

HE PANUI

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The Perfect Storm

It is hard to believe that it was only three months ago that the New Zealand farming sector was in a period of positivity all round. Since then we have seen a major shift occur in the markets with the big impact being the well publicised coronavirus (COVID-19) which has dramatically reduced the demand for our meat products in China. This has been due to a few factors including a major reduction in the restaurant trade as well as many of the major ports being shut down so ship loads of our marvellous meat product were being turned around at the ports with no way to unload or truck the product out to the masses.

As a result, the meat chillers are now full in New Zealand and you only have to drive past any processing plant around the country and notice the huge number of refrigerated shipping containers sitting outside – these are full of meat that should be sitting on supermarket shelves overseas. There have even been reports that some of our major processing plants are shipping meat to USA to utilise more cold storage there! All of this comes at a cost and this backlog of product will not change overnight – it will take a few months for the markets to “*come right*” even if COVID-19 does get under control quickly.

So with no demand and a lack of freezer space, many processors did not want stock and the price dropped accordingly. Getting space to get stock processed became a nightmare, getting cattle processed has become a six week wait exercise and the works simply stopped killing old ewes as there was no demand for the product.

If this was not bad enough, we have seen the dry conditions now turn in officially “*drought*”

conditions in much of the North Island and the top of the South Island is not faring much better. With many regions only having 10-20% of “*normal*” rainfall since Christmas the pasture has been drying up in front of our eyes. So all of a sudden we have had falling prices, big delays in getting stock sold and less pasture to feed them on - the perfect storm! This has really taken the gloss off the season, so it has forced a real “*rethink*” of the plan.

The silver lining. There is still demand for our quality products around the rest of the world which is why we have seen prices remain at or above the five-year average (it’s not all doom and gloom). It is important to remember though that the small falls of 5-10mm of rain do little to ease the pain at the moment - we need more like 50mm+ (2 inches or more!) to really start to make a difference and grow some grass before winter arrives.

Darren McNae, AgFirst

The impacts of Coronavirus

Everyone will be aware of the Coronavirus and its spread around the globe. So what impact is this having on New Zealand agriculture and more specifically Te Uranga B2 farm operations?

The immediate impact has been on the beef market. Around the globe there has been a move to tighten border controls, impacting trade. Specifically, in China these restrictions have been very strong and coupled with imposing limits of movement on residents in cities means food supply is constrained and demand for produce subdued.

Both factors have led to a log jam of product in our meat works. Their chillers are full and there are significant delays in finding slots to send produce to the works. Prices have fallen

alongside this. Te Uranga B2 is no different to other farms in feeling this impact.

However, Te Uranga B2 remains in a sound position. It has a strong financial base and resilient farm practices and is still tracking well against its budgets.

Peter Topham, Peak Chartered Accountants

Tēnā koutou nga kaimahi ahuwheua hou i Upoko.

Julian Olsen has been appointed *Shepherd* on Upoko and begins work on 16 March. He and Nivea will work with Rod Walker on Te Uranga B2 Inc's 1,153 ha drystock unit that runs approximately 8,000 sheep and 800 cattle.

Julian (Julz) who is originally from Rotorua started work driving diggers for the forestry industry, then was a contract fencer, a dairy milker then wanted to be on the land shepherding where he's been for the past year working in Te Kuiti. When he learned that Upoko was looking for a shepherd he applied for the job knowing that here was a chance for him to grow his knowledge and skills by working on a larger farm.

Julz's partner Kate has a dairy farming background and in the previous 12 months has been milking goats in Te Kuiti.

Both Julz and Kate are looking forward to being part of the Upoko team.

Not only will Julz and Nivea learn hands-on knowledge and skills from Rod, Te Uranga B2 will assist Julz and Nivea in their endeavours to grow all the skills necessary to help improve Upoko's productivity and achieve outstanding results through their participation in Primary ITO to gain a diploma in Agribusiness Management.

New Farm Unit Signs

Kia Ora Whānau over the past couple of months I have had the honour of working on four new signs as a visual impact for each of the farms.

The signs will stand at the entrance to each farm on the Te Uranga B2 Incorporation and visually symbolises the continuing relationship between our tupuna blocks and the current incorporation.



There have been a number of hours spent on each sign, carving the lettering in and painting. The varnishing to seal the wood has brought out some amazing aesthetics from the timber. The work has been completed on locally milled wood and the names of Koromiko, Paatara, Upoko, and Upokomatu have been carved into the wood so that the signs can withstand our rohe changing weather.

I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to recreate these signs that once stood on the farm and I respect that each name cements the history of each of these farms to the Te Uranga B2 Incorporation. The signs will be installed soon, and I hope this new feature will be enjoyed by owners and visitors to our whenua. *Nāku Noa, nā Lee Hall*

Alert Level 4 - Covid 19

Stay in isolation - head to town if you must get supplies. Remember to keep a safe 2-3m distance from others and follow the protocols each supplier and service deliverer has set up to keep them, you, and the industry safe. If they are going into town, ask your neighbour to pick stuff up and drop it at your gate or when you go ask if you can pick stuff up for your neighbour - try to stay isolated.

Unite Against Covid19 - visit Government Website - <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

Feedback Welcome email: derekwooster@outlook.com

