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# Celebrating women

The International Day of Rural Women, also known as International Rural Women's Day, has been celebrated on October 15 since 2008.

In New Zealand, rural women play an essential role in our agriculture sector, and thanks to the generations of women who came before us, we now have a much more level field to farm on.

We have some strong and intelligent women in leadership positions in the primary sector.

Tracy Brown will be elected as chairperson for DairyNZ in October (who you can read about in this issue), Kate Acland is chairperson for Beef + Lamb New Zealand.

Keri Johnston is chairperson of Irrigation New Zealand, and Charlotte Connoley is president of the New Zealand Grain & Seed Trade Association.

Kate Trufitt is the chief executive of Potatoes New Zealand, and Kate Scott is the incoming chief executive of Horticulture New Zealand.

Emma Poole was the first female to win the FMG Young Farmer of the Year contest in 2023.

The list goes on, and it's an impressive one.

Many women are doing the mahi on the ground, too—running and managing farms either independently or making an invaluable contribution to the decision-making and labour of family farming partnerships.

Despite the fact that the grass ceiling has (for the most part) been effectively shattered, it is important to continue to celebrate rural women's impact on our primary sector both now and in the past.

When we examine the history of New Zealand agriculture, we cannot overlook the significant and lasting contribution of the

Women's Land Service, known as the Land Girls.

Established in 1942, this group of women from diverse backgrounds had the important responsibility of ensuring a steady food supply to the citizens of Britain and New Zealand, the New Zealand armed forces, and the 45,000 American soldiers stationed in New Zealand who were involved in the war in the Pacific.

Some women were trained on the farm, while others studied at the Canterbury Agricultural College at Lincoln University, which offered a six-week course on the basics of farming.

Each intake comprised of 21 women, all unmarried and over the age of 17.

The women helped on the university farm, Ashley Dene, to relieve the lecturers who had been keeping the farm running in the absence of workers.

Once they graduated from the course, these women were placed on farms throughout the country, working long hours, with sometimes only an afternoon off each week.

Even with a lack of experience and resources, and with the 4000 women in the land service effectively replacing the 28,000 men who had gone off to war, wool and meat production during this period was at a record high.

Despite their efforts, New Zealand Land Girls, unlike their British counterparts, were not officially recognised by the government until 2011.

There was no record of where women were placed or their achievements.

There is no doubt, though, that these pioneering women helped reshape perceptions about women and work during the 1940s, laying the groundwork for women's participation in the primary sector.



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## Maurice Wotton - ACL's landscape legend

**Maurice Wotton and ACL landscaping.**

**They go together like salt and pepper, and bacon and eggs.**

**That's how synonymous Maurice is at Ashburton Contracting Limited, which has been in operation since 1995.**

Maurice is ACL's landscaping supplies manager and has been working for the company for 18 years.

"I've been here for a long time," Maurice said with a smile.

"I had a background in this business

long before I joined ACL because shingle and landscaping products were always part of my life."

The transformation of ACL's landscaping services has been vast in Maurice's near two-decade stint.

"When I started, we had a smaller selection," he said.

"Now we've expanded our inventory to include a vast array of products. We've got everything from the popular bark nuggets to coloured stones, various shapes and sizes, and even crusher dust. Our soil and growing materials are something we really pride ourselves on."

And Maurice is particularly proud

of their free loan trailers, which allows customers to transport their purchases easily.

"We offer deliveries in our little truck too," he adds.

"And for those who prefer to grab and go, we have smaller lots and bags available.

"It's perfect for those with smaller spaces who don't need a full trailer load."

It's all about customer service for Maurice and his team.

They all love what they do. They love what they offer. They love going the extra mile, and customers appreciate their dedication.

They frequently wander into the office

with specific needs and ideas.

"People often come in with projects in mind, like a new outdoor barbecue area or a garden overhaul," Maurice said.

"They ask for advice on how to tidy up their space or keep weeds at bay.

"We've got a display in the office showcasing most of our products, and we also share photos of various landscape jobs around town to give them inspiration



# Jane Smith: The inconvenient truth

JANE SMITH

Apparently, 97% of scientists and climate change-dependent bureaucrats say a continued stream of methane mitigation money is crucial to their careers.

Actually, I made that figure up, but sadly that seems an acceptable practice these days of plucking figures from hot air when it comes to justifying unwarranted spending on unnecessary mitigation.

Agrizero CEO Wayne McNee, in last month's Rural Guardian, said New Zealand's methane emissions needed to reduce to "protect our sector's future" and doing so is "no longer optional".

Agrizero may be unperturbed by reality but down here at ground level, facts and stats are everything. That is how we have adapted and survived as a sector, without wasteful, quasi-research blocking the path of genuine progress.

At the risk of putting Wayne and co out of a job, imagine making the call to redirect that \$183 million – nearly \$1 billion has been wasted on methane over the past decade – into real research instead of chasing methane reduction rainbows.

The inconvenient truth is that methane emissions from our ruminant livestock are so minuscule on a world scale that even if they were to increase, it would have no measurable effect on global temperature.

Our methane emissions have been decreasing at a significant rate over the past decade, with productive efficiency continuing to spiral downwards at an alarming rate over the past three years due to land use change.

We do not need alarmist targets that require what amounts to expensive methane money laundering.

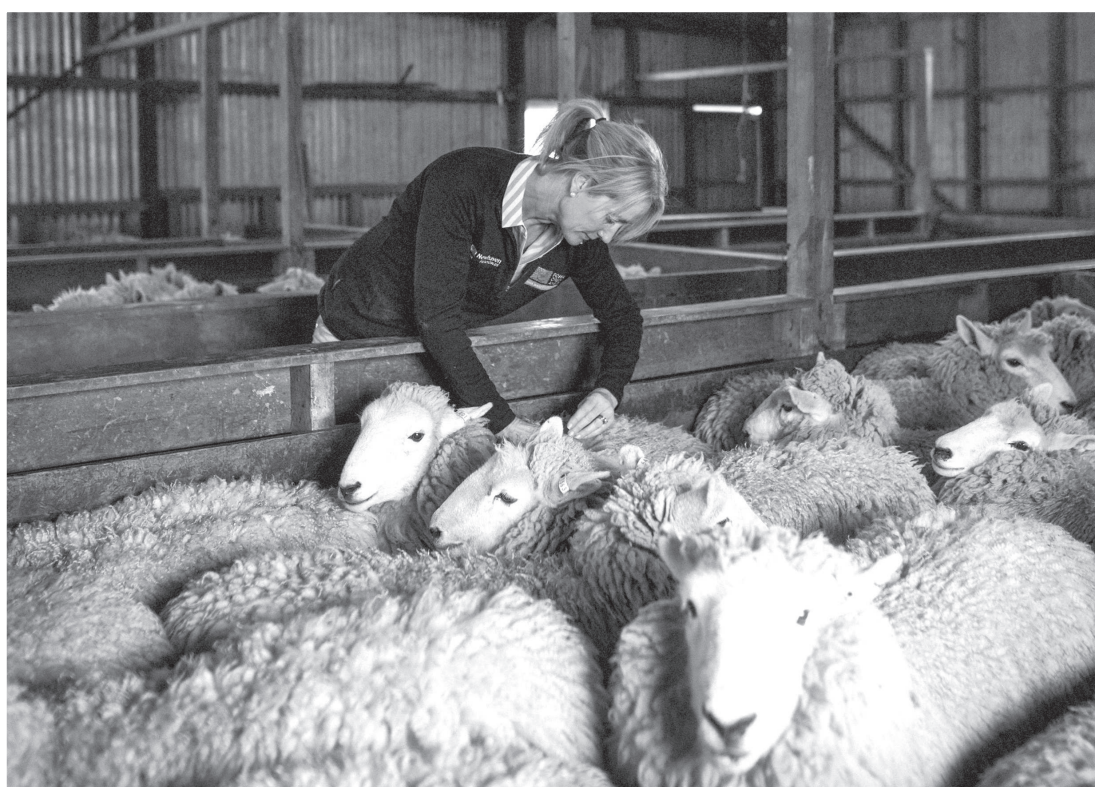
We now have a methane review panel charged with assessing our reduction targets, ensuring they are in line with the simple scientific concept of no further warming.

The good news is that we have already achieved it, but the irony is we may, in fact, be adding slightly to global cooling with our downwards trajectory.

One of the panel scientists has previously stated that New Zealand's methane emissions were not making any measurable difference to global warming. Yet, in the same breath said we should be "seen to be doing something".

That's science overridden by politics.

The global methane pledge that



North Otago farmer and environmentalist Jane Smith says that methane emissions from our ruminant livestock are so minuscule on a world scale that even if they were to increase, it would have no measurable effect on global temperature. PHOTO SUPPLIED

banks signed up to around the world was to primarily address methane expelled from oil and gas pipelines. Never would they consider signing up for food-producing ruminant methane for punishment. Our banks did.

Surely an export-reliant, non-subsidised country without the luxury of a methane profile heavily weighted with pipeline

emissions would have taken a moment to consider just how focused on food production our natural methane emissions are. And they should have done that before signing up to something that they didn't understand and then doubling down on it by and creating the Agrizero behemoth.

I can hear a scripted reply echoing through the corporate corri-

dors of power along the lines of: "customers are demanding that we decrease emissions" and "Intensive feedlot agriculture overseas is catching up and even lowering their ruminant emissions better than New Zealand".

At what point did those customers decide that lowering natural biogenic ruminant emissions, which are already decreasing, was

more important than exceptional animal welfare, free-range pastoral systems and allowing natural grazing behaviour of stock in low-input farming? It's farming that doesn't require high-intensity fossil-fuel burning interference, feedlots, vaccines, feed additives and boluses. Surely that all comes with a climate cost.

New Zealand needs to decide if it is intensifying into feedlots as those intensive, heavily subsidised high-input factory farms. Or will we continue on our naturally pasture-raised continuum, which has proven to become more efficient each year without Government interference.

Either leave us to it or get ready to ask taxpayers to underwrite expensive, intensive factory farming, which would produce food that no New Zealander would ever afford to buy.

Europe can't even afford its own food due to the cost of its high-intensity farming systems and has had to heighten both producer and consumer subsidies in order to keep food on shelves.

It is absurd to think New Zealand would even look at that mirroring those systems to then ship it around the world.

Expensive, unnecessary methane mitigation is a major step towards painting ourselves into this corner. And methane mitigation is an embarrassing political subsidy that farmers never wanted nor needed.

Jane Smith is an environmentalist, farmer and rural advocate  
Abridged, editor

## 'Comments not surprising'

WAYNE MCNEE

These comments from Jane Smith are not surprising given her previous comments, but the truth is farmers will need to reduce emissions to meet the global demands from our premium global customers and trading partners.

As I covered previously – customers (like McDonalds, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Nestle, Danone and more) are pushing deep into their supply chains for emissions reduction with ambitious targets.

When our processors and co-ops meet with them, the conversations are acutely focused on New Zealand's contribution

to scope 3 emissions – not our relative impact to global emissions or temperatures.

I've met many of our global customers and international co-ops that compete with us and have heard it directly from them.

Jane clearly doesn't agree with those premium global customers, but frankly, they do not care what Jane thinks.

Our farmers are among the most emissions efficient in the world, but these customers still want proof and progress of emissions reduction.

As an export-reliant nation, this is the reality we're facing.

AgriZeroNZ was set up to accelerate development of tools for our pastoral farms, to help farmers reduce emissions without compromising profitability.

I firmly believe if we invest, innovate and work together, we can have the best of both worlds – keep farming animals outdoors on grass and lead the world in low emissions pastoral farming.

Wayne McNee is AgriZeroNZ chief executive



Wayne McNee

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# Drought still biting in Hurunui

CLAIRE INKSON

There may be a green tinge on the hills in the Hurunui District, but farmers say the hard times are far from over.

Waipara farmer and 2023 Canterbury Ballance Farm Environment Awards supreme winner Ian Knowles says while they are in a good position for surface growth, there is limited moisture underneath.

"We are ticking along about as good as expected, but it could be a very short window because there is no reserve underneath."

"The reality is, if we don't get a good soaking, we are heading back into another drought."

Minister of Agriculture Todd McClay declared a "medium-scale adverse event" for the region in March.

Rural Communities minister Mark Patterson visited Hurunui in August, announcing a boost in support for the region.

"The government is providing \$20,000, with the Farmers Adverse Events Trust, Veterinary Association and Boehringer Ingelheim contributing an additional \$18,000, to deliver specialist veterinary support to drought-affected farmers in the Hurunui District."

"A further \$30,000 contribution will go to the Hurunui Mayoral Fund to ensure targeted assistance is available to those farmers identified the most critical in need," Patterson said in a statement.

Knowles said the damage had already been done.



Waipara Farmer Ian Knowles has had to contend with not only a multi-season drought, but two fires on his property since the beginning of the year. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

"Stock condition is light, and scanning rates are low."

"The young stock that goes through a drought, normally you can see that in them for the rest of their life."

"They have already been pinched, and they never quite perform as well."

"You either accept that, or you chuck money at it."

This year, Knowles decided to stump up the money, sending his hoggets grazing in Mid and South Canterbury.

Knowles said he was grateful to the farmers who grazed his stock, and with the animals returning in good condition, there was one less worry on his plate.

"I sent the hoggets grazing, and they came back looking magnifi-

cent.

"I meant I could focus on what's here at home, throw everything I've got at them and sneak through by the skin of my teeth."

Knowles said the biggest financial hit with the drought has been losing the dairy support side of his farming operation.

"Normally, about a third of the farm's income is generated from

grazing other people's stock, but when you can't even feed your own, you can't do that."

Droughts aren't the only adverse event Knowles has had to deal with.

Two fires broke out on the property in February and again in early September, destroying 200 hectares of grass and fences.

"We were lucky there were no people, animals or buildings in the way, but I have spent just over \$100,000 replacing fences."

Knowles still considers the drought his biggest challenge.

"Fires happen quickly, and you deal with it, and it's over."

"Droughts are multi-season and multi-year."

Federated Farmers North Canterbury president Karl Dean said the drought classification should remain in place for the area.

"Things are green now, but we are still several hundred mills of rain behind for the year, and that doesn't include last year's shortfall."

"We are only one very strong nor'west from going back into it."

Dean said the Rural Support Trust is crucial for helping farmers cope with drought, low commodity prices, and high input costs.

Dean said Rural Support in North Canterbury had yet to receive top-up funding from the last boost of \$30,000, which ended in June.

"That's quite concerning in the fact that the drought is going to be a long-winded affair."

"It's a journey the farmers need Rural Support Trust to be there for."

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# Ups to our rural women

NICOLA GRIGG

International Rural Women's Day is the perfect way to acknowledge, celebrate and thank women living rurally across New Zealand.

Wanting to bring a rural woman's voice to policy and decision making was the primary reason I entered politics.

Since becoming a minister, I have been working closely with my ministerial colleagues to promote and advocate on behalf of our rural communities, and women.

We have been working at pace to restore confidence and support in our regions. While much progress has been made – we have a lot more we want to achieve.

As an associate agriculture minister, I am responsible for 'rural women', which means I can put my focus towards improving their lives in practical ways. I have met with many organisations and groups who raise their key issues with me – those being: health, education, safety and, of course, the economy.

