

RURAL GUARDIAN

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NOVEMBER 2025

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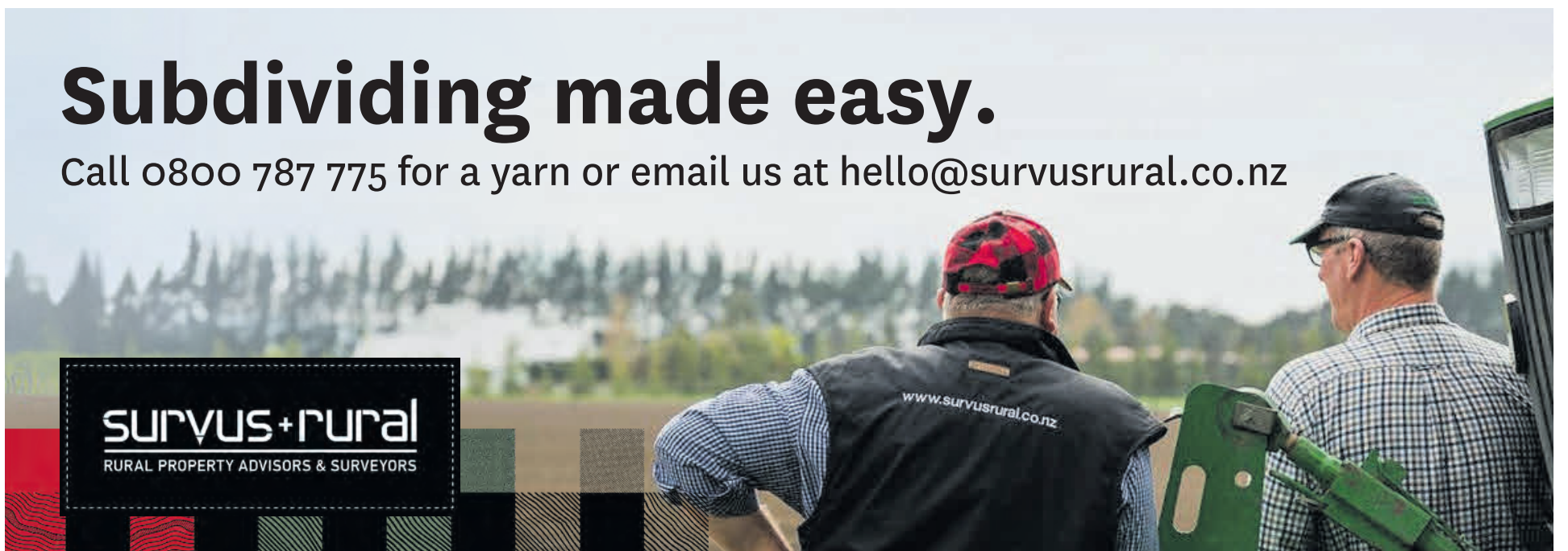
Pages 18-19

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Celebrating the heart of the community

When we launched our South Island Country Pub of the Year competition last month in association with Service Foods, it was about far more than just finding the best place for a cold one or a good feed.

Country pubs are an integral part of rural communities. They are unassuming, unsung, and quintessentially Kiwi. We wanted to highlight that.

While only one pub could take out the top spot in our South Island Country Pub of the Year Competition, every single one nominated is a winner in our books.

We had more than 5000 votes, a testament to how much communities cherish these cornerstones of the community that have witnessed generations of stories.

Many romances have been kindled over a beer in these often-historic establishments. Friendships have been forged, rugby games celebrated, bark-ups held, and problems quietly hashed out over a pint and a pie.

These are the places where laughter comes easily, where news travels fast, and where the welcome is always warm.

You don't need to be invited. You don't need to dress up. All you need to do? Show up.

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg had a name for places like these. He called them "third places," the social spaces that exist between home and work.

Home is the first place, work the second, and the third is where life happens in between. It is the café, the clubroom, the community hall, or, in much of rural New Zealand, the local pub.

Oldenburg believed third places are vital

for wellbeing and connection. They are neutral ground, open to everyone, where conversation is the main event and social status fades into the background.

In small towns, the pub often becomes the last true public meeting place, somewhere to belong, to be heard, and to reconnect after a long week.

That sense of connection has never mattered more.

Across the country, rural families face growing challenges, from financial pressure to isolation and mental health strain.

While the Rural Support Trust and other organisations do invaluable work, sometimes the first and most important conversation happens across a pub table.

Country pubs are the informal social hubs of rural New Zealand.

They host the fundraisers, the quiz nights, the farewells, and the quiet check-ins that keep communities stitched together.

In a show of resilience, many of these pubs are evolving.

Some now double as cafés or live music venues, others have added accommodation or have reinvented themselves to stay afloat.

But their essence remains the same. They are the places where people still meet face to face, where stories are told and retold, and where everyone is welcome.

So, while one pub wears the crown this year, we raise a glass to all our nominees, the true champions of community spirit.

They keep the lights on, the laughter flowing, and the connections strong in the places that need them most.

So, cheers to the country pub, the original third place, and still the best one of all.



Be part of our growing rural community – follow @ruralguardian on Instagram and Facebook for more real-life stories, farm inspiration, lifestyle features and what's coming up in the next issue.

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Photo: Supplied.

Technology Takes the Guesswork Out of Plumbing at ACL

New technology is transforming how ACL's plumbing and gas division finds and fixes leaks and blockages, taking much of the guesswork out of the job.

ACL's Plumbing and Gas Certifying Plumber Richard Begbie said business has been steady, with most of the team's work focused on maintenance such as water leaks, blocked drains and toilet repairs.

"The days of digging up driveways trying to find pipes are long gone," he said. "Now we can pinpoint exactly where we need to be."

The division uses a range of advanced equipment, including a push-rod camera that can be fed into pipes to identify blockages or damage. The footage is recorded to an SD card, allowing plumbers to show clients the exact problem and provide a precise repair plan.

"We can mark out the issue, record everything and send a PDF to the client. It's a brilliant piece of kit," Begbie said.

A sonde is another tool the team uses to locate underground pipe positions to help find leaks without unnecessary digging. The device works with a tracking wand to

trace the pipe's line, while listening equipment pinpoints the source of a leak.

For larger projects, ground-penetrating radar is used to detect underground pipes, wires and other obstructions before any work begins. This helps prevent damage to driveways or landscaping and saves clients both time and money.

New team member Cassie Van Der Merwe, who joined ACL four months ago and is about to begin his plumbing apprenticeship, said he is enjoying the hands-on learning.

"The people are great, I'm learning from one of the best, and every day is different," he said. "Plumbing is completely new to me, but I've always wanted to do a trade."

While technology has made the work faster and more precise, Begbie said ACL's commitment to quality service remains the same.

"It's still about getting the job done properly the first time," he said. "The new equipment just means we can do it with greater accuracy — and save our clients a lot of headaches."

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Community voices prevail as police scrap Canterbury restructure



Claire Inkson
RURAL EDITOR

Hurunui Mayor Marie Black says Canterbury Police's decision to abandon a controversial district restructure is a victory for collective action, community trust and common sense.

"It's fantastic news. A wonderful demonstration of keeping your integrity intact and focusing on the things that matter," Black said after confirmation that police would not proceed with plans to reduce staff in small towns and centralise operations into 24/7 hubs in Rolleston and Rangiora.

The proposal, which faced weeks of strong opposition from Federated Farmers, councils and rural residents, struck at the heart of small communities, where local police officers are seen as neighbours, friends and essential partners in keeping people safe.

"In my opinion, this proposed restructure really got to the heart of the people," Black said. "It's about trust and confidence, knowing that we've got police in our communities who live and breathe the same air, take their kids to the same schools, and go to the same rugby matches. That connection is vital."

Black, who spoke personally with Police Minister Mark Mitchell, Police Commissioner Richard Chambers and District Commander Tony Hill during the consultation period, praised the leadership team for reversing course in response to widespread feedback.

"For a big organisation, it would have been easy to just push ahead,



Hurunui district Mayor Marie Black has welcomed the Police decision to abandon a controversial restructure.
PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON

but they had the courage to listen," she said. "Trust and confidence in the culture of policing has been demonstrated from the top, and that's really important."

She said the proposal risked creating dangerous gaps in coverage, increasing response times and eroding the trust that underpins effective policing, while putting added pressure on volunteer emergency services.

"Our communities rely on organisations like Fire and

Emergency, St John, Civil Defence and local medics," she said. "Reducing police presence would have put extra pressure on those services and undermined the strong culture of local support that keeps rural areas safe."

Federated Farmers, which helped coordinate much of the community response, described the outcome as a "smart and pragmatic" decision.

"Farming families across Canterbury will be sleeping

a little more soundly tonight knowing their local police will stay on the ground, where they belong," Federated Farmers North Canterbury president Bex Green said. "You can't replace a trusted local police officer who lives in the community with drive-in drive-out cops who live an hour away."

Federated Farmers' rural policing spokesperson Karl Dean said the result demonstrated the power of rural communities.

"This outcome shows the

strength of rural Canterbury and farming communities nationwide," he said. "When something threatens the safety and wellbeing of our families, we stand up and speak out."

District Commander Superintendent Tony Hill said the proposal had aimed to improve service, including 24/7 response capability, but the lack of community support made it unviable.

"The reality is that the proposal was not acceptable to many of the communities affected, and their buy-in was a critical element in the proposal's success," Hill said. "We could not proceed without that support."

Police Commissioner Richard Chambers backed the decision and reaffirmed the value of engaged, local policing.

"I have long believed in the value of police who know their communities and the people in them. That is effective both for prevention and law enforcement, in both cities and rural areas," he said.

Black said the outcome has renewed public trust, not just in local officers but in the organisation.

"The trust was always there for the individual police working in our communities. That's why we got on our high horse," she said. "But now I think people feel that the organisation has listened and revalued its relationship with us."

She believes the experience will have a lasting impact.

"This groundswell was bigger than anyone expected, and I admire the police for recognising that. If more organisations listened in the same way, we'd all be better for it."

For Black, the decision represents one of the defining moments of her time in office.

"If I reflect back on anything when I'm done, this will be one of the moments I know has been worth it."



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Royal comeback for Canterbury's biggest show



Show staples like woodchopping will keep crowds entertained at the Canterbury Show. PHOTOS SUPPLIED

CLAIRE INKSON

After a near miss last year and a swift rebuild under new leadership, the Canterbury Show is back in full stride for 2025, and it is wearing a Royal crown.

For the first time since 2010, the Canterbury A&P Association will host the Royal Agricultural and Pastoral Show of New Zealand, reclaiming its place as the South Island's largest agricultural showcase. The event will run from November 13 to 15 at Canterbury Agricultural Park, with more than 400 trade sites, world-class livestock competitions, and one of the South Island's biggest gathering of food trucks.

Chairperson Sir David Carter says the return of Royal status

marks a major milestone for the Association and for the rural community. "It's the pinnacle of the showing calendar," he says. "Exhibitors chase that Royal Show status because winning here carries national significance."

That prestige has already driven entries sky-high. Dairy numbers are just under 400 and more than 700 sheep entries are confirmed, a clear sign that enthusiasm is back.

The A&P Association has also taken back full control of the event after last year's show was run externally to save it from cancellation. "We've regained momentum, and this year's team is absolutely committed," Carter says. "Everyone on the board is volunteering their time because they are passionate about ensuring the



Ticket prices have been kept at an affordable \$22, with children only \$10 and under-tuos free, making the show a great day out for families.



Sir David Carter believes the show is about bringing town and country together.

show survives for another 160 years."

