

THE AHUWHENUA TROPHY ROUND UP

MARCH 2019

» Ahuwhenua Finalists Announced

Two farms from the East Coast of the North Island and one from Central Hawke's Bay are the finalists in this years Ahuwhenua Trophy competition for the top Māori sheep and beef farm.

The finalists are, Whangara Farms, situated 35km north of Gisborne, Te Awahohonu Forest Trust, Gwavas Station, at Tikokino 50km west of Hastings and Kiroa Station owned by Eugene and Pania King, at Matawai, 70km north west of Gisborne.

The finalists were announced by the Minister of Agriculture, Damien O'Connor at a function at parliament attended by politicians and agribusiness leaders from around the country.

The announcement was made in the beautiful wood panelled 'Grand Hall' in the old parliament building. It was in every sense of the word a great celebration of the success of Māori agribusiness. Representatives of all the finalist had flown down to Wellington the night before and while some had been to parliament, for others it was a new experience. The guests at the event included politicians, academics, sponsors, businesses leaders, media and those with strong connections to the Māori agribusiness sector.



Each of the finalists were presented with medals by the Minister of Agriculture, Hon Damien O'Connor who along with Māori Development Minister, Hon Nanaia Mahuta spoke to the gathering. They were well supported by two outstanding kapa haka groups from the Ministry for Primary Industry and Te Puni Kōkiri.

The function provides for the finalists an opportunity to meet each other informally and also network with the many distinguished guests.

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Excellence celebrated

The Minister of Agriculture, Hon Damien O'Connor says this year's finalists are at the top of the game and provide the inspiration and example for others to get out and do better and grow the economy of New Zealand.

"We have to encourage excellence and better performance right across agriculture and horticulture. We have a few challenges across the areas of training and but this government is committed to provide better opportunities for young people – Māori and others to get into agriculture. We want them to build their skills and have a future that they can see is bright, is rewarding and will take them into the future," he says.

Minister O'Connor couldn't resist a comment on the capital gains tax controversy saying it's nice to be involved in a sector in the agricultural industry

that doesn't rely on capital gains to benefit its people.

"I acknowledge the progress that has been made across Māori farming where you don't rely on the purchase and sale of land to generate benefits and long may that continue," he says.

Originally Hon Damien O'Connor wasn't scheduled to be present at the announcement of the finalists. He had planned to be in Egypt for trade talks, but with further discoveries of fruit fly in Auckland, he decided to cut short his trip and return to New Zealand.

The Minister for Māori Development, Hon Nanaia Mahuta noted the history of the awards saying they are part of a long tradition that began with Sir Apirana Ngata in the 1930s.

"The Ahuwhenua Trophy shows the key role that beef and sheep farming has



in the \$50 billion that Māori enterprise brings to our economy. It also confirms the importance of Te Tairāwhiti to Aotearoa with all three finalists coming from the coast," she says.

Nanaia Mahuta says she's looking forward to 24th May when the winner will be announced in Gisborne.

FIELD DAYS
Thursday
4th, 11th & 18th
April 2019



Ahuwhenua Trophy Management Committee Chairman, Kingi Smiler says the high calibre of this year's finalists shows the strength of the Māori agribusiness sector. He says selecting the three finalists from an impressive field of entrants was no easy task.

"This competition is prestigious and people actively seek to enter this event to showcase the quality of their farming enterprises. What makes Māori sheep and beef farms so special is that in most cases they are in remote hill country areas which in itself makes farming operations challenging throughout the year, but especially in times of adverse events," he says.

Kingi Smiler says the resilience and innovation shown by these people is an example to all New Zealanders that hard work coupled with clear strategic objectives and excellent farm management can produce some outstanding outcomes.

He says that over the years the Māori agribusiness sector has grown exponentially, not only in sheep and beef, but also in dairy and horticulture. He says Māori are rapidly moving into the value-add space and to increase returns from their assets.

"Māori are making the economic impact we always knew they could," he says.

GREAT FINALISTS — CHAIRMAN

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ABOUT THE FARMS



WHANGARA FARMS

Whangara Farms just north of Gisborne on State Highway 35 is a Partnership of three Māori Incorporations. This allows the three Partners to join commercially, but also retain their own identity.

It's a 8,300ha (6,900 effective) property on which is run 75,000 stock units of which 45,000 are sheep and the balance cattle. It's a mix of steep and flat land and 17 full time staff are employed to run the operation.

