

THE AHUWHENUA TROPHY ROUND UP

MARCH 2016

BNZ
MĀORI
EXCELLENCE
IN FARMING AWARD 2016
DAIRY



»» Finalists announced at Parliament

The three finalists for the 2016 Ahuwhenua Trophy BNZ Māori Excellence in Farming Award for Dairy were announced at a special function in parliament by the Minister for Māori Development, Hon Te Ururoa Flavell. For the first time in recent history of the competition two of the farms are in the South Island – the other is in the South Waikato area.

More than 100 people involved in Māori agribusiness as well as members of parliament, sponsors of the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition and media attended the function which was held in the historic Grand Hall in the main parliament buildings in Wellington.



Hon Te Ururoa
Flavell Minister for
Māori Development



L-R James Russell, Chairman Rakaia Inc, Tuhi Watkinson,
Chair Tewi Trust and Andrew Priest, CE Ngāi Tahu Farming Ltd



The Finalists - Tewi Trust,
Ngāi Tahu Farming Ltd and Rakaia Incorporation

THE THREE FINALISTS ARE:

Ngāi Tahu Farming Limited whose farms are located near the Canterbury township of Oxford. Their farms Te Ahu Pātiki and Maungatere are in the area known as Te Whenua Hou and was originally a New Zealand Forest Service radiata pine plantation commonly known as Eyrewell Forest. Both farms are irrigated by water from the Waimakariri River. The two farms have a combined area of 645ha and milk 2230 cows.

Tewi Trust is situated near the small South Waikato settlement of Okoroire near Tirau. The area is famous for its hot springs and its beautiful hotel. The farm consists of a 138ha effective milking platform on which is run a 430 cow Friesian herd.

The Proprietors of Rakaia Incorporation's Tahu a Tao farm has a long and proud history dating back to 1886. The present 216ha property near Ashburton runs around 830 Kiwi cross cows. Its name Tahu a Tao is the Māori name for Kyle, the district where the farm is located.

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Accolades for the finalists



Minister Flavell hosted the event and congratulated the finalists for their sheer hard work and fulfilling a legacy left by Sir Apirana Ngata, who helped introduce the competition which encourages proficiency and skills in Māori farming. He says the Ahuwhenua Trophy awards contribute significantly to the profile and growth of Māori agribusiness – and in turn the growth of the country's economy.

Minister Flavell told those at the function that anything to do with the land is important to Māori and that the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition is about acknowledging the people who look after our land – the kaitiaki. He pointed out that the finalists are rightfully placed on the national stage as examples of success. Minister Flavell says that all three farms are dedicated to the economic social and cultural welfare of Māori people and share a commitment to good environmental practice and Māori values.

The Minister for Primary Industries, Hon Nathan Guy who was also at the function says the announcement of the finalists was a nice bit of positive news for the dairy sector. He says it's exciting to see businesses such as the three finalists performing well at a time when global dairy prices are putting pressure on farmers.



He noted that the dairy downturn has refocused farmers on the basic goal of growing grass, harvesting grass efficiently and working on the bottom line. Minister Guy says it is great to see Māori agribusiness performing so well and growing its asset base. He says a lot of work is being done by the Ministry for

Primary Industries to get Māori Land Trusts to work closely together and generate economies of scale.

Following the speeches, Minister Flavell presented representatives of the three finalists with medals that recognise their achievement thus far in the competition.



The Chairman of the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management committee, Kingi Smiler encouraged the finalists to enjoy themselves and get the most out of the competition. He says they probably have a lot to learn from each other and this is one of the many benefits that the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition has to offer.



AHUWHENUA
TROPHY

THE AWARDS DINNER

The highlight of the whole competition is the presentation of the Ahuwhenua Trophy to the winner. This year the awards dinner will be held at the Claudelands Arena in Hamilton on Friday 20th May.

Don't miss out on this amazing night – it's a chance to network with whānau and the country's top agribusiness people. The farming magazine Rural News rated it the 'best event of the year'.

This dinner is always a 'sell-out' and tickets are limited so make sure you obtain yours sooner rather than later. For more information email ahuwhenuacompetition@tetumupaeroa.co.nz

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FIELD DAYS

One of the key features of the Ahuwhenua Trophy BNZ Māori Excellence in Farming Award for Dairy are the field days on the farms of each of the three finalists.