As a government, we know that for our work to have a real impact, it requires collaboration across many areas of society. We are genuinely determined to achieve better outcomes across these matters, and we have already seen some significant shifts – which is great news.

Inflation is falling, as are food prices. Crime rates are declining and we are making major investments in infrastructure to get businesses moving again.

Some of the important policies and work programmes we are making progress on that impact women include extending the free breast screening age to include 70 to 74-year-olds, which will capture thousands more women.

We have fixed the mess that was an underfunded Pharmac and have made an unprecedented investment in health. As well as this, National's Three-Day Postnatal Stay policy has been pulled from the ballot and will come before the Parliament soon.

This policy makes sure women are entitled to 72 hours of care after having a baby, and ensures that their lead maternity carer makes them aware of this entitlement. I hope this brings some relief to rural mums grappling with the idea of leaving hospital to return home to, often, isolated areas.

We have also delivered tax relief for the first time in 14 years, which we have managed to do by controlling government spending. Our FamilyBoost policy payments are now available to help families with young

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**International Day of Rural Women**  
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Nicola Grigg

PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

children in childcare. We have removed phones from schools and have begun work on teaching our kids the basics brilliantly to ensure a successful future.

I know how much rural women, and their families, depend on their children having access to an amazing education, and that is what we are focused on delivering. As well as this, I have been progressing with work to address the gender pay gap, which has remained stagnant at around 9 per cent for the past six years.

We know times have been tough, which is why we are delivering on our promises. For our primary industries and rural communities, we are making significant amendments to the RMA and the National Policy for Freshwater Management, and are replacing Labour's failed three waters policy.

It is our government's priority to support our primary industries to succeed, because we know this is the best way for New Zealand to have a prosperous future. We are working tirelessly to turn our great country back around – so that our rural communities can flourish.

Rural women are still disproportionately impacted by many issues that I feel strongly about, including maternal and mental health, and women-specific cancers. I will continue to advocate for better outcomes across all of these issues.

Our rural women are the backbone of the country. They are pioneers, businesswomen, leaders, mothers, sisters, daughters, and friends.

I want to celebrate all of our rural women today and assure them our government has their back.

*Nicola Grigg is associate minister of agriculture, minister for women and minister of state - trade*

## Pick winners and prosper this spring

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Imagine there was a simple, reliable tool to help your farm prosper in 2024 and beyond, a free data hub established over 30 years ago to support one of your most important annual spending decisions.

Say goodbye to grappling with the question of exactly which ryegrass to sow this spring, and hello to the National Forage Variety Trial (NFVT) system.

With the DairyNZ Forage Value Index (FVI) suspended for now, there's no better way to find out which cultivars grow best in your part of the country, and be confident in your choice of seed for new pasture. Graham Kerr, commercial manager for Barenbrug, says the NFVT involves all New Zealand's main seed breeding companies. At any time, there can be up to 40 different ryegrass trials underway nationwide.

These are all run according to a strict scientific protocol, and are regularly audited to ensure that protocol is adhered to.

Results are freely available at [pbra.co.nz](http://pbra.co.nz), with both seasonal and total dry matter yields for perennial, hybrid, Italian and annual ryegrasses presented by region, and nationally.

"If you've previously used the FVI to help choose the best ryegrass for your farm system, you've already benefited from the NFVT, because NFVT data is a central component behind the index," Graham says.

And with good pasture more important than ever for efficient, cost-effective milk production, carefully considering your ryegrass choice this spring is time well spent.



Graham Kerr - carefully considering ryegrass options this spring is time well spent.

"We're proud to have cultivars like Array, 4front, and Forge ranking so well in this system. It's an endorsement of our on-going effort to develop ryegrasses that both add measurable value to today's farm businesses, and minimise the risk of a poor result."

Cultivar choice is a critical first step in sowing strong new pasture that will drive production for years to come, but it's important to remember this is just part of the check-list for success, Graham says.

"Pasture renewal is like a chain made up of many different links, from choosing the right paddocks, soil testing, checking for pests and achieving a good spray out right through to using the correct seed drill. Each link in the chain is as important as the next, and if one is weak, the chain is compromised."

"That's why it's always a great idea to have someone walk the farm with you to share ideas and come up with a robust renewal plan. Input from your local rep, consultant or contractor can be super helpful. And if you want we at Barenbrug are always available to help too."

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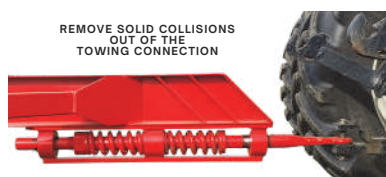
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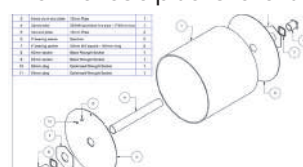


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# Ben Dooley

**The Farmers Fast Five: Where we ask a farmer five quick questions about farming, and what agriculture means to them. Today we chat to Southland farmer Ben Dooley.**

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

I was born and raised right here on this farm, what seems like a while back now. Through school I was pushed towards engineering, and although maths and physics were my favourite subjects, got sick of it all halfway through Year 12 and very quickly decided to leave.

After a year of fulltime dairy farming, I moved to Heriot to work on a lamb, beef and venison finishing farm, along with hogget grazing and lambing for Avenal Station.

It was also their first year milking 1500 ewes.

Following a year there, I spent a year at Glenarary Station, an absolutely amazing place, before coming home part-time, filling in the rest with casual shepherding as far away as Omarama, casual tractor work, and plenty of boating.

In 2021, my wife and I bought all the stock and plant here and started leasing the farm from the previous generation.

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

We run 2300, give or take, Turanganui romney ewes, roughly 630 (dry) hoggets, and hope to lamb 140-150 per cent.

We are hoping to finish all lambs to an average nudging 20kgcw.

We also hand rear 40 dairy beef calves every year, taking them through to finishing at 18 months, most of the time.

The farm is roughly 250-hectares, and we are very heavily reliant on winter crop

(swedes) grazing.

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

Obviously the challenges everyone around us face, in sheep farming, three bad days in September can be the difference between a great season or a disaster, drought bites us hard when it occasionally happens due to our long winters.

There have been a few unique ones though.

In April, 2017, I was told that I had a "mass" on my brain by an eye specialist.

The poor guy had no clue how to deal with telling me that.

Two weeks later, the biggest relief of my life to that point, was the legendary Dr Taha telling me "It needs to come out".

"So you think you can get it out?" I said, to which he replied, "Oh yes, easy".

I was very lucky to have a successful surgery on July 17 that year.

No malignancy. But the six-month recovery period was hard.

Thankfully I was surrounded by a pretty good group, especially my wife and uncle, who kept the farm going in that time.

Over the years, I've also struggled a bit with mental health, as I think we all do, when things outside my control stack up one on top of the other against me.

The only advice I have here is, "Buy the boat. And use the boat".

Whatever your "boat" may be, use it as a reason, an excuse, if you will, to get off farm often enough.



Southland farmer Ben Dooley says "buy the boat, use the boat."

PHOTO SUPPLIED

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

Where to start? Riding horses with a team of dogs behind, working with a pretty cool team at Glenarary, autumn musters at Dunstan Downs, helping to push precision planting of swedes to improve yield while reducing cost. There are my social media channels (X, YouTube, Instagram and TikTok), being elected on to the Southland Pest Eradication Society and the Southland Federated Farmers exec, taking on a fortnightly spot on The Muster radio show, meeting Matt Chisolm.

But, the big one would be, starting a family with my wife, Sarah, and taking on the family

farm.

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

It won't be easy.

If it was, everyone would be doing it. It won't always be fun.

Lambing in a snowstorm will take you to a dark place. But most of the time, it is the greatest career on earth.

Focus on the things you can control, while not thinking about the things you cannot control, impossible, don't dwell too much.

Talk to people in the same situation.

Your neighbour had that snowstorm at lambing too.

And buy the boat. Use the boat.

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# Jeff Donaldson

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# Words of wisdom ahead of peak spray season

## Getting the most from your programme

**W**ith the busy spraying season just around the corner, a leading contractor has a couple of words of wisdom: "Adjuvants are worth it."

Graham Greer owns Greer Groundspraying Ltd and became a member of the board of the Rural Contractors NZ soon after it was formed in 1995. Graham says he'd like to see even more clients use adjuvants. "Some people just see them as an additional cost."

While adjuvants don't have an "active" they can contribute to spray programmes' efficacy and efficiency, increase safety and increase profitability according to New Zealand specialists UPL NZ Ltd. The company (formerly Etec Crop Solutions) are the industry leaders with a portfolio of over 20 proven adjuvant products, and an in-depth knowledge of this country's unique conditions and the needs of farmers, growers, and contractors.

Ensuring sprays reach their target (and only that target) limits waste and avoids potential harm to sensitive neighbouring crops or the environment.

Graham says his company uses Li-1000™ from UPL to manage drift and help actives' penetration. "Where we are, it can get pretty windy. Using Li-1000™ can be the difference between being able to do the job and not." He adds that they would never operate when

conditions are too extreme or might impact nearby houses or other crops.

Li-1000™ dramatically reduces off-target drift and significantly increases leaf penetration (through the cuticle) and translocation throughout the plant, improving product performance.

Graham says using adjuvants can have a significant impact on the success of a spray operation and reflects changing needs.

"Using Du-Wett®, a super spreader (another UPL product) means we can go with lower water rates and, at the same time, get better coverage." He says this is especially important now that the company is incorporating drones. "You can actually even see the difference Du-Wett® coverage makes on the leaves. "It's especially good with insecticides in brassicas which are really hard to wet."

Graham says UPL's All Clear® 2X is also very important to his operation - cleaning and decontaminating gear between crops and applications, "it's a critical part of the process. You get less residuals and fewer blockages."

All Clear® 2X spray tank cleaner and decontaminator removes even notoriously sticky products, such as carfentrazone and cleans everything from the tank to the spray lines to the nozzles. It also has the benefit of increasing gear longevity and performance.

Graham places a lot of stock on standing by the company's



From Left to Right: Hamish, Isaac, and Graham Greer from Greer Groundspray Ltd.

workmanship, timely delivery, and good communication with clients and suppliers.

That's a result of decades of experience. And having contracting in his blood.

Graham's father was a farmer and a hay and silage contractor and, fresh out of school, Graham followed in his footsteps. He worked on farms and driving trucks and diggers, then for a mate with a contracting business who was looking for an experienced driver. 20 years later, in 2002, Graham went out on his own. "I sort of naturally morphed into it."

His business serves the wider Manawatū-Whanganui area (roughly in a 50km radius of their base). The area is largely mixed cropping, beef, dairy and sheep. Graham says there's

still a bit of horticulture, but it's not a large part of the business nowadays.

The company works across crops including maize, barley and wheat, plantain, chicory, brassicas, and grasses; and applies insecticides, fungicides and herbicides as well as crop health products and growth regulators. "It's a real mixed bag."

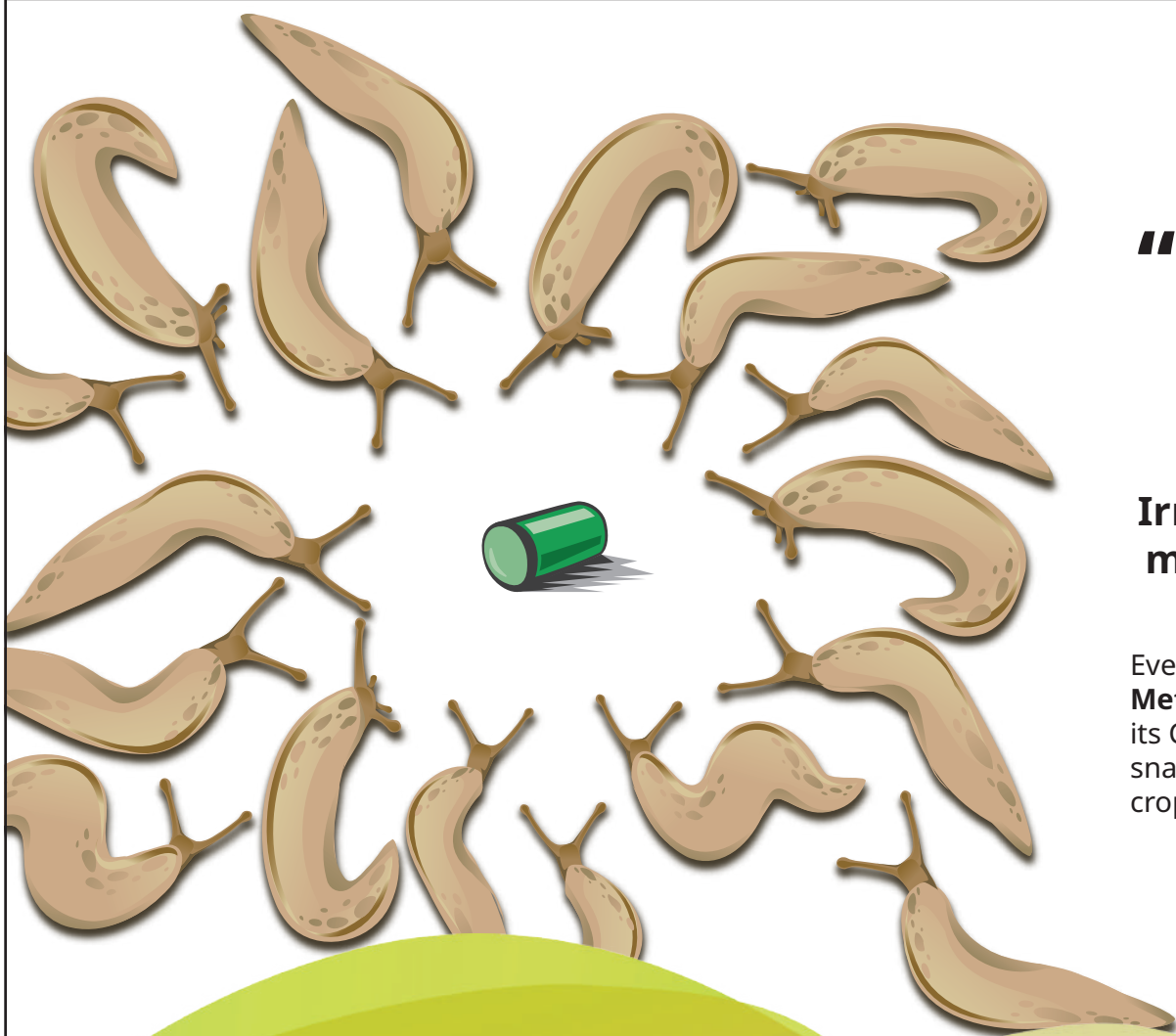
Greer Groundspraying has work year-round, employing 4 full-time staff and five at peak times. Graham says the busiest time of the year is September through February. "The rest of the year ticks along nicely. There's usually something to do."

Graham says the company has both trucks and self-propelling machines, so can work with

a larger variety of crops and taller crops, as well. "With the self-propelling machines, there's more ground clearance."

The next generation of Greer contractors, Graham's sons Isaac and Hamish, who work with him, are gaining their CAA drone certification. The company has also embraced the advantages of the Tabula GPS-guided proof of application and job tracking system. "You've got certainty, and your clients have certainty. We barely use paper in the office now. It saves us, and our clients' time. It's been huge for us."

