

A DIFFERENT TYPE OF FARMING

EXCITING, MAGNIFICENT ANIMALS

writer **PETER WHITE**
photographer **BEV BELL**

“ MY ROLE IS MANAGING THE TEAM, A LOT OF FEED BUDGETING AND STOCK MONITORING, ANIMAL HEALTH AND ORGANISING, AND ANALYSIS OF WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND WHERE WE ARE AT NOW.

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TIM TURNER

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For TIM TURNER, working every day with deer is a unique opportunity to understand these magnificent creatures.

“They all sort of have their own wee personalities. They are just a joy to be amongst and around. I just like the challenges that come with them. They are different animals to your typical sheep and beef,” he says.

Tim, 27, is a farm manager at Melior Venison, a large-scale deer breeding operation near Fairlie, South Canterbury, on the south bank of the Opuha River. Melior Venison is an 800-hectare property, with an effective grazing area of 650 hectares.

Tim’s role as a farm manager is busy, varied and challenging. “There are three of us fulltime and a part-time casual, so my role is managing the team, a lot of feed budgeting and stock monitoring, animal health and organising, and analysis of where we have been and where we are at now.”

Tim went to Waitaki Boys’ High School in Oamaru where he took English, Maths, Agricultural Studies, Geography and Biology in Year 13.

After school, he completed a three-year Bachelor of Agriculture at Lincoln University before starting work at Melior Venison as a shepherd, nearly seven years ago.

“Lincoln is a good university and it was a good course to take. There was a lot of theory backed with lots of practical, hands-on work that gave you an understanding of it all.

“The friends I made there and the people you meet there definitely helped me get to where I am now. They are people you can talk to and bounce ideas off and that helps push you along a bit more.”

Over the years, Tim has employed younger workers making their first steps to a career in the deer industry. He is not worried about the skillset they have, as what is more important is their attitude to working.

“I have employed quite relatively young staff aged from 17 to 22 years. The biggest thing I am looking for is that willingness to learn, to have a go. Everyone makes mistakes but as long as you learn from those mistakes and move on,

be the best you can be and keep improving, that’s the most important thing for me.”

Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ) CEO Innes Moffat says working with deer offers school leavers an interesting and different career choice in agriculture.

“Most deer are being run on mixed livestock farms, so there are around 1400 to 1500 deer farms around the country. If someone has enthusiasm for deer then there are lots of opportunities throughout New Zealand,” he says.

“You don’t have to be a deer specialist in order to get a job working with deer. They are pretty exciting animals. They are unique in that we farm them here for venison and for velvet.

“There is a very enthusiastic bunch of farmers who look after their deer and look after their staff well. They will take to people who are appropriately qualified and demonstrate a good aptitude with deer very well.

“People who want to be involved with it can look forward to an interesting career journey.”

KEY FACTS



- **TIM TURNER HAS A BACHELOR OF AGRICULTURE FROM LINCOLN UNIVERSITY.**
- **HE WORKS AS FARM MANAGER AT MELIOR VENISON, A LARGE-SCALE DEER BREEDING OPERATION SET ON 800-HECTARES NEAR FAIRLIE.**
- **WHEN EMPLOYING NEW WORKERS, TIM SAYS WHAT HE IS SEARCHING FOR IS THE RIGHT ATTITUDE, A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN AND DESIRE TO IMPROVE.**



For more information on careers in deer farming, visit www.deernz.org

For more information on studying Agriculture through Lincoln University, visit www.lincoln.ac.nz