

**A weekly
summary of
all that's news
in the primary
industries**

AgBrief

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Issue 4

Agribusiness

Holding banks accountable supported

Efforts to hold banks accountable when they stray from their core function – lending money, are welcomed by Federated Farmers. Minister Shane Jones is spearheading a member's bill seeking to ensure financial institutions focus on their legal and social responsibility to provide credit rather than engaging in selective lending based on ideology. "We're right behind that. Banks exist to lend, not to lecture," said Richard McIntyre. "We're seeing banks decline credit to legal businesses simply because they don't align with corporate PR strategies." One threat identified by Feds is to petrol stations, a vital lifeline for rural communities and isolated parts of NZ. Internal BNZ documents provided in late 2024 clearly state there is to be no new lending to petrol stations, and all existing debt needs to be repaid by 2030. "If banks are unwilling to provide lending to pay for things like upgrades, expansion or compliance, petrol stations will just disappear," McIntyre says. (AgBrief staff report 3 Feb)

Bank withdrawal angers ministers

A coal mining firm was told by BNZ that it would slowly have banking services withdrawn, culminating in the cancellation of credit cards and the closure of "all bank accounts" by 2030, forcing it to look for another bank. The letter has provoked fury from NZ First Minister Shane Jones, who has said he will "do everything he can" to allow the mine, which does not wish to be named, to continue banking. He said NZ First has a member's bill that addresses the issue, while Finance Minister Nicola Willis said bank chief executives should once again be hauled before a Parliamentary bank inquiry to explain themselves. BNZ said it was making the decisions in response to its coal mining policy which included capping coal exposure since 2019, exiting thermal coal mining by 2025 and exiting metallurgical coal by 2030. "We have been very upfront and open with impacted customers, communicating with them early and regularly to ensure they had time to prepare for this change." (The Country 31 Jan)

Approvals backlog impinging growth

NZ's primary sector is urging the Government to be bold in tackling the backlog of applications for new animal and plant health products that will help grow the economy – a backlog of over 100 applications awaits approval, with estimates of up to four years to clear the queue. The Ministry of Regulation is undertaking a review of the agricultural and horticultural products regulatory approval process and the cabinet is due to consider the review findings in February. Now, a dozen primary sector businesses and organisations have co-signed a letter to ministers urging the government to take the opportunity to deliver prompt and positive change. Animal and Plant Health NZ, Business NZ, Zespri, Farmlands, Federated Farmers, SFF, Horticulture NZ, FAR, PGGWrightson, Seed and Grain NZ, NZ Kiwifruit Growers and NZ Apples & Pears are united in seeking a transparent, consistent and enabling regulatory approvals process. (Farmers Weekly 31 Jan)

Act pushing farm sales

The Act Party is pushing for some state-owned farms to go on the market, claiming they are taking taxpayers for a ride by losing money. David Seymour said privatisation needs to be talked about more openly. Pāmu is managing about 360,000ha across 100 farms. Included in the mix is Molesworth station, one of the largest high-country sheep stations in the country. It is owned by DOC and managed by Pāmu. Across its farms throughout the country, Pāmu employs more than 600 permanent staff and runs 1.3 million stock. Last year Pāmu recorded a \$26 million loss it attributed to falling livestock prices, high interest rates and the on-going costs related to Cyclone Gabrielle. (The Country/RNZ 30 Jan)

U-turn on wool carpet

Kainga Ora has made a huge U-turn to allow wool carpet providers the chance to tender for supply of carpet and underlay in its homes. For more than a decade, the government agency has used nylon carpet due to its durability and price. Federated Farmers' Toby Williams said it was cause for celebration. "While we haven't won the tender yet it's certainly a fantastic step forward and a shot in the arm for the strong wool sector, which

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[Livestock & Arable](#) [Rural & Regional](#) [Forestry](#) [Horticulture](#)

desperately needs all the good news it can get at the moment." It is now up to wool carpet providers to make sure their proposals are competitive. The change comes after five months of relentless pressure from the industry. (RNZ News 31 Jan)

GDT lifts again

There was more good news in the third Global Dairy Trade auction this year with across-the-board prices lifting 3.7%. This latest increase follows a 1.4% at the previous auction two weeks ago. The price for whole milk powder – the biggest contributor to Fonterra's farmgate milk price – jumped 4.1% to US\$4169/MT on the back of a 5% lift at the last auction. Skim milk powder rose 4.7%, to an average of US\$2835/MT, another positive to build on its 2.0% bump last time. On the negative side, butter milk powder dropped 0.4% to an average of US\$3092/MT, and mozzarella dipped 0.1% to an average of US\$4157/MT. On December 5, Fonterra raised its farmgate milk price forecast for the 2024/25 season, to between \$9.50 and \$10.50 per kgMS, with a midpoint of \$10.00 per kgMS. (The Country 5 Feb)

