

WINTER 2021 ISSUE #19

The Gisborne Herald

FROM THE LAND





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Here comes winter

As temperatures get colder and the days shorter, we know winter is just around the corner.

Welcome to our 2021 winter issue of The Gisborne Herald's From the Land — our local farming publication.

In this issue we expand on last issue's discussion around the future potential of wool use with Henry Hansen; we talk to Nina Marshall, whose career path changed from agriculture to horticulture; we get an update on what is happening at Hauiti Blueberries in Tolaga Bay; Penny Wilson tells us about her experience as a young female shepherd in a male-dominated industry; Giuseppe Martelli of Taruheru Nursery tells us about his operation growing citrus, avocado and kiwifruit plants for commercial orchards; we talk bulls in the countdown to the annual East Coast

Bull Sales in June; and Beef + Lamb tells us about its genetics programme.

If you know of an interesting story that we can feature in a future issue please don't hesitate to contact me on 869-0654 or email me at cara.haines@gisborneherald.co.nz

We also welcome feedback and would love to hear from you.



Cara Haines
Features Team Leader

The Gisborne Herald

FROM THE LAND

To advertise in our next issue of FROM THE LAND please phone Jane Smith on 869-0617 or email: jane.smith@gisborneherald.co.nz

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Time management is about energy management

French novelist La Bruyere said: “Those who make the worst use of time most complain of its shortness.”

Bang on I say.

Here’s the thing. All of us are given the same 24 hours every day.

You might be someone who uses their time well or you might be someone who wastes time on the less important tasks just because they are easier to do, or something you want to do, rather than something you need to do.

Maybe rounding up your flock is more fun than spending time doing plate metre walks to measure pasture covers.

Maybe fencing is more enjoyable than entering paddock data into Farmax or FarmIQ.

And maybe duck shooting is more important than spending that time with your family.

It’s your life so they are your own calls and choices. You make your own bed.

When it comes to decisions, we often don’t do the things we know we need to get done, not because we don’t have the time, but because we don’t have the energy.

When we don’t have the energy we can’t get what we need to get things done. This is because we spend time on the things that deplete our energy rather than restore it.

The first thing you can do is get some crap (not all, because we have to be realistic) off your plate that takes precious energy away from you.

Who else can you delegate who might be better at it than you to get it done? Does it need to be done at all? Can it be left and dealt with later?

I was once told: “Focus on the priority of the important not the tyranny of the urgent.”

My coach told me that what’s important doesn’t scream out loud (family, health, time off the farm, exercise), it whispers quietly instead. Often the most important things are

the things you ignore most because it’s the loudest, squeakiest wheel that wins and gets your attention.

There is always something else to do but is it worth doing just because it’s urgent?

Are you fighting the right fires or do you need to let some die out?

So when someone doesn’t do something it’s never a question of time, it’s always a question of priority. They don’t make the time because it’s not seen as a priority.

What they choose to do with their time speaks volumes.

Walk not talk tells you all you need to know.

Where and what they do with their time tells you what their priorities are.

As US steel magnate Andrew Carnegie said: “As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do.”

This Victorian billionaire bloke knew what he was talking about.

You and your farm workers or managers will only do things that link with their deepest desires and motivations. Sit down with them and work out what they want and why. Show why what you’re asking is important. Give them the context so they can see the bigger picture and how they fit into it.

If you are struggling with time management and productivity here are a few tips:

- Run your life by this rule: “If it’s not in the diary it doesn’t get done.”
- Use your diary to focus on your 1-3-5 each day — that is, the one big rock you must do, the three pebbles you need to do and the five small sands you might decide to do (rocks-pebbles-sand in that order).
- Use the Eisenhower matrix so you don’t double-handle things — Do (important and urgent), Delegate (urgent but not important), Defer (important but not

urgent) or Delete (not urgent or important) Remember that not everything that’s urgent is important. Take the time to find a quiet spot and ask yourself:

- How are you valuing your time currently?
- How do you know?
- Are you busy working on the right stuff or the wrong stuff?
- Are you mistaking enthusiasm with effectiveness?
- Are you reacting or responding to events?

Until you start measuring your time, you can’t manage your time.

Start by keeping a time diary for a fortnight. After two weeks take the time to sit down and review what you could have delegated, deferred or deleted.

I’m betting that there are tasks and jobs you can get off your plate and on to the plate of someone else.

Start saying “no more” and set firm boundaries because over-committing yourself can come at a cost.

Good fences make good neighbours, yes? Put strong boundaries in place and block out

thinking time in the diary so you can become more efficient and effective. You can even block out uninterrupted time so you can get more things done.

You could even set yourself a “power hour” first thing in the morning when your brain is fresh and ready to go. I did this and hands down, it’s been my single biggest productivity hack. I do the hardest thinking first (what we call “eat the frog”).

M Scott Peck said: “Until you value yourself, you won’t value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.”

Value yourself and your time. You, your farm and your energy will be better for it.

by St John Craner, managing director of Agrarian, which trains underperforming rural companies how to improve their sales and marketing results. www.agrarian.co.nz



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A display of products made from the wool produced from the new carding machine that has been installed for Allwool Ltd and pictured behind Angus (left), Henry and Nicky Hansen. Their new products include bassinet mattresses, wool futon mattresses, cushions, bean bags, poufs, pillows and blankets. Wool nops, in a bale at front right, is the base product for stuffing and insulation.

Dawn of a new era in wool

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Helping grow the country

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Henry Hansen was always going to step up, follow the generations before him and continue a business started in 1894.

WH Smith Ltd was established by William Henry Smith, Henry's great-grandfather and later became Gisborne Wool Company Ltd.

In the early days it was simply a wool-scouring machine on the banks of the Taruheru River at the property on Haisman Road where Henry and his family now live.

Local farms would send their wool to WH Smith Ltd where, once scoured, it would be shipped to the Bradford Wool Sales in Yorkshire, England.

Barges would come up the river to to collect the bales for the ship anchored in

the bay.

As the only scourer in town, it was a busy and prosperous business.

Wool was a thriving industry for the nation, dominant in trade and boasting quality that was sought-after the world over.

In the early 1980s there were 70 million sheep in New Zealand, often making Kiwis the butt of many jokes albeit in the best of spirits. But things have changed.

The introduction of man-made synthetic fibres in the 1950s heralded a change that while welcomed as a saviour back then is now cursed by many.

