



Media release: May 2020

Covid-19 appears to be having a positive impact on New Zealanders views of pastoral farmers

Close to three-fifths (63%) of New Zealanders hold a positive view of sheep and beef farming this is a significant increase of 9% compared to just eight months ago. Dairy farmers also enjoyed a similar increase in positive support now at 60% positive up from 51%.

Horticulture continues to receive the highest positive rating of 65%. Ratings for fisheries just clicked over into majority positive territory at 53% up from 47% in August 2019.

The main reasons New Zealanders gave for feeling more positively disposed towards these food-producing industries included:

- Efficient and high-quality producers of food for New Zealanders and the world
- Being an essential industry to New Zealand
- Good for the New Zealand Economy as they provide exports and jobs, and
- Farmers worked through and will help us through COVID-19.

Marc Elliott, Director of Rural Research at UMR said, “The research appeared to show that in a time of crisis New Zealanders are more clearly seeing the critical importance of their food-producing sectors.”

“This should be a small shot in the arm for pastoral farmers who are facing droughts, along with looming regulations and long-term uncertainty in the markets”.

“I keep hearing from farmers that one of their main challenges is negative public perception. While there are pockets of hostility towards our farmers, there is also a growing wave of warmth.”

“When times are good critical aspects of our economy can be taken for granted, however in the current crisis our food producers appear to be receiving the extra credit they deserve”.

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