**For more information talk to your local technical specialist or contact David Lingan, UPL NZ Adjuvant Product Manager at 021 804 450.**



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## Dealing with stress and burnout

KATHRYN WRIGHT

Struggling with high stress and burnout? There is no one size fits all solution for recovering from severe stress and burnout - different things will work for different people.

Sometimes it's the way that various interventions are framed that will help you.

It can be a little like a jigsaw puzzle that you work on over time to find out which part fits where, made up of multiple tools and mind-sets that suit individually.

We all have a stress response.

We need small amounts of stress to propel us through challenging situations, and to care enough to try.

But if you think that your stress levels are higher than they should be, you might be experiencing decision fatigue, forgetfulness, or you might even notice that you're losing

your shit at people.

Stress overload is also associated with a weakened immune system, so no, you're not imagining that you get sick when you're stressed.

When stress morphs into burnout, you may feel that you have no more to give - whether that's time, energy, empathy, patience or even decency.

You might now be in survival mode, trying to go through the motions, but not really being as effective as you had been previously.

There might be several triggers at the base of your situation, such as feeling a lack of control, losing important human connections, having your rights violated, or doing something that goes against what you believe in.

You might also feel a sense of unfairness at your situation, or anger at people in your workplace.

Can you nail down some of the emotions you might be experiencing here?

You might notice symptoms such as headaches, body pains, changes in sleep and appetite, anger, digestion problems, relying on alcohol or drugs, feelings of overwhelm, and a racing mind.

The more stress you feel, the more you need to release, and that can be done in several ways.

We're not talking about bringing you back to a zen place straight away - we're looking to make small but effective actions that will eventually reduce the amounts of stress you are experiencing in small increments.

One is through breath work.

Breathing out longer and more purposefully than breathing in will activate your soothing system.

There are many breathing exercises that

can be accessed on the internet, and they can be far more powerful than we give them credit for.

Another way is to connect with and help others.

Even when you are beating yourself up internally, helping someone else is a guaranteed way to feel valuable and worthwhile.

Any type of mindful exercise that brings your focus back to this moment is likely to improve your mental state - there are many kinds of mindfulness exercises, but try looking up the "54321" exercise, or "dropping anchor" to start.

Looking at your basic human needs is also a good place to start - listening to your body when you need rest, silence, gentle movement or social connection.

These are often overlooked but are so important.

Finally, connecting with nature has strong evidence that tells us this is a powerful tool during stress and burnout.

Being in the garden and feeling your feet on the ground is so therapeutic, along with walking in nature or swimming in a natural body of water can literally "ground" you and remind you that there is a force that is bigger than you, and that you are part of this huge, interconnected environment.

Keep trying different things to work on reducing your stress levels. If you are feeling like you can never quite get on top of things, it's worth the effort.

I would also encourage anyone that is in an untenable situation to change their environment where possible - particularly in abusive situations.

There are always options, and if you are struggling to see your way through right now, consider seeking professional help - the investment may be well worth it.

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

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# Commercialising Conservation - Landowners Rewarded

**V**erity NZ, we believe that landowners should be rewarded for your contributions to the climate crisis.

We will achieve this through large-scale, nature-based reforestation and revegetation projects primarily using the VCM (Voluntary Carbon Market). The ETS will be used in various cases as well.

The way we implement our conservation projects in NZ has to change. We can't expect public or private funding to always be available. As farmers we know that if you want to protect something, make it commercially viable. Verity NZ is here to do this with conservation, utilising revenue gained from selling carbon and co-benefits.

Verity Nature, known for its groundbreaking, innovative technology and smarts across green, blue and teal carbon restoration globally, has now turned its focus to New Zealand. The goal is as bold as it is necessary, to plant millions of trees and revegetate with understorey plants across the nation, creating lush forests with predominantly native species, where degraded or deforested landscapes now exist. Our primary goal is to ensure that New Zealand's rich biodiversity is preserved for future generations to come.

"Our NZ projects are designed to be sustainable, science-driven, evidence-based, and, most importantly, beneficial to the communities we serve over many generations. We are proud of our Chain of Custody - Seed to Credit one stop shop approach". - Richie Phillips, Verity Nature's chief scientist.

The company's flagship project in the Rakaia Gorge, Canterbury exemplifies this approach. The Black Hill Station project which spans 1,200 hectares, aims to restore native forests that once thrived in the area. Planting a diverse mix of native species, Verity NZ is not only helping to sequester carbon but also creating habitats for endangered species, improving water quality, and stabilising soils.

These are some of the co-benefits that we can "staple" to our VCM credits - with the ultimate result of attracting premiums for our credits, which in turn puts more money into landowners pockets. There are numerous co-benefits that can be stapled to carbon credits, ranging from environmental to economic.

It is these opportunities that are recognised globally that Kiwi landowners have been missing out on. Verity NZ aims to remedy this. The question to ask is "Why shouldn't we be able to cash in on these opportunities?" The answer is simple - we can!

Just because the ETS doesn't recognise certain aspects of the carbon market doesn't mean we should miss out while landowners in other countries are cashing in on them.

There is that much information floating around regarding climate change and carbon that for most of us the more we read the less we understand. I will attempt to simplify the carbon component with an extremely broad stroke.

New Zealand is a signatory to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) established in 1988 jointly by the World Meteorological Organisation and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Fast forward to 1997, The Kyoto Protocol, we signed off on the definition of a "Kyoto Forest". Kyoto Forest is a minimum area of land of 0.05-1.0 hectares with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10-30 per cent with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2-5 metres at maturity in situ. A forest may consist either of closed forest formations where trees of various storeys



and undergrowth cover a high portion of the ground open forest. Young natural stands and all plantations which have yet to reach a crown density of 10-30 per cent or tree height of 2-5 metres are included under forest, as are areas normally forming part of the forest area which are temporarily unstocked as a result of human intervention such as harvesting or natural causes but which are expected to revert to forest.

New Zealand chose the highest setting in every case and then to add insult to injury we got lumped with a minimum width of 30m. This results in most shelterbelts and riparian plantings being ineligible for carbon credits. Just because the ETS settings exclude areas does not mean that they aren't sequestering carbon, under the VCM we can claim the carbon sequestered. Another interesting point regarding forests, a native forest with numerous species will sequester carbon for 100's of years, as long as the vegetation is increasing in size there is carbon being sequestered. With the VCM, science is relied on not assumptions. By carrying out surveys on a regular basis we measure the gains and report them.

The question begs; Why were these settings chosen? What was the rationale behind choosing settings that result in millions of dollars worth of carbon credits being ineligible? I've heard things like "It's too expensive and difficult to monitor small areas", really? That seems like a problem for someone other than landowners. If landowners could benefit from all the hard work that has been done historically, I'm pretty sure we would all do more. The big factor is cost. In a tough economic environment it is difficult to justify the cost of fencing and planting areas that have no earning potential.

Since 1997 there have been several amendments and additions to the Kyoto Protocol, we will explore them further in another article. For now I'd like to look at some numbers and what our ETS settings

mean to us as landowners.

If NZ had chosen the lowest settings for eligible forests as defined by the Kyoto Protocol, would we be getting a different price for our protein? If our riparian and other conservation areas were generating an income from the carbon sequestered, would it matter?

Are you reading this and thinking about the amount of time and money that you have invested in fencing, planting, weed and pest control as well as the ongoing maintenance of areas of your farm that you retired from grazing either because of regulations or just because you wanted to?

If our NZ forest settings were at 0.05ha, 10% and 2m and there was no minimum width, how many areas/ha have you got sitting there earning you nothing that would be eligible?

In Britain there are an estimated 700,000km of hedgerows, that would wrap around the world almost 17.5 times. At an average width of 3m, that is 2,100,000ha of land that is eligible for carbon credits. These landowners are benefiting financially from their shelterbelts and going off the eye watering prices they are currently receiving, it would appear that consumers are happily buying their produce.

In NZ there are an estimated 81,000km of waterways flowing through low slope farmland. (MfE data) If there are 3m of fenced off land along each side of the waterway, there are over 97,000ha of land that could be generating an income for the landowner. Add 646,785ha of scrub and 2,060,249ha of tussock lands as well as 180,285ha of QEII land and suddenly we have a number that's meaningful, (Areas are only for farmland not public land).

Not all of this land will be eligible for generating carbon credits, some will be ineligible due to when it was retired from grazing and there will be a number of farmers who want to continue with traditional pastoral farming.

For the sake of this exercise, I am going

to use a figure of 10% of the total land which gives us 298,432ha. If we use a figure of 9 tons of CO2 sequestered annually we have 2,685,888 tons. With a carbon price of \$40 per ton, we have approximately \$107,435,520 per annum. The reality is that over a 60 year project life the average tons of CO2 sequestered per ha will be far higher. Do the maths at 30 then 50, now that's what one would call serious money that we as landowners are largely missing out on. Please note that for this simple example I have used a flat line average figure for carbon sequestered, in reality there is very little carbon sequestered in the early stages and significantly more in the later stages

How much of this land is currently eligible for registration in the ETS? I don't know the answer to that question, what I do know is that we got our 2700ha property mapped a few years ago for ETS purposes. Our consultant at the time informed us that we had 350ha of land that met the criteria, after being assessed by MPI that number ultimately became 71ha.

Verity NZ have subsequently applied for 1200ha to be registered in the VCM, this land meets the definitions required by international bodies.

Now I'm the first to admit that I am no rocket scientist but it would appear that generating a carbon revenue off 1200ha is a better bet than 71ha. What makes it a slightly easier decision is that as a landowner I don't need to outlay any cash.

The sceptics will be saying "if it seems too good to be true....", and that's fair enough, I get that. Take a step back and have a good look at it from the perspective of trying to find a solution, rather than a problem with a solution.

The reality is that we live in a global economy and there are a significant number of landowners in other developed countries who are cashing in on the opportunity. Those countries signed the same agreements that NZ did regarding internationally approved methodologies.

This brings me to Verity Nature and Verity NZ. Verity Nature is our parent company based in Australia, founded by a group of individuals passionate about the environment. Together they have the combined expertise to ensure success in a global venture from project concept to trading high value credits to discerning buyers.

With projects in four countries at present and more in the pipeline, it is really exciting (and a little humbling), to be able to get them involved in NZ. To this end we incorporated Verity NZ as a subsidiary company focused on providing NZ landowners with the opportunities that come with being a part of a truly global enterprise.

We approach the market with some exciting initiatives that offer multiple opportunities to landowners. We know that "one size fits all" doesn't apply when it comes to land management.

Regardless of the model that landowners wish to use, one thing remains consistent. A landowner working with Verity NZ does not have to spend money on the carbon farming component of your business. We cover the implementation costs, ongoing operational expenses, MRV (Measuring, Reporting and Verification) and credit trading costs – for the life of the project. We will provide jobs for locals for the life of the projects ensuring genuine intergenerational benefits, both environmentally and economically.

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# Celebrating our contributions

GILL NAYLOR

The thing about women, and rural women in particular, is often we prioritise looking after our family, friends, farm, animals, work and community before taking time to look after ourselves.

That's why I really like International Rural Women's Day, as it's a chance to take time out from our busy lives and reflect on the amazing contribution rural women make to our communities.

As I come to the end of my tenure as national president of Rural Women New Zealand, one of the highlights of my role has been meeting our wonderful members from the length and breadth of the country.

Our organisation was founded nearly 100 years ago and while rural life and society has inevitably changed, many of the issues that drove our formation stay the same.

This includes overcoming isolation and grappling with limited access to the services and opportunities commonly available in urban areas.

Today, Rural Women NZ prides itself on being broader than primary industries, as rural and small-town New Zealand is extremely diverse, with many varying businesses and services in our rural communities.

We also have growing numbers

CELEBRATE  
**International  
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Rural Women**  
with Rural Guardian



International Rural Women's Day is a chance to reflect on the contribution Rural Women make to our communities, says Gill Naylor, Rural Women New Zealand national president.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

of agri-professionals joining us.

Like we have since 1925, we provide our members opportunities to take some 'me' time and make connections locally and nationally, as well as offering support through our charitable work and funding grants, especially in tough times, to build community

resilience.

At the grassroots level, I am proud that we have 121 active branches across the country providing local opportunities for connection and support.

At a national level, I am also proud of the work we do to advocate on behalf of rural communi-

ties with government, as well as our work to support the increasing number of rural women in business.

This time of year is always busy for us as we gear up for our annual NZI Rural Women New Zealand Business Awards in November. This year we've had a record

number of entries and introduced new award categories which recognise phenomenal growth in agri-tourism businesses, as well as businesses producing and selling incredible products from rural and regional NZ.

These awards are a wonderful way to showcase the diversity and entrepreneurial spirit out there.

We also run an Activator programme which offers practical advice and connections for women who are just starting out in business or ready to scale up.

Complementing both initiatives, is our new online business directory called The Country Women's Collective.

The collective showcases the diversity of businesses run by rural women. I encourage you to check it out on our website and support local and New Zealand made products and services from our rural businesses, because by supporting them, you are empowering our rural communities to succeed.

If you are in business yourself, I also encourage you to get in contact about getting listed on the collective!

This International Rural Women's Day I hope you, like me, all get a chance to reflect on the amazing contribution of rural women in your communities, as well as thinking about how we can better support the rural women of today – and tomorrow – to thrive.

*Gill Naylor is the national president for Rural Women New Zealand*

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# What is Happening in the Spring Market...?

## REAL ESTATE: Ask the Expert

**As the weather warms up and the blossom and daffodils are in full bloom, we are reminded of brighter days ahead as we move into the Spring market.**

The recent Reserve Bank reduction in the OCR from 5.50% to 5.25% has triggered the major banks to start to reduce their mortgage rates. This is the first reduction since March 2020, signaling a shift in the central bank's approach to managing inflation and economic growth. This is likely to be positive for the rural property market, given that high interest rates have been one of the biggest headwinds over the past two years.

The last month, being one that is traditionally quiet for real estate has proven to be pivotal in the rural real estate markets, marked by an uptick in buyer activity and positive economic developments. This increased market activity has set a promising tone as we come into the Spring selling season.

Farmer confidence is on the increase, with a rise in commodity prices, and a slide in interest rates boosting confidence.

There has been a genuine uplift in activity and interest in real estate across all disciplines. A record number of listings, more quality farm and country listings, an increase in residential and lifestyle campaigns, and our rural property management teams are busy.