Higher levy looms from DairyNZ

DairyNZ has begun talks with dairy farmers to decide how much should be paid in milksolid levies, which are used to fund the organisation. The levy is currently set at 3.6 cents per kilogram of milk solids. Of that, 0.8 cents is paid to TBfree NZ (on-paid to OSPRI), leaving 2.8c for DairyNZ. DairyNZ's board is floating two options for farmers, which it will be consulting on over the next month: a 4.4c-4.6c/kg MS dubbed the 'Maintain' option, and a higher, 4.7c-5c/kg MS levy called the 'Accelerate' option. Chair Tracy Brown said the board had looked at what DairyNZ would need to be able to operate sustainably. At the minimum, that was 4.4c. It's never been adjusted in the whole time DairyNZ has existed and hasn't changed for 16 years. If it was inflation-adjusted, it would be 5.2c. DairyNZ has offered a price band because it is unsure what the new levy should be, and the eventual amount will depend on farmers' feedback. (Farmers Weekly 4 Feb)

SI organics in sight?

Fonterra is considering expanding organic milk production to the South Island. GM organics Andrew Henderson said the co-op's organics business has been running since 2002 and continues to grow in supply, product range and value. Over the last four years the programme has more than doubled in size and currently includes more than 100 farms. Long-term demand projections for organic dairy ingredients currently exceed supply growth projections. More work is needed to determine whether there is sufficient supply interest in the right areas to enable efficient processing and to evaluate the investment needed to enable organic milk segregation and processing in the South Island. (Farmers Weekly 31 Jan)

ACC/Safer Farms partnership

ACC and Safer Farms have formed a partnership to reduce harm, injuries, and fatalities in the agricultural sector. The partnership will see over \$11 million invested by ACC over the next five years, supporting the agriculture sector in the implementation of Safer Farms' innovative grass-roots Farm Without Harm strategy. Agriculture remains

one of the most dangerous places for NZers to work. In 2024, ACC accepted over 17,116 new farming-related injury claims, and spent over \$124 million to help people recover from farming-related injuries. The key focus areas are: psychosocial risks resulting in diminished wellbeing; harm experienced while working in and around vehicles and mobile plant; muscular stress and injury caused by livestock handling; harm caused by exposure to agricultural chemicals and airborne risks. (AgBrief staff report)

Food/fibre hub for Ashburton

Development of a food and fibre business hub near Ashburton has taken a step forward with approval given for a NZ, US, and Canada-owned company to buy nearly 30ha. The land is being sold by the Ashburton District Council for \$8.5 million to Inside Out LLC. The agreement is to purchase 21.33ha of sensitive land with an option to purchase two further lots, 5.92ha and 2.33ha, located at the Ashburton Business Estate. The deal also includes the purchase of 50% of shares in Christchurch-based natural fibre and carpet yarn company Rubisco Ltd. (Farmers Weekly 4 Feb)

NZ velvet in supplement

Kwangdong Pharmaceutical has launched its world-first health functional food product: a product for prostate health, featuring NZ velvet. This is the first case of a health functional food with deer velvet as the key ingredient. This achievement, which has been certified by the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety of South Korea after completing human clinical trials, is a milestone not only domestically but also internationally. Notably, the traceability and quality assurance of NZ velvet features in the company's marketing, with promotional material featuring a stick of NZ velvet with a VelTrak tag in clear prominence. (DINZ News 30 Jan)

Wyeth moving on

Richard Wyeth has resigned as CEO of Westland Milk Products. He joined the company four years ago and turned it around from making a multi-million dollar loss into being profitable. "With the turnaround of the business largely complete it is a natural time for me to step aside," Wyeth said. Westland has been owned by Yili Group since 2019. Executive director of Yili Group Australia and NZ, Zhiqiang Li will be acting chief executive until the role is filled permanently. "Yili's investment in doubling our consumer butter production has helped us access the important US market and now the new \$80 million lactoferrin plant ensures Westland will continue to enjoy a bright future for many years to come," Wyeth said. (Farmers Weekly 31 Jan)

