

RURAL GUARDIAN

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It's a life sentence

As I grow older, I've come to realise that everyone is facing their own struggles in life.

As we age, we learn to cut people a little slack – we don't always know what challenges they face behind closed doors.

Each of my friends is dealing with something heavy, and that's on top of the everyday pressures of life and the struggles of farming.

Often, though, what we are dealing with passes eventually and we can move on to calmer waters and breathe until the next storm hits.

With type 1 diabetes, that is not the case. It is a relentless, constant battle that never ends.

It is a life sentence and a disease of which Canterbury has the second highest rate in the world.

Seven years ago, my friend's daughter, Sophie, was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. At the time, I didn't really know what that meant.

Neither did Sophie's parents, Jac and Ian. I have learned a lot about the disease through their experience and it has given me the most profound respect for anyone having to deal with this condition.

International Diabetes Day is coming up on November 14, and I want to take this opportunity to shine a light on a disease that affects so many Kiwis.

For rural type 1 diabetics, the challenges are heightened by the constant need to travel to main centres for clinic appointments and the added worry of geographical isolation in case of a diabetic medical emergency.

In this issue, you can read about Jac and her daughter Sophie and two other rural,

farming families dealing with type 1 diabetes.

The parents are brave and the children are even braver.

Pharmac's decision to fund glucose monitors and insulin pumps is monumental for type 1 diabetics, but the condition remains one that requires constant vigilance.

It's also a disease that is notoriously misunderstood.

As counsellor Kathryn Wright says in her article for this issue "saying the wrong thing is almost worse than saying nothing" and the misconceptions people have about diabetes often lead to people saying some unintentionally hurtful comments, especially to children.

When I met with the families in this issue, they wanted me to clarify some key points in the hope that people will gain a better understanding.

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes are very different.

Type 2 is often lifestyle-related and easier to manage, while Type 1 is an autoimmune disease typically diagnosed in childhood.

It is not caused by sugar consumption, nor is it linked to the Covid-19 vaccine, or breastfeeding practices.

If you see someone with a continuous glucose monitor, don't be afraid to ask the person about it.

Most diabetics appreciate the opportunity to educate rather than just be stared at.

I hope you find inspiration in reading about the stories of Dan, Sophie and Rosie in this issue.

While their journey is a tough one, these children are resilient and their parents are dedicated to supporting them, and that is an inspiring and humbling thing.



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ACL's health and safety manager Megan Wordsworth.

Photo: Supplied.

ACL's culture of care

Nothing is more important to Megan Wordsworth than ensuring her colleagues get home safely each day.

That's only as you would expect from ACL's highly focused health and safety manager, who lives and breathes workplace wellbeing.

"The most important thing is getting all of us home and it's not an easy job," Megan said of her health and safety role at Ashburton Contracting Limited, which has been in operation since 1995.

"And it's sometimes a bit of a dangerous job."

Megan is big on proactive health and safety efforts to ensure processes are in place, understood and that all incidents, or near incidents, are recorded and learned from.

"We're looking at auditing of sites, making sure that paperwork is going out to sites that need to be (audited)," she said.

"We're keeping our documentation up to date because that initiates controlling hazards and risks that we have out there."

"It's generally trying to ensure that the guys are working in such a way that's good for them, that brings them home every night to their families, and where

they actually, hopefully, enjoy the job as well."

And the vibe is that they love their work, that they all understand that nothing is more important than a rock-solid health and safety culture, which ACL clearly has.

"It's driven from the top," Megan said.

"The CEO (Gary Casey) is very proactive in health and safety policy and ensuring that there is support right through the company to be able to make sure our guys are able to work safely."

"Resources are provided to be able to do that."

Those resources include training and creating opportunities, which saw Megan

transition from human resources to health and safety.

"I came in not having health and safety experience and came in as a coordinator, and ACL have been really great at giving support for training."

"There a lot of people across the company with that training, and I think that that's amazing."



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Top marks for Lincoln

Young Farmers are the future of New Zealand agriculture, so each issue we shone a spotlight on a Young Farmer. Today we talk to Theo Wolfhagen from Lincoln Young Farmers Club.

1 What has been the highlight for you of joining Young Farmers?

Meeting a wide range of industry professionals as well as good mates, as being on the executive committee I have grown my experience with public speaking.

2 How did you become involved in agriculture?

I was born and bred on a farm in Australia.

3 What is your job now?

I am currently a student at Lincoln University studying a bachelor of agriculture, I also run a tailing business in the Canterbury region.

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

I feel like technology is going to play a huge role in New Zealand's agricultural future. We are going to see more legislation coming in around animal welfare require-

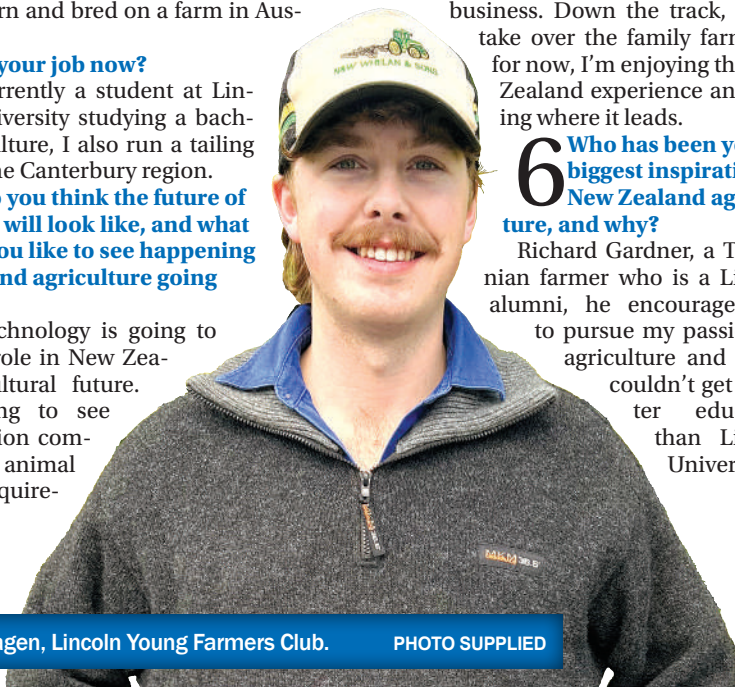
ments which could change farming systems. I would love to see the already growing number of young people like myself getting involved in agriculture.

5 What are your future plans?

My plan is to work as a stock agent for a few years after graduating, gain experience, and eventually start my own business. Down the track, I may take over the family farm, but for now, I'm enjoying the New Zealand experience and seeing where it leads.

6 Who has been your biggest inspiration in New Zealand agriculture, and why?

Richard Gardner, a Tasmanian farmer who is a Lincoln alumni, he encouraged me to pursue my passion for agriculture and said I couldn't get a better education than Lincoln University.



Theo Wolfhagen, Lincoln Young Farmers Club.

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Fed exactly the same, some cows naturally produce more than their herdmates. What if you could achieve the same with ryegrass? Grow more dry matter per ha, for the same amount of nitrogen?

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Long before farm nutrient management came under scrutiny, one local pasture breeder was routinely keeping all its developmental ryegrasses hungry for nitrogen.

Array NEA2 perennial ryegrass is the first of its type to come out of this programme, and Barenbrug commercial manager Graham Kerr says it's an exciting advance.

"It's the highest yielding perennial we've bred, which it achieves under the same nitrogen inputs, in the same soils, as its peers. But it really stands out when there's a nitrogen deficiency."

Trials comparing nitrogen in the leaves of diploid perennial cultivars grown under deliberate nitrogen deficiency showed no difference between Array NEA2 and others.

But Array NEA2 yielded significantly higher, meaning it is able to extract more

nitrogen from the same soil.

This is a significant benefit, because it can help even out pasture supply.

"All farms go through periods of low available soil nitrogen, largely weather-related, which reduce pasture growth. Array's ability to 'find' more nitrogen helps it keep growing and evening out pasture supply in these periods."

The only change for you is getting used to pastures that contain more feed than you might expect.

That's because of Array NEA2's physical characteristics, which reflect two key breeding goals - high animal intake and good persistence.

"We wanted to make it as easy as possible for animals to eat, because taking thousands of bites every day is hard work, so it's tall, with long leaves. And it has lots of tillers, because tiller density helps ryegrass persist."

"The continual feedback we've had from farmers is that there is 'more feed in the paddock than they realise'. Either it takes their animals a lot longer to graze paddocks of Array than they expect, and or they're ready for grazing earlier."

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Heading for a crisis

Arable sector braces as struggles threaten farming



Anisha Satya
REPORTER

Farmers' livelihoods could be at stake as New Zealand faces a flour and wheat crisis, warns Mid Canterbury sector leaders.

At the heart of the industry-threatening situation is the potential collapse of vital wheat-development programmes, which are struggling to stay financially viable and putting the entire arable industry at risk.

That's the view from respected family-owned Luisetti Seeds, which have bases in Ashburton and Rangiora and specialise in seed production domestically and around the world.

The company's managing director Ed Luisetti knows too well that fertile Mid Canterbury and the wider Canterbury Plains are world-renowned for producing high quality seed, but he also knows that is now in danger.

According to Luisetti, the situation has reached a critical tipping point because wheat-breeding



ED LUISETTI

programmes, which develop grain varieties tailored to New Zealand's climate and pests, are in jeopardy.

Those programmes are essential for producing the milling wheat that becomes flour, a staple ingredient in the nation's food supply.

But they are no longer making enough money to cover costs.

Luisetti revealed that breeding new wheat varieties costs about \$750,000 and could take up to a decade. Programmes from various seed producers are running all the time, but they may be forced to shut down entirely if they don't turn a profit within the next 12 to



BRIAN LEADLEY

18 months.

"It would be personally gut-wrenching," Luisetti said.

"But it would also have a significant impact on the arable industry as a whole."

A lack of purpose-bred milling wheat would mean New Zealand could not produce flour anymore. "We'll still grow wheat for animal feed, but that can't be used to make flour."

"You've only got one market then, and that's the feed market."

That feed market was already saturated, particularly in the North Island, so the grim prospect

of relying on imported milling wheat looms large.

But should any import disruption occur – like port strikes, shipping damage, or another pandemic – then New Zealand could face a flour shortage.

Luisetti said the main issue for Mid Canterbury and South Island grain growers generally were transport costs, with it being cheaper to import wheat from halfway across the world – like Canada – than it was to freight it from the South Island to the North.

"The Cook Strait is an expensive piece of water, as you know."

"Our infrastructure across it isn't great."

"If we were able to get milling wheat to the North Island cheaper, you'd hope those mills would be using South Island grain rather than importing it from Australia."

Federated Farmers' arable chairperson David Birkett was recently even more to the point about the import costs, saying it was "madness".

That's why Luisetti has suggested that the Government could subsidise transportation costs, similar to Australia's Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme.

The scheme provides financial assistance for Tasmanian industries shipping their produce

across the Bass Strait, giving them an equal shot at competing with mainland markets.

"It's done wonderful things for Tasmania," Luisetti said.

Bradley Fields' farm co-director Brian Leadley said some farmers were considering other transport options.

"We've now got this new rail hub in Ashburton, which is relatively central to a lot of the milling wheat production. That could handle containers of grain."

"That gets it to Picton but then you've got to have reliable ferries."

Unfortunately, KiwiRail's plans to buy new ferries were halted by the Government in May when costs ballooned to \$3 billion.

Leadley suspects political motives were behind the Government's decision to scrap it, believing they wouldn't "have walked away from that, and the money spent, for no reason."

Leadley and other members of the Arable Food Industry Council have met with Associate Minister of Agriculture Nicola Grigg to discuss their concerns.

While no immediate changes were expected, Leadley welcomed the Government's engagement with the industry.

"It's just good to have contact with someone who's interested in preserving the industry."

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Our Future – we have a choice

Part 2 of Verity NZ's look into the Carbon and Co-Benefits market options that we have available to us in New Zealand.

Recently I was told something that resonated with me, “we have two futures in the palm of our hand, one where the kids are playing in pine needles with the sound of chainsaws roaring and the alternative where they are playing in a biodiverse environment with the chorus of native birds instead of chainsaws”.

Thank you to those of you who not only read the last article but actually contacted me about the contents. I had hoped that I might be able to get people thinking about the whole carbon topic and maybe questioning things. I was not expecting to hear from one of the key people at the table when the ETS settings were chosen. Piers Maclaren was instrumental in getting the current settings implemented and explained to me why they were chosen, thank you for all the information and allowing me to include your details in this article. The following is the explanation for why the settings were put where they are. The canopy height and area (5m and 1ha) were chosen as if a lower height setting was selected, potentially say 2m, then this could have affected landowners' ability to clear scrub. The same logic was applied to the area setting which could have been set as low as 0.05ha, this could have resulted in a landowner being in breach of clearance rules when clearing a few trees that needed clearing for whatever reason. The 30 metre minimum width setting was applied due to the remote technology at the time not being capable of identifying narrow tree rows and also because of the minimum 1ha rule, a single tree lane would have to be very long to reach that threshold. If the width is measured from the drip line then an untrimmed double row of pines could achieve the required width – my thought.

I now have an understanding of the how and why, which I greatly appreciate. Of course, in hindsight, as we all now know, since the ETS has been operating the remote technology has greatly improved resulting in shelter belts being easily identified so why have the settings been left how they are?