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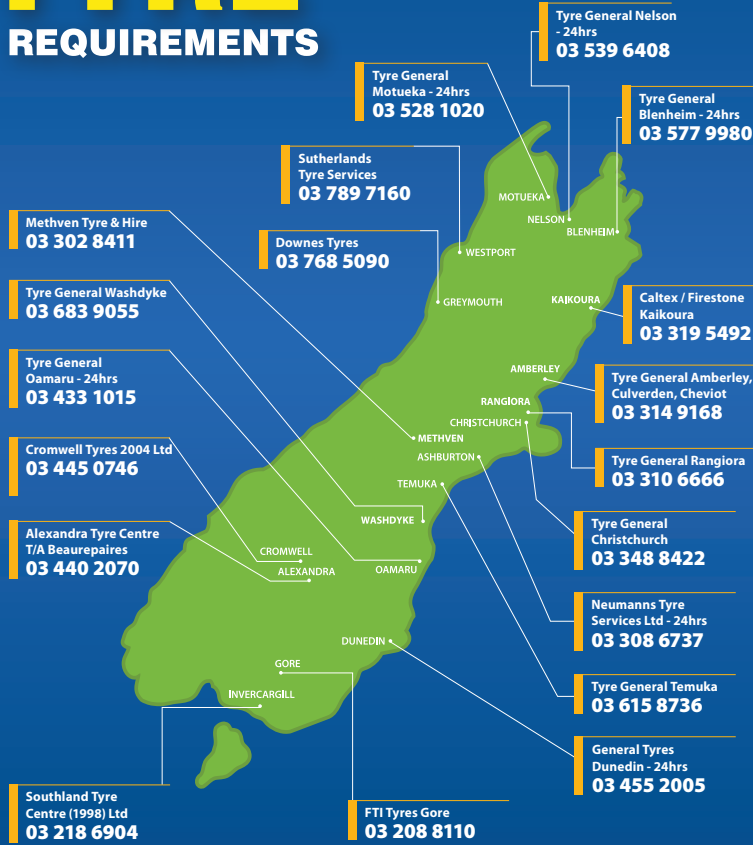


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# Sustainability high on the list

Young farmers are the future of New Zealand agriculture, so each issue we shine a spotlight on a Young Farmer. Today we talk to Georgia Lunn from Massey Young Farmers Club.

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

One of the key benefits has been the hands-on experience I've gained through various activities and competitions.

Learning from industry experts and peers has expanded my knowledge of sustainable farming practices, innovation in agriculture, and the challenges farmers face today.

Young Farmers has also helped build my confidence, leadership, and problem-solving skills, which are crucial in such a dynamic industry.

**How did you become involved in agriculture?**

I became involved in agriculture through university.

Throughout my years in high school, I became passionate about business, in particular business within an agricultural context.

This led me to choose electives so I would have additional knowledge to carry with me after my degree.

**What is your job now?**

I am currently in my third year studying a bachelor of business studies majoring in finance.

I applied for university at 16 and was accepted soon after I began my first year after finishing year 12 and completing my degree in November.

Young Farmers has helped me meet many like-minded people whilst being in a degree with limited people.

I work as a support worker and a dance teacher at dance works studios and have an internship at a large hockey company called OBO currently going through the process of repricing their products as well.

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

I believe the future of farming will be heavily influenced by technology



Georgia Lunn from Massey Young Farmers Club wants to study a masters of agribusiness.

and sustainability.

Precision agriculture, data-driven decision-making, and advancements in biotechnology will play a critical role in improving efficiency and reducing environmental impacts.

I'd like to see New Zealand lead the way in sustainable farming practices, with more emphasis on regenerative agriculture and a strong focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The industry will need to continue adapting to meet both local and global demands for food in a way that protects our land and resources.

**What are your future plans?**

My future plans after I finish my degree are to study a masters of agribusiness so that I am able to work in an industry that I have grown fond of since beginning uni.

I also plan to research the effects

of Green Human Resource Management Practices when being implemented into small to medium scale farms.

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

My biggest inspiration in agriculture is Joel Salatin who is known for his sustainable farming methods and advocacy for regenerative agriculture. His work at Polyface Farm

has inspired many with its emphasis on natural farming systems, rotational grazing, and closed-loop farming that prioritizes soil health and animal welfare. He's written extensively about sustainable agriculture and is a vocal critic of industrial farming practices. His commitment to sustainability and innovation has shown me the importance of adapting to change and embracing new technologies while staying true to the core values of farming.

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# More profit, fewer 'volunteers'

## POD-LOCK® - keeping seeds in the pod

**S**tanding between the much-anticipated yield of promising brassica seed crops and harvest is the menace of shattering (shedding of seed). This is a naturally occurring process exacerbated by factors including the weather and even the vibration of harvesting equipment itself.

Rain followed by the dry heat typical of our Canterbury summers are major factors contributing to yield loss across all brassica seed crops.

Tom McDonald, Regional Manager Lower South Island for sustainable agricultural solutions provider UPL NZ Ltd, says brassica seed crops are vulnerable to the problem from seed set till harvest.

"This product could've been developed with Canterbury specifically in mind!"

He says the UPL adjuvant POD-LOCK, a pod sealer, provides growers with two significant benefits. "It makes sure you get the most from your yield, while limiting the 'volunteer' population in the paddock the following season - you don't want to compromise your next rotation. That makes POD-LOCK a real time and money saver for growers." Anecdotally, Tom says, fewer

seeds left lying on the ground also means the crop is less attractive to birds, and pests.

"Maybe most important of all is that you get more peace-of-mind."

POD-LOCK is comprised of a unique latex polymer blend specifically developed to reduce the amount of shedding. Widely used by growers in the UK, Europe, North America, and Australia, Tom says it is taking off in this country too.

The adjuvant dries on the pod, creating a seal that helps keep the pod intact and strengthens the wall of the pod itself.

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

"When you have a high value crop and you're looking to maximise yield, why wouldn't you use it? It's money well spent." Tom says POD-LOCK is more than paying for itself with demonstrated ROIs of between 50 and 60%. "Using POD-LOCK, you just don't get those big seed losses. That's what it's all about nowadays - maximising the profitability of the crop.

"Without the product, seed losses of 10-25% because of split pods are common, in more extreme examples up to 70%. That's really disheartening for the grower. And costly. Not using POD-LOCK is actually false economy. If they're done well, these crops can be financially rewarding."

Brassica seeds offer farmers a valuable economic return, diversifying income streams.

And that's not the crops' only contribution.

They can also play a vital role in the arable rotation system, serving as an excellent break crop, improving soil health, and reducing the incidence of cereal diseases and pests. Brassica seed crops also contribute to weed management, and enhance soil structure, benefiting subsequent crops.

For maximum benefit, Tom says POD-LOCK should be applied in 150-300 L/ha, with 300 L/ha water volume recommended for use on dense crops. POD-LOCK is effective at



High value brassica seed crops can be protected from shattering with POD-LOCK

such low use rates as it bridges the upper pod suture line. This is the point where the pod starts to split when mature, or when repeatedly wetted and dried.

By essentially 'sticking' this area together the upper suture is prevented from opening which prevents seed loss. POD-LOCK does not have to cover the whole pod to be effective.

POD-LOCK doesn't translocate within the plant but sticks where it lands. And, as it has no active, it has no residue limit. It is broken down naturally over time through weathering and sunlight.

Re-spraying is recommended if a heavy rain even occurs.

Tom also recommends that, immediately after application, the sprayer be rinsed thoroughly with water. "Then add All Clear® 2X tank cleaner to ensure POD-LOCK is removed from the tank sides, pump and spray lines and spray nozzles."

**For more information talk to your local technical specialist or contact Tom McDonald, UPL NZ Regional Manager Lower South Island at 021 519 772.**



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DAVID BIRKETT



# Gene tech law sparks debate

CLAIRE INKSON

The Government's announced end to the ban on gene technology outside the lab continues to draw a mixed reaction from primary industry organisations and farmers alike.

The new law will be based on Australia's Gene Technology Act and will be adjusted to meet New Zealand's needs.

Like Australia, a regulatory agency will be established to support scientific advancement while protecting human health and the environment.

An independent farmer survey, commissioned by Beef + Lamb New Zealand in response to the proposed changes, revealed a "wide range of farmer opinions and a need for more information about gene technology and exactly what the potential regulatory changes could mean for them."

The survey found that most farmers don't fully understand gene editing in food production. Despite that, over half of the farmers surveyed in New Zealand support its use, with a cautious case-by-case approach.

Asia, Africa and Australia farmers and horticulturalists have been growing genetically modified crops with pest and disease resistance for up to two decades.

But in New Zealand the practice is tightly controlled by the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act, which aside from some amendments, dates back to 1996.

Farmers who were surveyed expressed concerns about how the technology could impact consumer demand in major markets.

But they also supported the technology's potential to enhance animal welfare, especially in managing issues like internal parasites, facial eczema, and pests like fly-strike.

Federated Farmers have welcomed the changes to gene editing legislation, describing it as a "positive step".

"Farmers are always looking for new technologies to help them improve their production, increase their profit, or reduce their environmental footprint," Federated Farmers' president Wayne Langford said.

"There are huge opportunities to help us reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, improve drought resilience, or increase our farm production using these technologies."

Langford said there were also potential conservation benefits, like eradicating possums that are spreading disease and decimating our native forests, and benefits for health-care.

"These aren't just imaginary concepts - they're real possibilities."

"Of course, there will always be risks and trade-offs that need to be carefully considered, too, like how our international consumers would feel about such a change."

The organisation's arable chairperson, David Birkett, said New Zealand can produce both genetically engineered (GE) and non-GE products and market those products for export accordingly.

"There is a perception that when you bring GE into the country, the whole country is GE. That's not the case."

"It's up to us to make sure we clearly say to our global markets that we can identify GE and non-GE components."

Birkett said that Australia has proven that both GE and non-GE products can be produced and marketed successfully and simultaneously.

"The new regulations will be based on Australia, and Australia has had GE for twenty years."

"There are only about four crops that are GE in Australia, and Australia is one of the biggest producers of organic products in the world."

"So, to me, that demonstrates the ability to have both."

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# A fantastic community effort

PHIL EVEREST

Much has happened over the last year in the Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group – including the opening of our wetland which is generating some exciting results – a 24% reduction in nitrate levels from water passing through the wetland.

During the year our group developed a trial wetland alongside Montgomery's Drain on the south side of the Hinds River on Wairuna Farm, owned by the McKenzie family.

The design involves three separate ponds, covering 1390 square meters.

The ponds have 'serpentine type structures' to direct the water evenly over the entire surface, which enables a residence time for the water in the wetland of at least two days.

We have installed two 'real time' nitrogen sensors from Hydrometrix at Lincoln University to monitor the performance of the ponds every minute.

As part of the monitoring, we are also taking separate water samples from each pond to test the effectiveness of each pond.

Lee Burberry from DairyNZ assisted with the design. His brief was to create a design that was low cost and able to be replicated on other farms in the district.

It is difficult to understand why something designed to enhance the environment would require an arduous and expensive consent from ECan.



Community planting on the banks of Montgomerys Drain at the Wairuna wetland site in Lowcliffe. PHOTO SUPPLIED

We were very lucky to obtain the services of Nick Vernon from Synlait's environmental team, Nick worked through the ECan rules to allow us to build the trial site without a consent.

This meant we had to abide by some strict construction requirements being no more the 1l/sec draw, no more than 100 cubic meters of soil moved and no earth works within 5m of the nearby stream.

Construction was completed by our local contractors Tarbotton Land and Civil with their 'hi tech'

GPS assisted digger to ensure levels were just right.

It was amazing how John the operator could work to such precision in a very tight area.

Before the water first ran, the ponds were planted out with native wetland species provided by Synlait.

Planting was a collaborative effort between the catchment group, Midlands Apiaries and DairyNZ staff from Lincoln – 1700 plants were planted in under 90 minutes.

None of this would have been possible without the assistance of

our funders, Ashburton Zone Committee, MHV Water, Hinds Hekeao Water Enhancement Trust, Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective.

The team at Wairuna also put in a considerable amount of time to get the wetland up and running.

A great community effort by all!

The trial will keep running for another couple of years to gather more performance data as the plantings within and around the wetland become more established.

This is but one example of what our community is doing to look at realistic options to improve our

districts surface water bodies.

Watch for our next update on the Windermere Drain enhancements to increase native and introduced fish life in our drains (yes it is working) and how planting drain banks with Carex Secta (a native wetland sedge) can reduce nitrate levels in the whole stream by 24%.

We do have options to make a difference, and we now have the knowledge.

Phill Everest is Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group facilitator

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# Plan pause a relief for farmers

CLAIRE INKSON

The farming community is breathing a collective sigh of relief over the Government's announcement to hit the pause button on freshwater farm plans until system improvements are finalised.

Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective (MCCC) co-ordinator Angela Cushnie supports a "carrot not stick approach" and says regulation should enable more of the "good stuff" happening inside the farm gate while also acknowledging the grassroots change that has been happening for a long time.

"There was nothing in the legislation coming through that said well done to all the early adopters and leaders."

The Government has indicated it will work with the sector, iwi, and regional councils to simplify requirements and enable more local catchment-level solutions.

"Most landowners are already using a farm environment plan or some type of supplier assurance programme and are benchmarking their progress this way," Cushnie said.

Cushnie said that across the MCCC community, the focus has been on developing Catchment Action Plans and implementing enduring change that will result in "sustainable environmental outcomes".

"Within our nine catchment groups, members are thinking beyond regulation in terms of improving water quality and enhancing ecosystem health."



Federated Farmers freshwater spokesperson Colin Hurst said there has been a huge amount of uncertainty hanging over farmers' heads regarding freshwater farm plans. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Associate Environment Minister Andrew Hoggard said improving the freshwater farm plan system to make it more cost-effective and practical for farmers is a priority for the Government.

"Freshwater farm plans support farmers in managing freshwater risks, but the current system is too costly and not fit for purpose.

"We have heard the concerns of the sector, and Cabinet has agreed to pause the rollout of freshwater farm plans while potential changes are considered."

Hoggard said minor amendments to the Resource Management Act (RMA) will enable the

pause.

"Once these amendments are made, farmers will not be required to submit a freshwater farm plan for certification while changes to the freshwater farm plan system are under way.

"We want freshwater farm plans to acknowledge the good work many farmers are already doing.

"The key thing for farmers is to make a start and keep up their efforts – their work will not be wasted."

Federated Farmers says pressing pause on the rollout of freshwater farm plans until improvements can be made is a practical and prag-

matic step by the Government.

"Farmers across the country will be breathing a sigh of relief that common sense has finally prevailed with farm plans," says Federated Farmers freshwater spokesperson Colin Hurst.

"There's been a huge amount of uncertainty hanging over farmers heads for the last year, with many wondering what's happening."

Hurst said farmers are not opposed to farm plans as long as they are "practical, cost-effective and easy to use".

"Unfortunately, the system put in place by the previous government was nothing short of a bureaucratic

birds' nest for farmers that failed on all three counts," Hurst says.

"They took a really good concept that had widespread buy-in from farmers and the wider primary sector and made it completely unworkable and unaffordable."

Hurst said the prospect of a five-figure bill for a new farm plan eroded a lot of good will from farmers, particularly those who already had a perfectly good plan in place.

More than 10,000 farmers already have some form of farm plan through their milk processor, meat processor or regional council requirements.

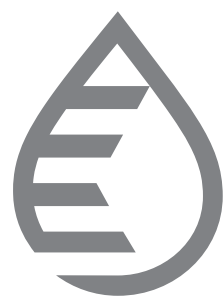
Hurst said none of those existing plans would have been recognised under the current regulations.

DairyNZ has also welcomed the announcement, with chairperson Jim van der Poel saying the pause "makes sense" and will be particularly welcomed by farmers and regional councils in areas where Freshwater Plan Plans have started, including parts of Waikato, Southland, the West Coast, Otago, and Manawātū-Whanganui.

"It has been our long-standing position that the current system could be improved to reduce cost and complexity and better acknowledge the environmental progress farmers and the wider dairy sector are making."

Van der Poel said DairyNZ will continue to work with dairy companies to provide a dairy perspective while regulations are reviewed.

