



WiFi on the *move*

Do you have a daily struggle with black spots (no cellphone coverage) slowing down your progress? Are you spending hours in the office at night and on the weekends you'd rather not?

A Canterbury ultrasound scanner showcases how Starlink Mini has transformed his life.

In the rugged heart of South Canterbury, where rolling paddocks stretch towards snow-tipped mountains, Carl Tairua's ute is more than just a farm vehicle – it's now a mobile command centre for his business. Canterbury Ultrasound is a specialised scanning business helping sheep and beef farmers across New Zealand's South Island make better, faster decisions about animal performance.

Whether it's pregnancy detection in ewes or assessing meat quality in stud rams and prime cattle, his work hinges on precision – and until recently, it was slowed by a stubborn rural challenge: poor connectivity.

"Before, I'd lose hours every night catching up on paperwork because I couldn't get a signal on the farm," Carl recalls. "I'd be out scanning all day, then spend my evenings trying to send reports or make calls I'd missed."

It was more than an inconvenience. The lack of reliable phone and internet service in remote areas meant delays in reporting results to farmers, challenges in accessing software updates for his ultrasound equipment, and a real risk if help was needed in an emergency.

"It was a constant battle," he says. "Some of the places we go – there's just no reception. That's the reality for a lot of rural New Zealand."

ENTER COMMSXTEND: A GAME CHANGER ON WHEELS

Everything changed when Tairua partnered with Connected Farms and installed CommsXtend, a portable connectivity solution designed for agricultural use. Mounted in his ute, the technology captures signals from all major New Zealand mobile providers – Spark, One NZ, and 2degrees – and dynamically selects the strongest one, converting it into reliable Wi-Fi coverage.

"For the first time, I could make a call or send an email from anywhere on the farm – even in blackout areas," says Carl. "It's been a massive shift in how I work."

LEFT Carl uses a CommsXtend unit by Connected Farms on the top of his truck to give him cellphone coverage anywhere. **RIGHT** Canterbury Ultrasound has been enhanced by having connectivity on the road to send data in real time to the lab.



And that shift is paying off. Reports are now sent in real time from the field. Advanced IMF (Intramuscular Fat) scanning software, used to assess marbling in beef cattle, can be accessed on the go. Farmers receive results instantly, enabling quicker decisions about breeding, feeding, and sending stock to market.

"We're lucky to be using one of only five pre-release versions of this IMF software in the country," Carl adds. "Now I can use it in the field, access the lab, and get data moving in real time. That's huge for our clients."

LIVESTOCK SCANNING MEETS THE DIGITAL AGE

Ultrasound scanning has long been essential to animal husbandry in New Zealand. For sheep and beef farmers, it provides a snapshot of their stock's reproductive status, muscle development, and fat distribution – information that feeds directly into breeding and productivity plans.

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CANTERBURY ULTRASOUND, SOUTH CANTERBURY

But as the technology has advanced, the tools have become more data-heavy and reliant on real-time connections with labs, databases,

and software providers. That's where connectivity has become both a bottleneck and a breakthrough.

"Pregnancy scanning is our bread and butter – we're scanning over a million animals a season," Carl says. "But these days, it's more than just a yes-or-no result. Farmers want detailed insights, and we want to provide them without delay."

Now, with CommsXtend, even eye muscle data can be entered on-site and uploaded directly to the cloud,

PRODUCTIVITY GAINS, SAFER WORKING CONDITIONS

The benefits aren't just technical. There's a very human upside to staying connected.

"Before, I'd be home at 8 or 9 pm, still doing admin. Now I finish scanning, send everything from the ute, and I'm done for the day. I get time back with my family," says Tairua.

He also emphasises the safety factor. Lone workers in remote paddocks can now make Wi-Fi calls or send a message if something goes wrong. "Being reachable anywhere gives peace of mind – not just for me, but for the people who care about me."

Canterbury Ultrasound's story shows how better rural connectivity doesn't just improve internet speeds – it transforms business models, safety practices, and service quality.

"We're proving that even the most remote farms can be part of the digital future," Tairua says. "Connectivity isn't a luxury. It's now essential for doing the job right." 