Regarding the concerns about landowners breaching the rules clearing scrub or the odd tree, well we are all aware of the changes made to rules around the clearance of any native vegetation so unfortunately, what made perfect practical sense back at the start is now totally irrelevant.

The 30 metre minimum rule still really annoys me. It is great that the ETS now has the Permanent category which recognises native forest that can achieve all the minimum requirements. Have you wondered what happens when forest area starts expanding? If your registered forest is 1ha, the perimeter is 400m. For every 10m expansion that is a further .4ha that is now forest. Unfortunately, until the new area achieves the minimum setting of 30m it can not be registered into the ETS. By the time the 30m width is achieved there is 1.2ha extra forest (120% increase in forest size).

Whilst a degree in hindsight is always helpful, it would appear that as technology improved the settings could, and I would argue should have been revisited.

Enough from me about that, the last article covered the conception and early years of the Carbon market up until 1997.

This time I would like to look at the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse

Gas Inventories – Volume 4, Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use. The acronym for this is AFOLU.

This section covers the six land use types as per the IPCC regulations. These are Forest Land, Cropland, Grassland, Wetlands, Settlements and Other Land. It goes into significant detail explaining the descriptions and methodologies that are applicable for that class. Annex 1 countries are obligated to report on the area of each of these and they should equal the total area of the country, or as close as possible.

Most of us are aware that globally there are landowners benefiting financially from several of these classes, while here in New Zealand we can partially benefit from the Forest Land category.

Why can't landowners benefit from their wetland restoration or dryland reforestation project? The good news is that you can - with the VCM.

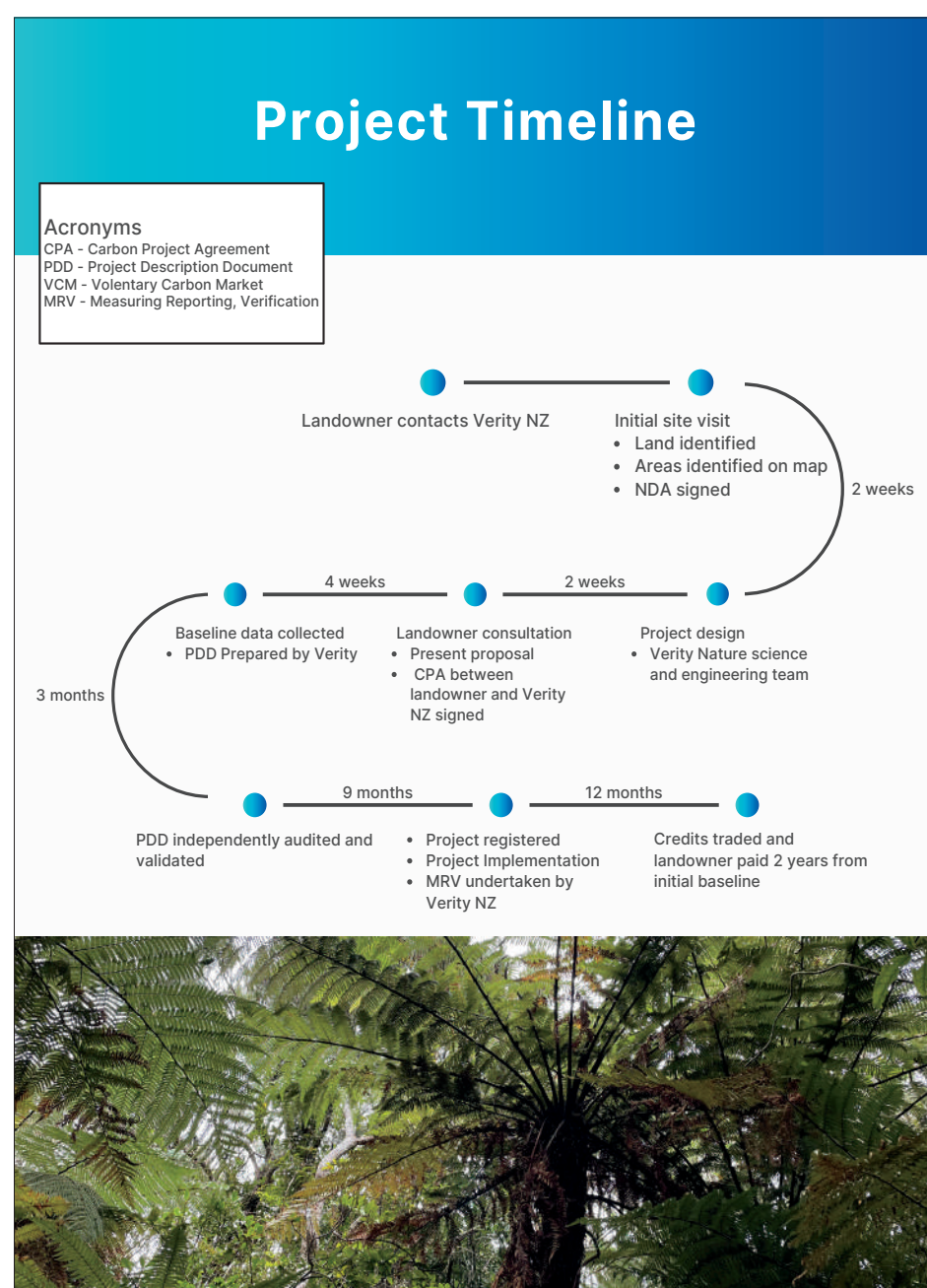
Land Use and Land Use Change Forestry (LULUCF) guidelines are in place enabling the recognition of and therefore the ability to generate revenue through sequestering carbon on Forest Land, Grasslands, Croplands and Wetlands which make up most of the private rural land in New Zealand. There are globally recognized methods for sequestering carbon without changing the land use category, eg, Grassland remaining grassland. By introducing new management strategies, you can sequester more carbon on this land, for example, you might go from set stocking for long periods to rotational grazing or install more fences thereby improving the grazing management. There are a lot of activities which are genuine additionality factors. I don't want to get into a debate about the science behind this, Verity NZ is relying on robust, internationally recognized and approved methodologies which will provide the information required. If other organizations want to waste time and money defending their stance on the theoretical results, go for it, Verity NZ would prefer to invest our time and money into projects that result in positive outcomes in both financial and environmental terms.

The same goes for wetlands, I am aware that there are numerous reports written by industry experts regarding the fact that some wetlands could be releasing more carbon than they are sequestering. While I don't claim to be an expert, we do have experts within our company. Verity NZ is prepared to invest our money into baselining and ongoing MRV for the life of the project so, I am happy to say that we will be in a position to prove or disprove these statements using science on each and every project we undertake. With our approach, if carbon is sequestered, the landowner will benefit financially from that project area.

If you choose to engage with Verity NZ, we will explore all available options that you have on your property, each property is unique and has to be approached with this in mind, couple this with your personal goals and aspirations and we can start to put together the right project for you. We respect the fact that no outsider knows your property like you do, we need your expertise on your property to be able to design a successful project.

There is a lot of noise around NZ lately about Biodiversity Credits, at this stage there isn't much information available as to what this might look like in the regulated market. Biodiversity credits are just one of many co-benefits that we

The following diagram provides an approximate indication of the steps and time involved with developing a carbon project.



can staple onto our carbon credits as a genuine value add proposition.

Verity NZ will be looking at what other co-benefits your project area attracts. Most projects will have multiple co-benefits which we will “staple” to the carbon credits.

Having the advantage of being a “one stop shop, seed to credit” business we have the buyers who are willing to pay a premium for high integrity credits. Chain of custody is crucial to being able to validate our claims regarding the integrity of our projects. Having the scale to effectively match up our buyers with projects at the beginning of a project is a real feature of what the Verity Nature Group and specifically Verity NZ brings to New Zealand landowners.

Verity NZ remains involved for the life of the project, the long-term success of our carbon projects are reliant on this, there are significant ongoing compliance costs with running successful, high integrity projects. Working with Verity NZ means that landowners know we are committed for the entire project life, we aren't going to walk away and leave you with a project that may not stack up financially without being part of a multi-property project. It isn't the ongoing maintenance of the area

or the actual measuring and reporting which makes small projects unviable, those costs are relative to the project scale. The big costs are associated with bringing in auditors and covering all the associated costs involved with them completing their work.

This is a crucial and compulsory step within the VCM framework, you can not have high integrity VCM credits without this step being completed. If this wasn't in place, “cowboys”, could literally make up their own standards and generate credits that might not be able to be substantiated. That approach has the potential to give NZ a bad reputation on the international stage possibly resulting in credits generated here being heavily discounted. There are people who think that carbon farming is just a way to make a quick buck, it is not, it is a component in the process of ensuring future generations have a chance of a future.

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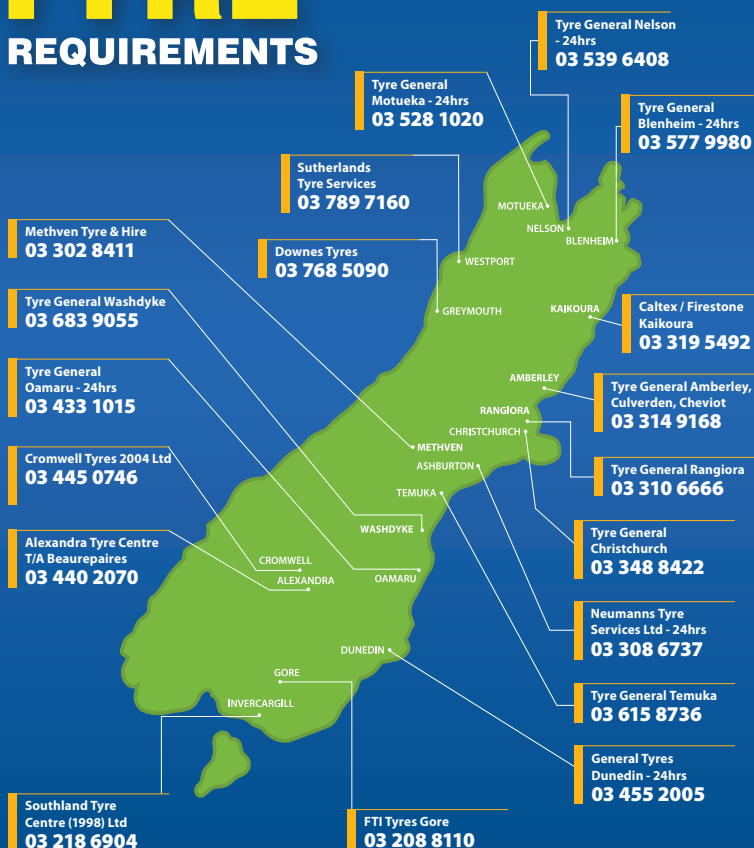
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Support for works staff

ANISHA SATYA, JULIE MOFFAT

Community and industry leaders are quick to dive in and offer help to the 600 Smithfield meatworks staff losing their jobs after a closure announcement from the Alliance group.

Rangitata MP James Meager said an informal taskforce has come together to get workers back on their feet.

"There will be things like a job fair, jobs boards, CV writing workshops and professional support which people might need."

Social services like Multicultural Aoraki, Arowhenua Whānau Services and The Y will do their part to help, he said, acknowledging the closure will displace a large number of migrant families.

He said it was a very sad day for Canterbury.

"There are several people at Smithfield who live in Mid Canterbury, so it's going to have a big impact on them."

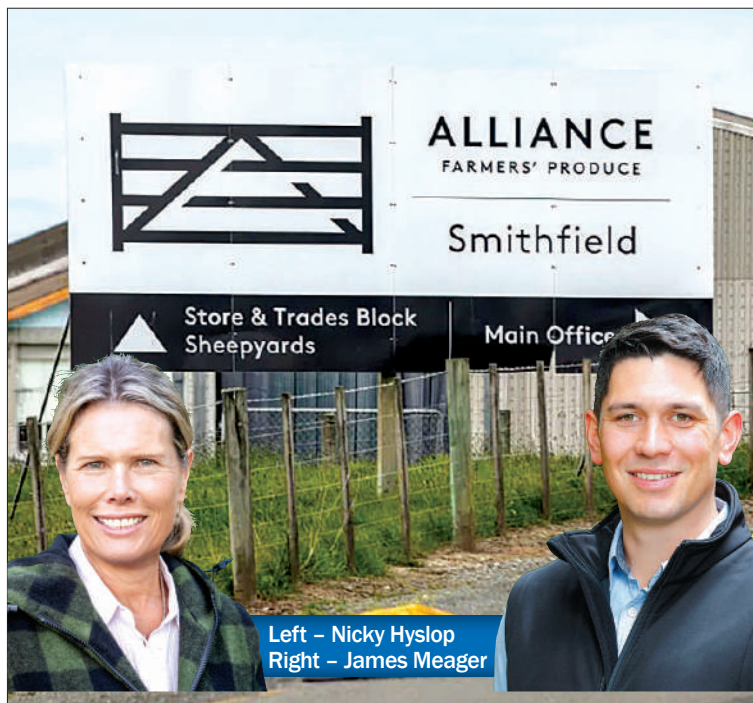
"My dad worked there for 16 years, I worked there for three summers, so I know many people."

It reminded him of the Ashburton Fairton Meatworks closure in 2017.

"We know in this area what it's like to [lose] a major employer."

He's aware Australian abattoirs are beckoning workers to move across the ditch, but encouraged people to stay local and explore the numerous opportunities for work in Mid and South Canterbury.

