now would have to open their doors to all comers, and who wouldn't want to supply Tatua?

These new suppliers could live almost anywhere in New Zealand, so Tatua would need to develop a network of tankers and factories across the country, complete with the staff required to run them. They must be capable of processing all the milk that comes to them during spring which is peak milk season. For a majority of the year these factories will not be running at capacity, and this will have financial implications for the cooperative.

Tatua may be inundated with suppliers whose milk they could only refuse to accept on very limited grounds. When they decline a potential supplier, they may find themselves in court defending the decision, so they would need to increase their legal team. As they will also be subject to review by the Commerce Commission every year, the lawyers will be kept busy.

Since Tatua are now playing by the rules that govern Fonterra, a substantial portion of that product would have to be sold at



Comparing Tatua and Fonterra is like comparing an apples and a pallet of oranges.

a global public auction to provide price transparency. This auction would be designed to set a floor price for their products rather than a ceiling, and Tatua would be required to pay the Commerce Commission to comb through the results and decide if the price being paid to farmers was the highest possible.

If someone wanted to set up in competition with Tatua, the cooperative would now be legally obliged to provide the new competitor with milk at cost price for three years, while that competitor secured their own supply.

The fact is that Tatua and all the independent processors play by a totally different set of rules than Fonterra does, yet no other processor gets the public

attention that Fonterra does.

Miraka, an independent dairy processor near Taupo, claimed \$900,000 in Covid-19 wages subsidies despite exports to China increasing during this time. Fonterra and Tatua claimed nothing.

Synlait, whose recent woes are well documented, has never paid a dividend to their shareholders, and this year posted a loss.

Mataura Valley Milk, another independent processor, also claimed the wage subsidy and have yet to make a profit.

None of these independent processors are hamstrung by the legislation that binds Fonterra, yet none of them

can emulate Tatua's success. This state of affairs leads me to conclude that smugly asking why Fonterra can't pay at the same level as Tatua betrays a lack of even basic understanding of the rules governing the dairy industry.

Tatua should be celebrated, their success should be held up as an example for all to try to emulate. The independent processors should benchmark themselves against Tatua instead of Fonterra, for that's where the similarities lie, and people who comment on the dairy industry should first make sure they know the difference between an apple and oranges.

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Farming in the veins of Dairy NZ's new chief executive

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

DairyNZ welcomed new chief executive Campbell Parker in October. He takes the reins from departing president Dr Tim Mackle.

Parker says he was attracted to the position because of the desire "to make a difference."

"I am genuinely humbled and excited to be joining DairyNZ as the new chief executive.

"I am passionate about the role the dairy sector plays in creating jobs, building communities, and contributing to the success of the New Zealand economy," Parker says.

Parker has over 25 years of experience in agriculture, having held roles with PGG Wrightson, Bank of New Zealand, Balance Agri-nutrients and more recently, was chief executive of GEA Farm Technologies.

Parker holds a Bachelor of Agriculture from Massey University and grew up on a sheep, beef and dairy grazing farm.

"I've been in and around agriculture my entire career; farming is in my veins."

"It's a sector that has such an important role, not only in terms of industry but for New Zealand as a whole."

Parker said that DairyNZ can help farmers navigate the industry's challenges with immediate tools and longer-term solutions.

"We have done work previously around managing in tight times, and some of that information is readily available and can be used to support farmers."

Parker describes the industry as "cyclical" and said a number of farmers had worked through tough times before and could manage it well, but that newer entrants to the industry may need more support.

"The key message is to reach out, seek help to manage through what is a cyclical part of our business,

"There are a lot of tools available."

In the longer term, Parker said DairyNZ will continue to focus research and development programmes around issues like methane reduction and nitrate loss.

"We also need to look at what



DairyNZ's new chief executive Campbell Parker is optimistic about the future of the dairy sector. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

also flows into the critical role we play with both local and central government around policy."

Parker said key learnings were to be taken from the He Waka Eke Noa (HWEN) process.

"A lot of people put a lot of effort into it and tried to get together on behalf of the industry,

and that's the piece I don't think we can lose."

Parker said DairyNZ needed to work with the incoming government around timeframes, mechanisms and emissions pricing.

