

Press Release

Masterton, Tuesday 31 August

WITT ANNOUNCES NEW PARTNER FOR AGRICULTURAL TRAINING

Agricultural training in Taranaki undertook a huge change on Tuesday 31 August when WITT (Western Institute of Technology in Taranaki) partnered with Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre for the delivery of agricultural courses and qualifications in the Taranaki region from 2011.

The launch took place at the Tikorangi Supershed, a state of the art dairy farm owned by Faull Farms and hosted on the day by Gavin and Carol Faull. The famous dairy farm will be the location for Taratahi's second campus in Taranaki next year.

The Hon David Carter, Minister of Agriculture was in Taranaki for the official signing ceremony. The launch was attended by national and local representatives from agriculture, education and the wider community as well as Shane Ardern, MP for Taranaki and King Country, Jonathan Young, MP for New Plymouth and Basil Chamberlain, CEO Taranaki Regional Council.

In his address the Minister said "It is crucial we develop young people with the right skills, the right experience, and most importantly the right attitude to make the most of this fantastic opportunity. The opportunities for school leavers in the agricultural industry have never been greater. As Minister of Agriculture it is a great pleasure to be part of the launch of this exciting joint venture. You have developed a real opportunity for students here in the Taranaki region keen to embark on a career in agriculture."

WITT's CEO Richard Handley pointed out that "Institutions need to be innovative in delivering quality tertiary education to meet the wide and varied needs of its community. That is why we work with other specialist tertiary providers such as Taratahi to ensure more of Taranaki's educational needs can be met. These arrangements will complement the delivery of a consistently high quality and relevant education, targeted to meet multiple demands."

Taratahi CEO Donovan Wearing says this is an important and logical step. "As educational providers, Taratahi and WITT have more than 128 years of experience between us and it is fitting that our two institutions are working together to provide choice, whilst ensuring that the needs of the learner, industry and nation are all met."

Richard Handley also noted that Taratahi was highly regarded in the agricultural sector nationwide and was well established in Taranaki. "Taratahi currently have a number of

other campuses nationally and the one based in Stratford is supported by around 30 local farming operations enabling Taratahi to offer students an extensive training experience on real working farms.”

This partnership aims to increase in the attraction, training and retention of skilled farm workers for the region. Taratahi and WITT are both committed to offering high-quality learning with flexible and innovative delivery that respects diversity and promotes excellence.

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The full version of the Minister’s speech is available at <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/taratahiwestern+institute+technology+launch>

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