One big change is the shift to a Thursday-to-Saturday format, giving families two public-holiday opportunities and making weather less of a risk. "Exhibitors questioned the change at first, but it has worked

really well," Carter says.

Visitors can expect a true celebration of rural life. Alongside the traditional equestrian, shearing, and woodchopping events, a new wool marquee will highlight the fibre's revival with up to 30

exhibitors. "There is a resurgence of interest in wool, and we want to showcase that," Carter says.

A farmers' breakfast, featuring the Prime Minister, is already a sell-out, and the members' cocktail party on Friday evening promises a lively social scene.

The Show's return to its agricultural roots is something Carter feels strongly about. "It's about bringing town and country together," he says. "Last year we saw a constant stream of young families through the city farmyard. For many urban kids it is their only chance to get close to farm animals, and that is really what the Show is about."

Financially, the outlook is positive. Support from the Christchurch City Council and the Canterbury A&P Trust has stabilised the event, and Carter says the goal is to be self-sustaining from next year onward. Trade sites are tracking strongly and ticket prices have been kept family-friendly, at \$22 for adults and \$10 for children.

Parking issues that once plagued the Show have been solved, and organisers are confident that fine weather will bring crowds through the gates. "Christchurch's economy is performing well and agriculture is driving that success," Carter says. "The Show celebrates that link between rural strength and urban prosperity."

As for the future, Carter is already thinking beyond 2025. "We are planning for 2026 and beyond to make sure the show stays strong," he says. "It is part of Canterbury's heritage and it deserves to be part of its future."

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Methane targets cut, agricultural emissions tax ruled out



Federated Farmers Mid Canterbury President David Acland.
PHOTO ASHBURTON GUARDIAN

ANISHA SATYA

Some farmers breathed a sigh of relief, and others shook their heads after policy changes to New Zealand's methane reduction approach were announced in mid October.

The government revealed new methane targets for 2050, and declared there would be no pricing for agricultural emissions.

A revised target range for biogenic methane (methane produced by living things, but mainly cattle and sheep) was set to 14% - 24% below 2017 levels by 2050.

The previous range was 24% to 47%, set by the 2019 government as an amendment to the Climate Change Response Act 2002.

"We've accepted a range of advice and worked closely with industry to agree [to] a practical target..." Agriculture and Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay said.

"Our primary sector earns nearly \$60 billion in export revenue and provides more than one in ten Kiwi jobs.

By setting sensible targets and backing innovation, we're ensuring New Zealand farmers remain world leaders in producing high-quality, safe, and sustainable food, while meeting our international commitments."

The announcement came less

than a week after major food corporation Nestlé announced it was leaving The Dairy Methane Action Alliance, a global commitment to reduce dairy emissions.

Nestlé has sourced New Zealand dairy for its internationally-sold products for over a century.

Federated Farmers Mid Canterbury president David Acland said farmers considered the original methane target range a bit "aspirational".

"[But] there's no point being aspirational if it's going to gut rural New Zealand."

When farming becomes expensive, it takes a toll on the towns those farmers are a part of, he said.

"When those people are removed from rural New Zealand, then you see a reduction in the number of teachers, the number of nurses - rural service towns then become ghost towns."

Acland said the new range was much more realistic for farmers.

"At the lower end (14%), that is very achievable.

"At the higher end (24%), it's apparently a little more challenging, but still within the realms of possibility - we don't know what technologies are going to come along."

Acland felt the promise of no emissions pricing was the biggest weight of peoples' shoulders.

But the reduction of methane targets, as opposed to the scrapping of them, has left a sour taste in some mouths.

"We've got this target that we have to work towards, we know we're not going to get priced, which is outstanding, and we also know... that we will be able to reach these goals.

"Everyone's happy-ish," he said, "I don't think everyone's 100%."

The government announced on the same day that \$400 million would go towards methane-reduction tool research and development.

Environmental consultant and Groundswell spokesperson Jamie McFadden felt that funding was misdirected.

"New Zealand's livestock are amongst the most methane-efficient in the world," he said.

"A lot have focussed on the reduction, rather than the question of why we keep these methane targets in the first place.

"To me, they're spending the money in the wrong place; they should be spending the money, actually doing stuff on the ground to look after our environment, rather than shoving boluses down cattle's throats."

McFadden said the \$400 million would be better spent on restoring native forests and grasslands.

"New Zealand's got a huge amount of native biodiversity on

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farms; compare that to anywhere else around the world.”
“[Like] down around Mid Canterbury, with the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective, all the fantastic stuff that’s going on on farms at the moment...”

He said the assumption that farmers would do “nothing” to care for the environment following the reduced targets was “disrespectful”.

“They imply that farmers are laggards; That’s because they’re so silo-focussed on methane.”

“Farmers don’t want to do nothing. Farmers are engaged in this and want to do good stuff for the environment.”

Also in the government’s announcement was consideration for applying a split gas approach internationally.

A split gas approach means greenhouse gases would be monitored and managed separately; for example carbon dioxide pollution would be subject to different rules than biogenic methane.

New Zealand already applies a split gas approach domestically, but the government has pledged to apply this to future climate commitments made internationally.

Federated Farmers, DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand have all welcomed the changes.

“B+LNZ has been calling for the targets to be revised... since the passage of the Zero Carbon Bill in 2019,” a statement from Beef + Lamb NZ read.

“In 2023 we led a joint project with Federated Farmers and DairyNZ to commission independent research... to measure the warming impact of NZ’s methane targets.

“[This] confirmed the targets

Groundswell spokesperson Jamie McFadden said farmers always worked towards better environmental outcomes, even without methane targets.
PHOTO SUPPLIED



were too high and helped build the case for the Government to appoint an independent panel of highly respected experts to review the science and targets for consistency with no additional warming.

“The panel reported back in December 2024, recommending the 14 to 24 percent range.”

Federated Farmers is welcoming major changes to New Zealand’s

climate policy as a long overdue and practical step that will be well received by farmers.

“Kiwi farmers have been bogged down in completely unscientific, unaffordable and unrealistic climate policy for far too long,” Federated Farmers president Wayne Langford said.

“This new target brings New Zealand’s climate policy in line

with what the research tells us is actually required to stop Kiwi farmers contributing to further warming.”

He said the promise of no agricultural emissions pricing was a “major step forward, and will be a huge relief for farming families who have had the threat of a massive tax hanging over our heads...”

DairyNZ chairperson Tracy Brown said strides had been made in the agri and agritech spaces to reduce emissions already.

“Methane emissions from dairy cattle are down 4.1 percent since 2017.

“Sustaining the viability of dairying, and agriculture in general, is critical to New Zealand’s future prosperity.”

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'If you can't get there in a Hilux, you need a helicopter'



Wayne Godfrey with his Hilux GR Sport. All the Toyotas in the Godfrey fleet have personalised plates.

Back-country pest control boss on the trucks that keep his crews safe and the systems behind them.



Claire Inkson

RURAL EDITOR

In New Zealand's toughest terrain, from braided rivers to the rugged slopes of Molesworth Station, and weather that can change a track overnight, Godfrey Pest Management has built a business on getting people and gear where they need to be, and home again, safely.

For owner Wayne Godfrey and general manager Mark Moore, that story is inseparable from one vehicle: the iconic Toyota Hilux.

"Godfrey Pest Management has been around since about 2000," says Godfrey. "We came off the back of the TB eradication programme. That was my first

business out of university, doing possum control performance monitoring. From there we branched into environmental work, wilding pines, specialist grasses, willow control and wetland restoration, and woody weed control across a range of environments. From the high country right down to the coast. We do a lot of work in the braided river corridors too."

The Hilux connection began early.

"As a young fella I had a small four-wheel drive, but the Hilux was the natural progression. I was fishing eels commercially, supplying live eels for export to Mossburn, and I needed something that could handle the braided rivers. The Subaru Brumby I had wasn't quite up to it. I bought a second-hand Hilux from a guy in Darfield and it was a game changer.

When he upgraded to the 2.8 flat deck diesel, the difference was dramatic.

"It had a limited-slip diff in the back. I remember dropping it into the Waipara River with a load of live eels in tanks on the back. That's a lot of weight to drag around a braided river. We fitted a snorkel straight away and extended breathers. It was tough work in water, but we got there."

The back country continues to test both men and machines.

"The Saxton River is probably one of the hardest," says Godfrey. "We're pushing an hour into big country. They'll send a bulldozer in before us to push a bit of a track, but a weather event can change all the crossings. It's hard on gear."

Moore agrees. "The Poulter River is pretty challenging too, with river crossings and loose gravel."

The company's vehicle setups are all about practicality.

"The key thing is the snorkel for water crossings," says Godfrey. "We fit ARB underbody protection, bull bars and canopies."

Sometimes even the Hilux cannot get there.

"Some of the most memorable times were doing animal pest monitoring in the Clarence Reserve. We were chasing a helicopter with a fuel tanker, flying people into locations. We put together survival bags with food, tents and sleeping bags, plus spare fuel containers for the machine and left them at designated landing zones. If the helicopter didn't come back for some reason, we knew we could walk there that day and be okay."

Safety is a major focus.

"Safety's one of the real key things," says Godfrey. "We have an obligation to supply the best

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equipment we can to make sure our people can do the job safely. The first question we ask on a project is, can we do this safely? If yes, can we deliver it to specification? If both are yes, we go ahead."

Moore adds, "On and off-road vehicle driving and accidents are our number one critical risk. When we put staff in new, safe vehicles, everyone sleeps a bit easier."

Buying new is now standard policy.

"They come with good service plans and they're not in the shop getting fixed because they're brand new," says Godfrey. "You can't have a vehicle breaking down in the middle of nowhere. If you've got a truck under 200,000 kilometres and it's serviced regularly, you don't have problems. We buy the service plans and stick to them religiously. As a government contractor, sometimes clients ask for our service records, and when you sell a one-owner vehicle with full service history, there's a waiting list."

That service support extends to Rangiora Toyota, which keeps the company's fleet running despite the demanding schedule.

"We can't just bring a vehicle in on a Tuesday, it might be four and a half hours away up the back of Molesworth Station. The team at Rangiora Toyota make it work. They might get two or three vehicles at once late on a Friday and have them ready for Monday. They've never let us down."

Compliance is another major focus.

"We've had to do GVM upgrades on our 79-series Land Cruisers," says Godfrey. "We were putting spray reels and tanks on the back, so we increased the gross vehicle



For Godfrey Pest Management owner Wayne Godfrey (left) and general manager Mark Moore safety for their crew is a priority — and that includes a reliable vehicle. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON



Wayne Godfrey's first Hilux that started a life-long passion. PHOTO SUPPLIED

Landcruisers in the fleet tackle the heavy loads at Lake Sumner. PHOTO MARK MOORE



Toyota's form the backbone of the pest management business.

mass. They're on COF now, which is a bit awkward, but they're fit for purpose and fully compliant."

Moore admits, "We realised we were on the limits on the hill in a 79-series Land Cruiser." Godfrey adds, "There are companies getting away with things, and it's all good until it's not. You've got to get ahead of it. It's like the Swiss cheese model, eventually all the holes line up and something gets through."

That same principle applies to safety training, Godfrey says.

"We tell the crew, you've got a bucket of luck and a bucket of experience. People take a bit from the luck bucket to fill the experience bucket, and hopefully you've got sufficient experience before your luck runs out, but you don't have to do it that way. We've got a lot of experience here, lean on it. Don't learn the hard way, I don't subscribe to learning the hard way."