The day before these are held, the judges of the competition will visit each of the properties and meet with trustees and staff and also go on a farm tour. There are strict judging criteria and the farms performance is rated against these. The next day when the field day is held, the judges will also look at how the event is run and do a final check on the farm

In the past the field days have attracted upwards of 200 people from the local area as well as sponsors and rural professionals. Everyone is welcome to attend these days and see for themselves what a quality farm looks like. The days will start with a pōwhiri followed by morning tea, presentations from trustees and farm staff and then a tour of the property with stops on the way to explain particular aspects of the farming operation. It is a chance for each of the finalists to showcase their achievements to a discerning audience.

At the field days a handbook setting out a wide range of details about each of the properties will be available. This will give those attending the days a chance to compare each of the properties and to see why they made the finals of this prestigious competition.

Each field day will commence at 9.30am and finish at 2.00pm.

Tuesday 8 March

Ngāi Tahu Farming Limited

654 Carleton Road, Supply number 37782, Oxford

Friday 11 March

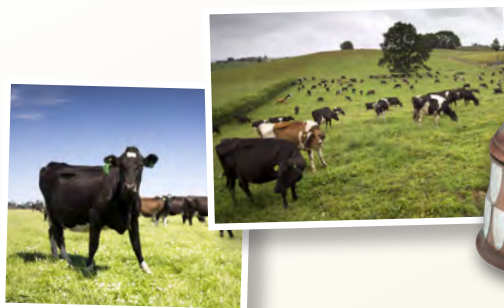
Tewi Trust

674 Okoroire Road, Tirau

Wednesday 16 March

The Proprietors of Rakaia Incorporation

1290 Kyle Road, Ashburton



Brave call says Chairman

The Chairman of the Ahuwhenua Trophy Management committee, King Smiler says all three farms are worthy finalists who have made a big and brave call to showcase their operations in challenging times and to take the positive approach that Sir Apirana Ngata, who inaugurated the competition would have wished.



Mr Smiler says in difficult times it is important that leaders emerge and show the way for others. He says there is no denying that the dairy industry is going through some difficult times at present with a combination of international factors well beyond the control of farmers.

Mr Smiler says this is not a time to retreat until the better times return. He says such downturns in a cycle provide an opportunity for all farming businesses to take stock of their operations and to honestly analyse what they are doing well and what they could do better. He says such work will pay great dividends when times improve. "We are intergenerational farmers, with time on our side and a history of managing adversity and coming back stronger and better. Everything we do today must be done to have a positive outcome for future generations" he says.

Kingi Smiler says overall Māori agribusiness is in very good shape. He says irrespective of the blip in the dairy sector, other elements of the primary sector are doing well – especially kiwifruit.

"I believe that the Ahuwhenua Trophy has been a major factor in lifting the profile and perception of Māori agribusiness and we are seen as significant contributors to the New Zealand economy. We are no longer an adjunct to the economy we are mainstream and we stand tall," he says.

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ABOUT THE FARMS

Ngāi Tahu Farming Limited

Ngāi Tahu's dairy farming operation currently consists of seven dairy units – of which Te Ahu Pātiki and Maungatere are located side by side near the Canterbury township of Oxford. The area is known as Te Whenua Hou and was originally a New Zealand Forest Service radiata pine plantation commonly known as Eyrewell Forest.

Ngāi Tahu made the decision to convert forestry to dairying to get the best economic return and to develop wider opportunities for whānau. The first farm came on line in the 2012/13 season. Full development of Te Whenua Hou will see 13 dairy farms and seven dairy support farms across the property. All the land is flat and most of the milking platforms of both farms are irrigated by water from the Waimakariri River.



The milking platform at Te Ahu Pātiki is 355ha and runs 1,251 Kiwi cross high BW cows that last season produced 468,747 kgMS. The slightly smaller farm Maungatere has a 290ha milking platform on which 979 Kiwi cross high BW cows which produced 413,058 kgMS last season. There are also a number of dairy support blocks owned by Ngāi Tahu where stock from these farms are sent in the autumn.



Being new farms, the soil is still quite sterile and there is a focus on increasing the organic matter in the ground to build up fertility. Both farms have 64 bail rotary sheds and include a lot of modern technology and inside automation designed to improve the efficiency and minimise the environmental footprint.

The pivot irrigation systems that have been installed on both farms have a 'variable rate' feature. This is a form of precision agriculture that allows water to be used more efficiently and in an environmentally friendly way. The system can be calibrated to only apply water to areas that need it and to avoid applying it to already wet or sensitive areas.

One of the features of the Ngāi Tahu operation is the strong focus on ensuring a low environmental footprint. An example is of a strategy currently being implemented is to reduce the amount of supplementary feed being used and to focus on better utilisation of pasture. This will help improve profitability, especially during the current downturn in the dairy industry. They say they are not just trying to meet consent conditions but to be ahead of that and show a genuine commitment to kaitiakitanga and iwi values.