Trade

First shots in global trade war

Trade and foreign affairs officials around the world are no doubt working on the Plans B as US President Trump initiates what many expect to develop into a full-blown trade war. Moving ahead with campaign promises, he has slapped serious tariffs on neighbours Canada and Mexico and, naturally, China, all of which Trump says have been ripping off the US for years. Canada and Mexico have said they will respond in kind, while the world awaits China's



response. Experts say it could go two ways for NZ – either get caught up in the collateral damage or provide opportunities for NZ products when the same products get too expensive from other countries. Trump has made it clear the EU is in his sights but appears to be exempting the UK (for the moment). What may make the ‘war’ interesting is just how much pain China is prepared to absorb, and how long Republican senators and congress representatives can tolerate the little bit of pain that Trump says is likely to result for US consumers. On his first day in office Trump sent a memo entitled America First Trade Policy to key federal economic agencies asking them to investigate the causes of the US’s ‘large and persistent’ annual deficits in its trade in goods with the rest of the world. He asked the agencies to report back to him on possible remedies including a “global supplemental tariff or other policies” by the beginning of April. (AgBrief staff report)

Merchandise trade surplus

NZ recorded its first merchandise trade surplus in six months in December. Goods exports rose by almost \$1 billion last month compared to December 2023, to \$6.8b. Imports were up, but only by \$404m or 6.5%, to \$6.6b. Across the year, exports to the US reached \$9b. China is still NZ’s biggest export partner. The US last year received 12% of all NZ’s exports by value – a decade earlier, the US received just 9.4% or \$4.7b of NZ’s total goods export value. Merchandise exports year-on-year were up across all major markets. Exports to China last month amounted to \$342m, up 22% on a year earlier, with dairy products the biggest driver; exports to the US were up \$82m or 11% compared to December 2023, with meat and edible offal exports alone surging by \$87m; exports to Australia were up \$64m or 8.7% compared to a year before, with dairy exports having the biggest impact; to the European Union, exports were \$110m or 39% more valuable than a year earlier, with dairy and aluminium exports well up; and to Japan, total exports rose by \$9.2m or 3.5%. Dairy products and live animal exports to Japan were also up. (NZ Herald 30 Jan)

Burgers drive trade figures

The US became NZ’s second-largest export market last year, thanks to the American obsession with burgers, according to new Stats NZ data. The US is rebuilding its beef herd, so it needs more imports. Cheap NZ lean beef trimmings are sent to the US and turned into burgers. Relative beef shortages worldwide had pushed up some prices. Meat and edible offal exports to the US are up \$87 million from a year earlier, says Stats NZ. ANZ’s Henry Russell said demand for NZ meat in China had been sluggish for some time but the US was a different story. (NZ Herald 30 Jan)

Research & Development

Wine taste research grant

Food Experience and Sensory Testing (Feast) Laboratory senior research officer Dr Amanda Dupas de Matos has been awarded more than \$100,000 from the Massey-Lincoln Agriculture Industry Fund to explore the impact of thiols in white wines. Her project seeks to unlock valuable insights into the science behind consumer perceptions

EXPORT MEATS SCHEDULED PRICES

Week ending February 7, 2024 (last week’s in brackets)

LAMB(\$/hd)	North Is.	South Is.
15.0kg YM	120.75 (120.75)	119.25 (119.25)
17.5kg YX	136.85 (136.85)	135.15 (135.15)
19.0kg YX	152.95 (152.95)	151.05 (151.05)
21.0kg YX	169.05 (169.05)	166.95 (166.95)
MUTTON (\$/hd)		
25kg MX2	103.75 (103.75)	101.25 (101.25)
BEEF (\$/kg)		
P2 Steer	7.00 (7.00)	7.00 (6.95)
M2 Bull	7.30 (7.25)	7.00 (7.00)
VENISON (\$/kg)		
AP Stag 60kg	9.20 (9.20)	9.10 (9.10)

Prices are gross operating prices, and are exclusive of levies.

AVERAGE EXPORT DAIRY PRODUCT PRICES

	Last week, ending January 31, 2024	4 weeks ago	3 months ago
Fonterra predicted payout			
/kg Milksolids	9.50	9.00	9.00
Butter (NZ\$/Tonne)	12340	12120	10920
Skim milk Powder	4980	4840	4660
Wholemilk Powder	6990	6830	6000
Cheddar	8740	8720	7920
Casein	16160	16020	14870

Prices are indicative only. They are compiled from an assessment of sales made worldwide on one-off basis in US \$. Quota market sales and contracts are excluded. The prices are then converted to NZ\$/t FOB at current exchange rates.

