



“FARMING THESE DAYS IS ABOUT MORE THAN JUST FARMING. YOU’VE GOT TO BE A BUSINESSMAN AND BE UP-TO-DATE WITH THE TECHNOLOGY.”

CAMERON RAVENWOOD

## CREATING ALTERNATIVES FOR FARMERS

# TAKING A BROADER VIEW

writer **CAMPBELL BURNES** // photographer **PETER NIKOLAISON**

**CAMERON RAVENWOOD** has made a good fist of mixing study with business and looks well-placed to make his mark in the burgeoning world of sheep milk processing.

The 21-year-old graduated earlier this year with a Bachelor of Agribusiness and Food Marketing from Lincoln University. He is currently doing a Masters of Global Agribusiness and Marketing, which he is hoping to knock off in under 12 months, as opposed to the usual 18 months.

This is a man moving fast who knows what he wants. Cameron is the co-founder of Fernglen Farm, which he started up with his parents this year. It is a sheep milk processing company based in Wairarapa.

“People are a lot more conscious of the environment, and sheep have less of an environmental footprint (than cows). Plus, sheep milk is easier to digest,” he says.

Fernglen Farm is building momentum and Cameron emphasises the need for alternative options for farmers.

You could say farming is in Cameron’s blood and he knew he would be entering a career in the industry when he was a student at Wairarapa College.

“I wanted to be in the agriculture sector because I enjoyed working with animals and being outdoors. As for study, farming these days is about more than just farming. You’ve got to be a businessman and be up-to-date with the technology. I thought I would further my education. One thing I was quite passionate about was value-adding in the sheep and beef sector,” he says.

Concerned that the majority of New Zealand farming is commodity-driven and therefore volatile in price, Cameron is keen to try and take the stress out of farming by value-adding and offering consistently good prices.

At school he took Agriculture and Horticultural Science as subjects, giving him a broader view of farming.

Then it was off to Christchurch, supported by a scholarship from Beef + Lamb New Zealand, to study at Lincoln University, one of New Zealand’s foremost universities offering specialised tertiary education, such as agribusiness.

While there, he played rugby for the Shirley club premiers and took the chance to see more of the South Island.

He found his degree to be a good mix of theory and practical.

There was, for instance, 18 weeks on marketing production and supply chain management. The chance to create networks with like-minded students and knowledgeable lecturers was another plus.

“I wanted to learn how to run a business and also the marketing side, which is critical for creating a value-added product,” he says.

Even as he finishes his studies, Cameron stays busy working on the business, so he is never out of the loop.

He advises school leavers keen to delve into the farming industry to not get hung up about school subjects, though Maths and Horticultural Science are always useful.

“Try and expose yourself to as many different job opportunities or industries as you can. You’ll probably get more benefit out of the extra-curricular stuff while at school or study. It might be an unpaid internship, but that experience will be huge in determining what career path you go down or just picking up practical skills.”

### KEY FACTS



- **CAMERON RAVENWOOD** HAS A BACHELOR OF AGRIBUSINESS AND FOOD MARKETING FROM **LINCOLN UNIVERSITY**. HE IS CURRENTLY DOING A **MASTERS OF GLOBAL AGRIBUSINESS AND MARKETING**.
- HE CO-FOUNDED **FERNGLEN FARM**, A SHEEP MILK PROCESSING COMPANY BASED IN THE **WAIRARAPA**.
- **CAMERON** WAS SUPPORTED IN HIS STUDIES AT **LINCOLN UNIVERSITY** BY A SCHOLARSHIP FROM **BEEF + LAMB NEW ZEALAND**.



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