



Farming the next 50 years

After her recent overseas trips and time spent in many governance roles, such as Deer Industry NZ and Wai Wānaka, **Dr Mandy Bell**, farming with her husband Jerry at Criffel Station near Wānaka, challenges our sector's vision towards a healthy outcome.



NEW ZEALAND'S FOOD STORY has been built on volume and purity but global markets are shifting fast. To stay competitive, farmers must link stock and soil with health, science and environmental care.

For decades, New Zealand has been known for purity, productivity and export success. Food is no longer valued just for what it is but for what it does. Food as medicine. Farming as health care.

On recent visits to Singapore, Ireland and Europe, the message was clear: nutrition, health and environmental care are merging. In Ireland, soil and dairy science is linked directly to human wellbeing. In Singapore, the government and investors are backing health-focused foods. Across Europe, regulation is driving carbon markets and ecosystem services into farming systems.



shifting from volume, to nutrition and health, could add another \$20–30 billion beyond current export goals. That's what will keep us competitive and keep farmers on the land.

At Criffel Station, we're asking how to farm for the next 50 years, not just the last 50.

qualities global markets are now demanding. It is about connecting and collaborating with researchers and offshore expertise to maximise opportunities in the bioeconomy.

We are also learning about and discussing the value of intergenerational rather than succession approaches for future farmers.

Farmers have always adapted. We've picked up new genetics, new markets, new technology. We have invested in the health of our land. The next step is harder but vital: connecting our livestock and land with science, innovation and health outcomes. If we succeed, New Zealand won't just be a trusted food supplier – we could be the world's health capital.

The choice is ours: stick with volume, or build real value. ∞

“We could be the world's health capital.”

DR MANDY BELL
CRIFFEL STATION, WĀNAKA

For New Zealand farmers, the question is whether we keep competing on bulk commodities or move into high-value products in adjacent industries, such as functional foods and bio-nutraceuticals. Analysis shows that

Deer remain at the heart of our business, but so too are regional test beds, agri-tech partnerships and nature-based solutions. It's about showing that our food comes with traceability, resilience and environmental integrity – the