Godfrey currently drives the Hilux GR Sport and says it is one of his favourites. "It's a pretty cool

rig. It's really comfortable, really fast and sticks to the track. I can get down to Otago and back very relaxed in that vehicle. Each time Toyota brings out a Hilux, they make it slightly better than the last one."

Asked about the biggest challenge in his business journey, Godfrey doesn't hesitate. "Growing teams of people and changing culture," he says. "Turning good things into amazing things. Taking people that have capabilities and making

them into leaders. Jesse, for example, came as a fairly young, enthusiastic person who now runs a division of the business. Mark came to me as a guy who worked in the crews on the tools next to me, and now he's running the company. It's about stepping back and giving people the opportunity."

After more than twenty Hiluxes, Godfrey says the formula still holds. "They're just really versatile. If you can't get there in a Hilux, you need a helicopter."

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INO0625

Spirit, strength and Scotland: The Hororata Highland games returns



Claire Inkson
RURAL EDITOR

Dust off your tartan and tune up your bagpipes as the Hororata Highland Games return to Canterbury on Saturday, November 8, bringing with them the colour, music and energy of one of the South Island's biggest community festivals.

Now in its 14th year, the event has grown from a small grassroots gathering born out of post-earthquake recovery, into a world-class celebration of Scottish culture, sport and community spirit.

Organised by the Hororata Community Trust, the games now draw more than 10,000 visitors from across New Zealand and beyond.

"People are blown away when they come," says Trust executive officer Cindy Driscoll. "They expect a small rural event, but it's massive, with world-class competitions, music, markets, and fun activities across the whole domain. It's a full festival experience powered

entirely by volunteers and local groups."

Visitors can also explore wool demonstrations, spinning and shearing displays, and the "paddock-to-garment" story that reflects the region's farming roots.

"We love showing our urban visitors where their wool jerseys start," Driscoll says.

This year's games promise plenty of new highlights.

The Welcoming Ceremony will feature a stirring performance of Amazing Grace with 500 pipers and drummers joining in the Massed Bands march.

A new feature is the Spirit of Hororata Tune Writing Competition, a global call for pipers to compose an original piece reflecting the heart of the games.

The winning tune, judged by international piping star Kyle Warren from Scotland, will be performed for the first time at the event.

"We'll have a solo piper perform the winning tune as part of the ceremony," Driscoll says. "It's been written especially for us, a world-first moment for Hororata."

The Oceania Heavyweight Championships return as a crowd favourite, with elite athletes from New Zealand and Australia competing in the caber toss, stone put and hammer throw. Olympian

Lauren Bruce will take part for the first time.

"We've got a really strong women's field this year," Driscoll says. "It's fantastic to see more women stepping up and showing their strength."

Visitors can do more than just watch, with opportunities to try the caber toss, tug-of-war, vehicle pull, or even take a Highland dance lesson from professional dancers. "That's what makes this event special," says Driscoll. "Families and friends can jump in together. It's about getting amongst it."

More than 20 Scottish clans will gather in St Andrews Square, where visitors can connect with their heritage or even trace their family roots.

The domain will be alive with more than 130 market stalls showcasing crafts, local produce and Celtic-themed goods.

"We're completely oversubscribed," Driscoll says. "We've had to turn stallholders away. It rivals any big fair for quality."

This year's Chieftain, Michael Fraser Milne of Whisky Galore, embodies the games' spirit of connection and community.

The role of Chieftain dates back to when Scottish clans gathered to test their strength and skill under their leader's watchful eye.

At Hororata, it's more about

Craig Manson competing in the hammer throw event at the Hororata Highland Games. PHOTO MURRAY IRWIN



celebrating community and shared heritage.

A proud Greendale local and lifelong whisky aficionado, Milne has supported the games since their inception, bringing authentic Scottish spirit - literally - through his whisky collaboration.

"Michael and Whisky Galore have been part of the fabric of the Hororata Highland Games since day one," Driscoll says. "His dedication and warmth make him the perfect ambassador."

Born from the desire to rebuild after the earthquakes, the games continue to funnel all proceeds back into community projects.

Nineteen local groups raise around \$30,000 each year through

their involvement, supporting schools, sports clubs and heritage initiatives.

The Trust is also working to restore the 1890 Hororata Hall, transforming it into a vibrant community hub for generations to come.

"If our sports clubs, schools and groups are thriving, then our community is thriving," Driscoll says.

The Hororata Highland Games will be held at the Hororata Domain on Saturday, November 8. Tickets are \$25 plus booking fee, under-16s are free.

Tickets must be purchased online at www.hororatahighlandgames.org.nz.

www.hororatahighlandgames.org.nz



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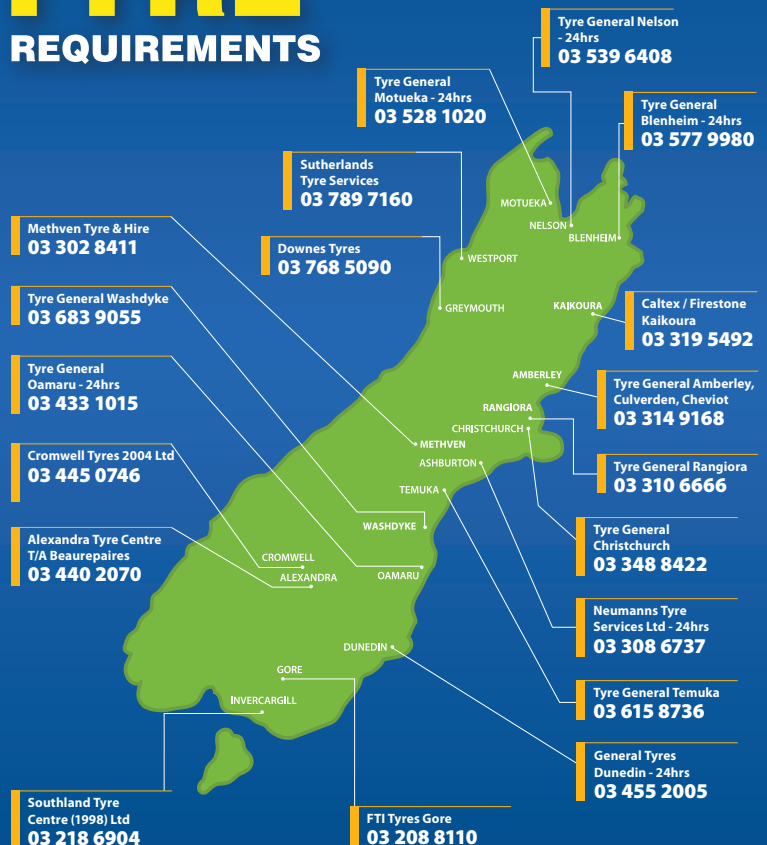


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Young Farmers are the future of New Zealand agriculture, so each issue we shine a spotlight on a Young Farmers' Club member. Today we chat to Morrinsville-Ngarua Young Farmers Club member Jack Daines.

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

My club is Morrinsville-Ngarua Young Farmers and I have been a member for two and a half years.

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

The highlight for me joining young farmers has been creating friendships with like-minded people who are motivated and inspiring to be around.

The benefits for me are having a place to get off farm, go and experience new things, all while being surrounded by people who can relate to me and my day-to-day life.

3 How did you become involved in agriculture?

I grew up on a dairy farm for most of my life then moved in to town during my high school years before eventually ending up back on a dairy farm working for my Dad.

4 What is your job now?

Currently I am in my first year of contract milking, it is a flat 44-hectare farm milking 210 cows through a 14 a side herringbone.

I am thankful to the farm owners for taking a chance on a younger farmer as I was 22 when I started here. I haven't been fired yet, so I am doing alright.

Before this I had only worked for my parents across two farms 330 cows and 380 respectively, I found it a great way to get to know my parents as an adult.

I was able to learn a lot and take on a lot of responsibilities that have prepared me well for taking on the next step into contract milking.

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

I think the future of farming will continue to be shaped by technology, streamlining farming processes and making

it easier to put emphasis on the minor details, thus keeping our cows fatter and happier.

6 What are your future plans?

In the future hopefully not too far in the future I'd love to own my own herd, being able to go out every day to work with, look after, care for a herd that is mine and is going to stick around with me is a very appealing narrative.

Also, my future plan is to travel to the Northern Hemisphere and experience some of the cultures and history that side of the world has to offer, and luckily their summers line up with our dry season.

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

My Dad has always been my biggest inspiration in farming as he has always been there and still is there to guide me and stop me making the mistakes he made during his farming career. He has a very calm and trusting way of teaching that has shown me how to be a good farmer and a good boss.

Our club has always been a great club with lots of really great people, this year we have an awesome team on the committee who are all really great in their roles and working together to create solutions. People are constantly moving around the country due to the nature of our jobs so no one stays at the club forever, new people are needed to keep the club going. Reaching out to the club and coming along the first time is a terrifying experience, I was once in that position so I know the feeling. I try my best to create an environment that makes people feel welcomed so they will come back a second, a third time and so on. The rest of the committee is instrumental in creating events people want to come back to. I got the easy job I just have to talk!

Nomination — Ever since Jack has stood up and taken on the role of New Members Liaison he has just been a gun at it. Since the start of the season we've welcomed 10 new members with Jack making sure they all feel welcomed and part of the club. Besides being amazing at his role he's also been the kind 'uber' driver for one of our members who couldn't drive for a few months which enabled this member to attend and enjoy our catch ups, events and meetings. He's an overall kind soul and it's great seeing members like him getting amongst it and really making a difference for our club.



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POD-LOCK® - preventing small seed crop losses

High value, small seed crops can be very profitable. But, there are a lot of variables to be managed - wind, heat, and even harvest itself can result in shedding (also known as shattering). This means seed ends up on the ground. 10-20% losses are common, while extreme cases can see up to 70% of seed being un-harvestable.

However, there is a technical agricultural solution, which can help.

POD-LOCK has a unique latex polymer blend, which acts like a glue along pod's vulnerable seams. This helps keep the seeds stay in the pod while not impacting senescence, maturity or seed quality.

There are also knock-on advantages if pod shattering can be reduced. Pieter Van Der Westhuizen, UPL NZ Ltd Adjuvant Lead, says POD-LOCK delivers cleaner paddocks post-harvest with fewer volunteer plants germinating from seed loss. "POD-LOCK reduces the seed burden for the following crop."

He says fewer seeds on the ground may also make the small seed crop less attractive to birds. "That's largely anecdotal, from local growers, but it certainly makes sense."

Pieter recommends getting in early with POD-LOCK applications - before seed pods begin opening. Applications can be repeated multiple times without compromising the crop or interfering with harvest times.

"Used in conjunction with desiccants or on its own, POD-LOCK is a useful tool allowing you to better coordinate harvesting around weather events and select the best harvest conditions without fear of compromising yield."

Pieter says POD-LOCK's specialised polymer blend works by forming a pliable netting that dries on the pod, creating a seal that helps keep the pod intact and strengthens the pod wall itself.

"In Mid Canterbury there's often rain followed by dry heat. That's when shedding/shattering can become a real problem. POD-LOCK is a really good tool for maximising harvest yields."

Widely used in the UK, Europe, North America, and Australia, POD-LOCK is gaining strong uptake in New Zealand too.

"It takes away some of the stress and uncertainty around harvest time - as much as that is possible!"

He says with small seed crops for export markets, especially, the stakes are high. "There's a lot of inputs and a lot of spray, resources, and time going into those crops. You don't want to lose a single seed pod, if you can help it. Costs in agriculture and horticulture have also been rising, which makes optimising yield a priority."

