

5

Farm ownership – what are the building blocks to farm ownership

The goal of farm ownership is achievable, when the right ingredients are in place. What are these ingredients?

Chaired by Will Grayling, Dairy Farmer



James and Ceri Bourke

Rakaia Dairy Farmers

We have enjoyed 18 years working our way up from dairy assistant level through to Sharemilking and Contract milking in the NZ dairy sector.

In June 2018, we bucked the trend of moving from Sharemilking to farm ownership; instead opting to sell our cows to the farm owners in the Amuri Basin and James taking on a senior farm manager position overseeing 2700 cows and 14 full time staff at Rakaia Island Dairies near Leeston. Ceri will return to Lincoln University in 2019 to study Environmental Science and policy in a bid to help the dairy sector maintain a fair say and understanding of the potential changes which may lie ahead.

Our passion for cows and grass remains strong but another passion that has developed over our time in the sector is people development and progression along with building strong, capable teams on farm.

This has been the main driver for our recent change in pathway.

Pasture harvested always has been and still is the overriding driver for farm profitability in the New Zealand; today, and into the future.

The potential for pasture growth is the underlying value for a dairy farm.

Our personal progression and wealth creation have been driven by increasing pasture harvest and developing simple but effective systems and capable teams to implement these systems.

Traditional pathways in the NZ dairy sector are changing but these changes are presenting new opportunities now and into the future.

Human capital - who is going to work on these farms?

Who will have the skill sets to manage these farms?

People - team leadership and people management. What gets one particular culture or team ticking won't necessarily work for the next.

Is your farm a business or a hobby? Who you (as a farm owner) employ is decided by this question.

Where is the money coming from for current owners to release some capital and realize some of the value of their asset?

What is the value of the farm? Asset value vs productive potential. Pasture grown and harvested is the true productive potential. Pasture vs Supplement.

Investment in people. Have the investments on farm been in the right areas? In shed feeding, centre pivots, protract etc. - are they always fully utilized to their full potential or are they sometimes limited by lack of knowledge and understanding from those using them day to day?

In summary, the dairy sector in NZ is here to stay albeit in a potentially different environment to what we have seen previously but let's explore what this can mean for keen, capable, skilled leaders of the future.



Will Green

Fairlie Dairy Farmer

Lower Order Sharemilker in Fairlie, South Canterbury.

2018 Canterbury Dairy Industry Awards Dairy Manager of the Year.

Will is currently in his first year of lower order sharemilking 850 cows for Kieran and Leonie Guiney.

Previously managing for them on the same property for 3 years since emigrating for the UK in 2014.

With a burning desire to achieve farm ownership Will believes that New Zealand's grass growth advantage and strong co-operative values are the perfect platform to help him achieve his goals.

Will's presentation will cover:

- *Background*
 - *Networking*
 - *Why NZ?*
 - *Why pasture?*
 - *Cost Management*
 - *The Future*
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