**Level 3: Future Proofing Strategies – Economic Strategy.**

**Teachers Note:**

Begin by having students research the milk processing companies **Open Country** and **Miraka**. Focus on the following aspects:

* **Location**
* **Products they produce**
* **Company values**

Then, have students read the article *“Open Country Buys Miraka.”*

**Discussion Questions**: These are designed to stimulate discussion and build understanding of the acquisition as a **future-proofing strategy**, particularly in the context of purchasing a similar company.

**Question 5** can be adapted into a **class or group debate**:  
**Debate Topic:** *What are the positive and negative impacts of the sale on Miraka’s Māori values?*

**Open Country**

**New Zealand’s second largest milk processor-100% New Zealand Owned**

Open Country represents the very best of the New Zealand dairy industry. We are New Zealand’s second largest milk processor and the world’s second largest exporter of whole milk powder.

We collaborate with our clients, listen to their feedback, and work hard to ensure we develop products that consistently deliver on their quality expectations and evolving needs.

We’re here to make a real difference, recognising that New Zealand’s strong primary industry is the backbone of our economy, and will continue its leading role into the future.

100% New Zealand owned and operated; we work hand in hand with our customers across the globe to understand the ingredients they need. Smart and flexible partnerships, and a little Kiwi ingenuity, go a long way.

Find out more about [Open Country](https://www.opencountry.co.nz/en-nz/about-us/)



**Miraka**

**New Zealand’s first Māori-owned dairy company**

Miraka is New Zealand’s first Māori-owned dairy company. Miraka is driven by kaitiakitanga. The company is propelled by this Te Ao Māori worldview of guardianship for the natural environment, and underpinned by a vision to ensure long-term, intergenerational impact.

Miraka is New Zealand's, and the world's, first dairy processing company to use renewable geothermal energy, giving us one of the lowest manufacturing carbon emissions footprints that there is in industry, globally.

Find out more about [Miraka](https://www.miraka.co.nz/)- includes a video



**Open Country buys Miraka**

[Farmers Weekly](https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/author/staff-reporter/)

<https://www.farmersweekly.co.nz/news/open-country-buys-miraka/>

September 1, 2025

**Business as usual for iwi-owned dairy company, its farmers and customers.**

A sign on a stone wall

AI-generated content may be incorrect.Open Country has bought 100% of iwi-owned Miraka, boosting the company’s footprint across the central North Island.

There was no public announcement of the sale price.

For Miraka, the ownership change, which has taken immediate effect, means that it will continue to operate its current name and brand in the market.

Open Country has purchased iwi-owned Miraka, extending its reach across the North Island. File photo.

Open Country CEO Mark de Lautour said the opportunity to purchase Miraka happened quickly and made sense for the business.

“We have admired the Miraka location and milk supply network for a long period given it sits nicely between our Whanganui and Waikato operations.  While we are still completing our recent Mataura Valley Milk acquisition, we were immediately interested when the opportunity came along to look at Miraka. We really believe that our 100% NZ-owned company culture, strong customer relationships and scale make this a good, strategic fit.”

He said the shareholders of both companies believe the deal provides clear benefits for the combined business. In a statement, Miraka’s board said that for farmers, customers, and kaimahi (employees), day-to-day operations continue as usual and milk processing and supply contracts remain in place.

Board chair Bruce Scott said there is a lot to be proud of for Miraka over the past 15 years, having grown to become New Zealand’s second-largest Māori-owned exporter.

“However, there are significant challenges that come with being a standalone regional processor operating in a global market. Under Open Country Dairy’s ownership, our Miraka whānau will be part of a strong NZ-owned network serving the global dairy market.”

Open Country currently operates four dairy ingredient manufacturing sites around New Zealand, located in Horotiu, Waharoa, Whanganui and Awarua.  It will soon add a fifth site, Mataura Valley Milk near Gore, once its conditional acquisition agreement with current shareholders is finalised.

De Lautour said adding Miraka, which is geographically located in the middle of these two areas just north of Taupō, gives Open Country a solid footprint in southern Waikato.

“Over time, the ideal geographic position of Miraka means Open Country can optimise our milk collection across the wider region.  Our increased scale throughout the central North Island allows us to realise some important efficiencies.”