MAIN OVERSEAS MARKETS AND CURRENCY, INTEREST RATES, WOOL & WHEAT

	Previous week, ending January 31, 2024	4 weeks ago	3 months ago
UK CKT Lamb Leg (£/kg)	5.95	5.85	5.60
US Bull Beef (US\$/lb)	3.15	3.09	2.96
US Dollar (for NZ\$1)	0.566	0.562	0.603
Aust Dollar (for NZ\$1)	0.906	0.903	0.905
UK Pound (for NZ\$1)	0.455	0.453	0.465
Euro (for NZ\$1)	0.543	0.544	0.557
INTEREST			
90 Day Bill Rate (%)	3.94	4.11	4.51
2 Year Swap Rate (%)	3.44	3.37	3.64
5 Year Swap Rate (%)	3.67	3.61	3.79
NEW ZEALAND WOOL PRICES			
PPG Wrihston Wool Prices			
Coarse (Good style)	397	382	367
Coarse (Poor Style)	370	361	339
2nd Shear (Good style)	1973	363	352
Lamb (30-micron)	390	305	305
Merino (18-micron)	1635	1635	1640
WHEAT			
ASW NZ\$/tonne	473	471	459



and the chemical dynamics of white wine production. This research could have significant implications for the NZ wine industry, which faces both economic and environmental challenges. Thiols are a class of aroma compounds considered important determinants of acceptability given that some of these compounds provide key tropical fruit aromas to wine. While thiols are known for producing desirable tropical fruit aromas at certain levels, a high varietal thiol concentration can produce off-putting smells. The relevance of this project comes at a crucial time for NZ's wine industry, which has seen its domestic sales dip to their lowest point in two decades (AgBrief staff report).

At the heart of health

Emile Siers-Jamieson is putting beef offal to good use, turning it into high-value supplement. His REGEN+ business offers a general multi-purpose, multivitamin in capsule or powdered form, made from organic beef organs. His Beef Organ Blend, made from beef liver and heart, is the first in what he hopes will be a growing list of whole food supplements. Designed to nourish and support health and wellbeing, Siers-Jamieson described the products as a "superfood powerhouse." "Beef offal was always known as the most nutrient-dense part of the animal," he said. "As communities urbanised, these products seemed like cheap cuts and, worse still, there was that challenging taste and smell, so they went out of fashion." Siers-Jamieson said this was a "shame" as these organs contained heme iron, a range of B vitamins (including high levels of B12), vitamin A, zinc and CoQ10 — plus all the essential amino acids. (The Country 2 Feb)

New equine research chair

The NZ Equine Trust has funded a 10-year chair position, the New Zealand Equine Trust Chair in Equine Health, Welfare and Performance at the School of Veterinary Science. This position aims to foster a world-class research programme, addressing the health, welfare and performance of horses, while reinforcing NZ's reputation as a leader in equine research. Massey's Professor Chris Rogers has been appointed to the role and will dedicate the next decade to advancing research and promoting collaboration between the university and NZ's equine industry. Professor Rogers has a PhD in equine biomechanics and postdoctoral experience as a Huygens Fellow at Utrecht University in the Netherlands, and has a long history of research in equine health and performance. (AgBrief staff report).

Environment

BLNZ criticises new methane target

BLNZ is deeply concerned by Climate Change Commission's methane reduction target recommendations that raise NZ's methane reduction targets even higher than the current targets. The Commission argues that NZ's targets could be more ambitious to compensate for the rest of the world's actions not being on track to keep warming below 1.5 degrees. BLNZ chair Kate Acland says the methane targets are already too high. "Despite this, the Commission is asking us to do even more. The Government's own Independent Scientific Review on Biogenic Methane Science and Targets panel's findings

show that if methane is reduced by between 14 and 24%, methane would be adding no additional warming from 2017 levels." Professor Myles Allen showed that the current targets are too high and are asking methane to do more than other gases in terms of reductions. "NZ can therefore revise downwards its methane targets and still hold its head up high internationally. There is simply no reason for us to do more," Acland says. (AgBrief staff report)

55% emissions target

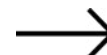
NZ will reduce emissions by 51 to 55% compared to 2005 levels, by 2035, according to the country's second international climate target under the Paris Agreement. This target also brings NZ's international and domestic climate change commitments into line, so efforts can focus on the actions that will make the biggest difference towards reaching the net zero 2050 target. (Friday Offcuts 31 Jan)

Small tree patches have impact

A new study reveals small tree patches can have mighty environmental, economic, and cultural benefits in grassland landscapes. Landcare research highlights the critical role these small patches, each less than one hectare in size, play in carbon storage and sequestration, biodiversity support, and climate adaptation. Dr Daniel Richards said the study used high-resolution satellite data to map over 1.6 million small tree patches. They collectively cover up to 188,000ha of NZ's grasslands. The researchers estimated the above ground carbon stock stored in these patches to be between 11.6 and 29.3 million metric tonnes, with annual sequestration of up to 0.8 million tonnes of carbon. Small tree patches sequester carbon equivalent to 2.9–7.8% of NZ's agricultural emissions. The market value of carbon sequestered by these patches could reach NZ\$237.6 million annually, underscoring their economic potential. Despite their contributions, current policies exclude small tree patches from regulatory carbon markets like the ETS. Researchers agree that the next step would be to age the patches to determine the 'additionality' required by carbon markets. (AgBrief staff report).