Farmers were getting \$8-\$9 a kilogram for strong wool in the 1980s but now at a net \$1 per kilogram, the future is bleak. It costs around \$4.50 to shear a sheep, which

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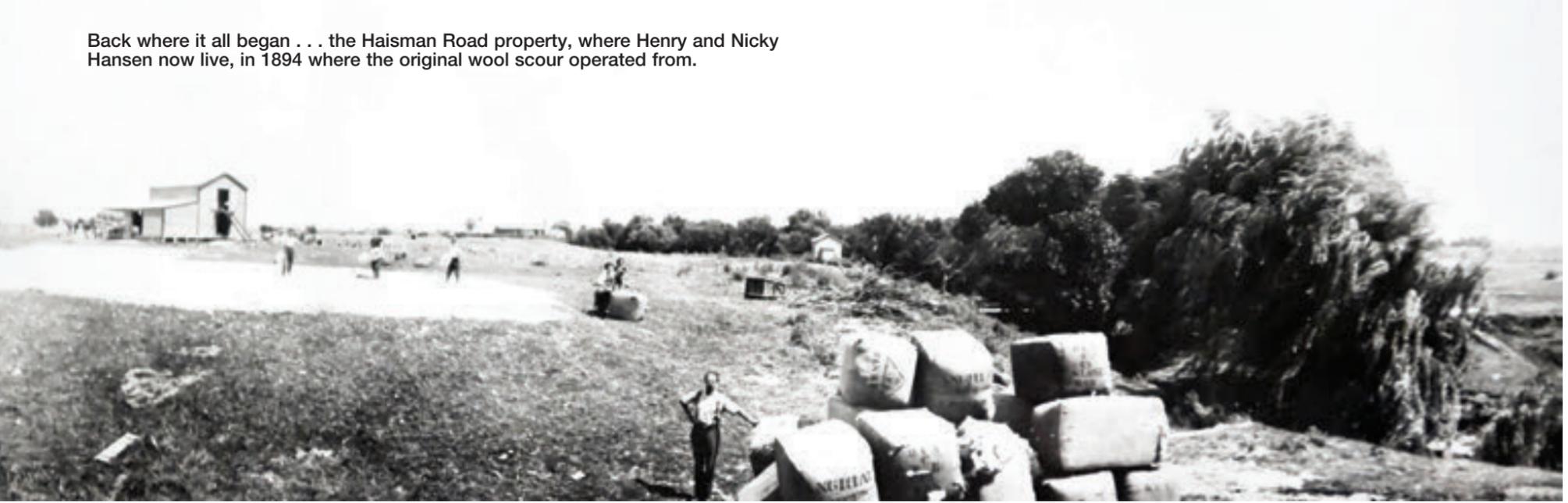
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Back where it all began . . . the Haisman Road property, where Henry and Nicky Hansen now live, in 1894 where the original wool scour operated from.



is done purely for the health of the animal. Where it used to be a valuable by-product of lambs (to eat), it is now a cost borne by the farmer.

“In the 1980s wool boards tried to dictate that the world would continue to pay high prices for our wool, which played right into the hands of the synthetic companies who thought they could nail the wool producers,” Henry says.

“They were right. We let it happen and they did just that.”

This is where Henry’s pioneering spirit kicked in.

“We are an industry in crisis,” he says. “We are now in a situation that if we do not do something in a very short space of time there will be no strong wool industry.”

It is something that keeps him awake at night but for good reason.

Henry, with wife Nicky and son Angus, are stepping into the unknown with their new company Allwool Ltd.

Traditionally, strong wool has been used mainly for textiles and carpets.

“Strong wool is a product that is natural, biodegradable, sustainable, fire retardant and has endless use possibilities,” he says.

Value has to be added to the product to ensure a future, otherwise farmers will start producing non-wool-growing sheep.

Sheep will die if they are not sheared, he says, but the wool they produce is totally sustainable, unlike other products such as plastics.

“They talk about recycling plastic — it should be illegal. Just get it all out of the system.”

Henry says it is heartening to see an environmental renaissance happening around the world.

“People are realising we have made a big

mistake in making so much clothing and other products out of synthetics. It is now getting into the food chain and becoming a massive issue . . . but one we can easily fix by using wool more.

“The world is geared to make and sell synthetics. That comes with huge political and corporate issues, where there are massive companies controlling what we buy and wear.

“We have to get away from that. You can make anything out of wool. It is so versatile and sustainable.

“What have we done in New Zealand agriculture over the last 50 years?”

“We have sold more wool for less. We have been all about volume, pumping out kilograms of every product we can and selling it too cheap.

“Now is the time to change that. We have to sell less for more.”

Nicky and Henry have been delving into non-woven wool products. Already they have imported a new machine from the UK to start making a new insulation product.

And that is just the beginning.

“There are a lot of new products being made from wool but they are small and have appalling marketing,” Henry says. “We have to think bigger.

“There are around 800,000 bales of strong wool produced each year in New Zealand and we should plan to hit the top right-hand corner . . . high end, top-quality products that tell an amazing story.”

Henry wants the local farming community to be part of the journey.

“We want all of the wool farmers in Gisborne to support us. We are not asking for money but we do need their wool to take them along for the ride. We are the only local wool company here so it makes

sense.”

They have plans to build a new factory within the next two years, employ 20-30 local people and create a hub where farmers can meet, chew the fat and solve the problems of the world . . . relatively speaking.

“We want to show school children how amazing wool is and what it means to our region and the national economy.

“We want them to understand how important this is. The scope for this is massive.”

Henry says all too often the chief executives of companies seem to think bigger is best.

“But none of them have the story we do. Our story is totally unique. Our local farmers are the same families my great grandfather dealt with 140 years ago.

“It is a truly unique and international story that, if we are not careful, could be lost to

outside influences and corporate companies.”

Now is the time to do it, he says

“If we don’t it will be another industry that will disappear.”

The Hansens bought their first machine during Covid-19 lockdown last year, which added an extra challenge, but they are already talking about the next . . . and the next.

“We envisage we may need 10 to 12 similar machines.”

Henry is in talks with other investors but his goal is to keep things local.

“It calls for a multimillion-dollar-type investment over the next two years but this should be a legacy business. It isn’t just about us. This company has been going for 140-odd years and we want to know it will go for another 100-plus if it gets that great community grunt behind it.

CONTINUED PAGE 6

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6 FROM THE LAND

“I have not seen the potential of a new wool product that is anything like what we are going to start producing. It is exciting.”

Much will hang on marketing and re-educating people.

“Wool is nature’s cleverness. Everything we buy looks beautiful from the outside but is stuffed with plastic. We only look skin deep.”