Pieter says POD-LOCK is more than paying for itself with ROIs of 50 to 60%. Trials in the UK have shown a 200-500 kg/ha seed saving when the product is used. "When you're looking at a crop yielding 4 tonne/ha that's pretty significant. With POD-LOCK you just don't get those big seed losses."

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



POD-LOCK pod sealer prevents small seed crops from shattering, significantly reducing seed loss.

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

POD-LOCK should be applied in 150-300 L/ha, with 300 L/ha water volume recommended for use on dense crops for maximum benefit. It's effective at such low use rates as it bridges the upper pod suture/seal line. This is the point where the pod starts to split when mature, or when repeatedly wetted and dried. By essentially "sticking" this area together the upper suture is prevented from opening, which prevents seed loss. POD-LOCK does not have to

cover the whole pod to be effective.

The pod sealer does not translocate within the plant but sticks where it lands. And, it has no residue limit; being broken down naturally over time by weathering and sunlight.

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

Talk to your local technical representative for more details on using POD-LOCK - the convenient, effective way to maximise the value of your valuable small seed crops - or contact Pieter Van Der Westhuizen from UPL NZ at 021 392 740.



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The Farmers Fast Five — where we ask a farmer five quick questions about farming and what agriculture means to them. Today we chat to Culverden dairy farmer and Ballance award winner Stuart Neill.

1 What did your journey into farming look like?

I grew up in a family of six children on a 90-cow town supply farm in Coldstream, Mid Canterbury. I went to Lowcliffe School and Ashburton College. I did one year at Lincoln University before deciding to go dairying as the dairying boom took off.

2 Tell us a little bit about your farming operation.

Tracey and I are in an equity partnership in a 640 cow, 223-hectare farm in Culverden, North Canterbury. We are running a low input system with 10 in 7 milkings.

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

Environmental sustainability is our biggest challenge. We are experimenting with systems to be environmentally friendly, sustainable, and profitable.

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

Highlights have been being part of a successful equity partnership for 30 years and in March this year winning the Canterbury Supreme Award at the Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

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

Environmental and financial sustainability and treating people with respect have been the keys to our success.



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A new kind of drill: Boon Ag brings Kiwi ingenuity to seed sowing

CLAIRE INKSON

When Springfield engineer Andrew Gillies decided to step back into machinery design, he knew exactly what he wanted to build: a drill tough enough for New Zealand terrain and smart enough to meet the needs of modern farmers.

"I used to build drills for another company, and later I hired out agricultural equipment, including seed drills," Gillies explains.

A dealer told Gillies they had lost their agent and asked if he had ever thought about building a drill – and for Gillies, who was well aware of the limitations of existing drills on the market, that sparked an idea.

"Over the years, I listened to farmers about their frustrations and started seeing the need for something new. I also missed working in a team, solving problems, and that motivated me to build our own drill."

Six years and lots of trial and error later, the result is the Boon 3m Single and Double Hopper Seed Drill, a locally designed machine that blends durability with innovation and has the potential to change the way Kiwi farmers sow their crops.

"With machinery design, everything has a chain reaction – change one thing and it affects ten others. The drill constantly evolved

from the first drawings to the final build."

The breakthrough: Modular metering

The cornerstone of Boon's design is its patented modular metering system.

This means farmers can slide in different units depending on the job – a concept Gillies says unlocks endless possibilities.

"At the moment, the drill does everything other drills do, but better. Farmers won't need multiple machines or contractors – one drill can do it all."

The modular design has created new options.

A broadcast cassette allows operators to switch from drilling to broadcasting with the press of a button on a wireless tablet, without leaving the cab.

"That's never been done before either," Gillies says.

Built for New Zealand conditions

Designed and tested in Canterbury, the Boon drill reflects Gillies' decades of hands-on experience with Kiwi farms.

It's a heavy-duty, robust build on a galvanised 100x100 box frame with stainless fittings, one-tonne hoppers, and symmetrical axles for even weight distribution.

The custom 60mm S-tyres are

engineered for trash clearance, contour following, and reliable penetration on stony, steep, or wet ground.

"All those weak spots we saw over the years repairing other drills, we've designed out of this one," Gillies says. "It's built to last and built to make life easier."

Farmers will also appreciate the practical features: ram spacers built into the machine so they can't be lost, enclosed metering systems to keep out weather and rodents, and folding treadplates for easy servicing.

Smart technology at work

Equally impressive is the drill's electronics.

At the heart is a waterproof, dustproof, and impact-resistant wireless rugged tablet that controls the machine.

Unlike traditional wired systems, there are no fragile looms running to the cab.

If the tablet fails, a backup touchscreen on the drill itself keeps farmers working.

Calibration is designed to be as simple as using a smartphone. The system walks operators through the process step by step and even offers a double-check function to test accuracy before drilling begins.

Wireless cameras can be added



At the heart of the Boon seed drill is a waterproof, dustproof, and impact-resistant, wireless, rugged tablet that controls the machine. PHOTO SUPPLIED

to monitor hopper levels or metering, all viewed directly on the tablet.

"We've used the technology of 2025, not 20 years ago," Gillies explains. "The electronics even have machine learning built in, adjusting power as it senses changes in the rollers. It's smart, reliable, and easy to use."

Support close to home

For now, Boon Ag is managing sales and support directly from Darfield while building a dealer network.

Electronics partners are also

New Zealand-based, ensuring after-sales help remains local.

"No one's going home until things are solved," Gillies says.

What's next?

While Gillies is keeping some features under wraps, there are further game-changing ideas in the pipeline.

Export markets are a future goal, but for now the focus is on serving New Zealand farmers.

"This drill is just the start," he says.

"It's designed to grow with farmers, to adapt to what they need. That's what makes it exciting."

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Saltwater therapy for the paddock

CLAIRE INKSON

When Stephen Thomson first had the idea for Surfing for Farmers, he never imagined it would grow into one of New Zealand's most celebrated grassroots wellbeing initiatives. What began with a handful of Gisborne farmers hitting the surf in 2018 has now evolved into 25 beach locations nationwide, with farmers ditching Swandri for wetsuits and hitting the water 8,000 times in the last seven years.

Thomson, who works in rural real estate and has a background in farm consultancy, says the inspiration came in the most unlikely way: a rainy Saturday, a new Netflix subscription, and a documentary called 'Resurface'.

The film followed American soldiers with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who found healing through surfing.

"One soldier said, 'Every day I wanted to wake up and kill myself. Now every day I wake up wanting to go surfing.' That was a real penny-drop moment for me," Thomson says.

"I thought, why don't we take farmers surfing? Get them off the farm, give them a breather, and make them happier people."

A few months later he partnered with the Gisborne Boardriders, raised \$12,000 in just over a day, and launched the first session.

Twenty-five farmers showed up. "From that day, we've never looked back."

More than surfing

As a rural professional, Thomson saw firsthand how challenging farming can be and how important it was for farmers to step away, reset, and connect.

"We see farmers turn up grumpy and worn out. But they get in the water, and when they come back up the beach it's all teeth and smiles. It's a game-changer," he says.

The concept is simple: Surfing for Farmers provides the boards, wetsuits, and coaching, followed by a barbecue and refreshments.

It's free of charge, thanks to the support of premier sponsors Rabobank, Ballance Agri-Nutrients, Bayleys, and Fonterra.

"There are no excuses," Thomson says.

"You don't need gear, you don't need to know how to surf, and you don't even need to cook tea that night. Just throw your neighbour in the ute and come along."

Building community

While surfing is the focus, the true magic often happens on the beach afterwards. Gathered around the barbecue, farmers chat, decompress, and share advice.

"We see farmers turn up stressed and grumpy, put on a wetsuit, and then come out of the water grinning from ear to ear."

"It's saltwater therapy, but it's also community. The barbecues afterward are just as important - that's where people decompress, share experiences, and swap advice."



The initiative now has 25 beach locations nationwide.

"Surfing puts people back in a good mindset. They talk, they listen, and they actually retain information. That's when little golden nuggets of advice get passed around," says Thomson.

For Thomson, the measure of success isn't the number of beaches involved, but the growing turnout at each location.

"We don't want to just add dots to the map, we want to see more farmers participating. That's where the real impact lies."

Looking ahead

This season sessions will begin

in late November, run through December, pause for Christmas, and then continue into March and April.

Most events are held on Tuesdays or Thursdays, though times vary by region.

Grassroots at heart, Thomson is determined to keep the initiative simple, inclusive, and community-driven.

"As long as farmers keep turning up with a smile, we'll keep doing it."

For more information and to find your nearest session, visit surfingforfarmers.com.



The documentary 'Resurface' inspired Stephen Thomson to launch Surfing for Farmers in 2018. PHOTOS SUPPLIED



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Inovata got to work, registering the product and conducting trials on the very farm that initiated the request demonstrating that the formulation elevated selenium levels for up to six weeks post-treatment.

Selenium deficiency is widespread across New Zealand and pour-on treatments have long been a favourite among beef, dairy, and deer farmers. It's a simple, reliable way to boost selenium levels — especially around critical times like mating. With the feedback we've received, there's hardly a class of stock that doesn't benefit.

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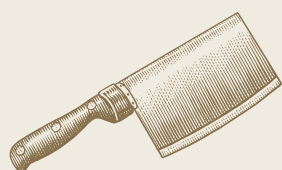


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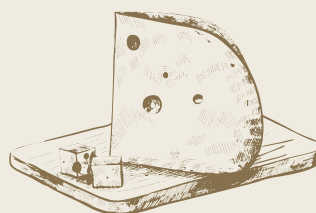
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Makikihi Country Hotel crowned South Island Country Pub of the Year

Makikihi Country Hotel managers Daniel Lewis and Belinda Coco have focused the pub on quality food and accommodation.
PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON



The Makikihi Country Hotel opened its doors in 1929 after the original building burned down. Since then, it's been the hub of the rural community.



Claire Inkson
RURAL EDITOR

The humble country pub has long been more than just a place to grab a cold one.

In many rural communities, it is the beating heart of social life, connection, and resilience.

That spirit was on full display during the Rural Guardian's inaugural South Island Country Pub of the Year competition, which drew more than 5,000 votes and ignited local pride from Nelson to Southland.

When the votes closed, the Makikihi Country Hotel emerged as the winner with an impressive 1,200 votes, closely followed by Donegal House in Kaikōura on 963 votes.

Makikihi Country Hotel co-manager Belinda Coco said the win was both a surprise and a validation of their commitment to being more than a pub.

"It was so nice to have something just for country pubs," she said. "These places don't always get a look in when the big hospitality awards come around."

A changing pub landscape

Coco and co-manager Daniel Lewis took over the Makikihi Country Hotel nearly eight years ago, at a time when several nearby pubs were closing their doors.

"Back then, a lot of pubs still relied on the old model of late nights and high bar sales," said Lewis. "Those days are gone. You've got to evolve."

The couple restructured the business around quality food, accommodation, and a welcoming atmosphere that caters to both locals and travellers — a shift they believe has been key to their survival.

"People are looking for good meals in a relaxed environment now," said Coco. "You can't just pour beer and hope for the best."

The modern rural hub

For locals, Makikihi is more than a hospitality venue - it's a support system.

"It brings the community together," said Coco. "People come here to talk, to catch up, to meet new faces. It's a safe place to go when you need company."

Lewis sees the pub as a kind of informal network for rural life.

"If you need someone to help out on-farm, chances are you'll find them here. It's still the old-school marketplace before Facebook."

Regular patron Michael Simpson agrees. "It's exactly what a country pub should be," he said. "Great food, a loyal team who know your name, and a Friday night when you can't find a spare seat."

