



**Agribusiness in Schools**  
DELIVERING AGRIBUSINESS TO NZ SECONDARY SCHOOLS

## Industry Spotlight: Karn Dhaliwal The Blueprint for a Modern Primary Sector Career

Karn's journey into the primary sector was never confined to a single lane. Raised on a small-scale dairy farm, he experienced the realities of farming early. Karn's parents were hard workers, yet financial returns were often tight. That environment shaped his thinking, not by discouraging him, but by pushing him to question what farming could look like if done differently.

**"I saw the challenges of farming firsthand and it was a very small scale. My parents worked really hard, but it never got the financial rewards. I saw the realities of farming, and I challenged myself, well there's got to be a better way to do this."**

This mindset followed Karn through his education journey. Karn attended Hamilton Boys' High School where he studied Agricultural Science, before continuing to Massey University, where he completed a Bachelor of Agribusiness and Farm Management with a focus on international agribusiness. His degree exposed him to the full scope of the sector, from farm systems and production to finance, valuation and business planning.

**"The most powerful thing I did was the Bachelor of Agribusiness. It was all-encompassing. You were doing budgeting for a dairy farmer, then a loan request, then farm valuations, then animal production. It gave you so much depth on high performance farming and what tools you need to be successful."**

This broad perspective became a cornerstone of Karn's career. Rather than stepping into a traditional pathway, Karn and his wife set out to build something of their own. Starting with just one hectare and grading produce under a tree, the businesses has scaled rapidly. Today he



leads operations at Ohinewai Harvest, overseeing everything from productivity and planting plans to staff management, budgets and long-term strategy.

**"What I do is look over productivity, planting plans, management, anything to do with operations. I could be discussing capital requirements with our banker one day and then be out in the field the next making sure product goes into bins without being damaged."**

Reflecting on that growth, Karn is quick to point out that if it did not happen by chance, it was built on clear planning and disciplined decision-making.

**"We set out a five and ten year plan. We wanted a scalable business, the ability to employ staff, and flexibility to enjoy our lives."**

Karn's passion for the primary sector has also been guided by a quality education. When it comes to education and pathways for young people, he believes one of the biggest challenges is visibility, with many students associating the sector only with on-farm work.

**"People often just see a farmer with a tractor and think that's purely operational. In reality, farmers are making tactical on-farm decisions while also shaping long-term strategy. There are also layers most people don't see, including rural bankers, agronomists, vets, accountants, and consultants, all feeding into those decisions. It's a connected system young people need to understand"**

Karn's honesty reflects his belief that the primary sector needs young people who are willing to try, fail and think differently, and that there is no single pathway in, only the courage to take the first step.