The company already has mattresses being used in the The Hotel Britomart, with more ordered.

It has also started producing WiseWool, a 100 percent strong wool insulation product for ceiling spaces in old and new houses.

In July, Allwool will welcome Henry’s nephew, Harry Urquhart-Hay, to head sales of the new manufactured products.

“Covid-19 was actually really helpful for

us. It gave us time to think and we talked and realised how ridiculous it is that we are in this situation with the most perfect product,” Henry says.

“I am very optimistic of the future of trade from New Zealand. The timing is right to export — everyone wants to be in New Zealand.

“This is our moment to shine.

“We have to get out there and make things for the world, not send things to China to be made.”

It is the dawn of a new era for a man who has been around wool all his life. He is like a kid at Christmas talking about the possibilities of this new twist on an age-old product.

“Others may follow us, but none of them have our story . . . and that’s what it all hangs on.”



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WILLIAM HENRY SMITH



From humble beginnings

- WH Smith Ltd wool scourers was established by William Henry Smith on Haisman Road in 1894.
- His son, Albert Smith, was the next to run the business but was called up for duty in World War 2.
- Eva Smith, sister of Albert, married Ruie Hansen and their son Bruce took over the running of the operation when he was just 18.
- As a teenager, Bruce would travel the country to trade wool. He increased the focus on wool trading and the company would buy and sell wool all over the world.
- In 1952, the business was moved to its current site on the corner of Awapuni and Stanley roads largely due to the wells on the property. A growing business, it needed a lot of water to wash the wool.
- Back then there were 35 wool scourers around New Zealand. Now there are just two.
- Bruce’s sons Henry and Andrew took over the running of the business in the 1990s. Andrew as the wool store manager and Henry oversaw the business side of the operation. “It was never really talked about, me coming into the business,” Henry said. “It just happened.”
- In 2016, Gisborne Wool Company joined forces with Fred Tate Wools and became East Coast Wools to ensure continuity of supply.
- There are 26 million sheep in New Zealand — 1.4 million of those are in the Wharekahika/Hicks Bay to Hawke’s Bay area.
- Gisborne produces approximately 34,000 bales of strong wool annually, with over 35 percent of that being traded by East Coast Wools.

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Just what the industry needs



LeaderBrand's Nina Marshall has worked her way up the ladder and is now a supervisor in the salad leaf department.

Nina Marshall is making her way in a predominantly male-dominated industry and impressing plenty of people along the way.

The 20-year-old previously had her heart set on farming and was destined for an agricultural training centre in the Wairarapa, but when that fell through, she had to make a quick change and turned to horticulture.

Nina grew up on a lifestyle block just out of Gisborne on her parents' orchard.

"I developed a passion for tractors and farming in my teenage years, which led me to do a Gateway course at high school and gain work experience on farms," she said.

That also involved tractor driving so when her plans changed, she applied for and got a job driving a grape gondola over a six-week season at LeaderBrand.

There she impressed bosses and those six weeks turned into two years. She is now working full-time in the salad leaf department helping the local company produce tonnes of crops a week.

Nina is a harvest operator and harvest

crew supervisor. She supervises the herb growing while overseeing the growing and harvesting of small-leaf crops, including spinach, mesclun and lettuce.

She is hands-on with seeding and harvest plans and is always looking for ways to improve the overall crop.

"I get to help make decisions about our day-to-day running and help organise the crew," she says. "I love my job."

Billy Stackhouse, LeaderBrand's crop manager for salad leaf, said he knew Nina would be an asset to the company as soon as he interviewed her.

"She is just what the industry needs," he said. "She has been a great addition to my team for sure. I am very proud of her. She is driven, motivated and passionate about her work, and that will take her a long way."

Nina has worked her way up from driving tractors in grape to the harvest crew and is now a supervisor.

Billy says Nina's attention to detail is hugely important in the role she plays, and especially for a company that is New

Zealand's leading supplier of baby leaf spinach and salad products.

"The horticulture industry is mostly men but the women in it are good at what they do. It may not be glamorous but when you see your product on the shelf, you have got to be pretty proud of that."

Nina balances her work with studying the Level 3 and 4 Certificate in Vegetable Production through Primary ITO.

"I want to move up to a management role within LeaderBrand and branch out into other vegetable crops to see where this career in vegetable production can take me."

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Blueberries by the millions



by Jack Marshall

Eighteen million blueberries are set to be picked at Uawa/Tolaga Bay this year as Hauti Berries' production continues to increase — up from 6.5 million last year.

People can expect to see the punnets in supermarkets later this year.

Since The Gisborne Herald visited the

orchard in July 2019 the operation has grown fourfold.

Starting with one hectare, it has grown to four and increased its number of bushes from 9000 to just under 20,000.

Everything relating to the growing and maintaining of the plants is computer-controlled.

The plants are grown in individual 30-litre

pots in tunnel houses. The computer system monitors and controls the amount of water and nutrients required.

Each plant will be picked around 10 times as the fruit ripens, meaning staff will rustle through the bushes roughly 200,000 times over the three-month picking period.

This will be the Hauti Berries' third harvest.

In its first year, it picked 500 kilograms of blueberries. That was ramped up to 17,000kg the second year and this year it is hoped to reach 54,000kg.

The company is aiming for 100,000kg by 2022 if everything goes to plan.

Hauti Berries continues to test growing styles and methods because, while it gets information from others in the business, each climate is different and localities have their individual quirks, operations manager Steve Phelps says.

The plants are known to have a productive life cycle of around seven years but Steve says they will wait to see how production goes.

If they fruit well, they could go longer.

"We have a replacement plan in place but if they are still producing 25 to 27 tonnes

per hectare we'll be keeping them in."

The replacement plan was one reason for the orchard's staggered growth. Each year more canopy cover and plants would be added so there would be a variety in the age of bushes for rotation.

Hauti Berries works as a supplier for BerryCo, which handle the sales. All Hauti has to do is produce the best berries it can.

The only product to market Hauti deals with is rejected fruit — not up to the high standard of the retail market — which is sold as a frozen product to places like fruit ice-cream shops.

Steve says the Eureka berry from BerryCo produces large, firm, dark blue berries that are juicy and flavourful.

"We're six weeks ahead of schedule. If we can stop the disease coming in we'll start harvest in the first week of August."

Last year, Hauti did not harvest until the second week of September.

Steve puts the potential earlier start this year down to climate, different processes on the farm and older trees.