NZ Meat Workers and Related Trades Union senior organiser, Bill



Left – Nicky Hyslop
Right – James Meager

Watt, confirmed Australia had already begun sending offers of work.

"There's an awful lot of interest from outside the district."

"We've had approaches from a number of Australian companies that are looking for New Zealand meatworkers. There will be some jobs available in other sheds but certainly not to the 600 mark."

He said the consultation period was "a bit farcical", and workers knew Smithfield's closure was inevitable.

Staff will receive redundancy and Alliance has made an EAP (Employ-

ee Assistance Programme) available to them.

Watt said local not-for-profit agencies have offered the redundant workers support and he's hopeful Alliance will supply funding for the workers to do courses to help them find work.

Alliance have promised in a press release to help employees relocate to plants around the country.

Chief executive Willie Wiese said it was a hard choice to make.

"Unfortunately, we must face the reality of declining sheep processing numbers as a result of land-use

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Office of James Meager: 03 683-2009

Timaru District Council: 03 687-7200

Ashburton District Council: 03 307-7700

Timaru job fair: November 5 at Caroline Bay Hall.

Timaru CV Workshops: October 22 at 14 Strathallan Street.

change.

"We cannot maintain excess processing capacity when livestock numbers don't support it."

"While we know the outcome is not what anyone wanted, we are committed to working through the closure process as respectfully as possible."

He said the remaining six plants had the capacity to continue processing all the sheep, deer and cattle Alliance was committed to.

Federated Farmers meat and wool chairperson Toby Williams said the employees were front of mind for him.

"They're going to go into Christmas with no jobs, they've got mortgages to pay, some of them are multi-generational workers."

He said he expects many of the co-operative's suppliers, who own shares in the group, will start sending livestock to competitor plants.

"[Alliance] may well lose them to competitors."

"When you own part of the company, and you're no longer supply-

ing it, you're no longer supporting your own investment."

Williams expects it was a long time coming, with sheep numbers hitting a low of 23 million this year.

"We need to be realistic about the fact that we've got an overcapacity [within meatworks]."

Farmer and Beef + Lamb agribusiness director Nicky Hyslop echoed that sentiment.

"Sheep numbers have been trending downwards for a number of years."

"Our farmers are hurting, and it just feels like another knock to our sector, but we do understand overcapacity is hurting our meat processors."

She said it will be a difficult transition period for Timaru as a rural town that relies on its processing and farming communities, but hopes it will better position the sector in the long term.

She also said it was evidence of farmers looking hard at their businesses and finding ways to improve resilience.

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Kristine Santos-Asuncion

Where we ask a farmer five quick questions about farming, and what agriculture means to them. Today we talk to Hororata farmer and Filipino Dairy Workers of New Zealand chairperson Kristine Santos-Asuncion.

1 What did your journey into farming look like?

I married a dairy farmer, and that's how my farming journey began.

I was quite literally pulled into dairy farming by my husband.

We met when I was in Year 13, and since then, we've been inseparable.

He was 21 and just starting his dairy career in Southland.

As he pursued his progression, he moved regions, but whenever he had days off, he would spend them in Dunedin watching me study at the Otago University library.

He waited patiently for me to graduate, and as soon as I did, we got married. The very next day, I found myself pushing cows for milking!

The rest is history.

2 Tell us a little bit about your farming operation.

My husband and I are contract milking 1250 cows in Hororata.



Kristine Santos-Asuncion says the best business decision you can make is choosing your life partner. PHOTO SUPPLIED

We work in partnership with Theland Purata Group, and it's been a fulfilling and exciting journey.

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

Where do I even start? It seems like our journey began with challenges!

We got married in February, 2014, and two weeks later, I found out I was pregnant.

By June that year we had moved

to the West Coast as first-time contract milkers, managing 400 cows on our own while I was still pregnant.

The following year, we took a step into lower-order sharemilking, and that's when the milk price plummeted to one of its lowest points.

As if that wasn't enough, we were expecting again and our first child kept being hospitalised.

We've faced almost every kind of challenge: personal, financial,

staffing, and business contract issues. But through it all, my desire to reach the other side was greater.

I kept reminding myself, "It has to get better, this isn't what I signed up for."

We constantly strive to improve: how can we be better farmers, operators, and leaders for our team?

How can we become better partners for each other and, most importantly, better parents for our children?

That mindset has transformed our journey.

We're still on the path, but each challenge has brought valuable lessons, and we're better for it.

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

One of the biggest highlights was becoming debt-free - only to take on more debt as we bought our first home! Owning our home felt like the fulfillment of a dream, proof that with hard work and faith, dreams do come true.

We started this journey with

nothing but our skills, talent and determination. Along the way, we've faced losses but have also gained so much.

And through it all, season after season, we are proud to say that we're still married! Farming will test your character and your marriage, but we've weathered it together.

5 What advice would you give the next generation of farmers?

One piece of advice I learned in business school is this: the best business decision you'll ever make is choosing your life partner - so choose wisely!

We've farmed all over the country, and no matter how many cows you milk, whether it's 200 or 2000, you'll need good people around you to succeed.

Learn people skills. You may be great at animal health, pasture management, or have strong financial skills, but if you want to excel in this industry, mastering people management is essential.

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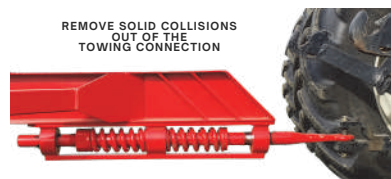
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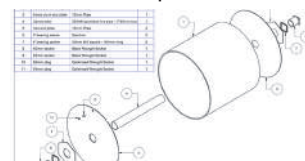


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That's according to Ash Pace, UPL NZ Ltd. Regional Manager, Central South Island who says Metarex Inov is a whole different ball game compared with coated bait. "With Metarex Inov, the potent, fast-acting active (Metaldehyde) isn't just a 'shop front', it doesn't skimp or cut corners.

"Coated baits only have the active on the outside. The gap between the two kinds of bait is huge: 40 grams of active per kg for Metarex Inov, compared with just 18 grams for coated granules."

He says that also means savings for growers and farmers by enabling effective cover in fewer passes, using less fuel, and saving on labour. "With Metarex Inov the application rate is 3-5 kg/ha. With coated bait, it's 10-15 kg/ha. That's a lot of extra refills. If you can get things done more effectively and in less time on your property, that's one more job you can tick off."

Ash says Metarex Inov has a consistent shape, and excellent ballistic properties, so spread is consistent and measurable. "Coated bait is irregular in shape. And so, potentially, is the spread."

In terms of the threat of slugs, Ash likens the unseen risk to the Titanic. "You may see a bit of slug damage, or even a single slug, but that's just the tip of your slug iceberg. When you're sleeping, that's when slugs shift into high gear."

Slugs are a major pest in brassicas, maize, cereals, forage crops and pasture in New Zealand with the potential to cost the economy millions of dollars. "No-one can afford to have a spring or autumn sowing fail. Slugs' ability to cause serious crop damage and failure – is just a fraction behind grass grub.

"Slugs are active year-round though population pressure and damage typically peaks in autumn and spring. The persistence of their life cycle makes them a constant threat, even if conditions are a bit drier – they'll be back."

There's also modern cultivation to consider. Ash says this has moved the goal posts in favour of slugs. "Less invasive soil tilling practices have had the unintended consequence of cutting slugs a break. While cultivation was never a silver bullet for control, strip tillage and direct drilling create environments that encourage slugs to flourish. There's more 'trash' and more places for slugs to hide

"Metarex Inov gives you critical protection, especially when you've got seedlings coming out of the ground, and you're looking to get them off to the best start."

Ash says Metarex Inov is super-attractive to slugs, and its palatability is a potent weapon. "Research has shown that slugs will actively choose to feed on Metarex Inov over seedlings."

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Slugs actively prefer feeding on Metarex Inov over seedlings

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Happy staff are a good investment

KATHRYN WRIGHT

There is one new compliance issue that I would like to see implemented – and if not officially, then morally at least.

Basic mental health knowledge, including how to identify and help another human who is suffering mentally. This should be in your health and safety plan.

One of the most significant factors that has emerged within my research findings has been that it appears that farm owners/managers need more training and knowledge around mental health issues. Multiple studies across various countries also confirm my findings.

By understanding the experiences of your staff and being willing and able to talk with them about what is occurring for them will have multiple benefits. In any industry, staff turnover is a costly problem.

Retaining staff who are happy and well cared for will cost you less in the long run. Your staff will be more productive if they are contented and they will likely be more invested in their jobs and your farm. Think about it: a staff member who starts out working for you who feels safe enough to let their guard down and be real about what might be going on for them will be more likely to seek help, stay and become a better employee. This is a win-win situation.

So, who is most at risk?

Everyone is at risk of developing poor mental health, particularly young men under 30. Young people



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- Phone 111 if the danger is immediate
- Farmstrong: <https://farmstrong.co.nz/>
- Will to Live: <https://www.willtolivenz.com/>
- 1317 Need to Talk: Phone/text 1317 24 hours or website: <https://1737.org.nz/>
- Lifeline Aotearoa: 24 hours. <https://www.lifeline.org.nz/>

ple will likely be missing their family and will have underdeveloped life skills. Watch them carefully and if possible, have them over for a meal with your family occasionally.

Risk factors for poor mental health include:

- If they have moved straight out of home to live and work on your farm, away from support networks
- Pre-existing mental health issues
- Experiencing interpersonal conflict or relationship breakdown
- Experiencing chronic ongoing physical pain
- Using drugs or alcohol to self-medicate

What can you say?

Saying the wrong thing is almost worse than saying nothing.

The worst way to address such issues is with false positivity – “you have so much going for you. Look at your Hilux and all your dogs” or “look on the bright side – you’re employed” and so on.

Often when someone talks about an issue they are having, those listening will try to jump in and solve the problem. This can sound really invalidating – they have likely already thought through every possibility before coming to you.

Saying something like “that sounds like a complete shit-show – what can I do to help you?” is a

hundred times better. And a bit of a relief to know that you don’t have to fix anything.

Ask open-ended questions and try not to pass judgement or blame them for their problems.

Avoiding eye contact can make them more comfortable – leaning over a fence or talking in a vehicle and having a bit of a yarn is far preferable. Let them speak – don’t be afraid of silence. Think of it like giving them the space to say what is on their mind. Really listen to what they say.

On the flip side, when things are going well, tell them. Say “well done” or “great job” – these two words could mean everything to

your staff, especially young ones.

Say more if you can – they want to please you and want to do a good job, so if they are doing well, let them know. It’s so easy to do and so meaningful for them.

Warning signs include:

Changes/withdrawing from social contact and enjoyed activities

Increased drinking or drug consumption. Any talk about “ending it all” or not wanting to be here.

Don’t be afraid to ask if they are thinking of taking their own life – this will not increase the risk. More risky behaviour such as driving fast, reckless spending, promiscuity, picking fights etc.

Sleeping more or less, including regularly sleeping in and being late for work. Changes in eating habits.

Help at hand

If you are worried about a someone and have successfully spoken to them, there is help out there – it’s just hard sometimes to know where to look.

The first port of call is often a GP, who can prescribe medication if necessary and refer them on to counselling or a psychologist, depending on the area and what is available.

There are funding streams available through Brief Intervention, Rural Support Trust, Gumboot Friday for 25s and under, ACC and many more.

Don’t be afraid to have the conversation.

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



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Worms, worms and more worms

CAROLYN JONES

Up to 70% of equine properties in New Zealand now have some degree of drench resistance.

This growth in resistance, which has been seen worldwide, has led to changes in advice around equine parasite management practices in recent years.

Most equine parasites are transmitted by horses ingesting the larvae from infected faeces while grazing.

If present in large numbers, these parasites have the potential to severely affect equine health and can result in poor body condition, colic, and general poor health.

A heavy worm burden can also damage the horse's intestines and some other internal organs.

To combat these parasites, horse owners were previously advised to regularly drench their horses, however, VetSouth's equine team now recommends

first testing for worms and then developing risk-based deworming programmes based on the results and grazing management on the property.

Anna Smillie, equine vet at VetSouth, explains why blanket drenching horses is no longer advised.

"Drench resistance develops because there will always be some random genetic mutations in parasites, meaning that some of them will naturally be resistant to certain drenches.

"That does not become a problem until we inadvertently apply selection pressure by deworming the animal.

"When we drench the horse, we kill all the susceptible worms, but the resistant worms survive, and they are the ones that go on to reproduce.

"So, the more we drench, the more we select for resistance."

Anna adds that this issue is made worse when we underdose

by giving the worms too small an amount of the drug. They are more likely to survive the underdose, develop resistance, and then go on to reproduce.

"Something to remember is that all drugs within a drench family have the same overall mechanism. So, if you have a parasite that becomes resistant to one specific drug, it can also have the genes to be resistant to other drugs in that family."

"The scary thing about this is that we do not have any new drench families in development.

"We have to think about what we will do when the drenches stop working."

As such, regular drenching based on calendar intervals, or blanket rotational drenching, is no longer recommended by the VetSouth equine team.

Alternatively, using faecal egg count testing to first check for the presence of adult worms in horse faeces helps to establish which

horses are contributing the most to the parasite contamination of the pasture.

"It is normal for all horses to have some worms all of the time.