AI wildfire reporting

A new wildfire forecasting system that updates using real-time weather data could help firefighters protect lives and property from a growing global threat. Developed by an international team led by Canterbury University's Dr Alberto Ardid the system is AI-based using readily available weather data to predict wildfire danger in real-time, providing a powerful tool to inform timely decision-making. "Our AI model analyses weather data every 30 minutes, capturing dynamic weather patterns that can contribute to sudden wildfire outbreaks," Dr Ardid says. He says the frequency and intensity of wildfires, such as the destructive blazes seen in California recently, is increasing due to climate change and there's an urgent need for more effective fire management strategies to protect lives, property, and ecosystems. "Weather conditions can change dramatically within hours, potentially leading to sudden wildfire outbreaks. We are developing new tools that are sensitive to these hourly weather conditions, which can help identify high fire hazard conditions." (Friday Offcuts 31 Jan)



Whangamarino recovering

Signs of recovery are growing from the ashes of Whangamarino Wetlands after a fire grew to about 19km in diameter, releasing an estimated \$9.6 million of carbon into the atmosphere. Initial DOC estimates suggested the habitat could take up to 30 years to recover, but now the department's assessment is more hopeful. Whangamarino ranger Lizzie Sharp said thanks to relatively high water levels in the peatland before the fire, only a shallow layer of the peat soils was burned. "It's like the peat bog has lost its skin. It is still vulnerable and losing water more easily than it should. The new conditions are inviting for weeds like willow, royal fern and pampas." The recovery plan will focus on controlling invasive weeds to give the native peat vegetation time to recover from their seed sources that survived the fire. (The Country 31 Jan)

Fonterra converting more boilers

Fonterra is converting two of its North Island gas boilers to electricity, lowering its total fossil gas use by about 38%. The conversions at Edgecumbe and Whareroa in Taranaki, with most of the emissions reductions coming from the conversion of Whareroa. That site alone uses half of the co-operative's gas and will be electrified in stages. The first stage of the project will reduce Fonterra's gas consumption by 25%, with the full conversions of the sites expected to take several years. The co-op said it planned to get out of gas anyway, but the country's rapidly depleting gas fields sped up its electrification plans. (RNZ/NZ Herald 30 Jan)

Livestock & Arable

Fonterra fighting Bovaer misinformation

Fonterra is using social media to reassure customers it is not using feed additive Bovaer that is designed to lower the climate impact of cows. It was caught up in misinformation around the use of Bovaer – the product is not used in NZ, because trials showed it was not very effective in animals who spend their time mainly grazing on pasture. Just before Christmas, BBC's Inside Science podcast reported on a social media backlash to well-known brands of milk, butter and cheese sold at major UK supermarkets, produced using milk from lower-methane cows. The trend featured people pouring milk down the drain and vowing not to buy it again. Food scientists explained the product had been tested as safe and was not present in milk or meat from animals that ate the supplement, but posts on platforms such as TikTok received millions of views. (RNZ News 27 Jan)

Record payout not enough carrot

The record dairy payout appears to be not a big enough carrot to get chasing production. Dairy farmers are largely sticking to their systems. Those with the infrastructure, staffing and feed are remaining on twice-a-day milking while smaller and low-input operators are sticking to moving to once-a-day or "10 and 7" milking as pastures dry out and more supplementary feed gets used. Waikato Feds' dairy chair Matthew Zonderop said remaining on twice-a-day milking in the new year risked jeopardising the health of his herd. "There will be a lot of guys out

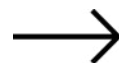
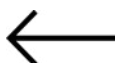
there thinking I'm not going to sacrifice cow condition for this payout because I'm only going to shoot myself in the foot when I'm drying off or come calving time." But the double-digit payout made it appealing, he said. For those farmers who have more intensive systems, it came down to the per-cow production, and they would be averaging around 1.5-1.6kg MS a day. On that basis, they would continue twice-a-day because they had those levers, he said. (Farmers Weekly 31 Jan)