The bulk of the picking, though, will be from September to the end of November, followed by a month of pruning and clean-

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Haiti Berries operations manager Steve Phelps among the blueberry bushes.

Pictures by Paul Rickard

Blueberries still green before picking season.



Worker James Keelan keeping bushes free of weeds at Haiti Berries blueberry farm on the Tolaga Bay flats.

up. With the bushes growing strong and berries budding, now all they need to do is lock down reliable pickers for when the harvest arrives.

“We’re looking for about 60 to 70 people to work this year.”

Haiti Berries is looking at different strategies to encourage locals to join their workforce over the four months of work.

“We’re looking at picking early morning, and from 4pm to 7pm, which could open it up to high school students keen to do a three-hour stint at the end of the day,” Steve says.

“Obviously if we can’t find enough labour we’ll have to look at contractors or even further afield.

“If we can service our requirements with

100 percent local workers that’s fantastic, but there is a requirement . . . we expect people to show up every picking day, which is Monday to Saturday.”

This year Haiti Berries will be incentivising pickers by offering a base wage topped up with a “paid-per-kilo rate”, meaning hard workers will be able to make over the Living Wage, Steve says.

“We’re still figuring things out here but they’re a beautiful product to work with and it’s only going to get better.”

Haiti Berries is holding recruitment days over the next four weeks, giving interested workers the chance to see the operation and talk with Steve about work options.

It will be advertising on social media soon.

Positive growth on the Gisborne flats

By Jacob Geuze, Bayleys Gisborne

It has been another outstanding year for Gisborne growers, with an early start, high production, and great flavour profile culminating in a fantastic season for many crops.

After a mild spring and dry summer, Gisborne started its harvest of crops earlier than typically expected with the squash harvest kicking off around Christmas followed by an early start to the 2021 grape vintage starting in early February. March saw the earliest start to the golden kiwifruit harvest in many years, with local grower, Mark Geuze of ‘Under the Vine Ltd’ saying it was the earliest harvest he has ever taken part in. “The fruit was of good quality, good taste and generally good size which made for an easy harvest.” Sweetcorn and maize crops have also seen better than average yields so far this season, but an overall assessment of the harvest won’t be known for some time.

Te Tairāwhiti is becoming increasingly recognised by other regions as the fruit bowl of New Zealand and while we are a relatively small part of the overall capacity of the NZ market, we consistently produce high quality, flavoursome and early produce.

Gisborne’s low rainfall, high sunlight

hours and heavy fertile soils, are very favourable for producing premium quality Kiwifruit. “Our fruit is constantly, year on year the first to hit the supermarket shelves around the world,” said Mark.

Great early maturing horticultural crops, as well as increased pressure on the Gisborne housing market over the past few years have dramatically lifted rural property values in our region. Premium prices are being paid for land with water consents and other permanent crops, whilst land without water has also sold very

strongly with the ability for buyers to introduce water options. We have seen an average annual increase in value of 51.3% across all rural sectors in the past 3 years culminating in 124% growth since 2018.

By starting the harvest early, it not only helps to get premium prices for the crop, but it can release the pressure of selling huge volumes through the main selling window because companies can plan their sales strategies better knowing what the different regions are doing. It means better utilisation of the infrastructure,

labour movement, picking, packing and transporting of the crop. “For Zespri, Gisborne’s early start meant they had the supply to run the pack-houses and fill the ships before the Bay of Plenty season kicked off.

The realisation nationally by growers and investors, regarding the production ability of the Poverty Bay flats, paired with the significant yields experienced in the wider market for various crops, has resulted in exponential growth in value of our flat land directly around Gisborne.



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Penny Wilson says being a shepherd isn't for everyone but she is thriving on the challenges in a male-dominated industry.

The 19-year-old from Wairoa is the fifth generation from her family on the land. She grew up on a 260-hectare farm and was always the one helping dad Fenton when anything needed to be done.

She remembers vividly at around 10 seeing neighbour Bex Scragg work some stock when helping on their farm.

"She was so pretty and just out there doing it," says Penny. "She has been my role model ever since."

Bex lives on Tukemokihi Station and Penny says she's a strong personality who gets plenty of respect from the men in the industry.

Penny's lifelong affinity with animals meant she was always going to do something on the land but wasn't sure what direction that would take her.

Watching Bex inspired her into shepherding.

While in Year 12, she applied for the Waipaoa Cadet Training Trust programme. She made it to the short list, which meant heading back to school for Year 13.

"It kicked me in the guts a bit and I almost went off the idea of it all and started thinking about going to university instead," she said.

But in February she got a call from Waipaoa saying a junior cadet had pulled out.

"I went up there with Mum and Dad to look around."

Put on the spot when asked what she was going to do, Penny said, "I could see Mum was pretty hesitant because she wanted me to finish Year 13, but Dad was into it."

"I was worried if I didn't take it, I wouldn't get another opportunity and I really just wanted to be there. So I was at school one week and there the next."

Five weeks in and she faced her first big challenge when she fell off the two-wheeler and dislocated her elbow.

"I was put on light hostel duties for two months, which was a tough run."

When she finally got back to work, she was six months behind the rest but she made up for it, winning the top academic prize at the end of the year.

Waipaoa takes in five cadets annually for the two-year course. They start as juniors and then move to seniors for their second year.

Penny was the only young woman in 2019 and was there to mentor a junior young woman for her senior year.

Cadets do Level 3 and 4 agricultural certificates, with the junior year focused on general work before moving to stock work for their final 12 months.

During lockdown Penny and two other senior cadets headed to Hadley Charteris' farm for seven weeks work.

On return to Waipaoa, Penny said she was intent on just putting her head down and finishing the year strongly.

Waipaoa manager James Maher left in October of her final year but she says it was heartening to have such strong support from him.

"I am proud of what I achieved at Waipaoa."

She headed to Parikanapa Station at Tiniroto as a casual for two months and ended up being offered a full-time job.

"I love it there," says Penny of her work on the 3700ha — 2600ha effective — sheep and beef station, where she is one of a "really great" team of six.

Penny has six dogs. She broke in huntaway Grit and heading dog Liz while at Waipaoa, bought huntaway Pearl and heading dog Haze, and is working on two pups — Floss and Witch.

"Witch is well named. You can't tell her off otherwise she sulks. Let's just say she is learning her trade."

While they usually get around on side-by-side buggies, during winter they use horses for safety.

Penny plays netball for Ngatapa and says while her job calls for fitness, she struggles with a different fitness on the court.