"However, 20% of the horses grazing a pasture will produce 80% of the worm eggs that are contaminating that pasture, so it is important to follow a risk-based deworming programme that only treats the high-shedding adult horses."

In a risk-based deworming programme, the no-shedding or low-shedding adult horses may not need drenching, because they are not contributing to pasture contamination, and are also maintaining populations of susceptible worms.

"We want to keep these populations of susceptible worms because it will minimise the increase of drench resistance in overall worm populations," notes Anna.

VetSouth advises working together with your equine vet to

create an appropriate risk-based deworming programme that is suitable for your property and takes into account the number of horses you have grazing, what age they are, and what paddock management strategies you follow.

Initially, this may seem like an increase in cost for the horse owner, with the extra cost of getting the faecal egg count testing done.

However, the overall cost of parasite management may go down, as the horse owner will no longer be drenching all of their horses all of the time.

Instead, they will just be drenching the horses that need drenching, and only at the exact times they need to be drenched.

Changes in paddock management and grazing strategies may also help to keep pasture contamination levels down, further reducing the need to drench all horses all the time.

Carolyn Jones is with VetSouth

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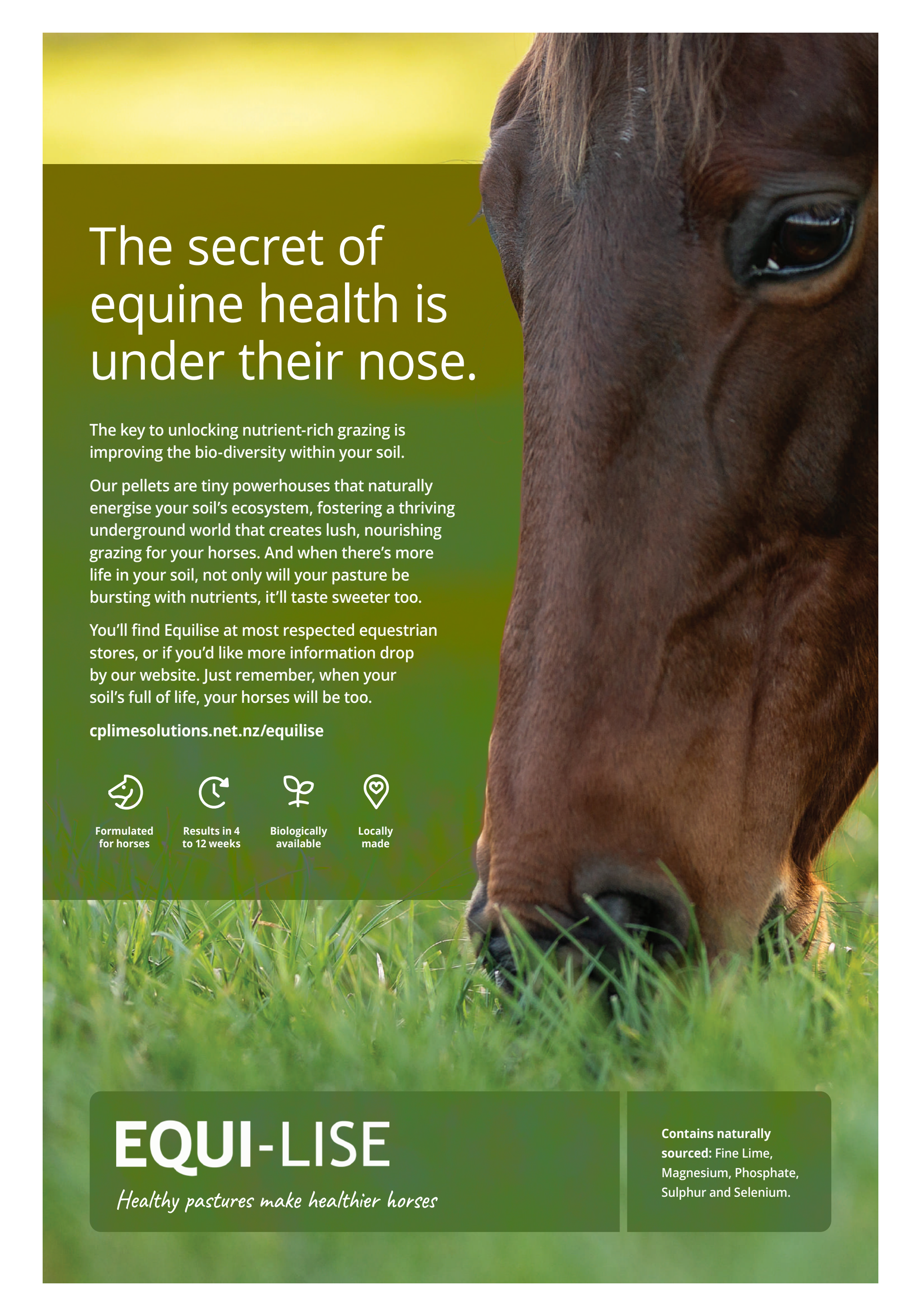
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Paddock chat at the trial site on Tinwald Lagmhor Westerfield Road (from left) Shane Maley from Plant & Food Research, Ben Johnson, Sophie Blair, Brendon Malcolm from Plant & Food Research and Shannon Johnson. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Catchment group has a lot going on

SOPHIE BLAIR

The Lagmhor Westerfield Catchment Group has a few projects happening at the moment and we are looking forward to seeing some community involvement, results and learnings for more environmental gains.

We have continued to use the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective's (MCCC) nitrate sensor to monitor both ground and surface water.

This testing has been occurring for one full year now and we are interested to see what changes we experience as time goes on.

Being able to have instantaneous nitrate results has been great for the community, not only for allowing us to understand where our levels are for environmental reasons, but also to provide peace of mind when checking household drinking water.

Biodiversity has been a key topic that members have wanted to improve on-farm, and we have seen considerable amounts of planting on farms within our catchment.

In the last year there have been well over 1000 farmer-funded native species planted in our catchment, which is something the community should be extremely proud of.

Alongside this, we have looked into the use of catch crops following winter grazing.

We have been lucky enough to have a MCCC, Hekaeo/Hinds Water Enhancement Trust (HHWET) and MHV Water Ltd scheme funded Plant and Food Research catch crop demonstration plot sown in the catchment.

This is looking at the ability of oats, and different mixes of oats and Italian ryegrass, to utilise available nitrogen in the soil leftover following winter grazing of stock on winter crop.

Alongside this, MCCC has funded a catchment group farmer-led

investigation of alternate crop's abilities to mop up this excess nitrogen.

This is being completed at paddock scale, and is on land that had a range of stock classes on it over winter – lambs, youngstock and dairy cattle.

We look forward to seeing the results of both the demonstration plots and the paddock scale investigation, and are hosting a field day to discuss this, understand further about catch cropping on the Plains with the help of Plant & Food Research, and talk about other great things our catchment group are doing.

This will be on November 8 from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Check out the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective Facebook page for more details.

In an economically challenging year, the Lagmhor Westerfield community have continued to invest in native plantings, education and monitoring, to improve environmental gains on farm.

We thank MCCC and HHWET, among others, for their continued support in helping us on our journey of learning and improvement.

Sophie Blair is the Lagmhor Westerfield Catchment Group facilitator



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Award-winners: It's about people

ANNIE STUDHOLME

Mid Canterbury dairy farmers John and Michelle O'Connell believe their three-pronged approach to sustainability – focusing on environmental, social and financial stewardship – underpins their success.

Their efforts earned them the Synlait For a Healthier World Award, recognising their commitment to sustainable land management and enhancing both people's and the planet's health.

The O'Connells sharemilk 390 hectares at Eiffelton, milking 1200 A2 cows for the NZ Rural Property Trust (NZRPT), while managing 850 KiwiCross cows on their 259-hectare property at Lowcliffe.

The Eiffelton farm supplies Synlait, while their home farm supplies Fonterra.

Their journey began decades ago, rooted in a dream of owning property. Fresh out of university, John, with a Bachelor of Commerce in Agriculture, and Michelle, a teacher, started with little more than hope.

"It wasn't trendy back then," John said. "We had no debt – just some savings from Michelle's wedding dress fund and my \$800."

Despite challenges, they found support in the industry. "It's been about the people," John said.

"There were times we could have left, but relationships kept us going."

John's first job was in Geraldine, followed by a management



John O'Connell (right) and NZ Property Trust Eiffelton farm manager Ben Haley undertaking monthly water testing at the Eiffelton Hall.
PHOTO ANNIE STUDHOLME

position at a new herringbone operation.

They soon transitioned to lower-order sharemilking while Michelle continued teaching. They raised calves, growing from 15 to 50 in a season, slowly building their herd.

In 2004, they entered an equity

partnership, milking 380 cows near Temuka.

Over seven years, they expanded to 800 cows while welcoming their children: Charlotte (2005), Lachie (2008) and Harry (2011).

Despite challenges, they sought new opportunities and secured a 50/50 sharemilking position with

the New Zealand Rural Property Trust (NZRPT).

This arrangement proved profitable, allowing them to focus on sharemilking after hiring a contract milker.

They paid off their borrowed funds for cows within three years and exited the equity partnership in 2011 to purchase a 116-hectare farm near Mayfield. In 2014, they moved to a new operation in Eiffelton with NZRPT, eventually selling the Mayfield farm for a larger 170-hectare dairy farm at Carew.

The O'Connells believe in giving back to the industry.

They recognised potential in Matt and Ali Burrough and provided capital and support to help them succeed.

Despite a robust business, they hadn't yet lived in their own house.

They later bought the Lowcliffe property for stability for their family and future.

Their roles as farm owners and sharemilkers provide a unique perspective on sustainable practices, centered around environmental care, community and financial viability.

Since joining Synlait's Lead With Pride programme early on, they continually adapt their systems. John emphasises the equal importance of sustainability pillars.

"If we can't replicate our business year-on-year, it strains our social and environmental responsibilities. I love farming, but it's essential to be profitable."

Creating a positive work environment is also a priority. "The staff are critical to our business. We can't do it without them," Michelle said.

They maintain an open-door policy, fostering mutual reliance.

The O'Connells are aware of their broader impact on the community, from local schools to sports clubs. "We've had nine children attend Longbeach School from our Eiffelton farm," Michelle said.

Recognising community expectations for responsible farming, they have undertaken initiatives to mitigate environmental impacts, including risk assessments and extensive riparian plantings.

Ongoing fertiliser trials aim to reduce nitrogen use while maintaining productivity.

John is active in the Hekeao Hinds Lowlands Catchment Group, formed in 2022 with over 30 members, focusing on improving water quality and promoting sustainable practices.

"We are stronger together."

"While individual actions are essential, community-wide efforts are crucial for long-term change."

Addressing water quality issues is complex and may take time.

"It may take a generation, but we're committed to the bigger picture, beyond just our cowshed," John said.

Through collaboration and shared learning, the O'Connells strive for a sustainable future for their family and the land.



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Urged to boycott Fish & Game

CLAIRE INKSON

Federated Farmers are calling for Southland farmers to boycott Fish & Game as tensions escalate following Fish & Game's involvement in a court decision that will see 3000 farmers have to apply for a resource consent to farm lawfully.

Southland Fish & Game manager Zane Moss was approached for an interview, but instead forwarded an email response, stating: "We're lucky that we have good relationships with many of the farmers that provide access across their properties to Southland rivers, who we work with to provide styles, gates, tapes and signage depending on what they request."

The boycott relates to the Water and Land Plan, a set of rules creating guidelines on farming practices to protect Southlands water quality.

Fish & Game supported stricter regulations, believing the existing rules were insufficient to address pollution from agriculture.

Their advocacy contributed to a recent Court of Appeal decision that would require over 3000 farmers to apply for resource consents to continue their activities legally, due to concerns about degraded waterways.

This ruling has intensified tensions between Fish & Game and the farming community, with farmers feeling that Fish & Game's actions have imposed unnecessary red tape and restrictions on their operations.

Herrick said the ruling comes on top of a raft of challenges from Fish & Game, including gravel management and management of flooding



Federated Farmers Southland president Jason Herrick says good will between Fish & Game and farmers has been eroded. PHOTO SUPPLIED

in the Waituna Lagoon area.

"There has been a constant push-back from Fish & Game Southland in regards to rivers, the Waituna Lagoon or the Water and Land Plan without any engagement or conversation with farmers," Federated Farmers Southland president Jason Herrick said.

"This is the straw that broke the camel's back, we have had enough."

Moss denies Federated Farmers have attempted discussions on the issues.

"We've heard claims that Federated Farmers have repeatedly requested to meet in person to discuss issues and 'got stonewalled' each time.

"This is simply not true.

"We have not been contacted to discuss any of the issues that they have raised, but we are always happy to work to find constructive solutions," Moss said.

Federated Farmers said that good will between farmers and Southland Fish & Game has been eroded,

and Feds are encouraging farmers to remove fishing access by taking down access signs.

"Farmers can replace those signs with an orange ribbon to show their frustration with Fish & Game, and anyone else who wants to show their support could do that by attaching an orange ribbon to their roadside gate as well."

Herrick said Southland Fish & Game are using funds from fishing licences against farmers by making land use difficult.

"We are encouraging people to abide by the law, and get fishing licences, but to allocate it to a different region.

"You'll still be able to fish anywhere."

Herrick emphasises that the boycott is in Southland only, but they don't intend to back down in a hurry in the region.

"We are going to keep the pressure on, if we have to take this right through to duck-shooting season, we will."