Another regular, Anna Miles, says the pub has a role in seasonal wellbeing in the farming community.

"During calving or after long wet weeks, people know they can come here for a proper meal and a good chat."

The hotel's 12 accommodation rooms are heavily used during the working week, particularly by truck drivers and agricultural workers.

Weekends bring a mix of families, local events and casual diners.

A celebration of small-town resilience

Runner-up Donegal House in Kaikōura also received overwhelming support.

"It was so exciting watching the votes," said co-owner Kate Lawson. "We're out of town, so people make a real effort to come here. I think that made our locals really proud."

Lawson says the competition resonated because it was decided by the patrons themselves.

"So many awards are judged by panels who haven't even set foot in the place. This one was the people speaking."

That sentiment was echoed by Jody Macdonald, co-owner of The Fort Enfield in North Otago.

"We're all in it together," she said. "Running a country pub isn't easy, especially in winter, so it meant a lot to feel supported."

"We just want to thank everyone who took the time to vote and, more importantly, everyone who

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Makikihi Country Hotel managers Daniel Lewis (left) Belinda Coco and Troydon Lill from New Zealand food distribution company Service Foods who sponsored the competition.

Makikihi Country Hotel managers Daniel Lewis and Belinda Coco appreciated the competition as a way to recognise how integral country pubs are in rural communities.



While the beers are still on-tap, Makikihi focuses on good hospitality and quality food.



Die-hard Makikihi locals Micheal Simpson, Anna Miles (middle) and visiting tourist Yvette Pin say Makikihi Country Hotel is "exactly what a pub should be."



Donegal House in Kaikōura came a close second with 963 votes.



supports us throughout the year. We love having people here at The Fort — it means a lot to us."

Many publicans across the country were quick to congratulate Makikihi when the winner was announced — a reminder that rural hospitality is as much about collaboration as competition.

"It is not about competing against each other, it is about backing each other," Macdonald said.

Sponsored with local heart

The competition was supported by Service Foods, who provided a \$500 credit to the winning pub and a \$100 hamper, awarded to voter Rebecca Machado.

Troydon Lill, South Island general manager for Service Foods, said supporting the competition aligned with the company's values.

"We started as a small business too," he said. "We know what it's like to go up against the big corporates. These pubs are doing the same — serving their communities with heart."

Looking ahead

For Makikihi, the next steps

include expanding their catering services and exploring the possibility of extending their accommodation after consistently turning away weekday bookings.

But for now, the focus is on celebrating with the people who made the win possible.

"We celebrate with our locals every day," said Coco. "This just makes it a bit more special."

Lewis says the win has also given their staff a boost.

"It shows we're heading in the right direction. They're a huge part of why this place works."

More than a title

As the team prepares for a community celebration, there's a sense that the competition has done more than crown a winner - it has reminded people why country pubs matter.

"They're places where you're known," said Simpson. "Where you can walk in alone and have a good conversation. Every town needs one."

The final word belongs to Coco: "Thank you to everyone who voted: not just for us, but for all the small pubs out there. Keep supporting local. These places keep communities connected."



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What makes a good

Dr Emma Pettigrew says there are two main aspects buyers look at when choosing a ram: looks and books. PHOTO SUPPLIED



DR EMMA PETTIGREW

Something has always been interesting to me is watching people making big decisions at ram (and bull) buying times. I'm sure there could be an entire PhD written on this topic. Everyone is different, has different needs for their own farming situation, and has a different perspective on what is good or not.

After four and a half years working at one of the largest ram studs in New Zealand, I have seen my fair share of ram-buying decisions being made on the spot. Here are some observations I have made of private treaty purchases during this time. Buyer behaviour at auction would need a much longer article!

The difference between what your eyes and the data might be telling you

To begin with, there are two main things a buyer is looking at when deciding on where to put their genetic investment: looks and books. While both aspects need to be regarded during the selection decision, a balance is essential. A ram with all of the figures but shocking feet isn't a sound choice

(although hopefully these have been culled prior to the point of sale). Similarly, a fantastic-looking ram with shocking figures won't be doing your flock any favours genetically.

Soundness vs appearances

The 'looks' part of the equation refers to the visual aspects of the sheep. Generally, this is focused on the structural soundness of the ram. However, there are also some physical traits that are merely a preference. While you do want to like the look of the sheep you are farming, this isn't something that has any monetary value. Interestingly, I see many farmers discarding rams that are structurally sound and have great figures but have a small, non-productive failing, like too much (or not enough) wool on the head.

There are always more rams presented for sale than ordered, so you have to narrow it down somehow! From what I have seen, about 80% of farmers go through the rams physically first, eliminating off-types, based on their personal preferences, before even looking at the numbers. Plenty of really good sheep get removed at this point. After picking out the rams

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ram-buying decision?

they like the look of, these farmers generally put them up the race, and go through the numbers next, to narrow it down further.

Making sense of the data

Now comes the 'books' part of the equation. Being a person of science, I regard this as the more important of the two (within reason, assuming that the rams available for sale are structurally sound). The figures that come with the ram indicate the impact he will have on the lambs he produces and, if ewe lambs are retained, the future of the flock.

Making sure your ram breeder displays the information you require is the first step. There is always more information than what can fit onto a piece of paper or XR5000 screen, so if the information you want to be displayed is a bit more niche, make sure you request it in advance.

The next step is understanding what the information means. There are a lot of numbers presented, which can all be a bit daunting if you are unfamiliar with them:

- **Raw data:** A lot of studs will present birth rank, weaning weight, autumn weight, muscle scanning data, and possibly fleece weight or shedding score. Keep in mind that this data has not been adjusted or transformed in any way, shape or form to indicate

the genetic potential of this animal for this trait. It can be handy information to have, but decisions on genetic merit should largely ignore this data.

- **Breeding values:** Next come the estimated breeding values (EBVs). The programmes that run genetic evaluations (eg SIL in New Zealand and Sheep Genetics in Australia) have a giant algorithm running that knows the pedigree of each animal, all the performance records for the animal and their relatives, and correlations between specific traits. With all of this information, it gives an estimate of the genetic merit of the individual for each trait: the EBV. An EBV relates back to the base sheep (this might be the average in a standard year, or the average at the point the recording of the trait began). The more complete the recording is for the animal and its relatives, the more accurate the EBV predictions are.
- **Indexes:** There are a series of indexes and sub-indexes that take relevant EBVs and their relative economic value (REV) to give one value you can use to rank animals in relation to an overall objective. For most rams for sale, the overall index is what they are ranked on, often determining the price paid for these rams.

Now, I would suggest that using the standard index alone for selecting superior animals should be done with caution. It is easy for an individual who is highly superior in a trait with a relatively high REV to be falsely inflated to 'good' in the index, when they are poor/average in all other traits. Looking at the EBVs of traits that are especially important to you is much more accurate in selecting rams that are more beneficial to your flock. However, adding more than two to three traits of importance into these decisions, especially while you are in the yards with a large book of numbers, can make things more than a little difficult.

On top of that, visual biases always come into effect here. We have a lot more in common with magpies than you may think, naturally favouring the big shiny looking thing, regardless of the information available. If I had a dollar for the number of times I have heard someone debating with themselves, 'He's a little bit down in the weaning weight EBV, but he looks exceptional now,' and talk themselves into taking the ram, I might be able to afford a house as a millennial.

The value of pre-screening

One of my personal favourite selection methods is the people

who sit down with the figures before even looking at the sheep. They usually go through a few traits of particular importance, cross off the one or two at the bottom end of each trait, or remove any that are particularly out of bounds across multiple traits. They will also usually highlight the odd one or two that have great figures for the traits of interest. Keep in mind, this may not be reflected in the overall index. From this quick look at the numbers, they generally don't even look at the rams that have been crossed off, so there is no visual bias occurring.

Last year, we took sale rams to the South Island, and my printing facilities were non-existent (we still had all the information readily available on the laptop). This meant that a couple of clients who usually buy their rams on the data-first method changed their routines and selected who they liked the look of prior to looking at the data. As we put the rams up the race for one of them, he asked if he could see the data on all of the sheep that he was selecting from.

In that data, he found one with exceptional CarLA values and a couple of other favourable traits. Off we went to find that ram, one that had been cast out already for being a little dumpy with too much wool on the head. Our South Island sales guy asked what in the hell we were putting a peg on that ram for

(he did not match the type that had already been selected at all). But, Nigel was in love! So he put two pegs on him while he decided on the others, and took him home to breed some worm resistance into his flock.

Do what works best for you and your flock

Ram selection processes definitely sit on a very wide spectrum. I have seen someone pick 20 rams in under five minutes by putting exactly 20 pegs on the first 20 things that looked like sheep. Job done! Only a few days later, I spent about 20 minutes with someone tossing up between two practically identical rams, where one was a smidge higher for weaning weight, and the other was half a smidge higher for fertility. In the end, he picked the one that was closer to him in the race, and therefore easier to put the final peg on.

So, what does your ram-buying technique say about you? How is it impacting the future of your flock?

Ultimately, as long as the ram is structurally sound and has figures that align with the breeding objectives specific to your flock, he should be a good match. Just make sure you get the balance right.

Dr Emma Pettigrew is senior livestock consultant for NeXtgenagri

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Mt Harding Creek: A Community Effort to Protect a Vital Waterway

STEVE VEIX

A creek on the north side of Ashburton is uniting the community through the Mt Harding Creek catchment group, formed in late 2023. Sparked by a meeting hosted by the Mid Canterbury Catchment Collective and Ashburton Lyndhurst Irrigation Scheme, the group emerged from local interest in the creek's future.

After several meetings, the group developed a three-part vision to improve the creek's future:

1. **Flowing Water** — ensuring water continues to flow for future generations.
2. **Landowner Autonomy** — enabling landowners to address drainage issues.
3. **Urban-Rural Connectivity** — fostering collaboration to improve creek health.

The group's formation coincided with Ashburton District Council's announcement to phase out district stockwater races last year. Mt Harding Creek, historically used for stockwater, faces potential ecological, drainage, and biodiversity impacts from this change. Environment Canterbury scientists predict the creek won't flow reliably without stockwater supplementation.

In response, the group has submitted feedback to council, advocating for environmental flows via stockwater and requesting discussions on drainage

concerns. The group is seeking a holistic, long-term approach to protect the creek and awaits with interest what the new council decides.

Surface waterways in Ashburton and Tinwald Domain rely on stockwater for amenity purposes, and the group hopes similar support will be extended to Mt Harding Creek, given its ecological and recreational significance to Methven and surrounding rural areas. Drainage is another major concern. Stockwater races help manage overland flow across the plains. As these are filled in, stormwater and flooding risks increase, especially with limited waterways north of the Ashburton River. The catchment group urges thorough investigation before any final decisions are made.

Mt Harding Creek also enhances local amenity and recreation, particularly along the Methven walkway near Thyme Stream subdivision and Mt Harding Road. Investments by landowners and the Methven Lions in riparian planting have created a peaceful environment for locals and visitors, which could be compromised by reduced water flows.

The Mt Harding Creek catchment group emphasizes the importance of collaboration and understanding among all stakeholders. Our aim now is to engage with the newly elected Ashburton District councillors and the mayor to ensure sustainable outcomes that safeguard the creek's future.