Ngāi Tahu is also looking at how best to utilise the bobby calves produced on the farms.

About five staff are employed on each of the two dairy farms, but on its overall dairy farming operation Ngāi Tahu employs about 70 staff. It also helps run a highly successful and popular training programme called Whenua Kura designed to give young Māori from Ngāi Tahu and other iwi the skills to make a career working on their farms and in the wider agri sector.

Contact: Shane Kelly, GM – Dairy, 027 224 2990, 03 366 4344.

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ABOUT THE FARMS

Tewi Trust



Tewi Trust is situated near the small South Waikato settlement of Okoroire near Tirau. The area is famous for its hot springs and its beautiful hotel.

Tewi Trust has 53 shareholders and is named after one of the original owners Tewi Hoera who passed the land on to his daughters and was leased out by them to a local farmer. When the lease came up for renewal during the second World War, the land was leased out again for 30 years. But when this expired the Trust took back one parcel of land and a year later a second parcel to form the farm but these were separated by a privately owned farm. There are two waahi tapu sites on the property.

During early 1970's the cow shed was upgraded and general improvements made to the farm. But the Trust faced further challenges and it was decided to employ a 50/50 Sharemilker. In 1991 a small parcel of land was exchanged to physically connect the run-off to the main farm. In 2000 the Trust bought the land that the two blocks completely surrounded.

Today the farm is still run by a 50/50 Sharemilker and consists of a 138ha effective milking platform on which is a 430 cow Friesian cross herd which produces 174,405 kgMS. The cows are milked in a 40 aside herringbone shed.

The land is flat to rolling with some steeper slopes. The soil is Tirau Sandy Loam and is very good dairy land. The farm runs as a system two which means the cows are fed mainly grass and receive supplements such as PKE on the shoulders of the season and to cover unforeseen adverse events.



Up to six hectares of turnips and four hectares of chicory are grown to protect against the summer dry. Each year about ninety tonnes of grass silage is produced – about half of this is on the main farm and the other half from the leased block. About two thirds of the maize used on the farm is grown on the lease block and the rest on farm.

Tewi Trust is a great example of how a small and determined group of whānau have, over many years of adversity and challenges achieved their dream of farming their own land successfully and profitably and have kept a strong focus on Māori values.

Contact: Tuhi Watkinson, 07 829 7077
or Advisor Ron Watkinson, 021 049 7489



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ABOUT THE FARMS

The Proprietors of Rakaia Incorporation

The Proprietors of Rakaia Incorporation's Tahu a Tao farm have a long and proud history dating back to 1886. The present 216ha property near Ashburton runs around 820 Kiwi cross cows that produced 371,294 kgMS last season and is located 8km's from the Rakaia river mouth.

In the early days this area proved to be quite a challenge for travellers going through the region, particularly crossing rivers. Tahu a Tao is the Māori name for the Kyle district where the farm is located. It is also known for being a resting place for travellers and where food was gathered.

Tahu a Tao was converted to dairying in 1996 with highly reputable dairy consultant, John Donkers playing a major role in the development of the property which has always operated in conjunction with 50/50 Sharemilkers. The current Sharemilkers Mark and Julie Cressey are into their ninth season.



When the farm was initially converted old pastures were sprayed out and new ones planted and since then the Incorporation has made concerted efforts to repasture with the latest cultivars of seed as a key means to boost production.

With the conversion came new fences, stock water and irrigation and of course a 50 bale rotary dairy shed. Two bores supply the four irrigators that run on the property. Irrigation is at the foundation of the overall dairy farm system. It is tightly managed using soil and water measuring technologies. Water metering and moisture monitoring technologies help identify the optimal time to irrigate.

In addition to the cows in milk, a further 200 replacement calves are reared each year. There is a strong farm culture with particular emphasis on animal welfare especially with the treatment of bobby calves which are fed good quality



colostrum milk for four days before being sold. Health and safety is also given high priority status on Tahu a Tao.

Since the conversion there have been ongoing capital works and new staff accommodation designed by Julie Cressey.

Being close to the Rakaia River, the soils on the farm are free draining and ideal for dairying. Soil tests are taken annually and close attention is paid to recording data on the property. Weekly farm walks are undertaken and feed budgeting is a key part of the management of the property.