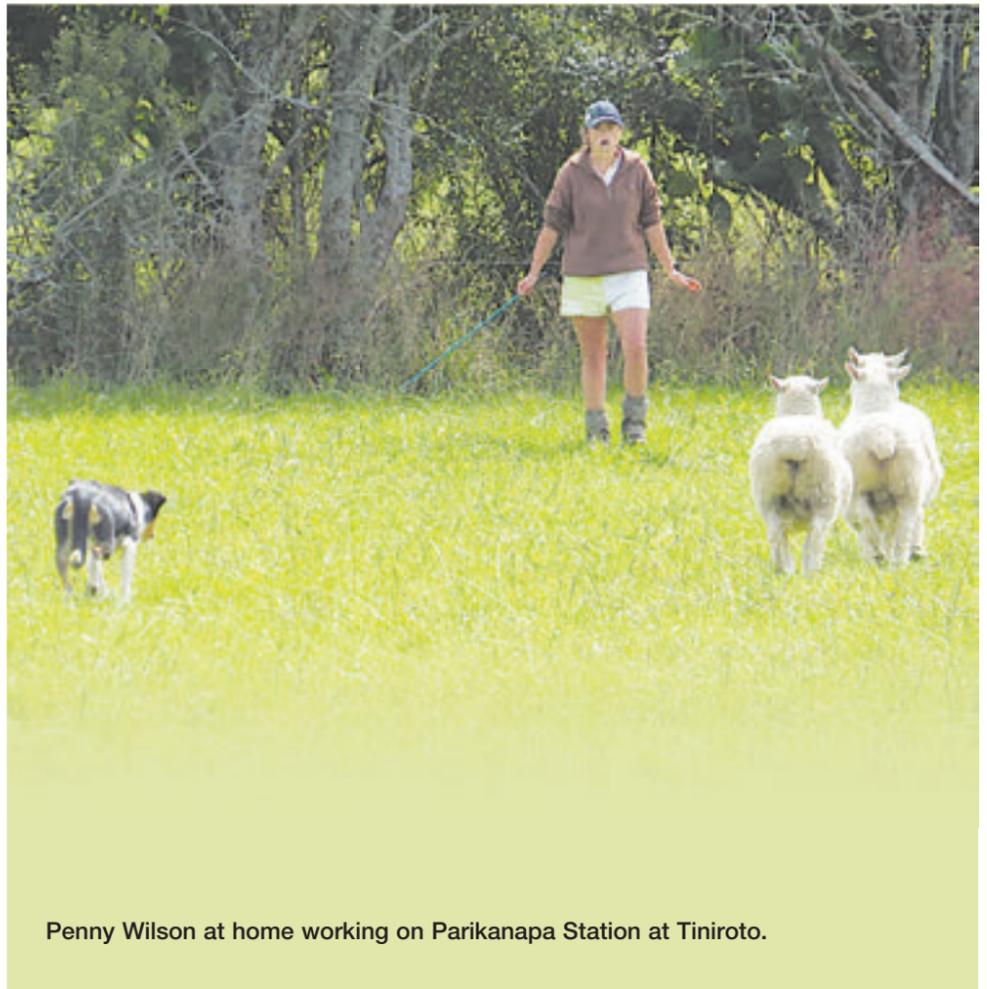
"Farm work is physically challenging, and you need to be ready to be challenged, but key is working smarter, not harder. That way you aren't wearing your body out."

"There is still that old-fashioned mentality out there about where women should or shouldn't be, but I adore it. I am working with animals, with cool people who you can have a good laugh with, and at the end of the day you can see the progress in both yourself and the farm. Every day is different."

When she heads home to her little whare at the end of each day she is rewarded by a stunning vista.

"I look out there and think how cool it is to be a woman in this industry."

"More and more women are coming through and it is great to be one of them, out there doing a good job and loving it."



Penny Wilson at home working on Parikanapa Station at Tiniroto.

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by Jack Marshall

Giuseppe Martelli was sitting inside wearing a lab coat in front of a microscope in southern Italy when he noticed two men fixing — or trying to fix — a tractor.

Tired of being indoors he went out to have a look.

“They were attempting to fix it but nothing much was happening.

Giuseppe went out and had a chat with them, fiddled around with a few things on the motor and the tractor roared to life.

That was the end of indoor life and the beginning of a life outdoors about 30 years ago in southern Italy, says Giuseppe, who now grows tens of thousands of plants for

Gisborne orchards at Taruheru Nursery.

“I come from a family of academics in the agriculture sector. My father was a virologist — a plant pathologist — and my grandfather was an entomologist.

“I broke the cycle. I wanted to get my hands dirty not only doing technical stuff but practical things as well.”

He succeeded.

Giuseppe’s Nelson Road nursery produces some of the best plants for growers around the country.

“We grow citrus, avocado and kiwifruit plants for commercial orchards.

Eighty percent of our clientele is local.”

For the last three years, Taruheru Nursery has sold many plants to growers wanting to expand.



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FUTURE GUACAMOLE: Rows of avocados at Taruheru Nursery getting ready for planting. Picture by Paul Rickard.



began growing when he was a teenager. “It started as a small business in my parent’s backyard, growing mushrooms and selling them at the farmers’ market in Italy. “Then things grew to a point that it was too much for me to comprehend and manage. I burnt myself a few times due to lack of experience and being too young and wanting to have a Porsche under my ass, rather than focusing on the business.”

After this reality check, his business started to tick along nicely. Then the pan-European currency came into force with the euro in 1999 and everything changed.

The European market opened up and many more players entered the market. Suddenly the products Giuseppe was growing in southern Italy were undercut by cheaper goods flooding Europe.

But there was a silver lining. The high worth of the euro made his farm assets worth a lot more.

“So I decided to sell the business and have a break.”

With New Zealand one of the rising players in the wine industry, Giuseppe says it became a very appealing location because there was room for growth.

When he came here at the turn of the millennium to test the waters he found operators were not quite his cup of cappuccino.

“I didn’t fit within the brackets of the New Zealand wine industry at the time. It was too new and . . . maybe too arrogant for my liking, and I didn’t want to put money into something I didn’t believe too much in.”

While he failed to find a place in the New Zealand wine industry, he did succeed in finding his future wife, Janine.

When Janine headed to England for her OE and Giuseppe went back to Italy, they spent five years travelling between the

countries, making the most of a 12-month summer.

In 2006, when Janine got pregnant, they decided to move permanently to New Zealand.

“I had a few midlife crises before getting into this business (he is in now). I joined the police force for a while but about five years ago I found there was something missing in my life and it was this.