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Farmer fights to better the land



Anisha Satya
REPORTER

Paul Ensor is a fulltime farmer. He's a fourth generation farmer raising merino sheep and angus cattle out at Glenaan Station.

But when he's not in the paddocks, he's clearing weeds, planting native trees and caring for the Rakaia River.

"Everyone's busy, but if you see something's important, you've just got to make time."

Ensor is chairperson of the Whitcombe Landcare Group, a team of farmers who co-ordinate projects and raise funding for conservation work on their land.

The 11 members manage a combined 42,000 hectares of land, spanning from Cleardale Station to Lake Heron Station, that borders the Rakaia river.

"Our primary goal is to enhance our natural environment," Ensor said.

The group helps to centralise the different concerns and plans of farmers, and helps secure co-ordinated funding for large-scale operations.

Environment Canterbury (ECan), the department of conservation (DOC), Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), Fish & Game



Above left – Paul Ensor is chairperson of the Whitcombe Landcare group, who carry out and manage conservation work.

Above inset – The Whitcombe Landcare Group carrying out wilding weeds pest control.

PHOTOS SUPPLIED

and more are undertaking projects on Whitcombe group land.

"There's research going on for pied oystercatchers, there's predator monitoring, bird counts, weed control, salmon spawn counts ..."

It's a lot to juggle, so joining the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective (MCCC) earlier this year was a no-brainer.

The collective communicates with the numerous catchment groups in the area to streamline project management.

Ensor has been with the group

for 20 years and said he's seen a lot of change – particularly with funding and land use.

"There's so many different funding pools around, it's quite a complicated matrix," he said.

He's grown more concerned about people who come out to the river for recreation.

Ensor said hikers and hunters, as a result of Te Araroa trail, have become more prevalent along the river in the past five years.

"We're quite concerned about vehicles and riverbeds where

we've got rare birds, like the black-fronted tern and wrybills, nesting in the river.

"Vehicles [end up] driving over top of the nests, because you can't see them."

He said a lack of awareness is the issue, but wants to avoid "polluting" the area with signage. The group is in talks with different organisations to see what sorts of solutions could be reached.

"We're keen to share the environment, we just need to make sure we're doing it in a way that

isn't detrimental."

All in all, Ensor said the Whitcombe landcare group aims to nurture their land for the future – as any farmer would.

"Farmers always say they want their land left in a better state than when they took it over."

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Tamar Farm owners, Richard and Chrissie Wright, are staunch believers in giving back to the community and this year are celebrating 25 years at Tamar Farm.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

Mini Glastonbury

CLAIRE INKSON

When Mt Somers farmers Richard and Chrissie Wright's daughter ventured to the iconic Glastonbury music festival, held on a 1500-acre farm in Somerset, England, they were inspired.

"We were going to have a party anyhow because we have been here 25 years, and we had been talking about it since Covid.

"The world needs a party after Covid and we wanted to do something to shout all the suppliers and everyone that have looked after us since we've been in business, and it just grew from there.

"Now we are having a mini Glastonbury," Richard said.

The Wrights own Tamar Farm, a 2000-hectare beef, cropping and lamb finishing operation with three dairy units and dairy support.

"There is a big team of people on the farm and we are passionate about the environment, the Tamar Beef that we produce, and the sharemilking we create."

This event, named Tamar Party in the Paddock, will be held on November 30.

The event will raise money for a proposed innovation hub at Mount Hutt College.

The hub aims to give students access to practical trade and agricultural skills without having to travel to Christchurch or Timaru.

"We thought we were going to have a party anyway, so let's kick-start that and raise some money.

"And then the bands got bigger, and it just sort of got out of hand."

And the musical talent is an impressive line-up.

Nelson-based Bryce Wastney, who is currently working with UK producers like Ronan Keating to produce a studio album, tops the list, as does popular country rock artist Brad Staley with his trio.

The highlight for the event, though, will be the newly-formed Kiwi super-group, The

Treble Makers.

The group is a blend of some of New Zealand's most successful and popular bands, with Jason Kerrison from Op Shop, Hamish Gee from The Feelers, Andy Lynch from Zed and Matthew Short from Sola Rosa.

The family event runs from noon until midnight and includes free camping on the farm, a bonfire, food trucks, and a bouncy castle for children.

Alcohol is BYO.

Adult entry is \$50, children 5-15 are \$15, and infants are free.

"It's pretty simple: just come and sit around a fire and listen to some music," Richard said.

"And we expect everyone to be responsible and pick their rubbish up."

The former Ballance Farm Environment Award regional finalists are familiar with opening the farm gates and supporting the community.

Last year, the Wrights created a maize maze on the farm to raise money for St John.

The maze opened for horror nights, with farm staff testing their acting prowess and delivering the fright factor.

At its busiest, the maze saw 600 people enter in two hours.

"At the end of the day, it's something different from farming, which is healthy," Richard said.

He said the success of the maze gave the team at Tamar farm a "huge buzz".

"If you want to live in a good community, you have to contribute towards it; you can't just rely on other people to do it."

The Wrights will reopen the maze again this January.

Until then, the family will focus on The Party in a Paddock, which Richard hopes will become an annual event not to be missed on the South Island calendar.

"Glastonbury started with 1500 people in 1970, and they have 210,000 people that go now, so there's hope for us yet."

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The art of worm farming

CLAIRE INKSON

Artist Sharon Earl is famous in the Hurunui District for her sculptures, but lately it's her unique worm farm that is stealing the spotlight.

Three years ago, the keen gardener developed an obsession with earthworms, which has seen a backyard hobby grow into a micro-enterprise.

The Worm Ranch is an unexpected surprise at the back of Earl's house in the North Canterbury town of Amberley.

"I love growing vegetables; that's a big part of my day.

"I started watching YouTube videos about soil science and how to do things organically.

"Then I decided to start a worm farm."

Worm castings (effectively worm poo) are great for soil health, and Earl uses them on her extensive vegetable garden and lemon grove.

Earl breeds worms in containers in a dedicated space at the back of her house, feeding them scraps from the farmers market and Dotti's Eatery next door and, interestingly, cardboard.

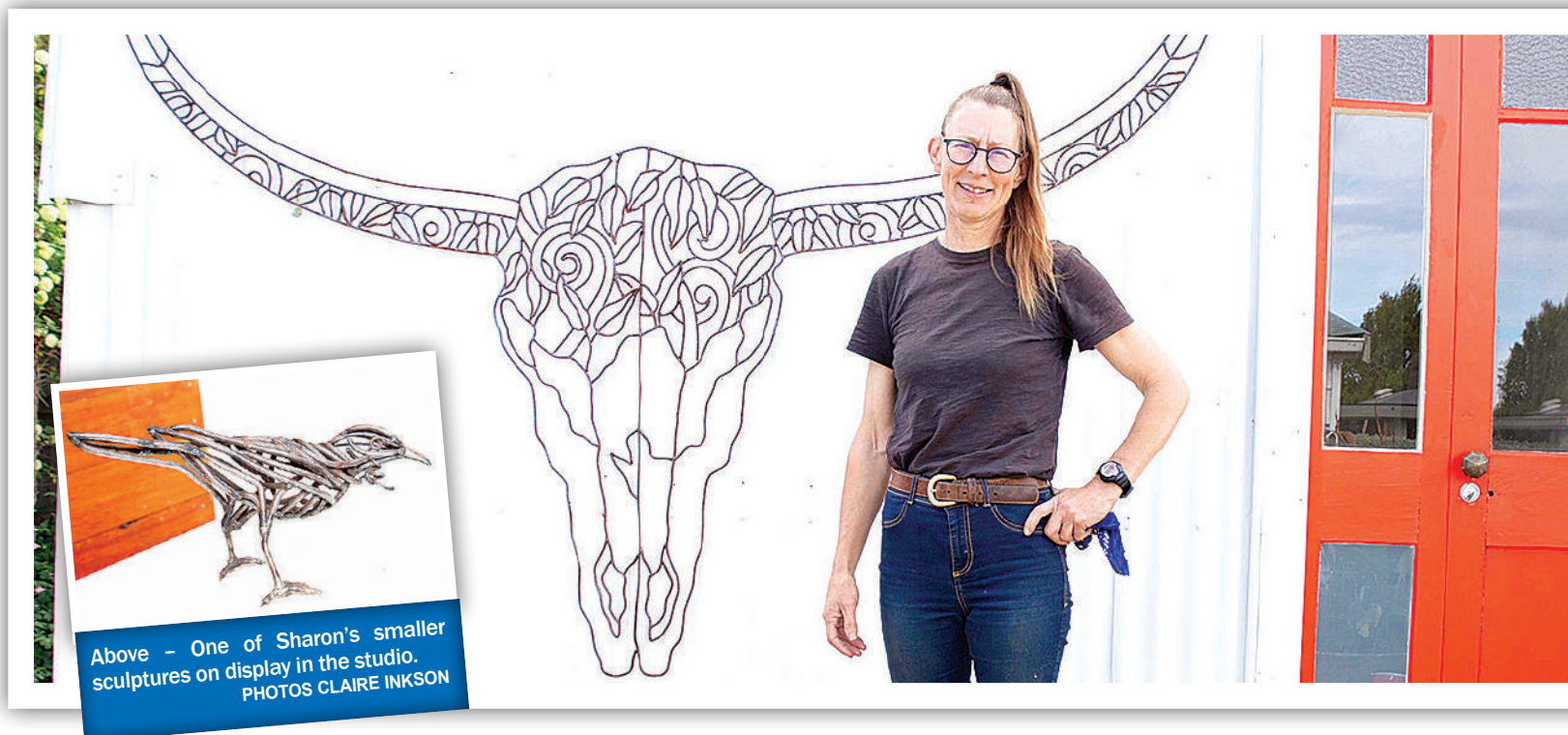
"Cardboard is their favourite."

Since posting her new venture on Instagram, Earl can't keep up with demand.

This is mainly because Earl has painstakingly bred batches of worms that aren't infected with 'pot worms' – a harmless but persistent type of worm that can take over worm bins.

Earl breeds two species of earthworms, red worms and tiger worms.

Earl ships worms all over the country in material sacks she makes



her-self, nestled in a bedding material.

"It's very labour intensive.

"I weigh the amount of worms people want, usually 200g, but I am getting farmers wanting a kilogram.

"I sell out every year; people even give them as Christmas presents."

People come to visit the worm farm, which Earl says she has worked hard to make presentable – a difficult task when dealing with soil and food scraps.

While there, people also like to visit her iconic house and studio,

and she takes group tours by appointment.

The house was built in 1864 when Amberley was first subdivided into a town and originally backed on to large stockyards.

Throughout its life, the house has had many personas, housing numerous residents and, at one point, a tearooms.

For a few years, it featured in the Hurunui Garden Festival.

It is cosy with a rustic, weather-beaten charm and lists slightly on its foundations.

Nothing about the house is sym-

metrical, and no door closes as it should.

"It's a wonderful upstairs, like a ship; it has a lovely lean."

A friend of Earl's, who is a builder, advised her to spend only what she needed to make the house warm and secure since Earl was likely to be the home's last owner.

"The bones of the house are just too far gone; it's a shame."

Despite the house's long-term prognosis, Earl has been working on it for the last six years, making it the perfect quirky backdrop for her art and garden.

She has replaced the back wall and is working towards replacing front.

Meander around the back of the house and you will find a carport and sleep-out with a cheerful orange door that has been converted to a studio exhibition space.

Earl did most of the conversion work herself, with help from her partner Mike.

"I wanted to be able to say that I had done it myself, but sometimes it's ridiculous not to accept help."

The walls are lined with wood repurposed from the house next

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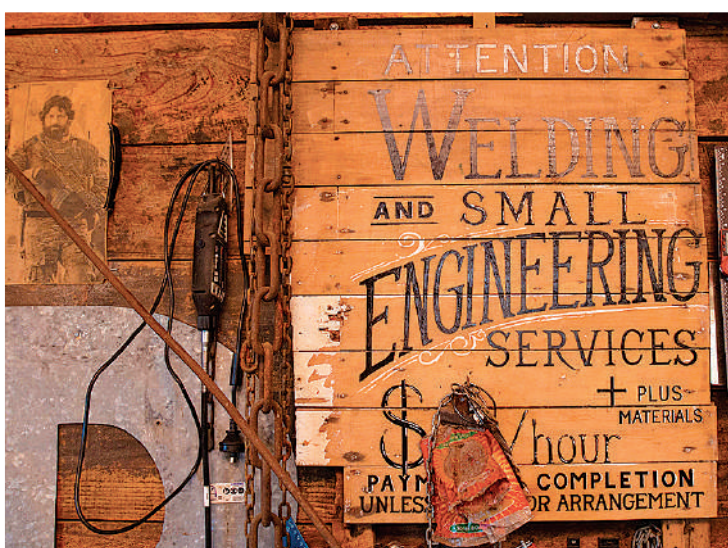
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Above – Sharon Earl at her home on Amberley's main road. The house is the oldest in Amberley and has a long history in the town, it was even once a tearooms.
Left – Sharon outside her studio and exhibition space, which she converted from a derelict sleepout and carport.



Above – A sign made by Sharon adorns the workshop wall, along with eclectic pieces she has collected over the years.
Below – Sharon Earl become obsessed with worm farming after watching YouTube videos.

door, which was being demolished, and a Chesterfield couch from Trade Me provides a place to sit and reflect.

