

Farmer Time for Schools

New Zealand

Impact Report 2023



Introduction

Farmer Time for Schools is a unique educational programme opening children's eyes to an entirely new world of learning and opportunity. Virtual field trips directly from the classroom to the farm aid in reconnecting urban and rural communities. This fosters a greater understanding of each other and the New Zealand food and fibre story.

Throughout 2023, the education and primary industry sectors faced a number of trials, from adverse weather events like Cyclones Hale and Gabrielle to ongoing waves of Covid19 and teacher strikes. In spite of these challenges, Farmer Time for Schools continued to forge ahead, introducing more young New Zealanders to rural life and the farmers behind our food.

This pan sector programme, introduced to New Zealand in 2022 by Beef and Lamb New Zealand Inc. and supported by the Ministry for Primary Industries, has attracted farmers from a wide range of farming enterprises, growing produce as diverse as sweetcorn, mushrooms, and milk.

Recognising the value of this wonderful programme, schools nationwide have become involved, with 48 pairings between farmers and schools in 2023.

The Farmer Time for Schools team wishes to thank all who continue to support us: our farmers, teachers, funders, and friends. The ongoing success of the programme is greatly attributed to your unwavering support.

Marie Burke
National Coordinator
Farmer Time for Schools New Zealand



“I like that we get to learn from actual farmers about what farmers actually do.”

Student

“Farmer Time for Schools is a great way to connect with children and teachers who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to learn about farming, rural life and how food is grown.” Farmer

Farmer Time for Schools aims to:

- Be the educational foundation upon which careers in the primary industries grow
- Increase young students' understanding of where their food comes from and the farmers who grow it
- Increase collaboration between the primary production and education sectors of New Zealand for the educational benefit of present and future generations
- Enable young New Zealanders to gain a greater understanding of food and fibre production and supply



“Some of my learners are now considering a job in farming.”

Teacher

2023 Overview:

2023 survey results show Farmer Time for Schools continues to be rewarding for farmers while delivering diverse and enriching classroom content for school students across the country.

The programme enables farmers to have varied and enjoyable social interactions beyond the farm gate allowing them to communicate the realities of their careers and lifestyles. This offers a special opportunity for students to understand how food is grown and sparks interest in subjects relevant to careers in the primary industries.

Overall, the programme offers ongoing mutual benefits for both farmers and schools, exposing children to novel experiences offering real-life applied learning scenarios.

“Learners acquired a multifaceted education that extended beyond the classroom, fostering a holistic understanding of food production, environmental sustainability, and community engagement.”

Teacher

“It’s so rewarding, it’s giving back, investing in the future and is lots of fun. I always get the warm fuzzies after a call.” Farmer

“I found Farmer Time for Schools really interesting, it was an amazing experience.”

Student



Programme Reach

- The majority of students were connecting with their Farmer Time for Schools farmer fortnightly
- Total time commitment for farmers and teachers for each session averaged less than an hour.

1098

Student
Participants

48

Farmer-Teacher
Pairings



Outcomes 2023

Farmer Time for Schools facilitated the direct sharing of knowledge and information between farmers and students.

“It’s an amazing opportunity to share what we do as producers, and the kids want to learn!” Farmer

School children from across the country got to know New Zealand farmers and their families, to ask questions of them, and to form their own views on rural life and the business of farming.

“My students developed a relationship with our farmer and because of that felt comfortable asking lots of questions.” Teacher

Children learnt first-hand that plant and animal welfare is at the forefront of farmers minds, and farmers play a key role in maintaining, improving, and protecting the environment, as custodians of the land.

“Students learned the importance of sustainable farming practices and environmental stewardship.” Teacher

Farmer Time for Schools sparked an interest in new subjects and gave students the opportunity to consider these avenues of employment for themselves.

“It’s a great way for students to experience a possible career path and engage with an industry they might know very little about.” Teacher

Farmer Time for Schools helped young learners understand the value of New Zealand farming practices in the global sense and conveyed how important farming is to the future of our country and planet.

“My learners now have a better understanding of the challenges faced by farmers, which cultivated a sense of global citizenship, encouraging learners to think about broader issues such as food security and sustainable agriculture on a global scale.” Teacher

Academic learning was enhanced, with sessions linked in some way to all areas of the New Zealand School Curriculum.



SCIENCE

“Before Farmer Time for Schools I had no idea what an agronomist is, and I think agronomy is really interesting!” Student



SOCIAL SCIENCE

“My learners came to understand that agriculture often plays a vital role in the culture and history of a region.” Teacher

MATHEMATICS & STATISTICS

“We estimated how big different animals were and then made them using classroom objects. We then measured them and sent our guesses back to our farmer.” Teacher



ENGLISH

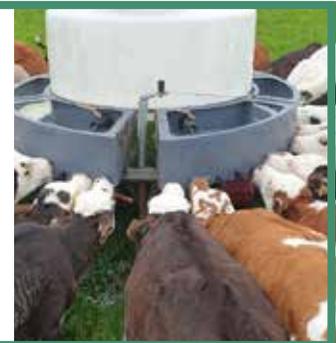
“The local council hadn’t mowed the grass at our local park for a long time, so we worked out how many sheep the grass could feed in a day and then wrote a letter to the council about it.” Teacher