Steve Veix is Chairman of the Mt Harding Creek Catchment Group



Mt Harding Creek, historically used for stockwater, faces potential ecological, drainage, and biodiversity impacts. PHOTO SUPPLIED

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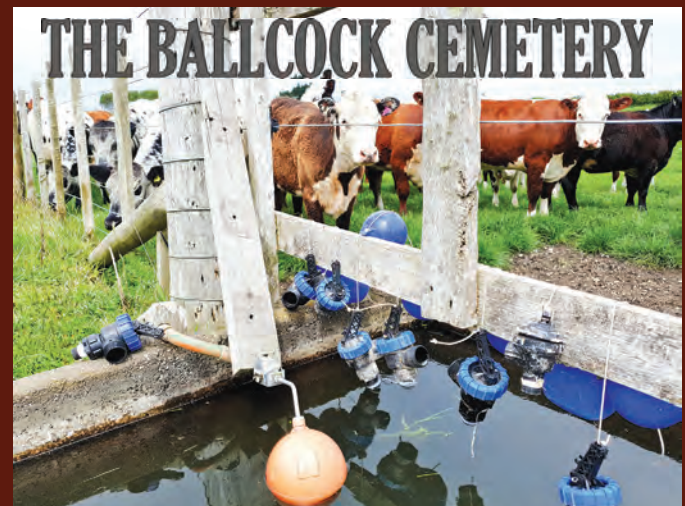
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Hunting for the next 10%

EVA HARRIS

There's an old saying that 80% of people think they're in the top 20% of performers. It's human nature. But are farmers any different? Fonterra tells us we're the most efficient producers of dairy protein in the world. Yet recent water quality results suggest there's still room to improve. So how efficient are we, really?

The tricky thing about "data" is you can make it say what you want. Take the often-quoted link between nitrates in drinking water and bowel cancer. It's frequently repeated, but when ESR reviewed all the available research, they found the evidence to be inconclusive — even "unlikely" — given how little of our nitrate intake comes from drinking water. With so much data available, it's easy for vested interests to pick and choose the figures to suit their argument.

So who can you believe when science seems to conflict at every turn? The truth is, we can't be certain. Farming has always meant operating under uncertainty — weather, prices, regulations — and focusing on what we do know and can control can take us a long way.

Even if you're already doing well, there's always something you can do to be better. Think of the likes of Richie McCaw or Sam Whitelock — did they ever leave the field without thinking about what they could do better? High performers don't see improvement as a task to finish; it's a mindset.

That mindset is just as important when it comes to environmental performance. Which brings us to the idea of hunting for your next 10%.

Every input on your farm that doesn't end up in your product — fertiliser, feed, or water — is likely lost to the environment. Chasing better environmental outcomes is simply good business. You're saving money on what might otherwise be washed or "farted" away.

It's easy to believe you're already in that top 20% and keep can doing what you've always done. In some ways, the system even rewards that behaviour. Water take consents, for instance, are based on historic use — meaning less efficient users can get access to more water. Farms with higher nitrogen baselines or winter grazing "rights" tend to have higher land values, regardless of the impact they have on their catchment. And when reduction targets are announced, some farmers hold back easy improvements so they can "keep something up the sleeve" for later, protecting land value in the meantime. From a business point of view, that's understandable — but it doesn't move us forward.

As we move into a new era of freshwater regulation, it's time to shift that mindset. Real progress depends not on the top 20% getting even better, but on the 80% understanding where they truly stand — and rewarding, not hindering, those who keep hunting for their next 10%.

*Eva Harris,
Principal Environmental Advisor,
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From the calf shed to the vet truck: Delilah Flavell's life with cows

CLAIRE INKSON

From sneaking out in her pyjamas as a child to feed calves on a neighbour's farm, to becoming one of Franklin's most trusted veterinary technicians, Delilah Flavell's story is one of hard work, determination and a lifelong love of dairy farming.

Although her parents were not farmers, Delilah grew up next to a dairy property in rural South Auckland. The pull of the paddock was strong from the start.

"I'd sneak out in my pyjamas and help feed the calves," she says. "My first job was test spraying, and I got paid a \$2 coin. That's how it all started."

What began as small jobs around the neighbourhood soon turned into regular weekend work, and eventually full-time employment on farm.

Delilah spent several years dairy farming before deciding to take her career in a slightly different direction.

From milking shed to veterinary technician

"Dairy farming can be full on, especially when you're young and working every day without a break," she says. "I already had a good relationship with Franklin Vets, so I started helping out casually, not even paid at first, and that eventually turned into a full-

time job."

Now a full-time veterinary technician with Franklin Vets, Delilah still milks on weekends and never strays far from the cows she loves.

The job gives her the best of both worlds: a chance to work hands-on with animals, while also supporting farmers and their herds.

"Some clients only request me because they trust me with their animals," she says. "That's a pretty special feeling."

Finding her place in a male-dominated industry

Working in an industry still dominated by men has not always been easy.

Delilah says she has often had to prove she is just as capable as any of her male colleagues.

"I'd just figure out a different way to get the job done. Sometimes my way even worked better."

Her determination has not gone unnoticed.

Once her family saw how well she handled life on farm, they were fully supportive, and now her younger sister is following in her footsteps, spending every spare moment working with cows too.

Changing the narrative online

Delilah's passion for dairy

extends beyond the farm gate.

What started as a way to share photos and snippets of her day-to-day life has grown into a social media following of thousands, along with a brand ambassadorship with Kaiwaka Clothing.

"I never expected that," she says. "I just wanted to share what I love: cows, sunsets, the day-to-day of farm life. It's a nice way to show people that farming is about care and connection."

While she chooses not to post the more difficult moments, she sees social media as a valuable way to educate people about modern dairy farming.

"Some people think what we do is terrible, but the way we farm here is the best for the animals," she says.

"I like to focus on showing the positive, like calm, curious cows and the reality of farm life."

One of those cows, Clover, has been part of her life since she was a calf-club heifer 14 years ago.

Clover has now retired but remains firmly part of the family.

"I dried her off for good last year, but she's still my pet," Delilah says.

Building trust and connection

What Delilah enjoys most about her work is the trust she has built with farmers and the relationships



Delilah Flavell spent several years dairy farming before making the switch to becoming a vet technician.

PHOTOS SUPPLIED



Although her parents were not dairy farmers, Delilah Flavell's passion for the industry blossomed at a young age.

Looking ahead

Delilah is not one to plan too far ahead.

She is content living in the moment and seeing where her career takes her next.

"If the right farming job came along, I might go back full-time," she says. "But I love being a vet tech. I still get to be out on farms and part of the community, and I get my weekends."

Wherever she ends up, one thing is certain: Delilah Flavell's dedication to the dairy industry, her care for animals and her determination to tell the good stories of farming will keep her firmly at the heart of rural New Zealand life.

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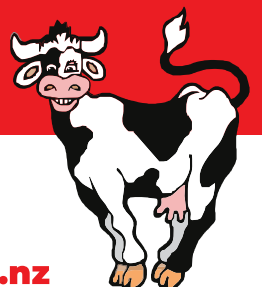
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Power and pedigree at

Fourth generation dairy farmer Olivia Cahill on Sherraine Holsteins' Swannanoa property. PHOTO SUPPLIED



The herd's efficiency allows a lower stocking rate with high output, aligning with environmental goals and animal welfare..



Claire Inkson

RURAL EDITOR

When fourth-generation dairy farmer Olivia Cahill walks into the rotary, every cow is known by name, number and lineage.

That's because each cow carries more than a century of family breeding behind it.

This winter, Olivia and her

husband Jared took a bold step, shifting the historic Sherraine Holsteins stud from Ohoka to a larger property at Swannanoa, doubling their herd and creating a platform for the next generation.

"It has been a huge move, but everything about it feels right," Olivia says.

"We were milking 180 cows at Ohoka, and we've hit 400 here already. We're aiming for 500 next season."

The Ohoka property is still managed by Olivia's parents, Peter and Rhonda Sheriff, who have run the stud for the past 35 years.

"Dad helps out when I need him with the day-to-day running of the new farm," Olivia says.

The 191-hectare Swannanoa farm features a 60-bale rotary with DelPro automation, a large feed pad and centre-pivot irrigation.

"We've always been big feeders of our cows," Olivia says. "The more we put in, the more they give out."

Building a modern Holstein operation

Sherraine Holsteins is built around performance and type. "It's about dairy character and capacity to milk," Olivia says. The herd's efficiency allows a lower stocking rate with high output, aligning with environmental goals and animal welfare.

The couple run a winter-milk, split-calving system that suits their



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- **Kate Mackersey**,
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Sherraine Holsteins

infrastructure and the Holsteins' work ethic.

"There's no pressure for a cow to get in calf every year," Olivia says. "If she goes 18 months, that's fine. They keep milking."

Every cow carries a SmaXtec bolus that tracks rumination, temperature and water intake, alerting them to issues before they show. "It even tells us how much a cow is drinking," she says. "You can catch problems early."

Their herd is managed by a small, capable team.

"It's a one-person shed," Olivia says.

"We've got Emma, who's fantastic, and Ash, a university student who helps on weekends. It works well for feeding calves and keeping things running smoothly."

The new farm's setup also supports efficient nutrient management.

Effluent is separated and recycled through a bladder system that flood-washes the yard, and lined feed pits ensure tidy, contained storage.

"It's very well set up," Olivia says. "Everything is easy to manage and environmentally sound."

Family, firefighting and farming life

For Jared, a full-time Christchurch firefighter, the move has meant taking a year off to help with the expansion.

"It's a big change," he says. "But the kids are older now, and it's easier to juggle."

This winter, Olivia Cahill and her husband Jared took a bold step, shifting the historic Sherraine Holsteins stud from Ohoka to a larger property at Swannanoa, doubling their herd and creating a platform for the next generation.



Their children, Tom (10) and Isobel (7) have grown up around cows and shows. "They're great helpers," Olivia says. "They love it."

The couple's passion for showing continues at the Christchurch A&P Show, where their Holsteins have won Supreme Champion six times in the past nine years.

"Dad has showed at Christchurch A&P his whole life," says Olivia.

Star cow Evie has taken the top award twice – in 2022 and 2023.

"We've just started preparing this year's team," Olivia says. "They get a special program and a lot of hands-on time."

Olivia says being a woman in dairy no longer feels unusual.

"There are women everywhere doing it now," she says. "We can do the hard work, the milking, the

calving, and still be mothers to our children. We can do it all."

The next generation of Sherraine

The move to Swannanoa represents the next stage of the Sherraine story.

"This is what we worked for," Olivia says. "A modern rotary, good infrastructure, and the chance to

keep improving our cows."

Her advice to young breeders is simple.

"Be passionate about what you do. Breed better cows each generation and remember it's a long-term game. It won't happen overnight"

Jared agrees. "Don't be afraid to ask for help. There are plenty of good people in the industry willing to share what they know."

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We have owned her since 2019, and the fuel gauge only ever went to halfway then dropped to empty so we had to keep it topped up all the time because you could never remember when you filled it up last and would end up running on fumes.

It went in for its annual WOF and Service and we got a different mechanic in the usual garage, and he fixed it for us.

Now it's a novelty watching the gauge go down below half. I'm not sure if it's the sharemilkers in us or the Scottish not wanting to spend money fixing it.



George (left - 5), Hamish (4) and Fraser (2) with Mum Lynne Ramsay with the family's trusty Ford Courier. PHOTO SUPPLIED

WHAT SONG IS ALWAYS ON YOUR PLAYLIST WHEN YOU'RE BEHIND THE WHEEL?

We have three wee boys and usually a minimum of one is home and out and about with me.

The radio does not work so we have a UE boom in it and the boys pick the tunes.

They vary from 'Nee Naw the

Little Fire Engine' to 'Who Let the Dogs Out' to 'Crazy Frog'.