AI scoring body condition

Manually body-condition scoring cows and getting inconsistent results is a thing of the past for dairy farmers, with an AI-powered body condition scoring system available. Herd-i in Christchurch said the technology saves time, improves consistency, and provides farmers with daily body condition scoring data. Farmers can monitor trends for each cow and act quickly if body condition begins to decline, preventing issues at key times in the season. Until now, farmers have relied on manual assessments by eye or brought in a certified BCS assessor – often a time-consuming process with inconsistent results. DairyNZ recommends at least four BCS assessments each season during key periods, as well as monthly scoring during the dry period and late lactation. The system uses an EID reader to identify each cow as she exits the shed. A small camera tracks her movement, streaming the video to a cloud-based server where machine-learning models analyse her body condition and assign a score based on DairyNZ's industry-standard scale. Results are displayed on an intuitive dashboard, allowing farmers to set customised alerts, track trends, and act quickly. (Farmers Weekly 3 Feb)

Ferdon wins again

Ferdon Genetics had excellent results at the NZ Dairy Event in Feilding, including repeat grand champion Jersey honours with Ferdon Tbone Veneer. Ferdon also exhibited the senior champion Holstein with Waipiri CR Freaky Girl and was supreme champion (all-breeds) exhibit. The Ferguson family and staff members have won the NZDE grand champion Jersey nine times, supreme dairy cow five times, and premier Jersey exhibitor nine successive years. Grand champion Holstein was the intermediate cow Tahora Sidekick Legacy2, exhibited by Dean Geddes, Tahora Farms in Canterbury. Grand champion Ayrshire was Pukekaraka Elle Delila from the Gilbert family in Ashburton. The reserve champion combined breeds and grand champion Brown Swiss was Blumoon Lester Mystery owned by Thurvalley Brown, Rotorua. The combined breeds grand champion Westell Jedi Rollie is owned by Josh Sneddon, of Tokoroa. The Summer Sensation Sale averaged \$7720 on the 17 live lots at the NZ Dairy Event. Top price was \$16,000 paid for Holstein Ruanui Energy Ladylike, sold by R and S Trainer to Noah Dibble, Taupiri. The other five-figure price was \$11,000 made by Holstein Silversea Lambda Maree offered by L Webster and A Reyland and sold to Varney Farms, Poipoi. (Farmers Weekly 31 Jan)



Sales and sentiment encouraging

Results at various stag sales over December and January have been mostly encouraging, and farmer sentiment good, according to DINZ CEO Rhys Griffiths. "Given the challenges we faced last year, the sentiment was pretty good overall." He said 2024 was a bit of an uncertain year for the industry, especially in the velvet space, so the mixed results weren't surprising. He was quietly confident that the short-term market bumps would lead on to long-term gains. DINZ chair Paddy Boyd commented that most farmers he had spoken to at sales were understanding of the complexities of re-establishing right of entry of velvet into China and showed confidence in the whole industry by competing strongly for sire stags and breeding hinds put up for sale. "I found that prices for quality stock were on par or better than previous years." (DINZ News 30 Jan)

Highest price for a filly

The highest priced filly ever sold in NZ has become the talk of the annual Karaka yearling sales. The Savabeel-sired filly sold for \$2.4 million dollars. She is also a full sister to a champion three-year-old named Orchestral who won the million-dollar race at Ellerslie recently, after winning last year's \$1.5m Karaka Million 3YO. The Christchurch buyer plans to take the horse to the stables of leading Australian thoroughbred trainer Chris Waller in Sydney to continue her career. (RNZ News 4 Feb)

FAW four generations horrific

The top-of-NZ's biggest maize contractor says news of a potential increase in fall army worm populations is "bloody horrific". Whangarei-based Greg Sowry's comments come as FAR warns of the country's first likely occurrence of four generations of the pest in a season. Sowry said fall army worm infestations could result in maize crop production loss of as much as 50%. The maize crop pest came from Australia and was first officially confirmed in NZ in 2022. The Far North's warmer temperatures make it the country's fall army worm epicentre. (Northern Advocate 2 Feb)

Horticulture

Dairy farm becomes orchard

T&G Global is expanding its growing footprint in Canterbury by partnering with FarmRight to license the growing of a new crop of premium apples, converting a dairy farm into an apple orchard. It partnered with the NZ Superannuation Fund, through its rural investment manager FarmRight, to plant the 125ha of Joli-branded apples. While the grower has already planted 55ha of the premium variety in Hawke's Bay, it marks the first plantings at a commercial scale in Canterbury. It will be a couple of years before the crop yields fruit, with the first commercial crop expected in 2027 from the Hawke's Bay plantings. (The Country 31 Jan)

