



Media Release

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Gisborne beef farm gets global sustainability recognition *Whangara Farms join McDonald's Flagship Farmers programme*

Management and the three Maori incorporations (Whangara B5, Pakarae A and Tapuwae Whitiwhiti) that own Whangara Farms are celebrating the farm's confirmation as part of McDonald's 'Flagship Farmers' programme.

The Flagship Farmers programme identifies exceptional farmers then enables and empowers them to share their sustainability experiences with peers and fellow farmers.

Whangara Farms was first identified for its sustainability practices several years ago by Silver Fern Farms (a McDonald's NZ beef supplier) and Beef + Lamb New Zealand.

Working with Beef + Lamb NZ, Silver Fern Farms and McDonald's, Whangara Farms instituted a Land & Environment Plan which measures and benchmarks sustainability efforts across key areas of the farm.

Situated north of Gisborne, Whangara is a large-scale farm, running 2,500 Angus breeding cows, 300 breeding heifers, 4,750 rearing/finishing cattle, and 60,000 sheep, and is managed by Richard Scholefield.

"The key to being a good manager of any business is to treat it like it's your own and that is what we do at Whangara Farms. Sustainability is the key to every decision we make within our business and we are constantly looking at ways that we can improve," says Scholefield.

"These lands will always be here – they can never be sold. Decisions we make today and the way we treat the land are going to affect the future generations. We embrace change because if you do what you have always done you will get what you have always got."

Scholefield's informed decision making, and the integration of sustainable management practices have helped the farm achieve an economic surplus of 60% higher than comparable farms in the region. Following an extensive assessment process, Whangara Farms was the first farm outside of Europe and the United Kingdom to join the Flagship Farmers program.

"Whangara Farms is at the pinnacle of sustainable agricultural production and is a well deserving member of the Flagship Farmers group," says Keith Kenny, Vice President Sustainability, McDonald's Corporation.

"Richard Scholefield and his team have done an excellent job of prioritizing key components of their Land & Environment Plan and successfully implementing those priorities. It's truly an inspiring effort.

"Flagship Farmers engage other farmers and ranchers by sharing their experiences and best practices around the Three 'E's of Responsibility: environmental safeguarding, ethical practices and economic viability. Whangara Farms will be incredibly important for increasing awareness and adoption of sustainable farming practices among their peers," Kenny explains.

Ingrid Collins, Chair of Whangara Farms and representative of the Maori owners says that Whangara Farms is more than two words and is much more than a place. “Whangara is alive, and it is inside our beating heart. As its guardians, we have protected the richness of our land for future generations,” she said.

“We are devoted to producing premium quality beef products and have built a business with the utmost regard for quality, longevity and sustainability. We are honoured to be part of the Flagship Farmers programme and look forward to sharing our story. Our experiences with McDonald’s shows us how much they value beef farmers and their efforts at continuous improvement.”

In April, Mrs Collins and farm manager Richard Scholefield were flown to McDonald’s worldwide convention in Orlando, attended by 20,000 people from around the world. They participated in a sustainability panel discussion with US, Canadian, and Irish beef farmers, and had the opportunity to talk with franchisees and delegates about how beef sustainability efforts are incorporated at Whangara Farms, and the importance of beef sustainability to McDonald’s.

“Farming is dependent on the natural environment and is at the heart of everything we do at Beef + Lamb New Zealand. Our sheep and beef farmers know this too and strive for the best for consumers, for their animals, and for the land,” says Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd CEO Sam McIvor.

“For Whangara Farms to receive this global sustainability recognition is testament to the incredible work that’s being done, and demonstrates how environmental performance delivers real benefits for everyone,” he says.

New Zealand is one of McDonald’s top ten beef producing markets, recognised for the quality of its grass-fed beef. In 2017 33 million kilograms of beef was exported from New Zealand to other McDonald’s markets.

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About Flagship Farmers

<http://www.flagshipfarmers.com/en/profile/richard-scholefield/>

About Whangara Farms

Whangara Farms was formed in 2006 when two neighbouring Maori-owned farms, Pakarae A and Whangara B5, joined to form a 5,600-hectare property. Led by farm manager Richard Scholefield, a major development programme was started in 2007 and focused on water, fertilizer use, genetics and infrastructure. Tapuwae Whitiwhiti joined Whangara Farms in 2015, and the total area of the farming partnership became 8,500ha. Over the last seven years, \$7 million has been invested in development and infrastructure projects on the property.

About McDonald’s New Zealand

New Zealand’s first McDonald’s restaurant opened in Porirua in 1976. Today there are over 165 McDonald’s restaurants across New Zealand, 85 per cent of which are owned and operated by local business men and women. The organisation employs over 9,000 people in restaurants nationwide,

and is one of New Zealand's largest employers of youth. In 2016 McDonald's spent more than \$150 million with local suppliers, while New Zealand producers exported over \$247 million of food to other McDonald's markets around the world. McDonald's is the primary supporter of Ronald McDonald House Charities New Zealand, who keep families close while their children are in hospital.

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