"I want to exhibit here and create a community space when there is enough of my work for an exhibition.

"I'll have sculptures that work together as cohesive pieces and have opening nights for the community for no other reason than just to get together."

Raised on a farm in Southbridge, and with a background as a vet nurse, Earl has always been creative.

She initially favoured drawing and painting, but once children were

added to the mix, she found she had to adapt.

"Pristine white paper and toddlers don't mix.

"So I thought – how am I going to be a parent with three little kids and still make art that doesn't get destroyed? So I thought, 'well, I'll just draw with steel."

Earl purchased a welder from Trade Me and got a few welding lessons from the owner and, randomly, from a tradesman who spotted her efforts while installing her Sky dish.

She then spent a year working at an engineering company next door.

That was 20 years ago, and since then Earl's sculptures reside in gardens right across the country, including a lifesize horse she created in honour of war horses that resides in Auckland.

These days she steers away from commission work.

"There is something cool about making something from your own desire than someone else's.

"I'm hoping to do more art and the lemons and the worm farm will provide another income stream, too," she said.

"My life is a work in progress."



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Canterbury welcomes

TYPE 1 DIABETES FUNDING

CLAIRE INKSON

A decision by Pharmac to fund Continuous Glucose Monitors (CGMs), insulin pumps and consumables for people living with type 1 diabetes has been welcomed by the thousands of people living with the disease across the country.

"Free access to these devices will not only be life-changing for thousands of New Zealanders living with type 1 diabetes, it will also be lifesaving," says CEO of Diabetes New Zealand Heather Verry.

The funding, which rolled out on October 1, will be particularly welcomed in Canterbury, which has one of the highest rates of type 1 diabetes globally.

The funding for the automated insulin delivery technology means people with diabetes do not have to finger prick to test glucose levels or inject insulin manually.

A CGM estimates glucose levels and transmits that information wirelessly to a pump or smartphone.

The program calculates the amount of insulin required using algorithms, and the pump delivers the insulin when glucose levels rise above the targeted range.

Christchurch-based associate professor and paediatric endocrinologist Dr Martin de Bock calls the funding announcement the "hugest moment in the history of type 1 management in this country".

"We are probably one of the few places in the world now with



Funding for automated insulin delivery will be particularly welcomed in Canterbury, which has one of the highest rates of type 1 diabetes in the world. PHOTO SUPPLIED

fully accessible automated insulin delivery fully funded for everyone with type 1."

While type 1 diabetes is incurable and often diagnosed in childhood, the funding is not age-dependent.

"It's gold standard therapy, which has been previously out of reach for so many families because of its expense.

"There are over 20,000 type 1 diabetics in New Zealand that are

very happy with how this week went."

There are a lot of misconceptions about the differences between type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

"Type 1 is an autoimmune condition, where your body fights its own cells that make insulin and is usually diagnosed in childhood.

"Type 2 diabetes is where your body makes plenty of insulin, but it doesn't work anymore."

Type 1 diabetics require insulin

SNEAKER FRIDAY

Diabetes NZ is encouraging New Zealanders to support young people in New Zealand by getting behind Sneaker Friday on International Diabetes Day on November 15.

In addition to wearing sneakers to work or school, people can wear something blue and fundraise to help Kiwis living in these conditions.

Visit <https://www.diabetesactionmonth.org.nz/sneaker-friday> for more information.

of is some kind of latitudinal effect because there are high incidences in Scandinavia in the equivalent hemisphere, meaning there must be some kind of environmental trigger at those latitudes.

De Brock said that while automated insulin delivery is a game changer, living with type 1 diabetes is still challenging for those with the disease and their families.

Pumps are connected to the body via a small tube placed under the skin, and these "sites" need to be changed every few days – a task that can be challenging for parents of small children.

"There are lots of restrictions despite automation and there is a lot of work behind the scenes to keep these young people healthy and happy at the same time."

"It's a hard combination."

TYPES OF DIABETES

There are three types of diabetes:

Type 1 diabetes: An autoimmune condition where the body attacks insulin-producing cells in the pancreas, leading to low or no insulin production.

Type 2 diabetes: The most common form, in which the body becomes resistant to insulin or doesn't produce enough.

It's often linked to lifestyle factors and can be managed with lifestyle changes, medication, or insulin therapy.

Gestational diabetes: This occurs during pregnancy and usually resolves after childbirth, but it increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes later in life.



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JOURNEY WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

With International Diabetes Day on November 14, Rural Guardian's Claire Inkson talks to three Canterbury farming families about the impact type 1 diabetes has had on their lives.

**Dan Earl, age 3
Diagnosed: Age 18 months**

When Dan Earl was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at just 18 months, his family's life changed dramatically.

His mother, Kate, first sensed something was wrong when Dan became excessively thirsty and appeared dazed and pale.

"He was drinking heaps," she recalls.

The night before his visit to the medical centre, Dan went through five wet nappies.

"I knew all the signs because my husband Matt has type 1, but I just hoped I was wrong."

After Dan was tested, they were rushed by ambulance to Christchurch Hospital, where they would remain for the next week.



Kate Earl with son's Jim, 4, (left) and Dan, 3, who was diagnosed as type 1 diabetic at just 18 months old. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

"We were bombarded with information.

"Even though I knew a bit about it with Matt having type 1, there was still so much to learn."

Life had begun to feel normal again as Dan settled into toddler-

hood.

"We were sleeping through the night, and I got a horse.

"We were about to get out of the trench you're in with newborns."

The diabetes diagnosis changed that.

"Since his diagnosis, it's like having a newborn again, and I haven't been able to dig myself out of that trench yet."

Dan has an automated insulin delivery system with a continuous glucose monitor, but Kate still needs to check on him multiple times each night.

"Sometimes you get a good night's sleep, but never more than two in a row."

Meal times are never simple.

Kate must count Dan's carbs and adjust his insulin accordingly, giving him extra insulin 15 minutes before meals—a difficult task with a toddler.

The diagnosis has caused complications for Dan at preschool.

Due to his need for close monitoring, he can only attend until 11:30 AM due to staff limitations. Kate said her greatest fear is Dan being treated differently from other kids.

"He can so easily have a full life with little effort, but because of government funding, he is already missing out on what is normal for kids.

"He cries when I pick him up."

To support Dan and other children with type 1 diabetes, Kate is starting a charity for funding and has created a Give a Little page to help cover Dan's preschool costs.

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<https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/dan-wants-to-go-to-preschool-for-whole-days>



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'It's no fun having

HAVING TO SIT ON A KID
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Rosie Barton, age 11
Diagnosed age: Five

Lisa Barton, mother of 11-year-old Rosie, recalls how her daughter's diabetes symptoms developed gradually.

"Over about six weeks, she developed thirst, tiredness, and weight loss," Lisa said.

After a visit to the doctor and blood tests, it was confirmed Rosie had diabetes.

As a general practice nurse in Christchurch, Lisa found her professional background did little to ease the turmoil following the diagnosis.

"With kids, diabetes is dealt with in the hospital; we never deal with it in general practice," she said.

Lisa said it felt like "going back to having a toddler", with constant vigilance required.

"You think you'll never go anywhere without them because you need to hover over these kids all the time."

With time, the family adjusted to their new reality.

Initially, Rosie was on multiple daily injections for insulin.

"At the beginning, it was really

hard.

"People would say, 'You are so lucky you are a nurse.'"

"But even though most of the time Rosie was amazing, there were times we had to hold her down to inject her."

"It doesn't matter whether you are a nurse, doctor or pharmacist - it's no fun having to sit on a kid to inject them."

Now, Rosie has a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) and pump, which has made life more manageable, but diabetes still interrupts daily activities. "If her blood sugar drops while playing sports, her pump will notify her," Lisa said.

"She has to stop, raise her blood sugar, then go back out to play."

Rosie's older brother, Tanner, has become attuned to her needs.

"He can often sense when Rosie is low before she even realises it."

"If her temperament seems off, he'll ask her, 'What's your number?'"

Lisa emphasised that a diabetes diagnosis impacts the whole family, with mothers often shouldering a heavier emotional load.

"They tell you at diagnosis that mothers end up doing 90% of the work - not because they work less, but just the way it works sometimes."

Left - Lisa Barton with daughter Rosie, 11, who was diagnosed at age five.

PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

Sophie Wright, age 18
Diagnosed age: 11

At just 18, Sophie Wright from Hawarden has been living with type 1 diabetes for seven years.

Her journey began unexpectedly during a routine immunisation visit when her mother, Jac, mentioned Sophie's excessive thirst and weight loss.

A blood test led them to Christchurch Hospital with life-changing news.

"I remember being told I wasn't allowed to cry in front of Sophie," Jac said.

From that moment, the Wrights had to adjust to a new normal where even grocery shopping became a challenge.

"I remember thinking, there's so much she is never going to be able to eat again."

Life became focused on counting carbohydrates to calculate Sophie's insulin needs.

People with diabetes make around 180 extra decisions each day compared to those without.

"You can do the same thing every day, but they can react differently."

"Sugar levels can be affected by heat, food, hormones, cold, exercise, or if they are sick."

The automated insulin delivery system has made life easier, sending alerts about blood sugar



Sophie Wright (left) with mum Jac. Sophie was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was 11.

PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

levels to Jac and Sophie's phones.

However, night time alerts often require Jac to wake Sophie, disrupting her sleep.

"I feel sorry for her because I have to wake her up," Jac said.

That made life complicated when Sophie started at high school at 13, boarding at Acland House, where she was the only student with the condition.

"They were really supportive," Sophie said.

"If something happens at night, and I don't answer my phone, Mum rings the matron, and they will come and wake me up and sit with me."

Although Sophie tries to stay positive, seeing her friends live without constraints is difficult.

A normal teenage social life is complicated for Sophie, as alcohol and late nights affect her

blood sugar levels.

Jac and her husband Ian are always on call. "You don't sleep, and you do worry, but she knows we will always come to her."

Jac tries to relieve Sophie of as much of the burden as possible, reminding her when her pump sites need to be changed and monitoring her levels.

"It makes it so much easier having someone supporting you rather than trying to do it all alone," Sophie said.

Looking to the future, Sophie is worried that when she leaves high school next year to study, she will live by herself and have no one to wake her if she has a high or low during the night, something Jac is acutely aware of.

"It's invisible, people don't see it. They don't know what goes on for her daily," Jac said.

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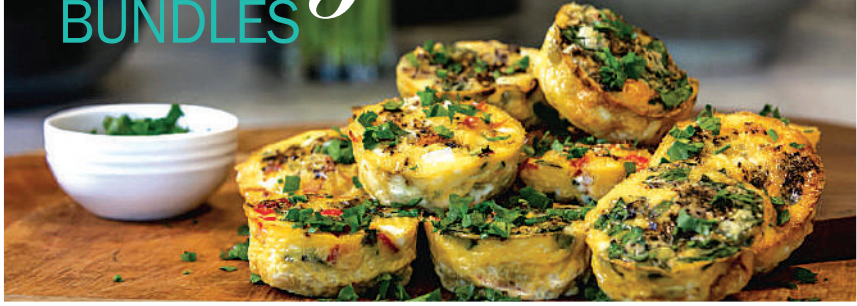


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It's really simple and easy. Using the basic bundles mix below add whatever ingredients you like directly into each muffin tray and pour the egg mix on top. Some of the best combinations are made with vegetables, chicken, meats, tinned fish, cheese, herbs and spices. See the recipes below for a guide to building your own bundles.

TIP: Use 1 x egg for each bundle you are making – you will need 12 eggs to make 12 bundles. To upsize or downsize the bundles use mini, standard or deep muffin trays to suit – you can even make a large bundle in a single dish.

6 eggs
Cooking spray or oil
Salt, to taste
Black ground pepper, to taste
Chopped parsley, to serve
A mix of tasty fillings and ingredients – see below for ideas and combinations:
» Fresh spinach, chopped

» Fresh basil
» Tomatoes, diced
» Onion, diced
» Cheddar cheese, grated
» Red pepper, diced
» Broccoli, cut into small florets
» Button mushrooms, sliced fine
» Parmesan cheese, grated
» Fetta cheese
» Tuna, canned flakes drained
» Ham, chopped
» Chicken, precooked and chopped
» Firm tofu, chopped into small cubes
» Frankfurter – chopped into smaller pieces

- Preheat oven to 170°C.
- In a jug beat the eggs with a fork until smooth. Set aside.
- Lightly grease each muffin cup with a spray of cooking oil.
- Place your combination of ingredients and fillings directly into each of the cups.
- Season each cup with a pinch of salt and pepper to taste.
- Pour the beaten eggs straight from the jug into each muffin cup until the liquid nearly reaches the rims.
- Bake the bundles for 20 minutes or until set.

recipe courtesy of NZ Eggs



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Good news for sore joints Part 1

I am writing this early on a Wednesday morning. Overnight I have had feedback from clients that I am helping with osteoarthritis. One reported real improvement with sore toes and his partner with much less knee pain.

Over the weekend a client who has booked in hip replacement surgery. We put in place a temporary programme to make her more comfortable while she waited for surgery. She reported that most of the hip pain had gone and no longer needed daily painkillers. I have got to the stage that I am genuinely surprised that people cannot get noticeable improvements in joints affected by osteoarthritis.

I am often asked whether nutritional therapy can restore lost or damaged cartilage. My answer is that in most cases what is lost cannot be restored. However, we can certainly help retain current cartilage. The better question is whether we can do anything about pain and loss of mobility.