"We will continue to work with the Government to progress a workable and enduring solution."



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Shannon and Ben Johnson have been named finalists in the 2024 Zimmatic Trailblazer Sustainable Irrigation Awards. The couple farm at Bodiam Dairies, south of Ashburton.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

CLAIRE INKSON

Two Mid Canterbury farmers are finalists in the upcoming Zimmatic Trailblazer Sustainable Irrigation Awards.

Ben and Shannon Johnson from Bodiam Dairies south of Ashburton and Eugene Cronin from Kilmurry Farm north of Ashburton will be up against two North Island farmers when the awards are announced in Wellington on November 6.

The Johnsons are no strangers to awards, having won the Water Efficiency Award at the Ballance Farm Environment Awards in 2012.

"We entered the Ballance Awards at the time because we were always trying to do better and improve," Ben Johnson says.

"We haven't entered anything since because I wanted to have some different improvements to talk about, and I feel like we have chipped away and made some pretty solid improvements over the last ten years, so we thought we would give the Irrigation Awards a go.

"We thought it would be good to see how we got on against everyone else and showcase the good work we are trying to do."

Finalist Eugene Cronin said that farmers generally do a "good job" irrigating and that people should be made aware of that.

"You see a lot of good stuff happening, and we are quite poor at letting everyone know we are doing those things."

Cronin immigrated to New Zealand 19 years ago after initially coming on a working visa.

He enjoyed the experience, decided to stay longer, and then met his wife, Sarah.

"I just ended up not going home, basically."

Cronin is a farm supervisor for Dairy Holdings and is sharemilking under the name Kilmurry Farms at Falstone Farm for David and Sonia Molloy, supplying Synlait.

Cronin said the more efficient farmers become with water, the less harm they do.

"We are trying to reduce over watering, because that has a tendency to leach water from the soil, which can be damaging to groundwater.

"Irrigation efficiency goes hand-in-hand with good environmental outcomes; the two align with each other.

The Zimmatic Trailblazer Sustainable Irrigation awards were launched in 2020 to showcase outstanding achievements in sustainable irrigation.

The awards spotlight farmers who demonstrate leadership in responsible irrigation techniques, innovative water management strategies, and environmental stewardship.

The Awards are held bi-annually, alternating between Australia and New Zealand.

The awards include four categories: Supreme Award Winner, Sustainable Irrigation Management Award, Farmers Weekly NZ Community Award, and the Judges' Choice Award which is awarded at the judges' discretion.

On-farm judging begins in October.

Each category winner will receive a valuable prize pack, which includes travel vouchers for attending future Trailblazer international irrigation study tours.

Awards coordinator Sarah Elliot said that since their launch in 2020, the Awards have sparked important conversations about smart practices and cutting-edge technologies available to farmers to enhance irrigation efficiency and freshwater conservation.

"The goal of the Awards has always been to seek out farmers deeply committed to water management and provide them with a platform to share their experiences and insights with peers and broader audiences.

"This year is no exception.

"We have been blown away by the quality of the entries we have received.

"We are proud to champion the leadership of our 2024 finalists within the agricultural sector and wish them the best of luck."

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# 'Ford nuts' driven to restore

CLAIRE INKSON

Jock Waterman's love affair with classic Ford trucks spans over 50 years, with one particular model capturing his heart during his courtship with Diane, now his wife, on the West Coast.

"It was before we were even married, and Diane lived in Runanga, and the old guy across the road from her had a Ford pickup truck.

"From then on, I always liked them," Jock says.

It took 46 years to find his Ford truck, but when the 1947 Half-Ton pickup popped up on Trade Me in Rotorua, Jock knew the search was over.

"I bought it four years ago, with the registration on hold and no warrant.

"It was an older restoration and needed a lot of work on the brakes and suspension."

Jock had the paintwork restored by a local panelbeater in Waipara and then had the truck pinstriped in gold in Christchurch.

Jock fitted the truck with after-market wheels, which he said makes it ride better.

"I still have the original wheels with the ply tyres."

Jock's truck runs a 239 cubic inch Flathead V8 motor and is New Zealand new, having been assembled in the Ford factory in Wellington.

Jock has been on a quest to uncover the ownership history of the truck.

He managed to trace it back to the 1960s, when it was used as a farm truck by one previous owner.

Jock describes the Half-Ton pickup

as a reliable and sturdy "work-horse".

"In the 1940s and 1950s, they were used by the Power Board, plumbers, carpenters and farmers."

Ford has been successfully producing trucks since the Model TT, based on the Model T car, rolled off the production line in America in 1917.

Ford produced the Half-Ton pickup between 1942 and 1947.

Production of the trucks was halted in New Zealand and overseas during the Second World War when Ford produced vehicles for the Allied

forces.

Production began again in 1944, but trucks were sold without spare tyres, as rubber was still in short supply.

The predecessor to the popular Ford F-series trucks, the Half-Ton got the nickname Jailbar for its distinctive vertical bar grill.

The Watermans are staunch Ford enthusiasts and have been members of the Falcon Fairlane Club for twenty



years.

Self-confessed "Ford nuts," the Jailbar isn't the only horse in Waterman's stables.

"We have owned a lot of Falcons over the years and presently own a

2016 Ford Falcon FGX Turbo Sprint.

"It's a limited edition; only 550 were made, and only 50 of those came to New Zealand.

"They are the last model of the Ford Falcon production," Jock said

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# truck



From far left, clockwise:  
The Ford Half-ton pick up was produced between 1942-1947. It was nicknamed the Ford Jailbar for its vertical bars on the grill.

Jock and Diane Waterman are self-confessed "Ford nuts" and have won a considerable amount of awards for their vehicles.

Diane Waterman with her 1964 Ford Anglia Super 1200.

Jock had pinstriped gold detailing added to the vehicle.



Diane doesn't miss out on the action and is the proud owner of a 1964 Ford Anglia Super 1200, which she named after their pet sheep, Missy. "We don't have any Holden friends," jokes Diane.

"One of our daughter's boyfriends had a Holden, and we told him he couldn't bring it up the drive." The couple are retired these days and live on a lifestyle block in North

Canterbury.

Diane says they enjoy the social aspect of classic car ownership and often take the vehicles out to club days and events.

"We have made life-long friends through the club.

"All our friends are connected with cars in some way."

The Watermans have a room filled

with an impressive number of awards for their vehicles.

Jock picked up three prizes at the annual Brunner All Ford Day in Westport earlier this year for the truck.

"We got the best pre-48 Commercial and People's Choice.

"We also got the Hard Luck Prize because from Reefton to Westport, it poured down rain, and the windscreen was leaking.

"Diane's jeans were wet when we arrived. She tried to stop the water getting in with a rag, but that didn't really work."

Last year, Diane picked up Best English Car for the Anglia at the same event.

Jock says their car collection is complete, at least for now.

"I have no more shed space; I have run out of room."

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# Clearing sale a farmer's dream



**Anisha Satya**  
REPORTER

Greendale School is small – there are less than 40 students there this year.

But it's mighty, or perhaps, its PTA is, raising thousands for the school at their annual clearing sale.

Greendale is a lightly populated rural area in Selwyn, and the school is 11km from Darfield.

Both the weather and large crowds turned up to show their support for the school, and get their hands on new toys for the farm.

Trucks, tractors, ploughs, you name it – the paddock was a farmer's dream department store.

And for those without stock and paddocks to tend to, there were ride-on mowers, furniture and plants.

PTA chairperson Chris Gribben said the team was still tallying the money raised, with items still being purchased following the auction.

"I think we sold another dozen [last Monday]."

There were 474 registered buyers at the sale.

"I was blown away with how many people were there. And seeing cars parked all the way out down the road.

"It just shows the generosity



PHOTOS ANISHA SATYA

Above left – Machinery of all shapes and sizes littered the paddock. Above – William Stack and father Gavin Casey had their Foden Truck up for grabs.

and support people in the rural communities have for the smaller schools."

Clearing sale co-ordinator Earl Worsford said the event had gone from strength to strength in the three years it had run.

"The machines came from all over the place this year – we got some stuff from Amberley and from Rangiora.

"A lot ... is local, a lot of people have connections to the school, whether they went there, or their kids did."

Many people went to the sale just to window shop, and enjoy a day

out with friends. Jennifer Thompson and her husband, Owen, were two of those people.

"You never know what the prices are gonna be," she said.

"We watched a seat go for about \$140, and we'd thought it would be about \$10."

Thompson said the community turnout to the sale was "mind blowing".

"I worked at a primary school for 32 years. And in all my time, I never saw anything on a scale like this."

Darrin Shearer was at the event alone, but came on behalf of his farm out at Waimate.

"Everyone's too busy on the farm at the moment, so I shot away.

"We're after a roller. There's a couple of them here, but they're a fair way away yet."

Shearer said it was his first time coming to the Greendale sales, and would likely not be his last.

It wasn't just old machinery and plants that were being sold.

Greendale students and staff had bought out home-baked goodies to fundraise for an upcoming camp.

Teacher aide Jade Collings said the day's turnout well overshadowed last year's.

"It's great because it's such a small school, and everyone bands together."

Principal Bronwyn Harding said the event made around \$40,000 in 2023.

"We have a very proactive PTA who organise all of this, all in their own time, over and above either working and family lives."

"They've actually helped in staffing, with the money they've raised, and with our school pool."

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# From cows to camels and back again

CLAIRE INKSON

As a kid growing up in Christchurch, Marcus Taylor wanted to be a fighter pilot.

"I was quite disappointed to find out that we had no fighter jets in New Zealand, and I was also colour blind so that one was off the table, and I had to reassess," Taylor said.

Inspired by watching Steve Irwin and with good scientific grades, Taylor thought he would give Massey University vet school a go instead.

"I luckily got in on the first round so that I could go straight into vet school, and I loved it.

"The courses were interesting, and the class becomes your family for five years, and I had a really great time there."

Taylor graduated as a veterinary surgeon in 2013 and went straight into large animal practice.

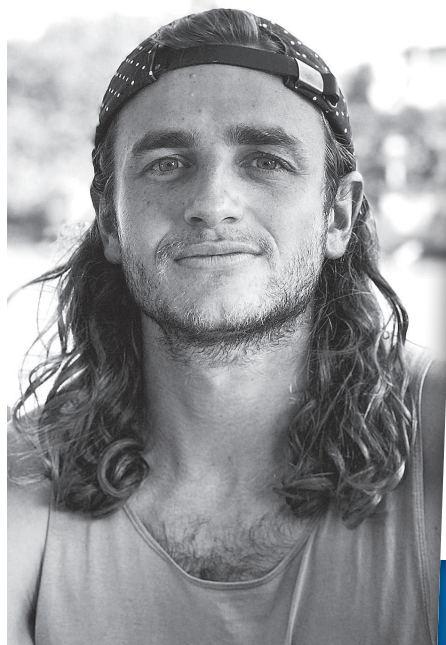
His career took him to England, Canada, Australia and the Middle East, where he had adventures with camels, cows, sheep, and ostriches.

He began documenting his adventures, which have become Taylor's book, *The Ones That Bit Me*, which chronicles his transition from student to experienced vet.

"I started by jotting down notes from my calls, thinking they were interesting and I didn't want to forget them.

"I guess I had an inkling that all these stories would add up to a book."

Taylor started by writing one chapter and sent it to his sister for her opinion.



Left - Marcus Taylor's work as a vet has taken him all over the world.

Right - Marcus has worked with everything from cattle and sheep to camels, hawks and fish.



Marcus Taylor's book *The Ones That Bit Me* chronicles his life as a student and qualified vet.



"She read it and said, 'you have to turn this into a book'.

"So I wrote a few more chapters and finally thought I had enough that I should sit down and dedicate some time to properly finishing it."

The book contains plenty of stories from behind the farm gate as Taylor navigates callouts for calving, lambing and even ostriches.

"There are a lot of stories I think farmers and their kids would enjoy."

The book is chatty and conversational, and Taylor said he wanted the book to "continuously move forward."

"I wanted it to be exciting and interesting so that people can get a flying trip through the life of a

veterinarian and enjoy it along the way."

Taylor isn't your average vet, though. His zest for travel and adventure takes the book far beyond simply a veterinary memoir.

"Even through vet school, I had itchy feet, so I did a lot of placements overseas to help with that desire to travel.

"I did a placement in the Cook Islands and in Outback Australia, and I've written about that in the book because there were a lot of adventures that came out of those placements.

Taylor said the placements gave him a head start in his career.

"In more remote places, as a student, you get given more responsi-

bility and you get to do surgeries.

"Vets are more willing to let you give things a crack."

Vet school is well known for being a high-stress environment, but Taylor said his attitude helped him get through.

"I just felt like I was going to be alright.

"I kept a good life balance; I slept properly, went to the gym and played sports because I felt that would benefit my learning.

"Now, there is a lot more information out there about how good that stuff is for your memory and learning."

Taylor said the skills for dealing with stress at university have helped in his veterinary practice.

"You can't take anything too seriously and you have to let things come as they do because you can't control everything; there are so many different outcomes.

A severe accident not long after Taylor, then 23, graduated nearly cost him his career and his life, which he describes as a pivotal moment.

"I had that young man attitude, where nothing can hurt you, which is a bit immature.

"So it was a real wake-up call about my own mortality.

"It's definitely a heavy part of the book."

Once recovered from the accident and armed with a fresh perspective, Taylor bought a plane ticket for Indonesia and set off to see the world.

"My accident gave me a real sense that life wasn't just something to take for granted.

"I had all these things I wanted to do, and I wasn't going to put them off or wait until I had everything figured out."

Taylor said he was pleased he had travelled when he was younger.

"Often, the longer you wait, the more life things come up that inhibit that ability to go and do stuff."

Taylor is now working on a documentary about farm vets in New Zealand. Depending on funding, it will be released on YouTube or television next year.

"It shows vets tackling difficult cases during spring and explores the topic of mental health and managing stress, as this can be a challenge for rural vets and farmers."

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## ELLESMERE A&P SHOW

- **Show location:** 1650 Leeston Road, Leeston
- **Show date:** Saturday, October 19
- **Parking:** Free Parking, Entrance North Gate
- **President:** Ian Fleming
- **Vice president:** Tracy McIlraith
- **Opening times:** Gates open from 7.30am
- **Ticket sales (cost/at gate etc):** Adults \$15, children 12 & under free, family pass \$40. Cash and Eftpos at gate.
- **Key highlights:** Variety of events, animals, farmyard, pony rides, Claas Harvest Centre feature tent. All day action Bayleys main ring, wearable arts, Selwyn's got Rock and Talent, Down to the Wire Fencing comp, YFC Final, Top Team challenge, wood chopping, shearing, Highland dancing, sheep dog trials and huge vintage display.
- **Best place to follow for information:** [www.ellesmereshow.co.nz](http://www.ellesmereshow.co.nz) and Facebook



Ellesmere show president Ian Fleming (right), seen here with Richard Turner, getting ready to kick off the 2024-2025 South Island A&P show season. PHOTO SUPPLIED



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# It's A&P 'opening day'

The A&P show season is about to kick off in style, with the much-anticipated Ellesmere show opening its gates at the Leeston showgrounds on October 19.

Show president Ian Fleming said the event is one of the biggest one-day shows and a great way to prepare stock for the A&P season.