“So I joined the farmers’ market, producing a few plants for gardeners and home growers, and then my first commercial client approached me and asked if I could do big numbers.”

They asked for 5000 plants and Giuseppe agreed.

Now the nursery sells tens of thousands of plants a year.

With his knowledge of plants and soils, growers can go to the nursery to get advice on the best plants for their land.

There is also a lot of information out there for growers to tap into, he says.

He has heard people say there was no money in citrus, so they replanted their orchards in apples and kiwifruit with higher returns.

However, Giuseppe says those returns can be temporary in a volatile market, whereas citrus proved steady.

“It is always going to be up and down, and someone is going to lose money for someone else to make money.”

But at the end of the day, Giuseppe says the nursery is a market-driven business.

“We have our eyes on the market and we know what is going on.”

And business is booming beyond what Giuseppe thought was possible.

“I shouldn’t say this, especially coming from Italy . . . but Covid has been the best thing that could have happened to us.

“All of a sudden we had clients that would order 10, 20 percent of our stock, then they were placing orders for 50 or 60 percent of our stock, and I was thinking, ‘what is going on?’”

CONTINUED PAGE 14

The operation looks modest from the street but the number of trees coming out is impressive.

The business sells 25,000 to 30,000 citrus trees a year to garden centres and commercial buyers.

Last year it sold 35,000 avocado trees, but that plummeted to about 12,000 this year.

Giuseppe speculates the drop in avocado tree sales might be because people are moving to cloned trees rather than planting from seed.

The nursery also grows thousands of plants for the booming kiwifruit industry.

Movement in the market is something nurseries deal with and Giuseppe has been in the game long enough to know. He

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14 FROM THE LAND

Low interest rates and closed borders are what happened.

“You can’t go overseas, you can’t spend that money on travel, and they say keeping money in the bank is not worth it . . . so investing in land, plants and permanent cropping seems to be the thing for buyers.

“If clients would have asked me before Covid if there was a way to increase our business 40 or 60 percent in six months, I would have said, ‘I don’t know, Bitcoin?’

“But no, Covid. It has been crazy.”

And this rush of money is driving growers to battle for plants.

“With kiwifruit is it war. We get people who are happy to pay a deposit for the plant, then come this time of the year, when they get the licence, they ring us and ask if their plants are ready . . . I tell them ‘as we agreed, everything will be ready in December.’

“Then they say, ‘no worries, keep the deposit, I have found plants elsewhere.’”

This has happened a few times already. Fortunately, Giuseppe can sell the plants within a week to other buyers when the time is right.

Then there is the matter of poaching. Giuseppe says clients call him and say they know he is growing kiwifruit for another person and they are willing to pay more.

Although the kiwifruit business is booming, Giuseppe says in his humble opinion, growers should not forget about Gisborne’s high-quality citrus.

“There has been a revival of citrus in Gisborne.”

He says Gisborne citrus is the crème de

la crème of New Zealand and should be recognised for that.

Like Amalfi Coast in Italy is famous for its lemons, so too should Gisborne be.

“It should be recognised as the best citrus in the whole country.

“We are very fortunate with the climate — the fact that further down south there is not much growing and up north there are only one or two other regions that do it.

“It could be quite an elite niche market here if it was controlled and tightly managed.

“I think Gizzy could thrive.”

As far as the future of horticulture in Gisborne goes, Giuseppe believes growers should be more involved with each other, working together as cooperatives rather than as individuals.

“Sometimes it is hard for those in the apple market because there is huge control from multi-national companies.

“For instance, the grape industry. For years there have been blocks with a half-hectare or two hectares that were growing grapes and selling them to winemakers.

“The grower is just an operator and they can be told to spray with this, spray with that.”

Giuseppe says if businesses work together they can have more leverage over the sale and better control over the growing conditions.

“The tendency is always the same. I look after my backyard, I look after my vege garden.

“But if they can change that mentality I think that would be a benefit for everyone.”



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Future focused

Tom Sanson (left) and Andrew “Cribby” Cribb, have leased the Lane Brothers’ property at Whangara. Picture by Strike Photography

Farmer Tom Sanson and veterinarian Andrew Cribb are the new leasees of Lane Bros Whangara Angus stud. Tony Leggett, of Country-Wide magazine, spoke with Tom to find out more about the duo’s plans for the farm, which also runs commercial cows and sheep.

Tom and Andrew are equal partners in the venture and took over in March after agreeing to a 10-year term, with another 10-year right of renewal for the 1006-hectare (900ha effective) farm.

They bought the entire livestock, comprising 300 Angus commercial cows and young stock plus sheep, and the highly-respected Whangara Angus stud cattle herd developed over decades by studmaster Patrick Lane.

The opportunity to lease the farm was handled by Bayleys Gisborne real estate agent Stephen Thomson, who produced a

detailed appraisal for the family.

For Tom, the long-term lease is a similar arrangement to his home farm at Otoko, which he and his wife Adeline have leased from his parents for the past 12 years.

“The 20-year term means we can invest in the property almost as though we own it ourselves, which is great,” he says.

“Andrew and I have looked for ways to expand and opportunities like this don’t come up often, so we were keen to give it our best shot.”

The farm has 76ha of flat country and a water system which feeds troughs in almost every paddock from a massive lake on the property.

“The infrastructure on the farm includes an all-weather central lane, plus several sets of yards and a bull sales complex.

“It is an amazing property and one that I could only have dreamed of owning myself.”

The lease agreement also includes an

agreed level of annual investment in repairs and maintenance, plus minimum annual fertiliser requirements.

“To be honest, the property is better than we anticipated and Patrick (Lane) has been fantastic to deal with, making the transition very smooth,” he says.

Tom will oversee the farm’s commercial operations and stud cattle enterprise while Andrew will contribute to overall strategic decision-making and provide animal health advice and services.

The pair have employed two permanent staff to run the day-to-day operations at Whangara.

Chris Richardson took on the role of managing the farm from mid-April and was joined soon after by a shepherd general.

Tom says he enjoys the genetics side of cattle breeding and is looking forward to building on the great foundation laid by Whangara stud principal Patrick, a stud breeder he describes as innovative and an outside-the-box thinker.

“Patrick placed a lot of emphasis on breeding values and performance so we want to build on this with a vision to breed high-performance, highly-functional maternal cattle that will deliver maximum value to our commercial clients on East Coast hill country.”

