



Media release

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New Zealanders much more likely to have a positive view of primary sector

New Zealanders are almost five times as likely to hold a positive view of sheep & beef farming than a negative one (54% positive compared to only 12% negative).

Meanwhile, New Zealanders were more than twice as likely (51%) to hold a positive view towards dairy farming than a negative one (20%).

The star of the industries tested was horticulture with 68% of New Zealanders declaring a positive view towards this industry compared to only 4% who were negative. The forestry industry also rated quite well with 56% giving them a positive rating compared to only 9% negative.

Just under half rate fisheries positively (47% compared to 16% negative). However, even in this instance, those with a positive view outweighed the negative by almost 3 to 1.

Marc Elliott, Executive Director of UMR Research, said the research was at odds with the perception held by many farmers.

“The strong theme we have heard from farmers in the past is that they do not feel well-liked by their urban counterparts. However, when you poll the general population, this is simply not true”.

“One in five New Zealanders (20%) declaring a negative view of dairying is not insignificant, and it shows that our primary sector has some work to do to improve its environmental performance. However, anyone who takes the time to look around our primary industries will see a lot of activity towards becoming more sustainable”.

“For example, land and environmental plans, retiring erosion prone land into native reserves, fencing off and planting around rivers and streams”.

“From working in this space over many years we have observed that New Zealanders on this topic are concerned, particularly about impacts on water quality. However, almost in the same breath, they acknowledge both the many jobs and the fantastic quality of food coming out of our primary industries, that they directly benefit from”.

“If farmers think urbanites are expecting more from them, they are, and farmers do need to deliver on this. But primary industries must take heart that most New Zealanders know which side their bread is buttered on.”

UMR surveyed a representative general public sample of 1,000 respondents.

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