

Speech by Sam McIvor, CEO Beef + Lamb NZ

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and distinguished guests.

Two years ago, we embarked on a refresh of our organisational strategy. B+LNZ's strategy, built with farmers is a reflection of their emerging needs and aspirations.

It points to both the challenges and opportunities, both domestically and globally that farmers see.

Farmers told us they wanted bold leadership in a range of areas, that we needed to tell their story, and create a better understanding of our sector with urban audiences and our global customers.

It was clear there was, and still is, an ambition for the sector to be valued by all New Zealanders, a return to the once shared pride in our industry.

Profitability was core and success would be reflected in thriving farming communities. There was also a significant pivot to the customer – to tell the NZ red meat story underpinned by evidence particularly our environmental credentials.

The environment was elevated to one of our top priorities.

And the environment now underpins much of what we do at Beef + Lamb NZ.

That's reflected in the fact that nearly every member of the Beef + Lamb NZ is now working on something related to the environment. Practically every project we do now has an environmental lens applied to it

We have been supporting farmers in the environmental area for some time. Facilitating farmer groups to develop land and environmental plans. Working with them in the regional planning processes for water quality, helping them prepare and present their submissions in the hearings.

But we're facing a new dawn.

Climate Change and the need to transition the world to a low carbon future is increasingly in the news and we need to respond. Closer to home, the Government is introducing their Carbon Zero Bill and we need to be part of that conversation. Biodiversity is also becoming front and centre.

When we set out on this process, we wanted the Strategy to be bold enough to take sheep and beef farmers through to 2040, making them sustainable environmentally, economically, socially and culturally.

We wanted to ensure farmers have access to the right tools and that the right policies are in place.

We also recognised we needed to do better in engaging our urban counterparts too, ensuring they have a better understanding of how we farm, the positive contributions we are making to the environment, but at the same hearing their viewpoint and them

contributing to a blueprint to improve our environmental performance further to allay their concerns.

We also wanted this to be a mechanism for farmers to rebuild their pride. They care deeply about the environment and we wanted to find a way of demonstrating their commitment in a meaningful way.

For me personally, this environment strategy achieves all these things.

It sets a vision for us to be world-leading stewards of the natural environment and communities, but it's also more than just words and green landscapes.

The strategy shows where we want to go, but crucially, it shows farmers, the government, our partners and wider New Zealand the steps we need to take to get there. We have focused on the next three years in our implementation plan, but make no mistake, the environment will remain a top priority for our organisation beyond that timeframe.

I would like to thank all the people and organisations that we worked with in the creation of this strategy.

Our farmers actively engaged in its development and we received very helpful feedback from government, NGOs, academics, and other industry organisations.

As stewards of the land, the environment is at the heart of everything we do.

It's also a vital component of the Red Meat Story and our Taste Pure Nature origin brand launched earlier this month.

We believe that we have the most authentic story to tell in terms of our unique temperate climate – that allows us to have a less intensive approach to farming. These combine to create a unique and natural flavour experience.

New Zealand is one of the most environmentally efficient farming systems in the world Page 6 of the strategy details some of that journey. However, we recognise that agriculture has an impact on the environment and that work must continue to understand, and address these impacts. In this way, our industry and country are safeguarded for future generations.

Good environmental management is a key selling point for New Zealand primary sector products, internationally. New Zealand has a unique brand – one that we want to protect and to continue building on.

We are targeting the premium customers and these consumers care about the provenance of their food, environment is a key component of that provenance.

Our environmental journey started some time ago but this is a significant ramp up in terms of organisational focus, investment, resourcing, and accountable action.

This vision has stretch and in some cases is a step into the unknown, but we are absolutely committed to it as an organisation and as a sector. The action plan shows the steps we've committed to.

It also recognises that we're all in this together whether you're central or regional government, NGO's, the wider community, agri services companies, iwi or science you have a part to play in helping our sector succeed which in turn feeds thriving rural communities, and ultimately a sustainably vibrant economy.

I trust we can rely on your support and commitment to this vision too.

Thankyou