Not surprisingly matters relating to the environment, kaitiakitanga and iwi values are a focus on the farm. An example of this is the implementation of a recycling system. This includes all farm and household waste which is stored in special containers. Silage wrap, bale string and plastics are also recycled and are stored in such a way that they cannot be blown away by the wind. The farm is provisioned with a quality dairy shed effluent handling system, which includes an effluent storage pond with about 15 day's capacity. The storage provides flexibility in the application of effluent to the land which contributes to a reduced risk of nitrogen leaching. The Committee of Management are very conscious of their role to give value to their 300 shareholders.

Communication is key as is their whole approach to business, and forming respected relationships with key suppliers. Shareholders are given an opportunity each year to visit the Rakaia farms so that they can view their investment, meet fellow owners and understand the life and style of a working dairying farm.

Contact: Mark Tynan, Secretary 021 375 980, 03 366 7154.

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MĀORI AGRIBUSINESS UPDATE

Two major Taranaki institutions have teamed up with an award winning education provider. The Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) and Parininihi ki Waitotara (PKW) will work with Whanganui-based Land Based Training (LBT) to school up the province's next generation of farmers. WITT will contract LBT to deliver some of its farming and agriculture courses around Taranaki, and students will spend much of their training time on PKW-owned farms.

PKW sees its involvement in the courses as providing avenues for Māori students to become driving forces in the region's agricultural industry. PKW General Manager of shareholder engagement Allie Hemara-Wahanui – who is also a WITT council member – said as the largest dairy farming operation in Taranaki, PKW was looking to the future of its own workforce and putting its own shareholders and their family members at the forefront of the employment market.

EXCITING MĀNUKA HONEY SCHEME LAUNCHED

A new initiative to boost the mānuka honey industry in Northland and provide educational and employment opportunities has been launched.

The Mānuka Planting Initiative at Northland College is part of the Tai Tokerau Northland Economic Action Plan. The Hon Te Ururoa Flavell, who is also the Associate Economic Development Minister, says the initiative will help prepare and up-skill unemployed adults living in Kaikohe. He says nearly 46 per cent of people in the region gain some of their income from benefits and he believes this project could be the first of many to help people get back on their feet.

Primary Industries Minister, Hon Nathan Guy says mānuka was identified as an industry with real growth potential for Northland in the initial Growth Study. He says with Government support, an initial 30 hectares of Northland College land will be planted in high performing mānuka cultivars for honey production and by 2017, this is expected to extend to 100 hectares.

He says this initiative is an opportunity for local long-term unemployed adults to be trained and employed to clear the site, plant and maintain the mānuka. He says it will also help address a predicted future skill shortage in the primary industries.

AHUWHENUA JUDGE RECOGNISED

A judge of the Ahuwhenua Trophy for sheep and beef and a man who has devoted virtually all his working life to the collection of statistical information about the sheep and beef industry was recognised in the new year's honours.

Rob Davison has been the Executive Director of Beef+Lamb New Zealand's Economic Service since 1989 and before that was part of the team of research officers collecting farm data for the various reports and publications produced by the service. Before obtaining a B.Ag.Com (Hons) at Lincoln University, Rob Davison worked on farms in the Wairarapa, Southland, Canterbury and the Central North Island.

Rob Davison says deregulation was the biggest single change he's experienced in his lifetime in the primary sector. He says this has driven change and believes the industry can be very proud of what has been achieved. Rob Davison cites the fact that while sheep numbers have been halved this has not affected the sector.

Rob Davison says he's greatly humbled and had not expected to receive the ONZM.

MPI AND MĀORI PARTNERING TO GROW ASSETS

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is committed to supporting the primary sectors to maximise the benefits from the sustainable use of primary assets.

Māori agribusiness is one of the economic cornerstones of our primary sector and of New Zealand's economy as a whole and MPI understands the unique challenges Māori face when it comes to growing their assets in a sustainable way.

To overcome these unique challenges, MPI has a dedicated team of people who partner with Māori to work through the Pathway to Increased Productivity Programme. The programme has a specific focus on Māori primary sector assets (agriculture, horticulture, forestry, or seafood) that are in collective ownership. An essential component of the programme is developing and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships between Māori and MPI.

As an example, in Te Hiku, Northland, a Pathway to Increased Productivity Programme is underway working with Māori trusts and incorporations to explore forming a Te Hiku Sheep and Beef farming collective. If agreed, the collective would have a starting total of 14,700ha. The findings so far show the collective has the potential to double their meat production within 3-5 years of operation. This is still in the development stage and the Māori trusts and incorporations are now considering the information and the decisions they will need to make to move forward.

To find out if you are eligible for the Pathway to Increased Productivity Programme or for more information, visit www.mpi.govt.nz and look for 'Māori Agribusiness' under the 'Funding and Programmes' tab.

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