

Press Release

Masterton, 27 January 2009

New property to offer greater learner experience

TARATAHI recently made a significant step toward meeting changing operational and educational needs with the purchase last month of Mangarata farm, north of Masterton.

Following an extensive search and inspection process, Taratahi identified Mangarata as meeting two important criteria for acquisition; it was both commercially viable and also suitable for agricultural training purposes.

Mangarata was purchased from Hamish and Carol Cameron. Hamish's family had owned the property for several generations but a change in direction meant the property was offered for sale, opening up an excellent opportunity for Taratahi.

In recent years Taratahi has consolidated its position as a leading national provider of agricultural training, offering a robust, modern and relevant education that can benefit both the learner and the agricultural industry. This position has been achieved not only through changes that have taken place in the recent past but also through the projection of future improvements, and buying a new property has been part of that vision.

The purchase of Mangarata has finalised one part of a three-pronged plan for the centre; renewal of technical workshops and a campus redevelopment project are additional plans in the initial stages of development.

"We are very pleased to have acquired Mangarata, which brings us one step closer to meeting these three goals," said business development manager at Taratahi, Stephen Carr.

"Along with the other two development goals, this brings us to a position where we can redefine how we deliver agricultural training. Mangarata's location means that, in conjunction with Glenside, we can send out more sheep and beef students for increased exposure to farm activities."

Taratahi's key point of difference from other agricultural training establishments in New Zealand is that staff and students together operate commercially viable properties. This model takes all the positive aspects of a cadet training farm and mixes in the additional practical training and theoretical study that is essential for a well rounded education.

"This is what makes us unique. Our students are dealing with real situations but under the professional guidance and supervision of experienced staff. While a definite proportion of course work is based on theory, access to "real life" experience plays an integral part in student development and success," Stephen said. Mangarata is a 518 hectare breeding and finishing farm situated eight minutes north east of Masterton. Comprising a mix of rolling to medium hill country and generous flat land, the mix of topography will allow for a broad range of on-farm learner experiences.