Fleming, a breeder of red poll cattle, is adding his own touch to this year's show with a beef and eool theme.

"Every president comes up with a theme to follow the president's interests.

"Of course, mine is cattle, and I needed something to go with it, so I chose wool."

Ellesmere show vice-president Alastair Barnett said the various events happening throughout the show make the day unique.

"It absolutely not to be missed."

A Wearable Arts competition features a wool-themed parade in the CLAAS Harvest Centre marquee, along with a blade shearing demonstration to honour the past.

Innovation takes the spotlight with cross-bred wool products such as Terralana insulation on display and Kiwi favourites like Swaandri and Bremworth carpets.

There's plenty for children, including rides, games, a farmyard full of baby farm animals, face painting, and a "find the needle in the haystack" competition.

Those who aren't squeamish can get up close and personal with some slippery locals in the form of a tank of Lake Ellesmere Long Fin Eels.

Equestrian events will take place on Friday and Saturday in the Baileys arena, and min-

iature pony rides will be available for young aspiring riders.

Barbecue competition Smoke by the Lake returns, but this time, it features competitors from across the country as the Show partners with the New Zealand Barbecue Alliance for the first time.

"We are looking at around 25 contestants lining up, who will be manning their smokers and barbecues throughout Friday night and will start cooking Saturday morning.

"They will be cooking four different classes of meat."

The Selwyn Heritage Park, which Barnett said isn't fully functional yet, will provide a sneak peek for attendees when it opens on the day, with access from the showgrounds.

"They have a lot of local history and British machinery there.

"There are some old cottages and the South Bridge jail."

Attendees can leave their cars at home with free buses funded by Selwyn District Council departing from Rolleston and Lincoln in the morning and back at the end of the day.

"It's very popular with families.

"Parents can drop their kids at the bus, send them off to the show for the day, and pick them up off the bus later."

The highlight of the day will be the Grand Parade.

According to Barnett, the committee has really upped the ante for this year's parade.

"It's the highlight of the day.

"We are making the grand parade bigger and better than it has been for a few years."

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# From vineyards to sheep yards

CLAIRE INKSON

The Amberley A&P Show is in its 123rd year with a new president, long-time North Canterbury farmer Hugh Macintosh, at the helm.

Macintosh manages Broomfield Estate, which is not far from the Amberley Domain, where the show will be held on November 2.

"That's probably why I was offered the role – because I was close.

"I've been involved in the sheep pens for many years but not involved with the committee, so I was a bit apprehensive at first, but they were struggling to find people, so I said yes.

"We've now got new people coming on with a vice president and junior vice president, which is good."

Macintosh may not have been on the A&P committee, but he is no stranger to community organisations.

He has been heavily involved in the Glenmark Rugby Club, having held the role of secretary and was also president of the Canterbury Dog Trial Association, something which he hopes to feature at this year's event.

"I'm hoping to have some dog trialling in the main ring after the grand parade, either a demonstration or a run-off – we're still working through that."

The community is still reeling from the loss of local farmer and dog trialler Neil Evans, who passed away earlier this year and would have been involved in the show.

"Neil Evans would have been our man to do the dog trials to that, but he is no longer with us.

"That's a big hole to fill."

Neil Evans's son, Andy Evans, is convening the Hoof to Hotplate competition, which is always a show highlight.

"It's showcasing what we, as farmers, do producing good beef and lamb," Evans says.

Farmers gift a lamb, which gets judged on Jean and Robert Forresters property in Omihi.

The lamb is then taken to Harris Meats, where it is killed and judged on the hook before it goes to the show, where the meat is cooked by

## AMBERLEY A&P SHOW

**Location:** Amberley Domain

**Date:** November 2

**Opening time:** 7am

**Tickets:** \$10, under 15 free

**Parking:** In the grounds, or at Amberley School (weather permitting)



Amberley A&P Show president Hugh Macintosh. PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

a chef and taste-tested by a judging panel. "We get around 30-40 gift lambs generally, and we also run a beef one with a prime steer or heifer, and that gets processed at Silver Fern Farms."

The Brew Moon Brewing Company will run the bar, and a wine contest near the hoof-to-hotplate competition will take place to

celebrate Amberley's location as the gateway to the North Canterbury wine region.

"We will get some of the wine guys to speak about what they do, and there will be tents outside where you can sample wine and gin," Evans said.

Macintosh says the area's diversity makes it unique, and the event

showcases that.

"Farming is my thing, but then we have viticulture, and the wine tent is quite strong here.

"I did a wine tasting last year as vice president, and it changed my thoughts on drinking wine," Macintosh said.

The show will also pay homage to Omihi farmer Keith Stackhouse,

whose dedication to the show spans 80 years, by renaming the pavilion – known by locals as the tin shed – after him for the duration of the show.

"He needs to be recognised.

"Eighty years involved with the show either as an exhibitor or running it is a massive contribution," Macintosh said.



Above – A Hoof to Hotplate competition will showcase local beef and lamb producers.

Below – Stephanie Henderson Grant from Ataahua Wines at last year's show.



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Ashburton show president Ben Stock is encouraging the community to get behind this year's event.  
PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

## 'Nearly a local' steps up to A&P plate

CLAIRE INKSON

Ashburton A&P president Ben Stock has been farming in Mid Canterbury with his wife Mary-Anne for 20 years, which he reckons makes him "nearly a local".

"I grew up in Gisborne, but my wife is from the South Island.

"I ended up here with an opportunity and I just love it.

"The South Island is where it's at."

After working around the island sharemilking, the Stocks settled in Hinds, where they milk 700 cows on their property.

Adding a contract milker to the farming operation has meant Stock has more free time.

"We are fortunate to have some wonderful people involved with the farms, which means we are

able to step back slightly.

"I was looking for something to fill that gap, and the show committee seemed like a good option."

Stock said being on the committee has sometimes pushed him out of his comfort zone, but he has enjoyed the experience.

"I probably wasn't quite ready to be a Lion, but this has been a whole new set of skills, new people and new and exciting challenges."

The Stocks are no strangers to giving back to the community, though, having got on board with the Rapa Feed Run in 2020, being instrumental in organising feed from Mid Canterbury for Hawke's Bay farmers struggling with drought.

"I saw what they were doing, and I said to Mary-Anne, 'we could do this', so we made a few phone

calls and got it going.

"You can only do it with good people around you.

"The community is full of good people like that. That's what makes the community go around."

Stock said the A&P show had been supported by a lot of energetic people in the past who wanted to see the show carry on and grow.

"Shows have been part of our Kiwi DNA since we were all young.

"It allows interaction between the farming community and town community, depending on what side of the fence you are on.

"We all remember going to the show in your new shirt Mum bought you and spilling hot dog sauce all down it, getting sunburnt and spending all your pocket money on the rides and the games.

"Every Kiwi can resonate with that, and I think that's what makes it such a good and valuable thing to put time and effort towards."

Stock said it was important to get the right entertainment to keep the interest alive.

This year's event on November 1-2 would showcase Mid Canterbury as the "food basket" with a paddock-to-plate theme, with the new Ash-burger bash highlighting local produce and encouraging people to support Ashburton businesses.

Exciting additions to the event include the Clash of the Colleges and the South Island gumboot throwing championships and celebrity shearing to keep the crowds entertained.

There will be forging demonstrations and an expanded and

improved animal tent.

Early birds through the gate on will get a sizzling reward, with the first 1000 paying attendees receiving a free burger sponsored by Anzco.

The Ashburton event is one of the few regional shows to run over two days.

Stock is calling on the community to mark their calendars and get behind it.

"Everyone plays their part, and we really want the community to come out and support us this year and support local business because it's not the nicest economic climate we have been in.

"It's blimmin' tricky out there at the moment.

"So we want to inject a bit of a good-will story into the community."

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## NORTHERN A&P SHOW

- **Show location:** Rangiora Showgrounds, 156 Ashley Street, Rangiora
- **Show date:** Friday, October 25 (Equestrian only) Show Day – Saturday, October 26
- **Parking:** Off Ashley Street – Showgrounds
- **President:** Melanie Morris
- **Vice president:** Rachael Robinson
- **Opening times:** 7.30 am – 6 pm
- **Ticket sales:** \$15 adults, \$0 under 5, \$5 – 5yr -18yrs, \$35 Family pass (2 adults, 2 youth)
- **Key highlights:** Rare horse society displays, freestyle motorcross display, Hato St John demonstrations, farmyard nursery, Rare Breeds Society, terrier race, lolly scramble, duck herding, dog trials, lots of equestrian, including clydesdales.
- **The best place to follow for information:** Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/Rangiorashow>



# Animal antics abound

CLAIRE INKSON

We have all heard the expression herding cats, but what about ducks?

Duck herding is just one of the highlights in the Northern A&P Show at Rangiora on October 26, says show president Melanie Morris.

"There's something for the whole family, whether it's patting animals in the farmyard, watching motorbike stunt riders, tractors,

crafts, livestock competitions or the sideshows, or just sitting down with some good food and a live band."

The Kidszone area ringside will entertain children with a sand pit, toys, and a straw bale lollipop hunt.

"Parents can sit and watch the action in the main oval or listen to the live band while their children play," Morris said.

There will be all the much-loved rural staples, including shearing,

terrier racing, dog trialling and wood chopping, and a strong equestrian section that will run on Friday and Saturday, but Morris said the show has an urban twist.

"It's quite unique in that it's not a true country show anymore; it's a real mix of town and country."

Morris has been involved with the show since she started competing in the equestrian section at 10.

It's not surprising she's had such a long association with it

when you consider her father, Lyndon, was a show president around 20 years ago.

Morris said she wasn't the only one on the committee to have a long association with the show.

"A few people have grown up with the show, which is quite cool to see."

"Other people have had parents or grandparents on the committee, so we have a lot of history."

This year's shows will mark 151 years of the event.

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# Lou Lou – Conversing with cows

CLAIRE INKSON

We have all heard the phrase horse whisperer, but a Southland accountant turned dairy farmer has gained a reputation for her talent for conversing with cows.

Meet Laura Murdoch, otherwise known as Lou Lou the Cow Whisperer.

At her first job on a dairy farm, Laura earned the nickname from her boss.

“On my first farm they would call me Lou Lou and then everyone started calling me that.

“My boss noticed the bond I had with the cows. I talk to them like they are human, and that’s just the way I work with them.

“It turned into a joke that I was a cow whisperer because I make them so friendly.”

Murdoch has always videoed her cows but started posting her bovine friends online a couple of years ago and is gaining followers on TikTok with her cow-whispering antics.

“I really did it because I like watching my own videos and there are some cool trends and sounds that fit well with my clips.

“I thought it was a cool way to showcase just how cool these animals are because most people have no idea.”

Murdoch’s followers are a mix of urban dwellers and farmers.

“Some are farming people, and we are all supporting each other because we are all doing the same thing.

“Like me, other people just love



cows and get a hoot out of seeing them friendly or doing something cool.”

Murdoch said she is cautious about what she posts to ensure her videos don’t cause more harm than good.

“I don’t even post if there is a bit of mud in the corner of a paddock.

“I’m quite aware of the fact that some people don’t understand farming or that things can be thrown out of context.”

While her social media exploits have garnered her attention, so has her dedication to her new-found career.

Despite growing up in urban Invercargill, Murdoch had always

Laura Murdoch has an affinity with cows and has been known as Lou Lou the Cow Whisperer since her first job on a dairy farm.

PHOTOS JULIET CAMPBELL

had an affinity with cows, but went down the accounting career path when she finished high school due to a carpal tunnel issue.

She had put off having an operation for years until she was finally left with no choice.

“My wrists just finally blew out.”

Once the operation was completed, Murdoch realised there was no longer a barrier to going dairy farming.

She got as much experience on dairy farms as she could relief

milking and began studying in her spare time.

“I knew my CV was going to be 15 years of administration and accountant work, not farming.

“I still had a lot of knowledge from relief milking over the years, and I had a passion.

“So, I contacted Primary ITO and asked about courses.”

Some courses Murdoch could complete off-farm, but as she progressed to Level 4 papers, she needed to find a permanent job to get photo evidence and assign-

ments signed off by an employer.

After a staff member left one of the farms where Murdoch had been relief milking, she applied for the job and was immediately offered it.

Murdoch then took her current position as a herd manager, working on Chris Reilly’s property 15 minutes from Invercargill, where she milks 250 cows.

After completing her studies, Murdoch entered the 2022 Dairy Industry Awards after receiving an email promoting the event in her inbox.

Murdoch saw the email as a sign, entering on a whim to “see where she was at”.

Her hard work paid off, and she won the Southland/Otago Dairy Manager of the Year title, which she described as “the icing on the cake”.

“That was a big highlight because it backed up that I’d made the right choice swapping jobs.

“I could have been sitting in an office on a six-digit salary, sitting on my butt working half the hours.

“But I don’t do it for the money; I do it because I enjoy it.”

Murdoch said she encourages other young women looking for careers in dairy farming to think about “what makes you tick”.

“Every farm operates completely differently.

“Don’t be disheartened if one job isn’t the right fit; don’t judge the whole industry based on that one time.

“It’s about finding what you love about the job and what parts of the job you want to do.”

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# Calves for a cause



Above – The IHC Calf and Rural Scheme has raised \$43 million since it was launched 43 years ago. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Left – IHC fundraising national manager Greg Millar said farmers who have donated to the scheme have had a huge impact on the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

## CLAIRE INKSON

IHC fundraising national manager Greg Millar says the IHC Calf and Rural Scheme has been running for 43 years thanks to the loyalty of New Zealand farmers.

“Amazing dairy farmers from around the country and in the Ashburton area have been wonderful supporters and made a huge impact on IHC’s work and people with intellectual disabilities and their families in rural communities.”

Millar said the farming community understood the importance of the IHC well before other sectors.

“I’m quite sure it’s because they

treasured community and the right to live in your local community with your family, friends and neighbours around you and not be shipped off to an institution that may be a very long way from your home and loved ones.”

Since its launch, the scheme has raised \$43 million, allowing the organisation to provide funding for its 30 branches nationwide, many of which are in rural communities.

“They receive money each year for local projects, which may be events for parents or events for people with intellectual disabilities.

“We do a volunteer programme to help match people with intellectual disabilities with friends and

provide a family whanau liaison programme which supports families at crucial moments and gives them a helping hand.”

The IHC also supports Idea Services, one of the largest services for people with intellectual disabilities.

It allows them to live in their own homes and be a part of their local communities.

“The Calf and Rural Scheme makes a huge difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities to make sure they can be helped towards a more meaningful life instead of just existing.

“It’s about having the extras and a quality life, some outings, getting out in the community and having

fun. Those kinds of things are really important.”

The scheme came under jeopardy during the Mycoplasma Bovis outbreak.

“It was a very scary moment for many farmers, but we also had to think, will the scheme survive?”

“But farmers basically told us they would make sure it kept going.

“Some gave us a virtual calf instead of a physical one.”

Farmers wanting to donate can sign up and pledge a calf, sheep or lamb through the IHC website.

“Most of the sales happen through PGG Wrightson sale yards.

“The livestock team do amazing work to ensure we get really good

prices for our calves.”

Agribusinesses and farms can also donate a virtual calf, a cash donation of \$300.

Those wanting an easier option can donate monthly through the Rural Smile Club.