Farming topics covered

Understanding food production, Growing crops, raising livestock, market dynamics, life cycles, food security, genetics, technology on farms, health & safety, maps, animal welfare, problem-solving, food chains, working dogs, weather, teamwork, climate change, rural life & communities, forestry, farm jobs & roles, sustainability, budgeting, machinery, soil management, wool & shearing

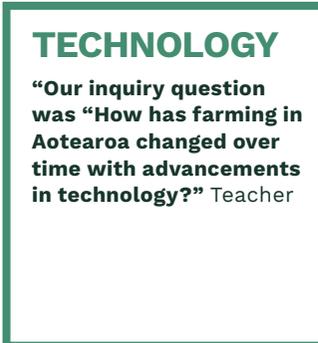
LEARNING LANGUAGES

“Farmer Time for Schools gave my English as a Second Language students an authentic purpose to practice the use of English, e.g names of animals.” Teacher



HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

“Students gained a better insight into the journey of food from farm to table, increasing their awareness of the importance of a healthy and balanced diet.” Teacher



TECHNOLOGY

“Our inquiry question was “How has farming in Aotearoa changed over time with advancements in technology?” Teacher

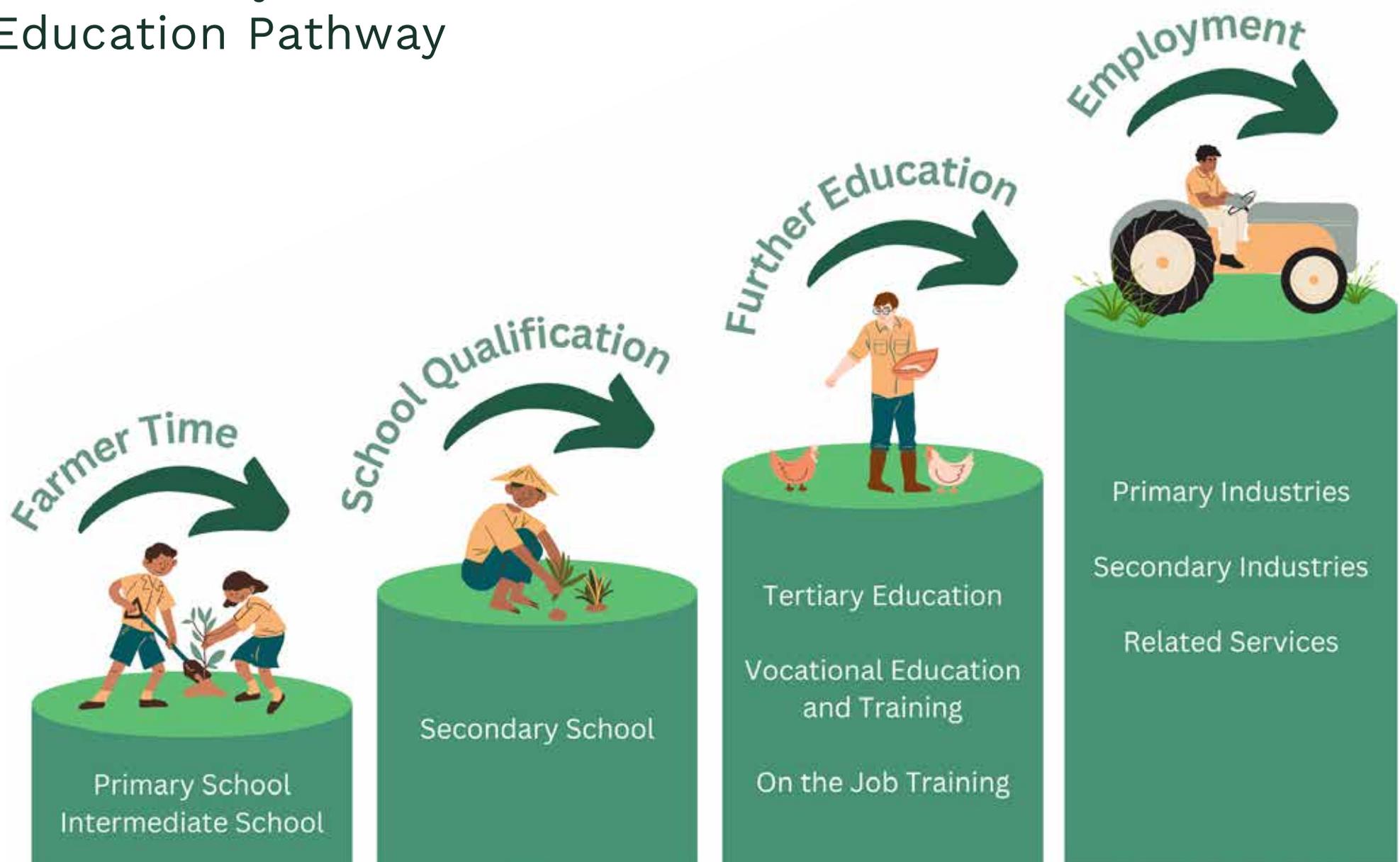
THE ARTS

“Our class sent us some drawings they did of us and our farm, they were really good!” Farmer



From Farmer Time for Schools to Employment

The Primary Industries
Education Pathway



Key Survey Results

100%

100% of farmers & teachers said...