Tom’s own Gold Creek Simmental stud bull sale is about a month before the Whangara sale slot in the Gisborne Angus bull week in early June.

“That will help to spread the workloads for preparing bulls for the auctions.”

Tom says the stud’s fifth bull sale after taking over will be particularly significant for them.

“That fifth sale is our first generation of bulls based on our selections, so that is the real test of progress we have made based on our own decisions.”

He plans to join more than 20 other Angus studs who are leaving the New Zealand Angus Association and basing their herd’s performance data analysis in Australia.

“We know the Australian beef sector is more focused on the use of estimated breeding values (EBVs) in bull selection and we know the science supports the use of EBVs and indexes for selection of the best genetics for our clients.”

Ill-health forced Patrick to lease out the Whangara farm, but he is delighted with the outcome.

“The farm is in excellent hands and I could not be happier for Tom and Andrew who now have the chance to run it like their own.”

Patrick says the whole beef industry is evolving and changing so rapidly.

“I’ve seen it in the United States and it’s coming on fast here in New Zealand and across the Tasman, too.”

To take full advantage of the power of genomics, Patrick says it requires youth and dynamism to capture the gains through innovation and new technologies.

“Every other business is heading that way. They are quickly adopting any new, proven technologies to create better or more products. The beef industry will be no different,” he says.

Patrick predicts the wider adoption of genomics-based selection will lead to fewer larger studs with the size and genetic diversity to deliver large numbers of predictable performing bulls for the beef sector.

“These will be used widely through artificial insemination and natural mating.”

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Incredi-bull sales season predicted

by Murray Robertson

Excitement is building in the region's cattle breeding ranks in the countdown to this year's rising two-year-old (R2) bull sales season.

At last year's sales, the R2s generated more than \$5 million for the regional economy across the Angus, Hereford and Simmental breeds.

More than 500 strapping young bulls sold and went to do the business at new homes.

The most expensive of them went for a mammoth \$104,000 and the Powdrell team at Turiroa were ecstatic. Another of their bulls went for \$86,000.

Early in the sales week, Tangihau Angus at Rere got one away for \$92,000.

So the big numbers were there again.

A comment from Bruce Orr, a well-respected and long-time expert in the cattle breeding field, points to potentially exciting times at next month's sales.

"I would be very surprised not to see the top-priced bull in the country sold in this district next month."

He believes there were a couple of bulls in the line-ups around the region's Angus studs that could attract "top-dollar" this season.

Comments from last month's Bull Walk were around how well-advanced and well-developed many of the cattle were.

"There were bulls on show that could have easily sold on the day, they looked that good," Mr Orr said.

"There will be strong demand at the top end of the sales season I'm picking, and the commercial bull side of it will be strong, too."

Black cattle led the charge in terms of price success last year, amassing \$3.8 million across the region's Angus studs.

But the Herefords chimed in strongly, adding another half-a-million, and the Simmentals at Whakaki added the rest to reach a total of \$5 million-plus.

It was a milestone year for Wilencote Herefords as it marked 100 years and Peter Humphreys was the right man to sum up the sales season.

"It has been a thrilling week. The 'blacks' (Angus) have led the way and the 'reds' (Hereford) have joined in. Long live the cattle industry in this region."

This will be a season tinged with sadness as it will be the last hurrah for Rangatira Stud on Coventry Station at Muriwai.

Charlie and Susie Dowding have sold off their breeding stock and once their final crop



More than 500 young bulls from this region went to new homes during the rising-two-year-old bull sales season last year and a similar number can be expected this time around. The Bull Walk in late April (pictured) showed the quality will definitely be there again. Picture by Paul Rickard

of rising-two-year-olds go at the end of June, Rangatira Angus will be no more.

The Dowdings' previous dispersal sales have been very successful — a testament to the quality of their breeding programme.

The yearlings and their two-year-old heifers sold in the first dispersal sale last September.

It was the turn of their impregnated mixed-age cows, and their heifer and bull calves in March.

Auctioneer Neville Clark from Carrfields

summed it up when he said: "We haven't, in the past 25 years, sold a stud of this quality."

"The sale reminds us that Charlie and Susie are at the top of their game."

"It could be one of the most successful stud stock dispersal sales of any breed in this country."

The sales season next month will have special poignancy and one of the most respected cattle studs in New Zealand deserves to bow out in style come their sale on June 30.



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Taking control of your farming future

It has been a while since we caught up about this but it is very topical at the moment so I thought I would bring it up again and provide some more up-to-date information.

In the Gisborne region, there are two regulations which may require a Farm Environment Plan (FEP) now and in the future — the Tairāwhiti Resource Management Plan (TRMP) and the Resource Management Act (RMA).

The TRMP requires FEPs for cropping, commercial vegetable growing and intensively-farmed stock to be certified by Gisborne District Council by May 1 2021.

Intensively-farmed stock includes cattle or deer grazed on irrigated land or contained for break feeding of feed crops, dairy farming, farming of more than nine pigs per hectare of land, and sheep farmed for milk production that are contained for break feeding of feed crops.

The requirements for an FEP under the TRMP are outlined in Appendix H20 of the plan.

As part of the recent RMA reforms, Part 9 of the Act outlines the requirements of an FEP.

This section applies where an Order in Council has been passed, which requires FEPs in a specified district, region, or part of New Zealand.

This order includes a timeframe for FEPs to be completed.

The intention is that the requirement for FEPs will be rolled out across the country in priority or at-risk areas first.

The RMA refers to certified FEPs, where the council appoints a certifier.

The regulations, which at this stage are quite broad, outline what would be required in a FEP such as identifying any adverse effects of activities carried out on the farm on fresh water and freshwater ecosystems.

Requirements to avoid, remedy or mitigate these effects should be specified.

Part 9 also outlines the requirements for the audit of FEPs.

While it is not yet known what would need to be included in an FEP to achieve certification under the RMA, the requirements in Appendix H20 of the TRMP are likely to be included and are similar to FEPs required by other councils across the country.

This means that any time spent preparing an FEP to meet the TRMP requirements would not be wasted.

It is likely that the new regulations will include additional aspects such as biodiversity, fish passage, wetlands and greenhouse gas emissions.

There has been some discussion in the media around privacy of information provided in FEPs to councils.

The RMA addresses this as it does not require the FEP to be submitted to



council, only the certification.

If you need a FEP under the TRMP, it is not too late to get started.

If you want to be prepared for the FEP regulations coming under the RMA, any time spent now preparing a plan will not be wasted.

Industry groups including Beef + Lamb and the Foundation for Arable Research have a lot of

information and templates on their websites.