“Interestingly, when I ask just about any of the amazing farming donors why they do this each year, their reply is almost always a version of the following: ‘It’s just what you do’.

“I love it. No seeking recognition or a pat on the back, just the simple ethos of tradition and caring about your community and the most vulnerable people in that community,” Millar said.



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# Change of guard at DairyNZ helm

CLAIRE INKSON

A change of guard is coming to DairyNZ next month as the long-term chairperson, Jim van der Poel, has announced he will stand down at the annual meeting on October 22.

Deputy chairperson Jacqueline Rowarth will also retire by rotation, opening two new positions for farmer-elected directors on the board.

Rowarth will stand again for re-election.

Van der Poel has been in the role for seven years and will be replaced by Waikato-based farmer-elected director Tracy Brown.

Brown grew up in urban Northland and moved with her family to a lifestyle block when she was 11, giving her a taste of farming and a desire to pursue a career in agriculture.

"I had a dream of being a farmer from a very young age," Brown said.

Brown studied Agricultural Science at Massey University, where she met her husband, Wynn.

The couple moved to the Waikato in the mid-1990s, and converted Wynns family sheep and beef farm to dairy.

With four children added to the mix, Brown cut her governance teeth in community organisations like play centre and toy library and by chairing the school board.

"I contributed to our community as our kids were growing up. It was quite hard doing much in the ag sector because I was so busy with little kids."

Brown describes winning the Waikato Ballance Farm Awards in 2010 as a "pivotal moment" when she decided she had an opportunity to make a difference in the dairy sector.

"That's when I set about proactively growing my experience and being quite purposeful with how I could contribute to the sector."

Brown became Dairy Environment Leaders Programme chairperson, Ballance Farm Environment Alumni chairperson, and director for New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Research.

She is on the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee and was a Dairy Women's Network Trustee for around three years.

"I've got a really broad range of experiences and bring a wide range of viewpoints because I've been around a lot of challenges and see things from different perspectives."

"My life has been enriched by the primary sector, and I see this role with DairyNZ as a real opportunity to be able to give back and pay it forward," Brown said.

She said a driver for her is trying to make things better for people involved in the dairy industry.

"It's always been about having sustainable, economically viable businesses that are also socially sustainable in terms of people coming into the sector."

Brown said she has a belief that farmers need to be responsible and make a difference for future generations.

"In the height of dairying, quite a few people were anti-dairy, and

I thought what we could do to get better stories out there around the good stuff that was happening, and to model best practice to try and help farmers with the change process they need to go through."

Brown said the industry has made phenomenal progress in the environmental space.

"We now have farm environment plans, and we have regional councils that have much stricter requirements on farmers we have to operate within, so we have seen a huge shift."

Brown said that when it comes to regulations, it's about having the "right" ones and that the market will dictate requirements on farmers.

"You see that already with some of the work milk companies are doing, particularly around emissions and our greenhouse gas footprint, and our international customers are demanding more from us on that."

"The market will sort it out, and it will have the right kind of influence in terms of getting the right kind of settings."

Brown said she would define her success in the role by delivering value to farmers and ensuring a strong succession plan for the organisation.

"I want to know I can step out of this role one day confident in knowing there are younger, smarter people coming through that are better equipped than me as director and chair, and potential future leaders coming forward."



Tracey Brown will become DairyNZ's new chairperson when Jim van der Poel steps down at the organisation's annual meeting on October 22.

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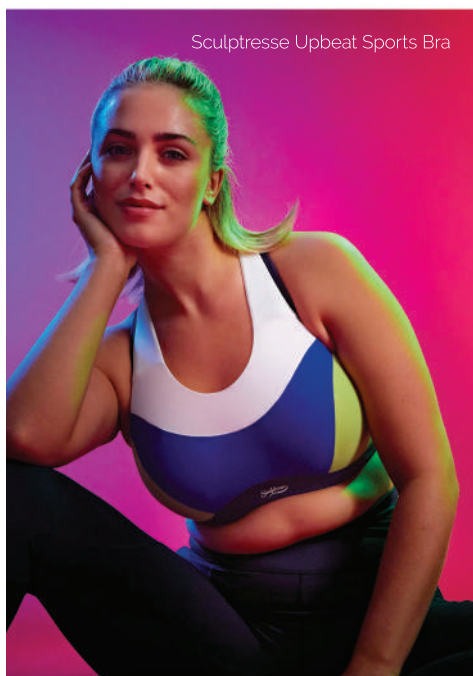
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## CLAIRE INKSON

Have you ever heard the saying, 'If you want something done, ask a busy person'? Well, that certainly holds true for North Otago farmer Kate Faulks.

In addition to managing Altavady Farm with her husband, Adam, and raising her five young children, Faulks serves on the board of Port Otago, is on the steering committee of the North Otago Sustainable Land Management Group, and is a candidate for election to the Ravensdown board.

She worked for ExxonMobil for six years before switching to farming when the family relocated from Christchurch to North Otago in 2018.

Faulks says that while life is busy, she and Adam "make it work".

"If you want something badly enough that aligns with your values, you just get it done.

"Adam and I are a strong team."

Faulks said juggling a career and parenthood is about balance, but with compromise, sacrifice and determination, women can have a professional and family life.

"I decided even before I had children and a career that I would have both."

Faulks said it comes down to what motivates and inspires you and what is in the family's best interest.

"As it turns out for us, what was of interest to our family was me maintaining a little bit of work outside of the farm that was in line with the career I had been building.

"I tried to be a traditional housewife, and it didn't work."

Altavady farm is part of a family farm group that spans 620 hectares of rolling hills 20 kilometres from Oamaru.

The farm provides dairy support for the group, finishing 500 dairy beef, grazing 1400 dairy stock, and raising around 700 dairy beef calves.

Faulks grew up in urban Oamaru and has embraced the transition to rural life despite having no background in farming.

"I realised then that this was an amazing opportunity, and I felt privileged to have that available to me."

Faulks describes going farming as a "humbling experience."

"It was realising that I know my strengths and I'd be judged on what I deliver rather than what my CV says."

With six years' experience now under her belt, Faulks enjoys being hands-on in the farming operation.

"Between Adam and I, we run the whole farm with a couple of staff.

"In the spring, it is really busy with calving, and then, as required, I work out in the yards or drenching - just anything and everything.

"I love it."

Faulks says that despite focusing on her career, she is clear about her priorities.

"My family is my first and most important thing.

"Then the farm, and then my career.

"It's important to me because I've never been able to shake this urge to continue learning and keep going in the commercial space."



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Above - Kate Faulks, pictured with her children Darcy, 6, (left) and Hazel, 8, believes it is possible to have a career and a strong family life.

PHOTOS SUPPLIED

Left - Kate Faulks has embraced the transition to rural life.

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# Meating the need in communities

'THE NEED IS INCREDIBLE'

CLAIRE INKSON

North Otago teacher turned farmer Jo Hay hates to see children hungry, so when an opportunity came to join the board of the farmer-led food donation initiative Meat the Need in April last year, she jumped at the chance.

Hay, who farms near Herbert with her husband Ross and three children, had already been trying to make a difference herself in her local community before the initiative started.

"I come from a really strong service background of doing for others and giving people a hand up.

"As a teacher, I struggled seeing kids come to school hungry, so I had got a breakfast club going."

After noticing a family with a near-empty shopping cart during lockdown in 2020, she organised for a donation of mince and sausages to go the local school for the principal to distribute.

"I know we are in business, and have to make money, but we produce this amazing protein, and people in our own country are going hungry.

"It just didn't sit well with me."

When Meat the Need began that year, it was just the vehicle Hay had been looking for to affect change.

The Hays immediately started donating meat from their farm to the cause.

"I became a bit of a cheerleader

for them, and when the opportunity arose to join the board, I thought Yes, because this totally sits with my 'why'.

"And the rest is history."

Meat the Need provides a platform for farmers to donate premium mince and milk to those at the frontlines of food insecurity – foodbanks and community organisations.

Hay says that if farmers can donate, they should.

"The need is incredible.

"Farmers think things are tough at the moment, and it is.

"But we can grow our own food, we can entertain ourselves at home pretty cheaply.

"We are not stuck in a small house with hungry kids trying to entertain them to take their mind

off it. Things are a whole lot worse for a whole lot of other people, and we need to remember that."

"As farmers, we don't ever have to think twice about putting food on the table for our families, and there are a lot of families who go without."

Hay has also started a local Food Fairies, supplying meals for families with newborn babies.

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with Rural Guardian



Helping to solve food insecurity isn't the only way Hay gives back to the community.

She also sits on the steering committee for North Otago Sustainable Land Management.

"Catchment stuff totally spins my wheels.

"Farmers do amazing stuff, and we just need to support it, and support farmers with learning.

"The more you know, the more you learn."

Hay is also a director for the North Otago Irrigation Company, a role that saw her receive the Institute of Directors Emerging Director Award last year.

"The North Otago Irrigation Company is a really interesting and exciting space to be involved in.

"You only have to be farmer son the east Coast of the South Island to understand that when it gets dry, it gets dry.

"Water has completely changed our community."

Hay said the biggest driver for her is building strong communities – and not just rural ones.

"Every rural community is intrinsically linked to urban communities.

"We want our communities to be places where people want to live, want to work and want to play.

"That's what gets me excited."

Jo Hay believes if farmers can donate to Meat the Need, they should.

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## Treat yourself to FUDGEY BROWNIES

Fudgey brownies are everyone's favourite. These brownies make a decadent dessert and are a great recipe for any celebration.

Servings: 20  
Prep time: 15 minutes  
Cooking time: 40 minutes

**Brownies**  
1 1/4 C all-purpose flour  
1t baking powder  
1/2 t salt  
3/4 C (175 mL) butter or margarine  
3/4 C unsweetened cocoa powder  
1C packed brown sugar  
1C granulated sugar  
4 eggs  
2t vanilla extract  
1C chopped walnuts

**Fudgey icing**  
2T butter or margarine  
1/4 C unsweetened cocoa powder  
1/2 t vanilla extract  
2C sifted icing sugar  
1/4 C low fat milk (1%)

- Brownies**
- Preheat oven to 180°C.
  - Combine flour, baking powder and salt in medium bowl; set aside.
  - Melt butter in large saucepan over low heat; remove from heat. Stir in cocoa. Beat in brown sugar, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Stir in dry ingredients and walnuts. Spray or butter a 23cm square pan. Spread batter in pan.
  - Bake in preheated 180°C oven for 40 minutes. Do not overbake. Cool completely.
- Fudgey Icing**
- Melt butter over low heat in medium saucepan. Remove from heat.
  - Stir in cocoa and vanilla.
  - Stir in icing sugar and milk until smooth and of spreading consistency.
  - Spread icing over cooled brownies. Decorate with sprinkles.

*Recipe courtesy of NZ Eggs*



## Nutritional Medicine for osteoarthritis Part 1

Almost everyone over 60 will have joint tissue degeneration caused by osteoarthritis (OA). Unfortunately, there are few medical options outside of surgery and pain relief. This is one health problem where nutritional therapy can be very helpful.

My discipline of Nutritional Medicine identifies compounds in food and supplements that can stimulate the body's joint repair processes. The results can be significant and in many cases life changing.

As an example, I have one client that contacted my last year with pain from hip and knee OA. This restricted him by limiting the exercise he really enjoyed. Now 6 months later he said that the pain had almost gone. He is now exercising and has much improved quality of life.

Inflammation is a major part of OA and can cause more discomfort than actual cartilage loss. OA is a disease of cartilage loss and associated reduction in joint space between the bones of the joint. The main process is the death of



specialised cells called chondrocytes that maintain cartilage. Free radical damage and certain enzymes can damage chondrocytes eventually causing them to die. Unfortunately, chondrocytes cannot replicate so when they die, the tiny patch of cartilage it maintained starts to degenerate. The immune system then tries to heal the problem with inflammation, making the problem worse. Extra fluid accumulates in the joint capsule causing stiffness, pain and swelling in some cases.

An anti-inflammatory diet combined with therapeutic levels of chondroitin sulphate, glucosamine sulphate and curcumin from turmeric can help. Of these, chondroitin is by far the most important. To be effective, chondroitin needs to be at 800mg or more. There are only a few joint supplements that have this amount. Most have either none or very little. I guess that this is because of the high cost of quality chondroitin. Feel free to contact me for a copy of my OA programme.

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



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#### John Arts comments:

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*John Arts, Founder, Abundant Health*



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# MAKING WOOL COOL AGAIN

**I**n May 2020, amid the COVID 19 lock down we embarked on our journey of developing a small wool business, The Grumpy Merino.

We wanted to produce a range which was made from our most premium merino wool, be New Zealand made but also exclusive to our designs which was inspired by our environment. It was important to us to explore the market, research what was already on offer but also make an individual stand as a brand. It was significant to celebrate our farm, The Grampians, and our merino flock.

As we progressed, we discovered many valued and appreciate our story and learning about the manufacturing processing. We are proud to be grassroot farmers, operating the day to day on the farm, caring for our animals and the land. We wanted to share this with others who wanted to come on the journey with us.

We found over time, we were telling two stories; New Zealand grown merino wool and New Zealand made. Both of which, is a premium, and a privilege. As our brand continued to get momentum, our followers appreciated this and saw the benefits of using wool verse synthetic materials.

Nearly five years on, many rural women are now diversifying off their already established farming operations. To help add value to their clip. Together, it has formed a network of producers who are proud of their story and who are working towards the rejuvenation of wool!

It highlights the different purposes for wool utilising its benefits in many different forms, from interior décor, clothing, gardening, bedding to name a few.

It emphasises to us all, the brilliance of wool and how it can contribute to a positive change for our environment.

I believe, it's exciting to see not only merino wool businesses, but strong wool being celebrated.



It underlines where wool can be beneficial and used, through innovation and creativity. You can see this from Bremworth Wool Carpets New Zealand. Bremworth brought a positive movement forward when they made a stand on synthetic fibres, focusing one hundred percent on wool. As a business owner, it makes you appreciate the risk they took for the greater good of us all. By doing so, they make wool carpets accessible to all. They give us an option when needing carpets, at a competitive price. It also supports strong

wool farmers, who continue to do it tough. Bremworth have taken the 'bull by the horns' and have developed an exciting concept. The website is creative, upbeat and makes you want to explore having wool in your home. This is thrilling and encouraging for New Zealand wool.

As a collective group and with support from other influential companies like, Campaign for Wool New Zealand, we as a community can continue to push and celebrate the New Zealand wool industry. It gathers momentum forward for

the resurgence of wool, assisting farmers to get the return they deserve for their commodities. Without it, wool, the manufacturing companies and small businesses alike, will disappear.

In preparation for Christmas this year, can you support a small business when doing your shopping? Can you support a New Zealand wool business? Because every order is valued and appreciated. As we all know, many hands, make light work.  
@thegrumpymerino  
www.thegrumpymerino.co.nz



# GLENMARK CHURCH – *A legacy restored*

CLAIRE INKSON

Over the generations, the Glenmark Church has been the cherished setting for countless weddings, funerals, services, and celebrations.

In a community that lost its Hotel to fire in 2014 and iconic rugby club rooms a year later, the church is one of the last remaining historic buildings in Waipara.

So, when the Glenmark Church was severely damaged in the Canterbury earthquakes of 2010, and again in 2011 and 2016, the district rallied together to save the building.