Mice insurance payout welcomed

Kiwifruit growers are welcoming the \$24.1 million payout Zespri has received for the mice infestation on last season's first shipment of SunGold to Europe as a late Christmas present. More than a million trays were destroyed in May, following the discovery of vermin onboard the Crown

Garnet shipment of SunGold around Belgium in April last year. Zespri said the successful marine cargo insurance claim will return a "substantial proportion of the losses" attributed to the incident to growers of SunGold at a value of 17-18 cents per tray, which will be reflected in the next forecast in February. (RNZ News 4 Feb)

Forestry

Same old for log exports

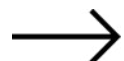
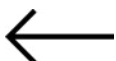
While 2025 has started well with increased AWG export returns, the underlying demand profile isn't much different from last year. January's AWG prices were up a few dollars to around \$128/m³ in southern North Island and northern South Island ports with \$2-3 more in Tauranga and Marsden and up to \$20/m³ less in Lyttelton and other southern ports. These numbers will get the woodlot sector fired back into life, especially during the summer months, but these increases are purely driven by lower shipping and exchange rates, not demand. The market does not need increased supply and any increase in supply will likely result in lower sales prices. Chinese New Year holidays started on January 29 this year and many sawmills had already closed as their workforce returned to their home provinces. This shutdown generally lasts four weeks and there is some expectation that this year the break may be slightly longer. (NZ Herald 3 Feb)

Slash for Cash gets funding

An innovative project to transform woody debris from beaches into valuable products is gaining momentum. The initiative also aims to address environmental challenges and unemployment in Tairāwhiti and Wairoa with the launch of a one-year job-readiness programme. Slash for Cash, a social enterprise established in 2023 by the Tolaga Bay Inn Charitable Trust, has secured \$320,000 in funding to advance its kaupapa. This includes \$220,000 from the Lottery Grants Board's community fund and \$100,000 from the Eastern and Central Community Trust's community impact fund. The funding will support a year-long job-readiness training programme for 18 unemployed participants from Tolaga Bay, Ruatoria and Wairoa. It will focus on developing practical and soft skills to prepare participants for employment with the enterprise or elsewhere. (NZ Herald 3 Feb)

Feds baffled over tree plans

Federated Farmers' Ian Anderson is baffled why land taken out of extensive farming because of its conservation values, is now being seen as suitable for trees. "The Government's proposal for public-private partnerships to plant trees on 'low-value' Crown land has more holes in it than Swiss cheese." Feds has written to Cabinet ministers seeking urgent clarification. The proposal is to identify land of "low conservation and farming value" and plant exotic or native trees or promote native forest regeneration. An accompanying map indicating land targeted in the proposal is dominated by South Island high country land, including land taken by the Crown under tenure review. The iconic Molesworth Station is also highlighted as having potential for trees. "Who's going



to determine what is 'low-value' land?" Anderson asks. "As much as one million hectares was taken out by the Crown for its high conservation and amenity values, with a goal of preserving it for future generations. This new afforestation idea seems to be in total conflict with that. Land deemed critical for conservation is now being categorised as having 'low conservation value.'" (Farmers Weekly 3 Feb)

Rural & Regional

Dunedin hospital plans laid out

The former Cadbury factory will be the site of the inpatient building for the new Dunedin hospital. Health Minister Simeon Brown says action has been taken to get the controversial hospital project's cost overruns under control. "We will build a new Dunedin hospital that will future-proof the provision of timely, quality healthcare for the people of Dunedin and the surrounding Otago and Southland regions." Last year, the Government invested \$290 million towards the new hospital project, bringing the total funding for the project to \$1.88 billion. Alongside this, the Government is investing a record additional \$16.68 billion in health over three years, the Minister confirmed. Upon opening, the new Dunedin Hospital will provide: 351 beds, with capacity to expand to 404 beds over time; 20 short-stay surgical beds, a new model of care; 22 theatres, with capacity to expand to 24 theatres over time; 41 same day beds to provide greater capacity for timely access to specialist and outpatient procedures; 58 ED spaces, including a short-stay unit and specialised emergency psychiatric care; 20 imaging units for CT, MRI and X-ray procedures, with 6 additional spaces available for future imaging advancement. (insidegovernment 3 Feb)

Taranaki gets recognition

Almost a decade of settlement negotiations between the Crown and Taranaki formally concluded when Parliament voted unanimously to pass a law that formally grants legal personhood to Taranaki maunga. The redress bill also acknowledged the historical grievances inflicted on Taranaki's eight iwi by the Crown. This is the 100th settlement between the Crown and Maori. Hundreds of descendants of Taranaki's eight iwi gathered at Parliament to witness the moment. (NZ Herald 2 Feb)

