



# Cameron Henderson

For Director of DairyNZ

DairyNZ has a vital role delivering solutions to farmers. These solutions must respond to the operational, economic and regulatory challenges we, as farmers, now face. Strong outcomes require vision, but also pragmatic governance, to connect farmers, influence decision-makers, and invest levies wisely for our future.

I am a positive and progressive leader, and a pragmatic problem-solver. I take this approach both on farm and in the boardroom as an experienced farmer and director

I farm with my wife, Sarah, and two young kids, Annie and Hugo, near Oxford, North Canterbury. I am a fifth-generation kiwi farmer milking 750 cows on 240ha. We also lease a further 250ha for arable crops and dairy support. We have an innovative culture on farm, helping to develop new farm solutions, including automatic backing gates, pastoral fertigation, real-time lysimeters and pivot dripline irrigation. You can read more about our farming story in the latest edition of Dairy Farmer and Farmers Weekly.

I have been an advocate for dairy for many years and am proud to work hard to improve outcomes for all farmers. Locally, as Federated Farmers Provincial President, I have engaged strategically with Environment Canterbury on environmental issues, most notably on their nutrient limit setting process. As Deputy Chair of the Waimakariri Water Zone Committee, I had an influential role in ensuring nutrient limits were achievable and that farmers were heard in the process. I continue that work today as a founding Trustee of the Waimakariri Landcare Trust, improving results for local farmers and developing the community's understanding of Canterbury hydrology and water quality. This is crucial to ensure farmers are well placed when nutrient rules are reviewed.

Nationally I was the Federated Farmers negotiator in the He Waka Eke Noa process. I was the only working farmer around the steering group table and fought hard for practical and sensible outcomes. While the process has since hit rocky ground, there are good lessons from He Waka Eke Noa that are of long-term value to DairyNZ and New Zealand farmers.

I hold degrees in mechatronic (robotic) engineering and finance, and have spent time earlier in my career as a strategy analyst at Fonterra and later farm systems developer at DairyNZ. Through these experiences, I have a firm understanding of the technical work of DairyNZ and industry partners.

I sit on the board of Ballance Agri Nutrients, am a trustee on the North Canterbury Farmers Charitable Trust and Mainpower Trust. I am a member of the Institute of Directors and have completed the Mayfield Cooperative Governance programme.

My work off farm has been aided through my Kellogg and Nuffield scholarships, which both provided a foundation in agricultural leadership and gave international context to the environment we farm in. Closer to home, our initiatives on farm have been recognised by Synlait, winning the Farming for a Healthier World Award in 2022 and the NZ Dairy Industry Awards, winning the Responsible Dairying Award in 2023.

In my view, governing DairyNZ also encompasses a wider advocacy role for the dairy industry as a whole. In today's climate, this role is a privilege, and a sizable responsibility. I feel it is important that farmers understand candidates' views on the core issues. I have attached a summary of my views on three key positions and what actions I believe DairyNZ should take.

DairyNZ has a strong track record in research, development, connection and advocacy. I believe my own values and experience are well aligned to strengthen these pillars of excellence.

**I would value your support to lead DairyNZ in achieving even greater outcomes in the future.**





# Cameron Henderson

For Director of DairyNZ

## My views on three key policy positions

### Rethink Agricultural Emissions Pricing

Agricultural Emissions should not be priced unless other countries are pricing emissions. Regardless of international action, emissions should never be priced through the ETS, as this system is designed for long-lived emissions where the goal is net zero. Methane needs to be treated differently. We do need to understand our own farm emissions through improved reporting, but the dairy sector is already a long way down this path.

#### **DairyNZ's role**

*DairyNZ and industry partners have a central role in telling the ag emissions story. The narrative must engage and educate, while demonstrating that policy should be focused on the overall warming effect, not just gross emissions. Farmers need new metrics that correctly identify where emissions reductions are required and a firm focus on engaging with the Climate Change Commission to endorse this story.*

### Water Quality – Keep it Simple

Dairy farmers have come a long way on freshwater management. The Essential Freshwater package of regulations threatens to derail much of that good work. The nitrate bottom lines are beyond what is natural in parts of the country, winter grazing rules are input, not outcome focused, and the need to rewrite every regional plan by the end on 2024 is simply unachievable. Freshwater Farm Plans can have a role in helping to achieve improved outcomes, but need to be fully customised to the farm and catchment, and created alongside the farmer. Freshwater plans need to replace, rather than add, to any consenting requirements to farm.

#### **DairyNZ's role**

*DairyNZ has been very active in highlighting the issues with this regulatory package. I would like to see greater support of catchment groups. Let local farmers and their communities take the lead on local solutions, steering input in policy development, with strong technical support from DairyNZ. DairyNZ's core role is to highlight to central government decision-makers the damage these fragmented regulations are doing and propose workable alternatives.*

### Our People, Our Most Valuable Asset

On our farm, I am fortunate to have a very capable team, but this is not the case for many farms struggling to find suitable staff. Overall, we are simply not selling the industry well enough. I would like to see greater promotion of the long-term benefits of dairy farming – financially, culturally and on lifestyle. No one becomes a lawyer or a doctor because they like what the job is in its first year. We need to stop selling dairy farming based on what a farm assistant does. Sell the vision of what you can become with a career in dairy.

#### **DairyNZ's role**

*DairyNZ has the central role in promoting the "Go Dairy" message. We must build on this using case studies of what people have been able to achieve within the dairy industry. Show pride in economic and family success. Demonstrate what hard work and learning can lead to. DairyNZ then need to support the newcomers through better distribution of media outside of just the levy payers addresses and return to holding regular discussion groups to help new farmers learn and connect.*

**If you would like to discuss this further, please feel free to reach out to me via Facebook, LinkedIn, email or give me a call on 0211138895. I welcome the opportunity to talk with farmers about the challenges (and successes) we are facing in the dairy industry and how I see DairyNZ delivering solutions and driving change.**