They would recommend Farmer Time for Schools to others

100% of farmers said...

Farmer Time for Schools will have a positive impact on the future of farming in New Zealand

100% of teachers said...

Farmer Time for Schools will have a positive impact on education in New Zealand

100% of farmers said...

Connecting with students was enjoyable, communicating with teachers was easy

100% of teachers said...

Farmer Time for Schools introduced students to career options in the primary industries

100% of students said...

They enjoyed Farmer Time for Schools
They'd like to do Farmer Time for Schools again

“You can tailor the programme to suit your class. The kids absolutely loved it and we all learnt so much.”

“The programme opened their eyes to a different way of life and learning about where our food comes from.”

“I had lots of parents tell me how engaged the children were and there were lots of conversations around the dinner table.”

Teacher Feedback

All surveyed teachers responded positively, saying Farmer Time for Schools provided worthwhile learning for their students.

Farmer Feedback

All participating farmers experienced positive outcomes.

“It is not a big deal in terms of time commitment, but the benefits are worthwhile. It has made me see our farm and all we take for granted with new eyes.”

“This is a great way to connect rural and urban, the children were so engaged and had plenty of questions.”

“It was much easier than we thought it was going to be because you are simply sharing what you do day to day so content is not hard to come up with. There is always something going on that is share-worthy.”

Student Feedback

Some things we learnt:

Sheep get shorn every year

In winter farmers do break feeding

Female sheep are called ewes

Pigs can't sweat

People spend heaps of money on farming

Wool can't burn

Cows have four stomachs and turn grass into milk

Farming is harder than I thought

There are over 13000 types of grass in the world

“ I liked everything about Farmer Time for Schools and I wish I could do it again.”

“ I liked getting to see a bit of their world and learnt much more about it than I expected.”

“ I used to think there wasn't much to being a farmer, but actually there's a lot.”

Opportunities for the future

The overall response from participants was once again positive, despite challenges with rural internet connectivity for some.

Key opportunities highlighted by farmers lie in facilitating smoother interactions with students through improved internet connectivity and establishing a network of participating farmers to exchange ideas on session content. Some farmers proposed that additional training in technology could enhance their sessions, along with the provision of relevant resources for classroom study and subsequent discussion.

The main constraint for teachers is their busy schedules, with high demand on their teaching time, and learning priorities changing each term and year. Developing a relationship with the Ministry of Education would be beneficial in assisting with integrating Farmer Time for Schools into the teaching curriculum. Teachers also asked for resources to support learning.

“Teaching and learning resources relevant to New Zealand would be great!” Teacher

Next Steps

For Farmer Time for Schools to become more easily integrated into teachers’ programme planning, a database of resources is required. First step is to determine what resources are required by teachers before beginning resource development. This work will be carried out during 2024 if funding can be sourced. Collaboration with leading government agencies, and both education and primary industry organisations is key to achieving this step.

Ideally, Farmer Time for Schools will become an integral part of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, ensuring it continues to have a positive impact. For this programme to evolve and expand, further support is essential.

To facilitate the sharing of information and ideas between Farmer Time for Schools participants, a closed Facebook group is to be created for their use.

“Keep pushing to have Farmer Time for Schools included in the education of all New Zealand children.” Teacher



Farmer Time for Schools Participants 2023

Farms:

Legendairies Ltd
Makatote
Noremac Ag
Deep South Sheep & Beef
Rushaven
Waikaka Station
Pine Ridge Farms
LeaderBrand Produce Ltd
Enton Farms
Glencorran Farm Ltd
Out of the Dark Mushrooms
Coasthaven Farms
Atapo Farm
Cravendale
Taranua
WJ Herbert
Toropuke Dairies

J and A Macdonald
Ywari Farms
Oropi Views
A S Wilcox & Sons Ltd
Mercer Mushrooms
Puketira Station
Waihora Farm
Pihitia Station
Malcolm Farms
Clus Moos
Barwell Farm
Kiwitahi
The Montana Flat
Lorne Peak Station
Earthbrooke Farm
Kaihoka Station
Moss Burn Ridges
Stonewood Farm

Schools:

Pukeatua Primary School
Tamatea Intermediate
Botany Downs School
Waterloo School
Ilam School
Carterton School
Edendale School
Northland School Wellington
Ararira Springs Primary School
West Rolleston Primary School
St Leos Catholic Primary School
Omokoroa Point School
Dominion Road School
Omihi School
Kilbirnie School
Masterton Intermediate School
Otautau School

Pukenui School
Maeroa School
Ngatea Primary School
Woodleigh School
Te Papapa Primary School
Saint Kentigern Girls School
St Mary's School Northcote
Pleasant Point Primary School
Orewa Beach Primary School

Thank You



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NEW ZEALAND

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