Friends of Glenmark Church chairperson Andy Munro said the building would have been unsalvageable if it had not been strengthened in 2001.

"The 2016 quake finished off what the 2010 and 2011 ones started.

"If the strengthening hadn't been done, it wouldn't have survived.

"Damage was done, but it was repairable."

The church is entwined in the farming history of the district.

Built in 1907, the church, along with a 12-room vicarage and cemetery, was gifted to the community by Annie Townend, daughter of George Moore, the notorious owner of Glenmark Station.

The original station covered 60,750 hectares, and Moore was believed to be the wealthiest man in the country.

He built an extravagant mansion



The Glenmark Church was gifted to the district by Annie Townend, daughter of Glenmark Station owner George Moore.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

on the property, which burned down three years later.

Townend, who was forbidden to have any suitors because her father feared they would only be after her fortune, moved to Christchurch with her father.

Moore's health was failing at this point, and he began to funnel assets off to Townend to avoid death duties and gave her power of attorney.

With her father unable to keep her on such a tight rein, Townend

began a relationship with Dr Joseph Townend, who was possibly treating her father at the time.

The two married secretly in 1900, with her father going to his grave unaware of their relationship.

Dr Townend sadly died two years later.

Townend, who also went on to own the Christchurch landmark Mona Vale, commissioned the church building in memory of her father and late husband.

"There is a strong connection

between all the landowners here whose farms were part of Glenmark Estate and the church.

"When Annie donated the church, one of the stained glass windows was donated by the residents of Omihi.

"My great-grandparents, grandparents and parents all had their funerals here. My dad was christened here; we were all christened here," Munro said.

The church is in the early gothic revival style, constructed of brick

with Oamaru stone dressings and kauri and rimu timber inside.

A bell tower contains a ring of eight tubular bells, which is believed to be the only set of its kind in New Zealand.

The Norman Beard pipe organ, made in Britain in 1906, has been maintained by the South Island Organ Company since the 1980s.

Since the earthquakes, the Friends of Glenmark Church, of which Munro has been chairperson for 21 years, have raised nearly \$500,000 for the restoration of the building.

A \$250,000 repair and refurbishment of the organ, valued at \$700,000, has just been completed.

"They are just wood and leather so that they can be brought back to brand new again," Munro said.

The main work has been strengthening the building to make it structurally sound and safe for public use while retaining its historic character.

"It took a long time with engineers coming in, and systems were changing as to how to repair it because the methodology on repairing brickwork was evolving as they repaired buildings in Christchurch."

*continued next page*



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Above left – The Glenmark Station homestead which burned down in 1891, three years after it was built. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Above middle – The church's organ has been refurbished, costing \$250,000.

Above right – Annie Townend donated the Glenmark Church to the community in memory of her father.



From P36

"The walls have been re-barred and strengthened; the tower was out of line, that's been left where it is, but strengthened.

"The archways have been replaced, and the foundation was pulled out with a new foundation replicating the old.

"The gables weren't tied into the building but are now."

The stained glass windows are a feature of the church and have been painstakingly restored, costing \$100,000.

A donation from Glenmark estate's current owners, George and Suzie Gould, made this possible.

"We have been told the windows are of such outstanding workmanship they could be in a museum," Munro said.

Most of the church's restoration is completed, with around \$50,000 required to finish the work, mainly interior plastering.

The grounds need tidying and replanting, and Munro is hoping for a donation of plants for upcoming landscaping working bees.

The building is already being used by the community again for Sunday services, and two weddings are booked for this spring.

"It's a place where people have memories, sad and happy memories, and they need preserving.

"It's nice to be involved in saving one of these old buildings; we lost a lot of our heritage buildings in Christchurch," Munro said.



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# A building

## OF CHARACTER

CLAIRE INKSON

Karetu Downs has been in the Forrester family for three generations, standing as a testament to their enduring legacy.

This 2000-hectare hill country property, with its romney sheep and angus cattle grazing on the rugged landscape in Hurunui's Waipara Gorge, is not just a farm; it's a way of life.

But beyond the rolling hills and sweeping vistas, the true soul of Karetu Downs lies within its homestead.

Owned by Karen and Bruce Forrester, the homestead has evolved since Bruce's grandfather, Matthew Forrester, built the then-modest house in 1911.

What was essentially a corrugated iron box did not live up to the expectations of his future wife, Amy Millar, though.

"The story goes that she told him she wouldn't live in it as it was.

"So he added another bedroom and lounge on to the house and extended the house to include the old dairy where they used to make the butter and cheese," Karen said.

The house now has six bedrooms and a large, ornately detailed verandah that frames the front of the building.

Karen and Bruce purchased the farm after starting their farming career by leasing land near Waikari. Bruce was shearing, and Karen was working as a nurse.

"We had two incomes and a lease, so we used that as a stepping stone, bought a deer farm, and continued with our lease."

Karen continued to work as a nurse in between having children.

"I've never not worked. In sheep and beef farming, you always need two incomes."

In 1993, they moved to Karetu, initially leasing the property before purchasing it in 2003 after selling the deer farm.

After buying the farm, Karen started making changes to the house and gardens despite Bruce's initial resistance.

Karen often did the work herself to bring her vision to life.

"There was a room out the front on the veranda, and she said I want to take that down.

"I said 'don't touch it, it's fine, leave it alone.'

"I went out the back of the farm, and when I got home, she had ripped it out," Bruce laughs.

The renovations included a new kitchen, the removal of walls, and the opening of the entranceway.

"This house has had so many changes.

"Bedrooms have been kitchens, and kitchens have been lounges," Karen said.

Despite the extent of the work, the house's character and charm remain in the stained glass windows, kauri and to-



tara panelling.

During the renovation, the Forresters discovered a dumb waiter hidden in a wall of an old dining room, under the carpet, children's footprints in paint, and a small trapdoor that piqued Bruce's interest.

"My heart was beating fast; I thought I'd found the family fortune. Inside was a tin.

"What do I find when I open it? A bloody meccano set," Bruce said.

In 2012, Karen convinced Bruce to let her start a farm stay.

"When she first wanted to do it, I was against it.

"I'm still eating humble pie."

They started opening bookings for the farm cottage, built by Bruce's grandfather in 1954.

The cottage proved popular, with guests having the option to book farm tours or take their own horses for self-guided treks through the property.

Following that success, they renovated a room in the house and added a bathroom and door to an adjoining separate lounge.

The quaint suite, named after Bruce's grandmother, Louisa, has the original wallpaper hung by Bruce's mother, Joan Forrester, years ago.

Another exterior room with a kitchenette was later renovated and added to accommodation offerings, known as the Musterer's Studio, but the room once held a secret, Bruce said.

"It was built on when my uncle got his future wife pregnant, and so it was built to hide them away so they didn't bring shame on the family.

"Hazel, their child, ended up being born in that room."

*continued next page*



Above – Bruce and Karen Forrester, with labradoodle Wilson, have put their stamp on the Karetu Downs homestead and gardens since they purchased the family farm in 2003.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON

Left – Karen, seen here with australian bull terrier Kali, has created a garden with bridges, sculptures and plants that lead visitors on a serene journey through the grounds.

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From P38

Karen has added further value to the business by converting the original shearing quarters into a gift shop.

She found that guests wanted a keepsake from their visit to take home.

Bruce said if there is a point of difference, a home accommodation business can work.

"The point of difference is that this is a working farm, and we just carry on like normal.

"You can't put a price on it."

The other point of difference is the extensive gardens, started by Joan and developed into show-worthy grounds by Karen, which provide a tranquil setting for the house.

"Through Joan, we were lucky enough to have all these trees that are well established now.

"It gives the garden its bones."

Garden tours often visit, and the garden will also be part of the Hurunui Garden festival, which runs from October 31 to November 3.

Bruce said that old houses "just have something about them".

"I remember someone saying, you should take a match to this place and start again.

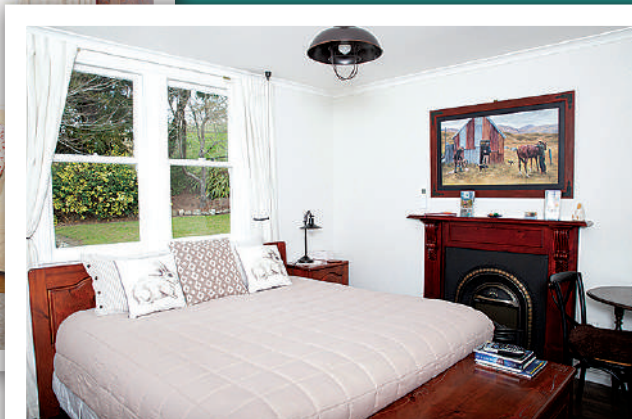
"But you can't build character."



Above – Karetu Downs began life as a humble corrugated iron box, but the house has evolved over three generations of the Forrester family to become a six-bedroom homestead.

Left – The living area of the Louisa suite.

Below – The Musterer's Studio.



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# Flying high

## FOR THEIR PERFECT WEDDING DAY

CLAIRE INKSON

Twenty-nine-year-old Jaz and Tim, 30, Murdoch's love story began at the tender age of 11, when they met at primary school.

Their journey led them not only to the same high school but also the same class.

"We became best mates," Jaz said.

When Year 11 rolled around, the pair made a pact that if they didn't have a date for the semi-formal, they would go together.

"I actually had a date, but then he ditched me, so Tim and I went together.

"He gave me a wee kiss on the cheek at the semi-formal and we have been together ever since."

Fifteen years later, the couple are now married, having celebrated their wedding earlier this year.

"Next year, I will have spent half my life with Tim," Jaz said.

Jaz, an intern psychologist, and Tim, general manager and pilot at Christchurch Helicopters, got engaged in March, 2023, at Flock Hill Station.

"We were going to go hunting - fly somewhere in the helicopter, go for a hunt and then come home.

"When we landed, the sun was just coming up. It was super early in the morning and Tim wanted to get the drone out to get a shot of the helicopter.

"So he was making me walk

around the helicopter to get some cool shots, and then I turned around, and he was on one knee."

Jaz says she had a pretty good inkling a proposal was imminent, although she didn't tell Tim that.

"I knew it was going to happen, so I got my nails done, which I

never do, got a fake tan, all of the things," Jaz laughs.

The couple were engaged for just under a year before tying the knot, which Jaz said was the perfect time-frame for planning a wedding.

"If we had had less time, I would have struggled because we

wouldn't have gotten the vendors we wanted.

"If we had left it too much longer, Instagram would have become a trap.

You just see more inspiration and want to get more things, but you have to be strict with your budget,

have a vision, go with it, and then say enough is enough.

"On the day, it doesn't matter what flowers are on the table or what napkins you chose because it's literally not about any of that stuff."

Tim and Jaz chose Tim's parents' holiday home on the edge of the Cardrona Valley, just outside Wanaka, as the wedding location.

"It's a bit out of town and it's got beautiful open space, and we spend a lot of time there with Tim's family, so it's a very special place for us."

The venue being owned by the family gave the Murdochs more freedom over how their day would unfold.

"I have been to so many weddings where you follow all the motions, and then at 11 o'clock, they kick you out of the venue, and you have to go home.

"We could watch everything get built the day before; it was really exciting.

"It felt like the day was ours; it felt really special."

The couple chose a clear marquee to allow their 80 guests to enjoy the picturesque views during the reception.

"It was black framed, so it matched the tone of the house, and it was almost exactly the same shape and length, so we knew it would look cool."

*continued over page*



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She has had brides arrive on their horse and

with a bale of hay put on the fence with her archway in front so that the tethered horse is part of the wedding party plus family dogs come up the aisle with the rings on their collars. She also loves children and other family members to participate in your ceremony in whatever way suits you, so that the day becomes entirely yours and one you will always remember.

Jenni will help you through the marriage process, and also offers other services as a wedding planner for small, bespoke weddings and elopements. The sound and music for the ceremony comes as part of her package, plus livestreaming can be provided if requested, as well as onsite ceremony photography for small weddings.

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P40 photo: Having Tim's helicopter and the stunning landscape in the wedding images were important to Jaz and Tim Murdoch.

PHOTOS CHARLOTTE KIRI

Left – Jaz with her mother Nicky.



Above – Jaz and Tim Murdoch's love story began at the age of 11 with a friendship.

Left – Crayfish caught by Tim's mates was the highlight of the menu.

Below – Tim's family holiday home near Wanaka was the perfect spot for the wedding.

Below left – A clear marquee allowed guests to enjoy the view.



From P40

Jaz said the food was a highlight of their wedding, and the menu was "like eating at a restaurant".

"We got to design our menu, so we could have anything we wanted, which meant we could incorporate things that were special to us."

That included crayfish caught by Tim's mates in Akaroa under a special licence the day before the wedding and flown down in the helicopter.

Another friend supplied whitebait, while another made the wedding cake.

Despite the wind and a change in timing, with the sun setting earlier than expected, the photos provide happy memories.

Tim's helicopter is part of the action, complete with the Murdoch family crest on the side for the day.

"He loved his helicopter and it was important to Tim to have the photos in the mountains because he is such an outdoors boy; he loves being in the backcountry."

Jaz advises anyone planning a wedding to invest in a videographer. The couple was tossing up whether to get one but they were glad they did.

"It's one way you can re-watch your day and see yourself so in love and having so much fun."

"You get so lost in everything and swept up on the day, you don't see what's happening around you."

The couple also invested in an on-the-day event co-ordinator.

"It just takes all your stress away, and you can just enjoy your day; they take over everything and make sure everything runs how you want it."

Jaz said it was hard to think of what her favourite part of the day was.

"I smiled the whole day; in every photo, I'm beaming. Just seeing how it had all come together in our favourite place in the world, with all our people with us laughing, having amazing food and drinks."

"It was so special."

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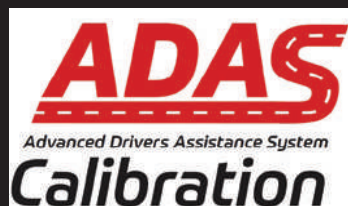
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**O**nce again, the year is nearing to an end and to say it's been a tough one for everyone would be an understatement.

We have all had to make changes in our businesses, myself, I have had to let staff go and am now running Rural People as a sole operator, so more like "Rural Person" these days.

However, my main reason in making these changes is so that I can keep supporting the dairy farmers of New

Zealand which is my main priority.

Over the last 4 years I personally believe that farmers have been given the short end of the stick when it comes to changes the previous and now this government have made.

You may have recently seen in the news that Immigration New Zealand are doubling their fees as of the 1st of October, which makes it increasingly difficult for farmers to consider employing migrants.

For me this means that I am forced to put up the cost of my services for visa work, however, with regards my normal recruitment fees, again for the 7th consecutive year they will NOT be going up.

Recently I have made some very successful placements by recruiting people who are already in New Zealand and are either citizens or residents, so no visa work required. It is true I do have to sift through a lot more applicants, but I have the time to do that whereas farmers

do not, especially at this time of year.

I want to keep this email short and sweet as I know you are all busy so in a nutshell what I want to let you know is not to be afraid to pick up the phone and talk to me if you are having trouble sourcing the right people for your farm.

If you need professional help with recruitment or HR, I will work in with you and your budget as my passion for helping dairy farmers is as strong as ever and I am here to help if you need me.

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