Most of the discomfort from



osteoarthritis comes from inflammation. Cartilage has no nerves. We cannot feel cartilage loss. What we can feel is the inflammation generated by joint capsule immune cells in response to cartilage loss. We can also feel bones rubbing together where cartilage has completely gone.

My main initial goal is to reduce inflammation in the joint capsule. I have spoken to another client that reported 50% less knee swelling after only a couple of months. This translated to less pain and more mobility.

There is much we can achieve through diet. Adopting an anti-inflammatory diet underpins what we do through supplements. Initially I like to add 1600mg of high-grade chondroitin sulphate, 1600mg of the latest non-shellfish glucosamine and 400mg of 100% water soluble curcumin extract. To this we add sufficient Omega 3 to get 700-1000mg daily of EPA, the anti-inflammatory component in fish oils. We continue this for 6 weeks where we review progress.

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



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John Arts, Founder, Abundant Health



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Bringing Scotland TO CANTERBURY

CLAIRE INKSON

The Hororata Highland Games return to Canterbury on November 9, showcasing traditional Scottish sports, music, and culture while celebrating community resilience in the wake of the 2010 earthquakes.

With thrilling competitions, clan connections, and a vibrant festival atmosphere, this year's event promises something for everyone.

It's time to dust off the clan tartan as the Hororata Highland Games brings all things Scotland to Canterbury once again for the event's 13th year.

The Hororata Community Trust organises the event, which started as a response to the 2010 earthquakes.

"We were looking for a way to rebuild our community, both emotionally and physically.

"We knew an event would be the way to do that," Trust chief executive Cindy Driscoll says.

The event has grown from a small community event to attracting 10,000 visitors from New Zealand and around the world, making it one of the biggest events of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

The games have made the finals of the New Zealand Event Awards three times.

The games honour traditional Scottish strength sports, and athletes will line up to compete in the Oceania Heavyweight Championship. The event also is one of the

few to have a Women's Heavyweight Championship.

Children can enter the Junior Warriors competition, and there will be opportunities for the general public to try their hand at traditional Scottish games such as hammer throwing and caber toss.

Much more than a sporting event, though, the Hororata Highland Games is a cultural festival packed with entertainment throughout the day.

23 Scottish clans will attend the event and set up in an area dubbed

St Andrews Square, where people can connect with clans and explore their Scottish heritage.

Over 130 stalls will be on-site, and there will be bagpipes, dancing, and a tug-of-war competition.

Vintage cars and steam engines will be on display, and there will be a pie-eating competition for lovers of the famous Hororata pastry.

"It's a cliché, but there really is something for everyone."

The focus of this year's event, though, is music.

"The Hororata Highland Games

has always been a celebration of Scottish culture, and this year's emphasis on music aims to showcase the deep-rooted musical traditions of Scotland, with performances from the Southern Celtic Fiddle Orchestra and a sing-a-long with Willie McArthur."

Driscoll encourages people to arrive in time for the Chieftains' welcoming ceremony, which will include a massed band march at 11.30.

Each year, a chieftain is chosen for the event, following the Scottish

tradition of having a formidable leader lead each clan.

"During the highland games, the Chieftain sought out the strongest and swiftest individuals, who would stand by his side in future battles," Driscoll said.

"At the Hororata Highland Games, the Chieftain holds an esteemed and honorary position, embodying the spirit of this tradition."

This year's Chieftain is Richard Lang, a founding member of the Hororata Community Trust and a partner at the law firm Duncan and Cottrill.

Lang has used his skills to build a solid foundation for the Trust.

Lang also served as trust chairperson from 2023-2022.

All proceeds from the event go back into the community.

"If our sports clubs, schools, community groups and volunteers are thriving, our community is thriving."

"We have also had the Hororata Hall handed back to the community, so we are looking at rebuilding that historic building and creating a hub for the community."

Driscoll said the event had bolstered the community's morale, and its success reflects the commitment of volunteers and community spirit.

"We decided these earthquakes wouldn't beat us, and we need to put our community on the map.

"It has made us believe that we can achieve anything."



Craig Manson competes in the Ocean Championships Hammer Throw competition.

PHOTO MURRAY IRWIN

ESSENTIAL INFO

- **What:** The Hororata Highland Games
- **Where:** The Hororata Domain
- **When:** November 9, 9am to 5pm
- **Want tickets?** Tickets are available online; there will be no gate sales. www.hororata.org.nz

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FROM THE LAND

Where There's Wool, There's a Way:

FMG on stepping up their support for the NZ wool industry.

Growing up on a sheep and beef farm in the Rangitikei is something Emma Rowe, FMG's Sustainability Specialist feels privileged about. She intimately understands the vital role our rural towns and communities play, a sentiment equally shared by FMG, who've been supporting the growth and prosperity of our rural communities since 1905.

That's why FMG is proud to be investing in local, by expanding their Ashburton office, while also using this opportunity to fit it with 100% NZ wool carpet tiles.

Insuring over 8000 sheep and beef farmers across Aotearoa/New Zealand and with a lot of their employees sheep farmers themselves, wool is a big topic of conversation over the water trough at FMG.

Finding the right wool flooring has been a challenge

FMG has long aspired to use more wool carpet in their offices but admit that finding wool carpet tiles or commercial flooring products that can withstand high-traffic areas has been a challenge.

Compared to the wide availability of residential wool carpets, commercial options are limited, making it tough to compete with synthetic alternatives," says Emma.

However, FMG commend the support they received from partners Carpet Court and Godfrey Hurst, helping them source an affordable, 100% NZ wool product that met the demands of their new Ashburton office.

"The strong wool industry is grappling

with significant challenges. The cost of shearing now largely surpasses the income from wool sales, and much farmland is being lost to forestry. It's incredibly frustrating, especially considering wool's sustainability and numerous positive attributes," says Emma.

Aggressive marketing of synthetic carpets has also driven up demand for synthetics over wool.

"When it comes to our wool, we've got to love it locally for it to go globally"

Even though FMG's policies are designed so that clients with wool carpets, can replace with wool carpets (like for like) at claims time, they noticed some people were still opting for synthetic options.

"While this is certainly their choice, we're working more closely with our carpet suppliers and retailers to understand why that might be, and ensure our clients know the benefits of choosing wool carpets."

"In the sustainability world, we often hear about the need to reduce landfill waste, microplastics, and petrochemicals, always seeking the latest innovations in biodegradable fibres. When I listen to these discussions, I can't help but think how wool ticks so many of these boxes.

"I think 'sustainability' is taking a short recession at the moment, while the focus is on cost of living, and economic strength, but it will be back with vengeance, and we've already seen a significant mind shift of consumers wanting to live more 'naturally,' and environmentally friendly. This resurgence is not just with food, but



with fibre too. I'd love to think NZ could be at the forefront of a wool renaissance!"

How does FMG intend to continue supporting the sector?

FMG has a long-standing commitment to the wool sector, recognising its importance to rural communities and the broader agricultural industry. For over 40 years, they've proudly sponsored iconic events like the Golden Shears and the New Zealand Shearing Championships, celebrating the skill and dedication of those in the sport.

FMG is also making conscious choices to support the wool industry in other ways,

opting for wool in their soft furnishings, corporate clothing, merchandise and other opportunities where possible.

"We understand our role in continuously backing and advocating for the wool sector through sharing client stories and sponsoring initiatives like Wool Week. While we acknowledge there's always room for improvement, we're proud of our progress and remain committed to finding impactful ways to support the industry."

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We're here for the good of the country.



Removing barriers



Lyzanne Du Plessis, with husband Hannes, immigrated to New Zealand from South Africa 21 years ago, and understands all too well how challenging it can be to settle into a new country. PHOTO SUPPLIED

CLAIRE INKSON

A free online English language course for migrant women on dairy farms has just completed a successful pilot programme, paving the way for its first intake this November.

Launched by Southland dairy farmer Lyzanne Du Plessis and founder of education platform Agri Teach Me, the programme is initially aimed at the Filipino community.

Kristine Santos-Asuncion, chairperson of the Filipino Dairy Workers of New Zealand, says the course will be invaluable in removing language barriers.

"It would allow them further exposure to the English language and increase their confidence so they can make that step into work or further contribute to their community and get out and meet new people."

The course's flexibility makes it accessible to those who are often isolated and unable to

attend physical classrooms.

Du Plessis said accessibility for migrants was paramount.

"I wanted a vehicle that could help those isolated on farms and unable to get to English classes. Online classes were an obvious choice since many women in rural communities do not have transport and cannot attend the English classes in town provided by other organisations."

Collaborating with online provider Te Puna Reo Māori, she created the course with funding by Rural Women New Zealand Southland.

The courses, with small intakes of 10-15 students, use technology to simulate classrooms, focusing on practical lessons about everyday life, Kiwi-English, and local culture.

Du Plessis believes the programme has the potential to grow, saying, "We can easily scale up the programme to accommodate large numbers of participants."

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Farmer, filmmaker and adventurer



Anisha Satya
REPORTER

"My role? I've got lots of roles."

Deane Parker is a dairy farmer. He's also a filmmaker, an adventure biker and a dad.

His wife, Melissa Scarlett, is a fifth-generation dairy farmer from the West Coast, and the pair are 50/50 sharemilkers on the family farm.

"Before I was a farmer, my wife and I had a water-rafting business in Hokitika, so we'd always been taking photos as part of that business.

"Once we moved into the family farm, I just continued to shoot my adventures."

He's since become a videographer for Quorum Sense, a forum for farmers interested in sustainable and regenerative farming practices.

Filming on farms is vastly different to adventure biking or boating, he said – and not just because of the terrain.

"A lot of farmers are scared of the judgement.

"It does take a degree of rapport building to make sure that farmer's comfortable, that they know you're not there to show the worst side of the farm."

He's been across the country



Deane Parker said regenerative practice fuels his passion to farm.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

filming snippets of new ways to farm regeneratively – finding ways to utilise what farmers have on hand.

More and more farmers are turning to the concept as the cost of fertilisers, animal feed, and agriculture generally climbs.

Through that work, he's been able to bring sustainable practices home to the farm – which is proving effective.

"We're seeing much lower impacts on the land and environment, and much better animal welfare outcomes."

One such practice is hay bale grazing, which he borrowed from Otago and Southland farmers who were testing it out.

"And what I saw was a completely different picture for wintering livestock."

Hay bale grazing essentially

sees farmers put out full bales of hay and block graze stock, leaving them to pull apart the bales in each section.

"Sometimes 20 or 30% of the bale is viable seed, so that gets deposited on the soil, then germinates and recovers," Parker said.

"By the time we get to the driest part of the season, those bale areas are growing up to twice as much grass as the non-bale areas."

He brought it back to his Hororata farm for a test run – it worked well, and he's just completed his first full winter with the method.

Regenerative farming hacks like help farmers cut costs without sacrificing animal or paddock health, Parker said.

Compared to other farming methods, regenerative farming is a new concept without many rules or procedures. Trial and error, essentially.

But to Parker, the risks are worth the rewards.

"What we've been told by some banks is that biological, regenerative farmers do have higher margins than conventional farmers."

"Regenerative farming has definitely fueled my passion to stay in the game for the next generation and hopefully keep the farm around."

The precious spare time Parker has between farming and filming is spent on his kids.

"Once we get through mating and into the swing of milking, we can kind of escape from time to time for adventures."

"We're a family that plays together."



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A legacy of ag leadership

CLAIRE INKSON

Although Sir David Carter didn't come from a farming background, his remarkable career has undeniably left a lasting impact on New Zealand's agriculture sector.

"I was born and bred in Christchurch, so city raised," Carter says.

"But from the age of 12, I was determined I was going to be involved in farming."

The determination led him to Lincoln University, where he graduated in 1974 with a Bachelor of Agricultural Science.

Following his graduation, Carter went into a farming partnership with his father in West Melton.

Only 25 years old but already future-focused, Carter began to explore what was then cutting-edge agricultural innovation: embryo transplants with European cattle breeds.

"I was involved in setting up an embryo transplant business on the West Melton property using Australian and Canadian vets."

The venture was short-lived but hugely successful.

Carter then moved to a Banks Peninsula property where he established a successful cattle stud called Avon Park Simmentals.

During the 1980s and 1990s, Carter showed cattle at the Canterbury A&P Show.

"I know the work and dedication those animal exhibitors put into it."

Driven by a desire to advocate

for the agriculture sector and influenced by his father, who had a long tenure on the Christchurch City Council, Carter ran for the Lyttelton Electorate in 1994.

"I always had an aspiration to go to parliament and become minister of agriculture."

"I'd set my sights on that at Lincoln."

He lost the election and thought his short political career was over, but opportunity came knocking a short time later when an MP in a neighbouring electorate, Ruth Richardson, resigned.

This triggered a bi-election for which Carter was given the National Party nomination.

"I won the bi-election, and that was the start of a 26-year political career."

Carter achieved his dream of becoming minister of agriculture, forestry, and biosecurity, which later became the Ministry for Primary Industries under John Key's leadership.

"It was timing and it was luck."

Carter's time as minister included some significant initiatives, such as the Irrigation Acceleration Fund, which aimed to improve water storage for the farming sector.

"New Zealand has heaps of water; it just doesn't fall in the right place at the right time."

Carter also faced major challenges as a minister, such as the kiwifruit industry crisis caused by PSA disease.