WHAT'S YOUR ULTIMATE ROADTRIP SNACK WHEN YOU'RE OUT ON THE FARM OR HEADING TO TOWN?

The kids love a snack in the afternoon whilst getting the cows in or feeding the calves.

At the moment the boys are into bite sized salami, apples and bananas.

There's usually a box of crimped chicken shapes in the glove box for those emergency times you end up taking an hour to do a 5 minute job.

WHAT'S ALWAYS ROLLING AROUND IN THE BACK TRAY?

The back tray has a coating of lime flour on it at present from dusting the colostrum break with the duster and some buckets which are used for feeding the calves.

Some reels and standards for doing break fences too.

Then on top of all that there's also the boys pedal bikes and a football.

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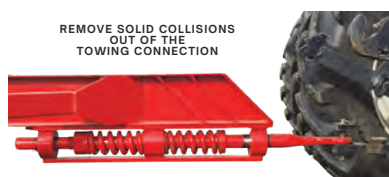
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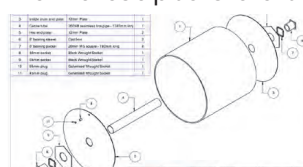


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From Paddock to Page: The Making of Tangleby

Tangleby Gardens has an impressive vegetable patch of raised beds that keep the kitchen well-stocked with seasonal produce for Sue's recipes. PHOTO CLAIRE INKSON



Claire Inkson

RURAL
EDITOR

When Sue Heazlewood bought a large house and paddock on the outskirts of Christchurch after her divorce, most people thought she was mad.

For Heazlewood, who had spent more than 30 years in property development and earthquake-repair work, the move to Ohoka marked a new beginning.

"I always wanted a big garden," she said. "Everyone thought I was mad coming out here on my own, but I knew what I wanted."

That paddock is now Tangleby Gardens, a manicured property of box hedging, roses and a storybook playhouse that inspired a new career. "I was out there one day and thought, why don't I write a book? My kids loved Peter Rabbit, so I decided to write about the animals that come to Tangleby to live," she said.

That idea became 'Tails of Tangleby', a series of illustrated story cookbooks combining children's tales with family recipes.

"I'd never thought of writing before, but I loved it," she said. "I've now done eight books in just over three years."

In 2023 her work was recognised at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards in the Middle East, where she received two top honours.

'A Table at Tangleby' was named Best Entertaining Cookbook in the World, and 'Tails of Tangleby 2' won Best Children's Cookbook in Oceania.

"It was amazing," Heazlewood said. "Andre Cointreau from Le Cordon Bleu came up to me and said, 'I really enjoyed your presentation, and I'm keeping a close eye on you.' "That business card has pride of place."

Living with chronic pain

Success has come despite ongoing health challenges.

Diagnosed with fibromyalgia in 2007, Heazlewood has learned to manage chronic pain and fatigue.

"It took me a long time to learn how to manage it," she said. "I fought it at first, but I've learned I need structure. I go to bed at seven,



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Sue's cookbooks have won international awards, with timeless covers that make them a heirloom piece for any kitchen.

PHOTOS CLAIRE INKSON



The kitchen where Sue creates and styles recipes for her cookbooks.



Sue's children's books are a unique mix of stories and recipes.



The Tangleby cats feature in Sue's children's books.

sleep ten to eleven hours, and lie down after lunch. I liken myself to a mobile phone, I need charging."

Her partner, Don Auckram, helps keep that balance.

A former safety manager and educator, he now manages the business and marketing for Tangleby.

"I do all the design, advertising and SEO, the stuff that lets Sue focus on creating," Auckram said. "We've learned everything ourselves. One day you post something online and nothing happens; the next you hit 14,000 views."

The Tangleby enterprise

Together they have built a self-publishing business that supplies around 250 retailers across New Zealand.

"Gift shops are phenomenal," Auckram said. "Bookshops can work too if they display them properly."

Heazlewood stages every photo shoot, baking the sweets, styling the food and working alongside photographer Neil Smith and illustrator Jane Smith. "I want the books to last," she said. "That's why you'll never see my face on a cover. I don't want them to date."

Rooted in community

For all the international attention, Heazlewood says her joy lies close to home.

"I absolutely love this community," she said. "Everyone looks out for each other. The kids in the street helped test my first recipes. They gave me scores out of ten, so they feel part of it too."

Events at Tangleby have become part of local life.

The annual Easter egg hunt draws families from across the district. "The Easter Bunny hides over a thousand eggs around the garden," Auckram said. "Last time we had 160 people here. It just

keeps growing."

Heazlewood also runs an online subscription club offering monthly recipes, children's activities and garden tips.

Members receive exclusive content, discounts and invitations to events.

"It has become a lovely community," she said. "People feel proud of what they make."

A new chapter for a good cause

Heazlewood's next project is a charity cookbook created with Bayleys Real Estate to support Plate Up for a Purpose, which raises funds for The Salvation Army to help children in need.

"I'll be taking inspiration from the restaurants that have supported the charity for the past six years," she said. "The book will have over 80 recipes, all ideal for

entertaining at home."

The project will take about five months to write, photograph and edit, and is due for release in August 2026. "All profits go to the charity via The Salvation Army to provide kids with school uniforms, shoes and school supplies," Heazlewood said. "No one wants to see any child arrive at school and feel left out."

Looking ahead

Inspired by a visit to Monet's Garden at Giverny in France, Heazlewood hopes Tangleby will endure beyond her lifetime as a

family legacy.

"I don't want Tangleby to be sold," she said. "I want it to carry on in one form or another."

From the outside, Tangleby looks idyllic, but its heart is built on hard work and persistence.

"I never think twice about new ideas," Heazlewood said. "I just move forward."

At Tangleby Gardens, the rows of roses and shelves of books tell the same story: a woman who turned hard ground, pain and perseverance into something generous, imaginative and enduring.

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The Made Up Farmer: Glam meets gumboots in Hawke's Bay



On a crisp Hawke's Bay morning, Ingrid Smith might be found crutching sheep, chasing lambs with her children, or shifting mobs across paddocks.

Her nails are neat, her lashes coated in mascara, and there's usually a slick of long-lasting lipstick in place.

It's all part of the brand she has built - The Made Up Farmer — a social media platform where agriculture meets every day glamour.

"I'm not a full glam girl," Ingrid laughs. "I'm more of a farmer who wears makeup. I want quick, easy looks that actually work on the farm."

Farming roots

Farming runs deep in Ingrid's story.

She grew up in Wairoa on a 3,700-acre sheep and beef farm

where her parents still live.

Today, she and her husband Rowland Smith — a world-champion shearer turned farmer — manage 25-hectares of their own land and lease another 675.

Life is busy, especially with three children: Callie (11), Sia (9), and Lincoln (7).

"Some days I feel like I'm doing lots of things okay, but nothing really well," she admits. "But that's motherhood, isn't it? The kids are part of it all, they help catch sheep, work the dogs, or just play around the bales. It's the same upbringing we had making the best of what you've got."

From lipstick to lifestyle

In 2019, Ingrid began selling SeneGence makeup products as a way to contribute financially while raising young children.

The American brand is known for its famously durable LipSense lipstick, which lasts up to 18 hours.

"I've always loved lipstick, but I hated finding it on my teeth," she says. "This was a game changer, perfect for women who don't want to touch up makeup all day."

At first, Ingrid tried her hand at online tutorials but quickly realised it didn't feel authentic. "I wasn't a tutorial girl. That wasn't me. What people responded to was when I showed farm life alongside

the makeup. That's when my following really grew."

Today, The Made Up Farmer Facebook page has more than 15,000 followers and counting.

Real Life, real following

With the growth has come both encouragement and criticism.

Ingrid admits the negative comments once shook her confidence, but she has since found her stride.

"At first, trolls would really get to me. I'd feel shaky and think, 'Why am I doing this?' But now I call it out. I won't let bullies hide behind a keyboard."

"Sometimes my mum even jumps into the comments to defend me, which I love."

Her posts are authentic and relatable - which resonates with her followers.

"People relate to imperfection, and that's what I show. If there's washing on the floor in the background, so be it. That's real life."

Most of her audience consists of rural women, but the odd man follows along too. "I always say 'Hey ladies,' because that's who I'm here for," she says.

Quick, practical beauty

So, what are Ingrid's farm-

Ingrid Smith's Facebook page has 15,000 followers. She blends gumboots with glamour and showcases practical make-up looks and her life on the farm. PHOTO SUPPLIED



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Ingrid Smith began selling make-up in 2019 to supplement the farm income. PHOTOS SUPPLIED



Ingrid Smith admits the negative online comments once shook her confidence, but she has since found her stride.



Ingrid Smith's relatable authentic posts resonate with her following of rural women.

ready beauty staples? She doesn't hesitate:

"Sunscreen, always. It's the cheapest anti-aging product you'll ever use. Then a tinted moisturiser, mascara, and something nourishing for the lips, like a gloss or oil. Three things, done."

Farming and make-up might seem like an odd mix – but Ingrid doesn't think so.

"Wearing lipstick or having my nails done doesn't stop me farming. Just yesterday we were crutching sheep, and I was still in my mascara and lippy. You can do whatever you want, it doesn't matter what you look like."

Originally trading as Kiwi Kisses, Ingrid rebranded last year.

"I realised I was making it up as I went along – whether it was farming

or makeup. So, The Made Up Farmer just fit perfectly," she says.

Setting boundaries

Running an online platform can be demanding – and Ingrid has learned to keep her screen time in check, which she says can be challenging.

"I remind myself, if I was working for someone else, I couldn't be on

my phone all the time."

Ingrid sets the same screen-time boundaries she instils in her children.

"If someone messages me at 9pm, I don't need to reply until tomorrow."

Looking ahead

Ingrid has no grand blueprint for where this all leads.

For now, she'll continue balancing gumboots and glamour, sharing her unique mix of honesty, humour, and hard-wearing lipstick.

"I'll keep going as long as it adds value for me, for my family, for other women. If it stops doing that, I'll let it go. But I do love it. It shows that you can be both: the girl with the lipstick and the girl driving the tractor."

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No mental health issues? Lucky you

KATHRYN WRIGHT

With Mental Health Week just having past, it's great to see awareness building on the topic – an issue that has always existed, but with more visibility and acknowledgement, comes a perception that problems are increasing.

If you don't struggle with your mental health, that is great. You lucked in when mental health issues were being randomly assigned to around a quarter of the population, or roughly half of us over the entirety of our lives.

But if you haven't had the

misfortune of experiencing a mental health issue, the topic might seem confounding to you, and you may have even gotten tired of hearing about it. It's really hard to see something that isn't there. Are some people just using it as an excuse?

It's difficult to understand something that you do not experience. It's not my job - or anyone's job - to make you understand what it's like to experience mental health problems. But what you can do, is remember these important facts. It is more than likely that someone close to you has some kind of mental health

challenge going on. Or you employ someone. Or work with someone. Or live with someone.

- Mental health exists on a spectrum of mild to severe. There is no one size fits all.
- There will be good days and bad days. Just because today is good, they are not suddenly healed.
- More than one challenge at a time could be going on - depression, anxiety, and anything else, all kinds of combinations.
- They are not choosing to have mental health issues. Who the hell would choose that?!
- People having mental health

problems are not weak - facing it and being honest about their experiences requires real strength.

- No, they can't snap out of it. Can you snap out of a headache? Or a broken leg?
 - Mental health challenges often come with physical side effects such as digestion problems, fatigue, headaches, aches and pains.
- Talking with someone with mental health issues can be really helpful - be respectful and inquisitive. Avoiding the topic won't make it disappear. We can never judge whether a person's issues or problems warrant their



severity of symptoms – it is impossible to tell what kind of reaction and effect a life event may have on someone. And quite frankly, it's unhelpful to try.

