



# Next Generation Farming.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

A part of the work in partnership with Our Land and Water National Science challenge eDNA, a new method for assessing stream ecosystem health which detects a range of species and provides an overall 'ecological health' score. Samples were undertaken for 41 sites across the Waimakariri. Of which 2 were excellent, 4 good, 30 average, and 5 poor.

To view the sampling visit [wilderlab.co.nz/explore](http://wilderlab.co.nz/explore)  
Passcode WC35828

## On farm perception



Caretakers Progressive Proactive Community

The Waimakariri Landcare Trust is a farmer-led initiative to support long-term, sustainable agriculture in the Waimakariri District.

[waimaklandcaretrust.co.nz](http://waimaklandcaretrust.co.nz)

**All** farmers have taken steps to improve their environmental impact.

90% have made a reduction in nitrogen fertiliser use.  
85% have improved irrigation management.  
85% have increased the use of plantain.

**45%** of farmers listed environment as the top priority when making decisions.

**90%** placed environment in the top three.

Stewardship/Kaitiakitanga of the land and animal welfare were other key considerations.

**95%** believe their GMPs have a positive impact.

**63%** of farmers have a good understanding of their catchment. *The catchment context will become increasingly important with freshwater farm plans.*



**88%** of farmers say community engagement is critical.

Key reasons are to "share the farmers side of the story", "show that farmers aren't bad", and "educate people and children about what farmers really do".



**Most** farmers would encourage the next generation to continue farming

Key reasons are society and regulatory external pressures, and the wide skill set required to mitigate environmental impacts.



DOWN  
10%



The use of integrated farm plans has grown by 8% and the awareness of their importance has increased.

Comments from farmers who have undergone the IFP process would actively encourage other to take up the opportunity.

UP  
8%

On average farmers seek information from **4-5** sources and consult 2 groups of people to make decisions on reducing their environmental impact.

**A strong focus on genetics and DNA has paid dividends** for Fernside dairy farmer Julie Bradshaw with four of her cows being selected for Livestock Improvement Corporation's (LIC's) breeding programme. The four cows have been selected for the breeding profile based on their DNA profiles. In the next mating season these cows will be mated to bulls specifically selected by LIC for genetic traits which will complement cows' traits. The aim is to improve the overall genetic profile of the herd.

Over the last 20 years since Julie first became interested in genetics, technology has become far more precise than when she did the first DNA tests on her herd, and this is providing economic benefits to her farming operation. Now Julie's Production Worth (PW) and Breeding Worth (BW) herd sit in the top five per cent of Canterbury herds and just under the top five per cent of all herds nationally which she says proves that her investment in genetics has enabled her to refine her herd to ensure that she has the best cows.