"It could have been absolute devastation for the kiwifruit industry, but the government worked closely with the leadership of Zespri, and we got the money to pull out the affected vines."

"It was a joint venture."

It's the



Sir David Carter has had a lasting impact on the New Zealand agriculture sector throughout his long and remarkable career.

PHOTO SUPPLIED

aftermath of the February 2011 Christchurch earthquake that is cemented in his memory, though, and his visit to the city that day, where he witnessed the devastation first-hand.

"I got a call from a friend to say their son had been killed."

"Then John Key and I spent the day wandering around Christchurch."

"It was a sobering experience."

Carter then became speaker of the house, for which he received a knighthood.

Carter said that although he felt some disappointment at giving up his agriculture portfolio, he enjoyed his time in the role.

"It's a huge job; you control the democratic process of New Zealand."

"You set the tone of how parliament operates and how efficiently democracy works."

Carter retired from politics in 2020 but remained actively involved in the agricultural sector, taking up leadership roles.

Carter was appointed chairperson of the agricultural co-operative RuralCo in 2022.

"RuralCo plays a critical role in connecting farmers with the resources they need."

"It's not just about commerce; it's about building a sense of community and resilience in rural areas."

Carter said that when farming isn't going well, it is tough for cooperatives, pointing to the troubled Alliance as an example.

"RuralCo as a co-operative has had its challenges as well, but we have worked through it with a very good functional board."

"It's been an exciting venture to be involved with."

Carter was recently appointed chairperson of the Canterbury A&P Association board, determined to preserve the show and secure its future after it was cancelled earlier this year.

"It seemed to me with the right approach and dedication, we could run a show in 2024."

"More importantly, it's ensuring we have established a good, sound foundation for this Canterbury A&P Show that has run for 160 years to run for another 160 years."

"It brings town and country together, and we are still an agricultural economy."

Carter said that although times are tough for farmers currently, he believes agriculture has a bright future.

"I think agriculture does have a future, and I would argue that while climate change is a huge challenge for the world, a bigger challenge is food insecurity."

"Unless we solve food insecurity, the world will not be a peaceful place."

"New Zealand has a role to play in that, and I want to see the New Zealand meat industry perform as well as the dairy industry has."



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Impressed with Kiwi farmers

LAWRENCE MEREDITH

I am excited to putting on my gumboots and heading to the Christchurch Show later this month in my role as European Union Ambassador to Aotearoa New Zealand.

I come from a rural Yorkshire village, and growing up loved the Great Yorkshire Show where there was great excitement and competition with the sheep dog trials and ferret racing.

I'm guessing there won't be any ferrets at this show, however I am keen to check out the sheep shearing, which I hear Kiwis are champions at and the mighty axe-throwing competition.

If you are headed to the show, I'd love to catch up with you at our booth, called Enjoy it's from Europe.

We will be showcasing the best of European food and beverages and sharing the benefits and advantages of our forward-thinking collaboration with Aotearoa, under the new EU-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement.

Our presence at the show isn't just about enjoying great food and drink – it's also about strengthening the connection between Europe and New Zealand.

I am incredibly impressed at how committed and innovative Kiwi farmers are.

As a country, Aotearoa is well known across Europe for the high quality of products that are grown here.

As I visit farms, industries, and businesses across the country, I am continually impressed by the generosity and collaborative nature of Kiwis.

While we face many challenges, including the urgent need to

rope's first global partner.

With a budget of €53.5 billion (\$NZ95 billion) from 2021 to 2027, Horizon Europe offers New Zealand researchers unprecedented access to funding and collaborations.

This will enhance New Zealand's research and innovation capabilities, particularly in areas such food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment.

People tell me the Christchurch

“As a country, Aotearoa is well known across Europe for the high quality of products that are grown here

address climate change and the rising demand for sustainable food production, I know our collective efforts will help drive economic growth and environmental sustainability.

One of the opportunities I am most proud of is the advancement of local innovations and research through Horizon Europe, the European Union's flagship research and innovation programme.

New Zealand is Horizon Eu-

Show is always a celebration of innovation and tradition in New Zealand's community; I'm keen to find out for myself.

If you are passing, come visit, share our wonderful tasting food & drink and enjoy conversation with the team and me – so that we are #StrongerTogether!

Ngā mihi nui,

Lawrence Meredith is the EU Ambassador to New Zealand



European Union Ambassador to New Zealand Lawrence Meredith will attend this year's Christchurch Show. PHOTO SUPPLIED

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Christchurch's fresh approach

CLAIRE INKSON

A fresh layout and improved parking at this year's Christchurch Show will enhance the visitor experience for those attending the event at the Canterbury Agricultural Park from November 14 to 16.

"We have changed the site layout to make it more engaging and active," senior event manager Karl Howarth said.

Trade sites have moved to the main paddock area, creating what Howarth describes as a "trade bazaar".

Food trucks will be interspersed between stalls, creating a vibrant market-like atmosphere.

Howarth said the uptake for trade sites had been good.

"We have filled around 300 sites, showcasing a mix of traditional agricultural exhibitors alongside popular brands from various industries."

Some large agri-businesses will be noticeably absent from this year's event, though, due to the show's earlier cancellation.

"Ravensdown and PGG Wrightson are unable to have a presence. Unfortunately, since the cancellation, either their budget was allocated elsewhere, or their staff were on holiday over the long weekend."

"They have all promised they will be back next year."

There are new highlights to fill the gap, though, such as the exhibit by Waimak Classic Cars in the central paddock, featuring rare



The Christchurch Show will have all of the usual much-loved attractions such as livestock, wood chopping and the farmyard, but will also feature new events like lawnmower racing and mounted games. PHOTO SUPPLIED.

luxury supercars like McLaren.

"This central attraction is designed to draw visitors into the main area and encourage them to explore."

The farmyard, a show staple and always a favourite, has been relocated to a more central position, making it more accessible.

"Normally, it's tucked away down the end of the park, and it's tricky to find, but now it's going to be in the middle of everything."

Tractor pulls, wood chopping,

shearing, and duck herding are making a comeback, as are pedal mania and pony rides for kids.

New events join the tried-and-true show favourites, including lawnmower racing, drone racing, and an eco-friendly, unique motorbike event.

"Instead of the noisy Enduro cross, we have 30 competitors racing on electric motocross bikes, which hasn't been done before."

Foodies will be well catered for in the Wine & Food Pavilion, and

the bar provides a place to relax and enjoy the entertainment.

Equestrian lovers and Yellowstone fans will enjoy watching the mounted games, a cowboy-style relay event.

"It's more informal and exciting than dressage and jumps."

There will be significant improvements to parking which will ensure smoother access to the event.

The previously problematic Curletts Road entrance will be closed,

allowing visitors to enter through the two Nga Puna Wai entrances or via Hayton Road.

Ticket prices have been slashed this year, too, making the event more affordable for families.

Adult tickets are \$20, and children's tickets are \$10.

"The philosophy of this year's event is to get people more engaged and to explore."

"Every time they turn a corner, there will be something exciting to do," Howarth said.

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Prevent fires on the fa

CLAIRE INKSON

It's that time of year when our feathered friends, especially starlings, transform tractors into snug nesting spots.

But with nest-building materials like hay and straw being highly flammable, it's no surprise that this season often brings about tractor fires.

Mid and South Canterbury Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) senior risk reduction advisor Don Geddes encourages farmers to pop the tractor bonnet at lunchtime to prevent bird nesting and to check for birds' nests before starting the tractor.

"Birds can't build a nest over lunchtime, but they can carry enough straw and nesting material to cause a fire.

"Popping the bonnet at lunchtime or in the evenings before you park up in the shed discourages birds from nesting there."

Birds' nests are not the only hazard.

Harvesters also carry fire risks, so ensuring machinery is clean and well-maintained reduces the chance of fire.

"Make sure your servicing is up to date, your filters are clean, and you haven't got dust and straw around your manifold and exhausts."

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QUICK FIRE TIPS

- Pop the tractor bonnet at lunchtime to check for birds' nests before starting the tractor
- Make sure harvesters are clean and well-maintained
- Be prepared in the event of a fire and carry fire extinguishers in your vehicles
- Have a water source on site during harvest
- Have a fire plan on-farm
- Rake out a burn pile after a fire to ensure it's dead and cold before leaving
- Consider 'defensible spaces' around homes and sheds – remove flammable material
- In the event of a fire, dial 111.
- For information related to permits and fire safety on your farm, go to www.checkitsalright.nz

fire is key, and Geddes recommends all vehicles carry fire extinguishers.

"We recommend a dry powder type extinguisher.

"If you have that readily available, and you are in your header, and you have a fire start up around the motor, you can do something about it."

While having a water source on hand during stubble fires and burn-offs is a requirement, many farmers don't think of having water on-site during harvest.

"Farmers do not think to park the water cart in the paddock during harvest, and then they have to rush back to the yard to get it, and by then, the fire has got away."

Geddes said having a fire plan on-

farm is essential.

"You need to think about where a potential fire is going to come from and have a mitigation plan.

"You need to think about how to prevent a fire from occurring, but if it did occur, how you can deal with it promptly and efficiently."

In case of a fire, Geddes emphasized the importance of not hesitating to dial 111 for help.

"Don't be hesitant about calling 111, hoping you can get the fire out yourself.

"We don't mind being turned around and sent home.

"We would rather that than arrive late when they've lost the fire, it's racing across the paddock, and we

are there for several hours."

Geddes said it was important to remember that any planned outdoor fires over the summer will likely require a permit, with information and applications available online.

"The one-stop shop for all information around fires is Check It's Alright.

"You can apply for a permit there, and there is a lot of information around safe outdoor burning."

Old pit fires and burn piles are a major cause of fires escaping during hot and windy months, sometimes reigniting five months later.

"Often, we get a hot day in the middle of summer with some Nor'west wind, and suddenly, we are getting a flare-up of hot ashes that

might have been left in that burn pile.

Geddes said it's important to rake out a burn pile after a fire to ensure it's dead and cold before leaving.

"We have had a reignition of fire five months later."

Geddes said farmers should consider "defensible spaces" around homes and sheds so that if a fire did take off, it would be less likely to consume buildings.

"It's about removing flammable material, so if a fire does start, it's not going to burn across multiple paddocks and into your yard and take your house or your sheds loaded up with implements and farm machinery."

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THE PERFECT FIT

HOW STRAUTMANN HOPKINS 2023 LIMITED AND WESTLAND FARM SERVICES SHARE A FAMILY-FIRST VISION AND CUSTOMER-CENTRIC APPROACH

Westland Farm Services is more than just a farm machinery provider on the West Coast—it's a business rooted in strong family values, a customer-first mindset, and a commitment to the region's farmers. This shared vision is precisely what makes Westland Farm Services and Strautmann Hopkins 2023 Ltd (SHL) such a natural fit.

A JOURNEY FROM CORPORATE TO COMMUNITY

The story of Westland Farm Services is one of dedication and growth. Founder, Colin Redpath, a skilled diesel mechanic from Scotland, spent 25 years in the corporate world, working his way up from mechanic to foreman, sales manager, and eventually branch manager. Despite his success, he yearned for something more personal and community focused.

In March 2016, after growing weary of the corporate environment, Colin decided to forge his own path. He established Westland Farm Services with the goal of providing top-notch service to the farming community he loved. Starting from the ground up, he built a multi-purpose workshop and office, assembled a dedicated team of six and began serving an expansive area from Karamea to Haast—a stretch comparable to the distance from Auckland to Wellington.

Now approaching its eight-year anniversary, Westland Farm Services continues to uphold a business ethos centered on family values and a customer-focused approach—the very principles that attracted SHL to the company.

THE STRAUTMANN HOPKINS CONNECTION

Last year, SHL approached Westland Farm Services with an exciting opportunity. Recognising the family-first nature of Westland Farm Services and its dedication to the region's farmers, SHL wanted a local dealer who would truly care for their customers. Without hesitation, Westland Farm Services became the official SHL dealer on the West Coast, embracing the chance to represent a product they consider one of the best in the industry.

Strautmann products have been a staple on the Coast for over 20 years, and Westland Farm Services is now poised to provide the hands-on support and service that the region's farmers need. As farmers themselves, SHL knew the importance of working with a dealer who truly understood the needs of the farming community. With their expertise and customer-first approach, farmers can rest assured that their equipment is in capable hands, whether it's for maintenance, upgrades, or new machinery advice.



A GROWING PRESENCE, A SHARED SUCCESS

The collaboration between Strautmann Hopkins and Westland Farm Services has strengthened both companies' presence on the Coast. The increased visibility of SHL products, combined with Westland Farm Services' reputation for excellent customer service, is driving sales and attracting new customers. Farmers appreciate having a reliable local dealer who can look after their existing equipment and provide expert advice on new machinery.

This year Westland Farm Services and SHL attended AgFest at Greymouth – a celebration of agricultural innovation and community spirit on the West Coast. The next Agfest event, set for April 2026, will again feature Strautmann machinery front and center.

A FUTURE BUILT ON FAMILY AND SERVICE

Westland Farm Services is proud to represent Strautmann Hopkins, a brand known for its superior products and dedication to quality. This partnership is more than just business—it's about supporting the local farming community, helping farmers succeed, and growing together with shared family values at the core. With a greater presence in the region and a strong commitment to service, Westland Farm Services is ready to continue serving the West Coast's agricultural needs for years to come.



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