Air ambo being reorganised

Helicopter air ambulance contracts are being amended to cope with rising demand – rescue flights are up across the country by about a fifth over the last three years, to about 13,000 flying hours a year. Currently service contracts are split between three companies in the north, central and south of the country. Te Whatu Ora said the structure changes would be determined by the response to the tender, asking for expressions of interest. The change falls under a redesign of the whole aeromedical operating model, led by Health

NZ and ACC. The Government's \$140m funding covers most, but not all, of the air ambulance costs. It is putting in an extra \$14.7m this year to get eight new rescue helicopters, with a couple already in place. (RNZ News 2 Feb)

Reshaping of regional polytechnics

The Government will reshape vocational education and training to return decision making to regions and enable greater industry input into work-based learning. Tertiary Education and Skills Minister, Penny Simmonds says this includes re-establishing regional polytechnics that are financially sustainable. The Government has agreed to amend the Education and Training Act 2020 to disestablish Te Pūkenga and allow institutes of technology and polytechnics to be established as autonomous entities. These may be stand alone or as part of a federation. "Decisions on which polytechnics will be established, and in which form, will be taken in the first half of next year. These decisions will consider the needs of local communities, learners, and industry." (AgBrief staff report)

Tekapo and Milford most beautiful

Lake Tekapo and Milford Sound have been named among the 'most beautiful places in the world' by a prestigious US-based travel publication. They are among 57 destinations included in Conde Nast Traveler's list of most beautiful places, which also included the Amazon, Grand Canyon, Great Barrier Reef and Machu Picchu. (Stuff 29 Jan)

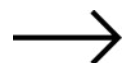
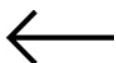
Homekill prosecution

Auckland woman Suli Rachael Rejoice Adimim has been fined \$25,245 and an Auckland man Bruce Baru Luke Vunipola has been ordered to do 300 hours' community work for the illegal slaughter and sales of pigs. "This so-called homekill business was not registered as required under the Animal Products Act, meaning they were operating without a risk management programme," says Food Safety's Vincent Arbuckle. (AgBrief Staff Report)

Global & Trending

10% reduction in English farmland

Farmland in England will be reduced by more than 10% by 2050 under government plans, with less meat produced and eaten by the country's citizens. Environment secretary Steve Reed launched the Government's blueprint for land use change, designed to balance the need to build infrastructure and meet nature and carbon targets. Grassland, used to rear livestock, faces the largest reduction – this meant, Reed said, people will be encouraged to eat less meat. "We know we need to develop a food strategy. If we can give parents better information to make better informed choices, they will do that. I'm sure that there will be no mandate from government about that, but I'm sure those informed choices will then affect what farmers grow, and producers and manufacturers provide, to meet the demands as that changes." (The Guardian 31 Jan)



Finland forests become emitters

Finland's forests, once a crucial carbon sink, have become a source of emissions, raising concerns over the country's climate policy and carbon neutrality targets. The latest data estimates Finland's forests emitted 1.12 million tonnes of CO2 equivalent in 2023. This shift began gradually around 2010 and has accelerated since 2018.

By 2021, Finland's forests had transitioned from absorbing carbon to releasing it. The main causes are declining forest growth, increased logging, and rising emissions from forest soil – it even surpasses agriculture. The carbon storage capacity of Finnish mineral soils has weakened. Rising temperatures have accelerated soil decomposition, leading to greater emissions. Peatland forests, which store large amounts of carbon, have also begun releasing more greenhouse gases. (Friday Offcuts 31 Jan)

\$1.9 million for building agric workforce

The Australian government has pledged \$1.9 million in funding to grow the nation's agriculture workforce. In comparison, the recently announced \$10,000 incentive payment to attract apprentices to the residential housing sector will cost close to \$627 million. Assistant Minister Anthony Chisholm said the Government is delivering on its budget commitment to encourage more students to pursue a career in the agriculture sector. (farmonline 30 Jan)

Oz farmers turning away from sheep

Inside the sheep industry's battle to keep farmers - Australia is no longer riding on the sheep's back, as producers turn away from the once-proud enterprise en masse. The percentage of adult sheep being slaughtered as part of the national kill has hit its highest figure in more than 30 years, as the industry battles a trifecta of challenges: low wool prices, high costs and a tough season in some of the nation's key production regions. But there also appears to be a change in sentiment, with sheep out of favour. National Livestock Reporting Service figures show 11.8 million adult sheep were slaughtered in 2024, compared to 9.8 million in 2023 and a range of 5.8-6.6 million in each of the three preceding years. (Weekly Times 30 Jan)