You can also talk to the council or a professional who can help.



by Lilian Harley, Allegrow Limited

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39560-01

Every year the rural district comes to life in May and June as hundreds of bulls exchange hands.

Beef cattle production has always been the poor cousin to ewe production in terms of dollars earned on a stock unit basis, but through changing management and breeding practices considerable improvements can be made.

One of the most significant gains in a breeding programme is the purchase of superior genetics.

- If individual cows and calves are not identified back to each other the bull contributes about 80 percent of the measurable genetic gain.

The selection process should begin with the establishment of breeding objectives that have high economic value relative to your farm. This process is the most important step but is almost always overlooked.

The most critical component in maximising genetic gain is to identify the breeder who most closely meets your breeding objectives. The amount of genetic progress you make in your herd is largely dependent on the genetic progress being made by the breeder who you buy your bulls from.

Once you have selected your breeder and been presented with a group of bulls, either on-farm or at the sales ring, a thorough physical inspection should be made with special emphasis placed on physical and reproductive soundness.

Areas to look at include the head, jaw, eyes, neck, shoulders, front leg and feet structure, pastern angle of front and hind legs, sheath and hind leg and structure.

It does not matter how impressive a bull's performance figures are, if he is not sound he will significantly depress profitability through poor in-calf rates.

It is now when Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs) should be considered, with the key emphasis placed on traits that align with your breeding objectives.

Bull breeders spend considerable time gathering information for the validity of these EBVs in order for purchasers to make informed and objective decisions.

Another point worth noting is sire stock needs to be fed well, year round, in order to perform to the best of their ability.

Thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars, are spent on individual bulls and it makes no sense to neglect them until a week before mating and then wonder why pregnancy testing was not what you thought it would be.

by Dr Andrew Cribb,
 East Coast Farm Vets



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19780-01

39560-01

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		152 1	153 LAST QTR 2	154 3	155 Matawhero Sheep Sale 4	156 5
157 6	158 Queen's Birthday 7	159 Hain Hereford Bull Sale 8	160 9	161 NEW MOON 10	162 Matawhero Sheep Sale 11	163 12
164 13	165 14	166 Matawhero Cattle Sale 15	167 Fieldays 16	168 Fieldays 17	169 FIRST QTR Fieldays Matawhero Sheep Sale 18	170 Fieldays 19
171 20	172 21	173 22	174 23	175 24	176 FULL MOON Matawhero Sheep Sale 25	177 26
178 27	179 Angus Sales: • Matawhero Combined • Kaharau • Tangihau/Cricklewood 28	180 Angus Sales: • Ratanui, Tolaga Bay • Whangara • Turihaua 29	181 Angus Sales: • Rangatira • Turiroa, Wairoa 30			

June 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				182 Hereford Sales: • Mokarau • Wilencote 1	183 LAST QTR Matawhero Sheep Sale 2	184 3
185 4	186 5	187 Matawhero Cattle Sale 6	188 7	189 8	190 Matawhero Sheep Sale 9	191 NEW MOON 10
192 11	193 12	194 13	195 14	196 15	197 Matawhero Sheep Sale 16	198 FIRST QTR 17
199 18	200 19	201 20	202 21	203 22	204 Matawhero Sheep Sale 23	205 FULL MOON 24
206 25	207 26	208 27	209 28	210 29	211 Matawhero Sheep Sale 30	212 31

July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
213 LAST QTR 1	214 2	215 3	216 4	217 5	218 Matawhero Sheep Sale 6	219 7
220 8	221 NEW MOON 9	222 10	223 11	224 Wairoa Cattle Sale 12	225 Matawhero Sheep Sale 13	226 14
227 15	228 FIRST QTR 16	229 17	230 18	231 19	232 Matawhero Sheep Sale 20	233 21
234 22	235 FULL MOON 23	236 24	237 25	238 26	239 Matawhero Sheep Sale, Daffodil Day Cancer Stock Drive 27	240 28
241 29	242 LAST QTR 30	243 31				

August 2021



FROM THE LAND

To promote your business in the next issue of From the Land please contact Jane Smith on 869 0617 or email: jane.smith@gisborneherald.co.nz

B+LNZ ahead of the game

A future-focused beef programme designed to generate more income for beef producers and the economy while protecting the environment is being hailed as an industry answer to increasing demand for high-quality food with a lower footprint.

The Beef + Lamb New Zealand Genetics programme builds on previous work, including the Beef Progeny Test and transtasman Maternal Cow Project.

B+LNZ Genetics' general manager Dan Brier said with the right science and tools farmers will be able to produce great-tasting meat with a good environmental story while maintaining and improving their production efficiencies.

"Our meat companies are already moving in this direction, with several introducing quality grading systems and working under the Taste Pure Nature initiative to target the 'conscious foodie' consumer," Mr Brier said.

Modelling has shown that through the programme farmers can increase the beef industry's income by \$460 million while improving the environmental and social outcomes for their farms and communities.

The beef programme incorporates four areas of work, which start with the development of New Zealand-centric breeding objectives.

"These will be focused on this country's pasture-based system, where cows play the dual role of supporting sheep production and producing a high-quality product."

A data measurement and collection system is being developed to collect phenotypic and genotypic data, and a new Beef Progeny Test, using Angus, Hereford and Simmental genetics, will identify the performance of the agreed-on traits, linking with international beef and dairy-beef genetics.

"The Beef Progeny Test got under way last spring after having secured a farm and identified bulls to create linkages to international datasets and previous progeny tests," Mr Brier said. "Time is of the essence when dealing with biological systems so we took the opportunity to get started so we have calves on the ground this year."

The third area of work is the use of next-generation commercial genomic tools to support stud and commercial operations.

Commercial farmers, who are performance-recording, will be used to ground-truth the tools and provide broader-based

performance data and feedback.

Mr Brier said B+LNZ Genetics would use its experience of building a genetic engine for sheep to build a similar engine for beef, combining phenotypic, genotypic and genomic data to calculate breeding values for agreed traits.

Ultimately, under Informing NZ Beef, B+LNZ Genetics plans to extend nProve genetics systems to include stud cattle. This would give commercial users the ability to quickly and easily source the right genetics for their environment and farm system.

"The final and arguably most important part of the beef programme is industry uptake, and we will bring a laser-like focus to this challenge, ensuring we are transferring knowledge to commercial farmers and making cutting-edge tools and resources available to the industry."



Beef + Lamb NZ general manager genetics Dan Brier.



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