



Agricultural Training for New Zealand



EASTERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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### JOINT VENTURE TO BOOST TRAINING FOR HAWKE'S BAY FARMING SECTOR

EIT Hawke's Bay is partnering up with leading rural educators Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre to provide agricultural training aimed at building the local farm skill base and attracting and retaining skilled farm workers for the region. The joint venture is intended to produce skilled tertiary graduates for the farming sector, meet the skills gaps of those currently employed in rural-based jobs and introduce school students to farm experiences.

Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre will deliver its Certificate in Agriculture programme from EIT's Taradale campus. Founded in 1919, the national rural educator has its main campus in the Wairarapa and a satellite campus in Taranaki. The collaboration will also provide smooth pathways from the certificate programme to related educational opportunities. Combining theory, technical skills and farm work, Taratahi's certificate programme has been designed to produce work-ready graduates.

Learning is flexible, with strands that allow students to choose whether their focus might be dairying, for example, or sheep and beef farming. Much of the supervised learning will involve real farming on real farms. As well as using the small farm attached to EIT, Taratahi will be seeking to engage Hawke's Bay farms in hands-on education for students, says chief executive Donovan Wearing.

The region's agricultural sector will continue to provide input on local industry needs through EIT's rural studies advisory committee. EIT chief executive Chris Collins says the joint venture will open up new opportunities for students based in Hawke's Bay. Some will attend block release training in Masterton, for example, giving them access to further resources, farms and specialist teaching staff. A three-way exchange will encourage Taratahi students to visit, study and work for short stints in Wairarapa, Taranaki and Hawke's Bay.

Although the initial intake for the EIT-based certificate programme has been set at 11 students, some additional enrolments may be accepted. Students will be enrolled at EIT and have access to the institute's on-campus resources including the library, computers and support services.

Taratahi and EIT expect the new training opportunity will attract strong interest and support. "Hawke's Bay's economy is centred on its rural industry" Mr Collins says "and well-trained graduates will always be in demand to help underpin the region's very significant agricultural strengths." According to recent surveys, the East Coast needs more than 300 new farming entrants a year. Mr Wearing says skills of entrants fall short of employers' needs. "This initiative will make a positive impact on the local skills imbalance."

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