False positivity is also ineffectual and unhelpful. Reminding them of all the "good" things in their lives may come from a good place but is more likely to make them feel invalidated than empowered. I'm not saying this can't be done, but first you must acknowledge their pain: "dance in the dark then lead to the light" is when you sit with them and say something like "that must be a really rough thing for you to be going through", before offering helpful suggestions, if that's what they need.

It's not always obvious if someone is struggling with mental health. You may get a shock to hear that someone you know is struggling. People are very good at hiding emotional pain, but we all have a threshold and there is only so much we can take.

Trying to understand their experiences might be a challenge, but either way, you can simply accept that they are struggling and be there for them. Not to problem solve, but just so that they know they're not alone. Anyone is capable of that.

Kathryn Wright is a registered counsellor specialising in rural mental health.
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The new Management team look forward to seeing you soon

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Sienna, Audiologist

Christmas is coming, it is time to start making!

Create advent calendars, stockings and Santa sacks easily with panels. Embellish with buttons, bells, ribbons and more!



Bakewell Blondies

Courtesy of Sue Heazlewood of Tangleby Gardens

Ingredients:

- 250g butter — melted
- 125g sugar
- 125g brown sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 200g flour
- 100g ground almonds
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 200g white chocolate chips
- 250g raspberry jam
- 50g flaked almonds

Makes 16 pieces

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan bake). Line a 20cm square cake pan with baking paper.
2. Cream the butter and sugars together until smooth.
3. Add in the eggs and almond extract and beat again until smooth.
4. Fold through the flour, ground almonds and cornflour. Beat until you create a thick blondie mixture.
5. Fold through the white chocolate chips.
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared cake pan and spread out evenly.
7. Dollop on the jam and lightly swirl through the blondie mixture.
8. Sprinkle over the almonds.
9. Bake for 30–40 minutes or until a skewer comes out clean.
10. Cool the blondie in the pan before cutting into pieces.

Understanding Severe Osteoarthritis (Part 1)

I regularly am contacted by people with severe osteoarthritis, usually in knees, hips and hands. The question is whether anything other than pain relief or surgery can help. In most cases nutritional therapy can help. I have a client with severe knee osteoarthritis. He gets noticeable relief enabling him to continue his physical lifestyle that was becoming increasingly difficult.

Severe osteoarthritis is characterised by significant deterioration of cartilage, the tissue that cushions the ends of bones. This usually results in bones rubbing directly against each other. This leads to pain, swelling, stiffness, and a reduction in joint mobility. People can often feel a grating sensation as the joint moves.

Severe osteoarthritis requires a wider range of supplements at higher doses. Changing to an anti-inflammatory diet will increase chances of results. Before we commence, we need to ensure compatibility of higher dose supplements with prescription medicines, especially blood thinners.

The key supplements we need are, in



order of importance, Chondroitin, Curcumin (from turmeric), Omega 3 Fish oil and Glucosamine. If medications, age and circumstances allow, we start with a very intensive period usually for 12 weeks.

This involves daily doses of Chondroitin 1600mg, 100% water soluble (pepper-free) Curcumin 1200mg, EPA from fish oils 1000mg and Glucosamine 1600mg. This involves 3 different supplements.

Chondroitin sulphate can make a significant difference to joint function. The main benefits come from supporting healthy cartilage secreting cells (chondrocytes) and reducing joint inflammation.

I have seen excellent results from this approach. The benefits can be anything from, like my client, noticeable improvements in comfort and mobility through to people cancelling planned surgery. There are only a relatively small group who have no benefits. The key is to work to a personalised plan with regular reviews.

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.



Abundant Health Bettaflex Super Joint Formula

New enhanced formula

What is Bettaflex?

- Bettaflex is a joint support formula to promote healthy joint cartilage function.
- Bettaflex has 400mg (per capsule) of high-grade avian chondroitin, 400mg of glucosamine and 100mg of BioSolve® bioavailable Curcumin (from turmeric).
- Try Bettaflex for 3 months and see for yourself.

How can Bettaflex help?

- Chondroitin and glucosamine are building blocks of cartilage.
- Supplementation with correct levels can support healthy cartilage function and cartilage repair processes.
- New BioSolve® bioavailable curcumin helps joint function while gentle on the stomach.
- Research indicates that chondroitin is highly effective at 800mg daily.

John Arts comments:

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

John Arts, Founder, Abundant Health

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



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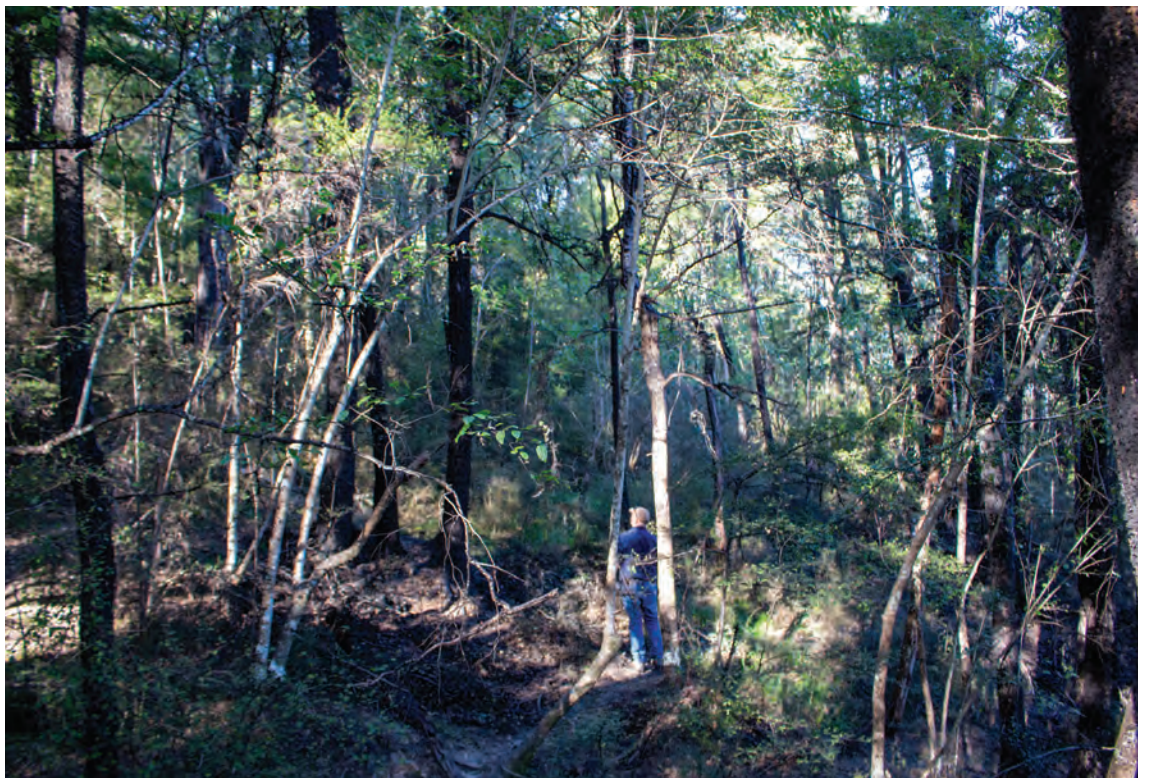
Verity™

Native Carbon Sequestration

Written by Emma Warmerdam, Technician for Verity NZ
based in Methven.



A cross-section of a kāmaka stem.



A protected native forest, the end goal of our projects.

Verity NZ offers a unique option that rewards landowners for the carbon sequestered by their land through the Voluntary Carbon Market. Our projects aim to restore the land back to the native forests and shrublands which were once widespread. We can achieve this restoration through the following project activities.

- Livestock exclusion using fencing to promote natural seedling recruitment.
- Targeted weed and pest control.

- Rotational livestock to support weed suppression and seed-to-soil contact.
- Aerial seeding of native seeds.
- Progressive introduction of pioneer and climax species to enhance ecological succession.
- Using gorse as a nurse crop where it is already well established.

These activities all contribute to native restoration; however, removing browsing pressure through fencing and pest control are two of the

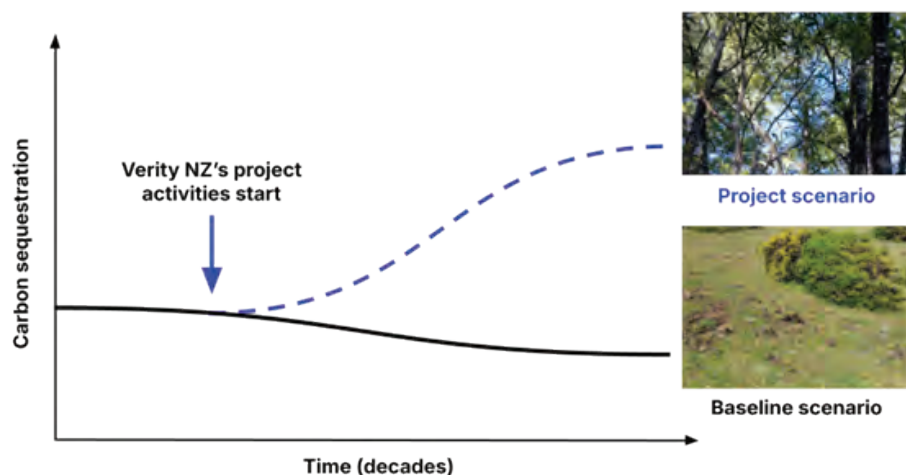
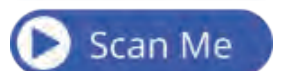
most important steps. This removes the pressures on the land, enabling regeneration and carbon sequestration to take place. The diagram below depicts this. The blue line represents the project scenario, while the black line shows the 'business as usual' baseline scenario where the land continues to degrade.

Carbon is not just stored in the vegetation you see growing aboveground. Belowground biomass (e.g., roots), litter, dead wood, and soil organic carbon all store carbon too, as shown in the diagram below. Verity

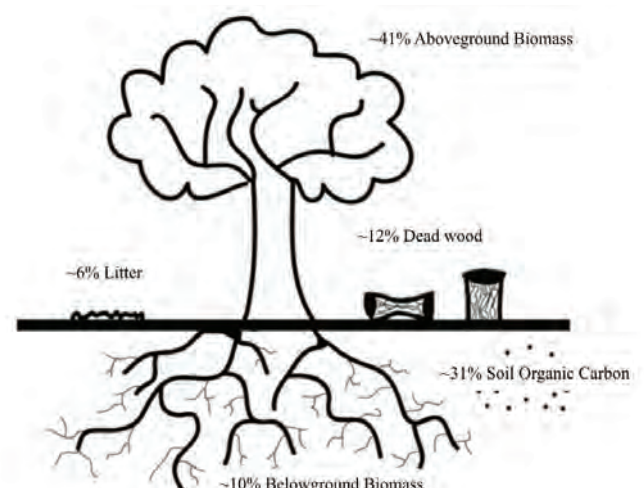
NZ will measure all these pools to accurately track changes over the project lifetime. This ensures carbon credits are earned for all the additional carbon stored by your land.

If this has got you interested, get in touch with our team in Methven for further information. Verity NZ is the genuine one-stop-shop, seed-to-credit company who will deliver for you.

Scan the QR code on the right to watch our new documentary showcasing our restoration projects.



A diagram illustrating carbon sequestration for the project and baseline scenarios.



The carbon pools Verity NZ takes into account.