Whangara Farms has also been a significant contributor to research and development in the region. It's has been a Beef and Lamb demonstration farm, a BLNZ

innovation farm and a BLNZ beef progeny test site. Last year it became the first farm outside Europe to be awarded flagship status by the McDonalds restaurant chain. It is only the 28th farm internationally to attain that status. Whangara Farms is also a Farm IQ focus farm and AgResearch pasture and forage plot trials on the property.

The Chair of Whangara Farms Ingrid Collins says their vision is to be an outstanding business delivering on-going sustainable returns.

"We moved away from using the word agri-business to business as we look to develop our commercial activities to be wider than just agriculture. Whangara Farms management is strongly based on using science, technology and data collection to improve decision making," she says.

Ingrid Collins says they recently decided to retire 400ha of coastal property and let this revert following the recommendation in our Land Environment Plan.



FIELD DAY: Thursday 4th April 2019

Whangara Marae, 368 Pa Road, Pouawa, Gisborne
Meet at 8:30am for a 9:00am start.

Only 4 wheel drive and all-wheel drive vehicles required for the farm tour, no bikes, quads or side by sides. Protect our industry - please arrive with clean boots to reduce the risk of spreading a disease, pest or weed.



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TE AWAHOHONU FOREST TRUST – GWAVAS STATION

Historic Gwavas Station in Central Hawke's Bay is owned by Te Awahohonu Forest Trust which won the Ahuwhenua Trophy in 2013 with its other farm, Tarawera Station on the Napier Taupo Road.

The farm comprises 1,000ha and the owners lease an additional 178ha making the property 989ha effective. The property is of an irregular shape with State Highway 50 bisecting the farm at the north eastern and eastern ends of the property.

Approximately 70% of the area is flat to easy rolling country with the balance consists of moderately steeper hills and steep faces connecting with lower terraces



and riverbeds. Gwavas Station sits in a region that can experience summer dry conditions and has a complex range of mainly free draining soils. These comprise Takapau silts and Tukituki gravelly sands on the flatter areas, Poporangi and Mangatahi soils on some intermediate terraces and rolling hills, and Gwavas sandy loams on the remaining easy and steeper hills.

The farm winters nearly 12,000 stock units comprising approximately 50% cattle and 50% sheep. Gwavas is farmed as an intensive dry-land finishing property that complements the Tarawera Station breeding operation. Between 14,000 and 16,000 lambs and approximately 800 cattle are finished annually depending on the season. The farm is effectively run with three full time labour units made up of the Farm Manager and two Shepherds.

According to the Chair of the Trust, Bob Cottrell the objective of the farm is to finish all stock bred off Tarawera Station and maximise returns through optimising processing weights and specifications alongside a profile of a broader out of season stock supply.

FIELD DAY: Thursday 11th April 2019

5740 State Highway 50, Tikokino, Hawke's Bay
Meet at 8:30am for a 9:00am start.

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KIRIROA STATION

Eugene and Pania King are the owner operators of Kirihoa Station in the Motu Valley 72km north west of Gisborne.

Kirihoa is a 483ha (357 effective) sheep and beef property of which 60ha is flat, 200ha medium hill country and the balance being steep hill country. The Kings trade cattle and finish all stock on farm and are currently wintering 3,800 stock units – a mix of 40% cattle and 60% sheep.

Soil types are predominately pumice with some sedimentary and the property has an annual rainfall of



between 2.1 and 2.5 metres. Motu Valley is regarded as summer safe, but does have long, cold winters. Regular snow falls are not uncommon. Some parts of the farm are 732 metres above sea level

For the Kings, Kirihoa is a special place. They feel lucky to have taonga like the Motu River, and consider themselves kaitiaki to the 2.2km of the river flowing through Kirihoa. The Motu Valley is home to weka –and because of their declining numbers, in 2015 Eugene and Pania retired 2ha of land for them and have established a wetland. They says the weka are thriving in their new environment.

Eugene and Pania are part of the King Whānau which has seen three different individual families being finalists in the last three Ahuwhenua sheep and beef competitions. Eugene's sister and brother-in-law, Nukuhia and Bart Hadfield won the trophy in 2015 and brother Ron and sister-in-law Justine were finalists in 2017.

FIELD DAY: Thursday 18th April 2019

253 Motu Road, Matawai, Gisborne

Meet at 8:30am for a 9:00am start.

Please Note: The Farm tour will be conducted using Farm Bikes, Quads and Side by Sides only. The use of helmets and seatbelts where fitted are compulsory for these vehicles and quads are not to carry passengers. NO HELMET NO RIDE. Protect our industry - please arrive with clean boots to reduce the risk of spreading a disease, pest or weed.



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