"If we are meeting our targets, that whole discussion about pricing becomes interesting, but

we have to continue to make progress."

Farmers wanted clarity about what the regulation would be, the timeframes and how it would work.

"We have to strike a balance around that because globally, the trends are not going away around the need for sustainable production and how we do that.

Parker said he believes the sector can balance both profit and sustainable outcomes, and he supports a science-backed approach to methane taxing.

"Science is at the core of what we do at DairyNZ; we've always relied heavily on science.

"Science is at the core of good outcomes."

Parker said he feels optimistic for the dairy sector.

"I see a really positive future for dairy farming in New Zealand.

"The challenge is how do we navigate those choppy waters ahead?"

"But when you can get alignment on agreement of what the issues are, and then try and find practical and pragmatic outcomes, then we can all progress.

"That's the opportunity."

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Over the next few weeks, twenty-eight farmers from five continents and 12 countries will spend 10 days in New Zealand taking part in the latest Rabobank Global Farmers Master Class (GFMC) – a state-of-the-art agri learning programme established in 2012 to bring together leading farmers from around the world to address global food security.

This is the sixth edition of the Rabobank GFMC and the second to be held in Aotearoa, with New Zealand having co-hosted the event alongside Australia in 2016. The bank has also run GFMC in the Netherlands, Zaire, and, most-recently, in Brazil.

Across recent years, I've had the chance to interact with several of our NZ-based clients who have taken part in previous GFMC, and the feedback has always been hugely positive. So, when I was asked earlier in the year if the New Zealand business was interested in hosting the 2023 event, I was quick to say yes, and thrilled when New Zealand was confirmed as the location.

For me, it's incredibly exciting to see the event back in

New Zealand and to have the chance to host farmers from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Ireland, Kenya, the Netherlands, Peru, the United States and Zimbabwe, alongside our five New Zealand-based attendees.

The GFMC will kick off in Hamilton on November 27 and finish in Queenstown on December 6, with its content-dense programme featuring presentations from top agricultural thinkers and business experts, interactive workshops and case studies, as well as visits to a range of flagship agribusiness operations in both the North and South Islands.

Not only does the GFMC provide a chance for the New Zealand business to host some fantastic farmers and growers from right across the globe, but it also gives us an opportunity to highlight some of this country's outstanding agricultural operations and to demonstrate why New Zealand is a global leader in farming best practices.

It's a platform for rural entrepreneurs to become even better, to increase their strategic

planning, management and farming skills and develop their innovative power to produce more with less.

It's also a great forum to make global connections with like-minded farmers, and I know that many of our Master Class participants from our previous years' events still stay in touch and bounce ideas off each other when they're after another perspective.

I'll be joining participants for the early stages of the programme in the Waikato, as well as for the event's closing dinner in Queenstown.

The farmers travelling here for the event are involved in a huge number of different agricultural sectors, including several that are very familiar to us here in New Zealand – like dairy, sheep and beef – and a few that aren't – like floriculture, banana and cocoa production.

It's shaping as a fantastic 10 days and I'm really looking forward to learning a bit more about these farmers' businesses and some of the challenges and opportunities they are facing in their own countries.



Bruce Weir, Rabobank general manager country banking. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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Young Country: Where we showcase a young farmer. Today it is Sam Lennon

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

I'm a member of Teviot Valley Young Farmers, I've been a part of the club for around four years now.

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

have helped you most?

Probably my highlight of the club has been meeting new people around the valley and catching up with mates.

3. How did you become involved in agriculture?

I started off doing weekend work and work experience on a dairy farm when I was at school.

4. What is your job now?

I'm giving shepherding a crack now.

I started on the dairy farm, then managed to get a job over the fence on a sheep and beef farm driving a tractor.

After a couple of years doing that, I managed to get a couple of dogs together and I'm doing some stock work.

Now I'm on a 1700-hectare property just outside of Millers Flat, running a mixture of sheep, beef and deer.

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

I'm hopeful for the future for farming. With all the rules and regulations that have come in, I would like

to see that us farmers are cut a break.

6. What are your future plans?

To carry on what I'm doing, learning and working my way up.

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

I would have to say most of the people I have met in the industry.

They have taught me and helped me out.



Sam Lennon. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

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