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Press Release

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Experience of a lifetime for Taratahi students

Last week nineteen second year Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre students returned from an exhilarating three and a half weeks in Britain where they experienced UK farming practices first-hand, renewed friendships and visited some tourist attractions. The students and two staff members were hosted by Walford and North Shropshire College in Northern Shropshire, England.

The annual exchange focuses on comparison of farming techniques as well as developing an understanding of the cultural differences between the two countries. The Taratahi students enjoyed some farming experiences with a distinctly UK feel including: shearing sheep straight off a trailer, going to the biggest livestock market in Britain, checking out a robotic milking unit, vaccinating pigs at a huge piggery, visiting an 8,000 acre estate owned by Lord Hamilton and inspection of a beef unit that housed 800 head of bulls indoors.

Cologne McKinstry, Taratahi's top performing first year student in 2010, said: "the major difference for me was the intensity that they have with their operations and the amount of additional feed required to grow their animals. It makes me realise how good NZ is at growing grass! The other major difference was the amount of regulations and paperwork required to farm in Britain – It was huge!"

The students also had a chance to experience British culture with visits to London, the wild Welsh west coast, several castles and the Three Counties Agricultural show.

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre and Walford and North Shropshire College have developed a strong relationship. The exchange programme has been running for seven years with Walford students visiting Taratahi for three weeks in March and April 2011. The exchange is an opportunity of a lifetime for the both the Walford and Taratahi students and leaves a lasting impression as they graduate and move forward into their first jobs or on to further training.

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