Founded in 2010, Miraka became operational with its first batch of milk powder exports in August 2011 and has grown its production to around 300 million litres of milk per year.

“Even though the Miraka team will operate under its own brand, we will work hard to ensure their suppliers and staff feel a part of the wider Open Country team,” De Lautour said.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What do Open Country and Miraka produce?
2. Discuss the reasons why Open Country purchase of Miraka makes good sense for the business?
3. Discuss how this future proofing strategy will ensure long term viability of Open Country?
4. Do you think Open Country purchasing Miraka is an effective strategy? Justify this strategy by discussing whether this is the best strategy to meet the future needs of Open Country to ensure long term viability.
5. What impact could the sale have on Miraka’s Māori values?

**Answers**

1. What do Open Country and Miraka produce?

Open Country and Miraka are dairy processing businesses producing a range of dairy products.

1. Discuss the reasons why Open Country purchase of Miraka makes good sense for the business?

The purchase of Miraka by Open Country is a strategic expansion and a clearly calculated future-proofing initiative that supports the company’s sustainable growth and long-term resilience.

This move makes both strategic and operational sense for several reasons:

* It enhances geographic reach: Miraka is located north of Taupō, between Open Country’s existing sites in Whanganui and Waikato. This location strengthens Open Country’s geographic footprint in the central North Island.
* Increases operational efficiency: The purchase of Miraka will help optimise milk collection and reduce transport and logistics costs across the region.
* Strengthens the milk supply network: Miraka adds a robust milk supply network, increasing volume and reliability of supply.
* Aligns with cultural values: Both companies are 100% New Zealand-owned and value strong relationships, which supports cultural and business alignment.
* Increased scale and competitiveness: Positions Open Country for long-term competitiveness in the global dairy market as a cost-efficient and flexible dairy processor.

1. Discuss how this future proofing strategy will ensure long-term viability of Open Country?

The purchase of Miraka is a future-proofing strategy that:

* Increases resilience by spreading operations and supply across more sites. Open Country is better protected from regional disruptions (e.g., weather events, supply chain issues).
* Larger processing capacity means more cost efficiencies, better economies of scale, and more power in international trade negotiations.
* With an expanded milk pool Open Country can maintain a more reliable and sustainable supply chain.
* Allowing Miraka to continue operating under its own brand, Open Country benefits from market and brand diversity, appealing to different customer segments.
* The deal strengthens Open Country’s ability to prepare for future growth adapting to changing global dairy demand, trade policies, and environmental standards.

1. Do you think Open Country purchasing Miraka is an effective strategy? Justify this strategy by discussing whether this is the best strategy to meet the future needs of Open Country to ensure long-term viability.

Yes, Open Country’s purchase of Miraka is an effective and well-aligned strategy to ensure the company’s long-term viability for several reasons:

* It improves operational scale, which is essential in a competitive global dairy market.
* The central North Island location enhances logistics and supply chain efficiency.
* The purchase of Miraka strengthens the company’s position as a New Zealand-owned alternative to larger players like Fonterra.
* Retaining Miraka’s brand while integrating operations helps preserve community relationships and trust, especially with Māori stakeholders.
* Buying a similar business in the same industry is one of the most effective ways to increase market share and capacity without starting from scratch.

However, the success of this strategy depends on how well Open Country integrates Miraka while respecting its unique identity, values, and existing stakeholder relationships.

5. What impact could the sale have on Miraka’s Māori values?

Students will have their own ideas.

The below are some ideas to get started.

The impact on Miraka’s Māori values could be both positive and negative:

Positive impacts:

* Open Country has committed to retaining the Miraka brand and operations, which may help preserve its Māori identity and relationships with iwi.
* The sale could provide greater financial and operational stability for Miraka, allowing it to continue contributing to Māori economic development.
* Being part of a larger, New Zealand-owned company may amplify Māori values in the broader dairy sector if Open Country respects and integrates them.

Potential negatives:

* There is a risk that Māori governance structures or cultural practices could be diluted over time, especially if leadership changes.
* Some stakeholders may feel that the loss of iwi ownership reduces Māori autonomy and influence in the business.
* Ensuring the voice of kaimahi (employees), farmers, and iwi continues to be heard and valued will be essential to maintaining trust.