PIPI

Pathways into Primary Industries

Phase Two Report

August 31, 2021

Primary ITO
Rōpū Whakangungu Ahuwhenua Ahumahi

Contents

Introduction

We want to create a clear and concise learner pathway between school, lifelong learning and employment, capturing career changers into the primary sector, and supporting the likely COVID-19 industry recovery pathways, with a view towards the future of our TITO and WDC's.

The Pathways into Primary Industries (PiPI) project brings together the activities of a broad range of stakeholders into a clear direction for training and training pathways in the primary industries. This co-ordination and direction will support our industry from the impacts of COVID-19 by ensuring that their needs are listened to and mapped against what is available and what additional learning opportunities are required to meet skills shortages.

The project will design skills responses that avoid duplication, leveraging existing systems and processes across multiple TEO's. This will support rapid implementation following the completion of this project with the clear allocation of roles and responsibilities between industry, the WDC's, NZIST, CoVE, and TITO's.

It is expected as a result of the project the Primary Industries will have fewer barriers to entry, and higher retention rates leading to greater numbers of New Zealanders in sustained employment and training.

PiPI will identify the areas of greatest need and gain regarding employment and capability lift across the primary sectors, enable collaboration, bringing ideas together for project scoping and design that support the objectives of this fund from a COVID-19 Response perspective, and a RoVE perspective.

This report is a deliverable of a successful application for funding from the WDC/TITO COVID-19 Response Projects Fund.

Background

Leading up to March 2020, New Zealand was experiencing consistently low unemployment. The thriving primary sector experienced consistent labour gaps, leading employers to look overseas, with approximately 15-20% of primary industry roles being filled by immigrant workers. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to rapid change of the overall New Zealand employment market, with reduced access to an immigrant workforce, and yet, without the drastically increased unemployment levels we could have been anticipating.

The primary sector is still a powerhouse continuing to produce essential products for the world over this time. The dairy industry alone has over 12,000 farms employing over 34,000 people. Closed borders have led to challenges in providing the primary sectors with their usual seasonal influx of immigrant workers. Even with rising unemployment across many regions, there are a large number of job vacancies across the primary sector. As at November 25 2020, there are 734 current dairy vacancies on Farmsource. Meat processors are currently projecting 3,300 vacancies with 1065 of these normally filled by overseas skilled workers. There are also 295 horticulture vacancies listed on Trademe, with many of these advertisements citing multiple positions.

Supporting industries are facing challenges in securing labour, such as hay and silage contracting and the manufacturing of our primary industries products. Many of the regions that have experienced the highest increase in jobseekers over the last few months are primary sector strongholds. To support efficiencies in our economy and overcome the challenges of our closed border, connections are needed to make positive transitions of our current jobseekers to the current vacancies and long-term career opportunities in the primary sector.

Pathways into Primary Industries (PiPI) is an opportunity to bring people into the sector and provide them with a choice of pathways to dynamic and rewarding careers.

With it, we can use our unique position to support the wider primary sector to work together and ensure the right people are employed in the right roles with the right skills. We can ensure that these people are engaged in lifelong learning which affords people managers the skills required by the sector and affords people an entire, cohesive framework from pre-employment to lifelong employment and learning in the primary sector.

Phase One Recap

Work during Phase 1 of the project centred on empathising with partners and undertaking research and observation and field studies – watching, engaging and listening to employers and learners with a Covid-19 recovery lens. As well as workshops and field studies, the Primary ITO team were engaged in other project groups which have synergies with the workstreams and intentions of PiPI.

The interviews and workshops undertaken during the work in Phase 1 have largely validated the workstreams outlined in the scoping document and discussion paper, but have provided more specificity about the areas where PiPI would provide the greatest positive impact on the primary sector, as well as placing greater emphasis on specific aspects of some workstreams. The interviewees that we talked to proposed broadly categorising the seven workstreams into three categories:

1. Pre-employment (incorporating familiarisation, short critical skills courses and passport/badging workstreams)

2. Transitioning into employment (incorporating new entrant employee experience)

3. In employment (incorporating the employer experience/obligations and lifelong learning and employment)

The structure of these workstreams is consistent with the draft unified funding system in development by TEC, and the Ministry of Education.

Interviewees identified proposed workstreams that they felt would be valuable, with some suggested expansion of the workstreams. Generally, the three most valuable workstreams were identified as:

1. Workstream 3: The Primary Industries Passport Badging System;

2. Workstream 4: New entrant trainee experience, and

3. Workstream 5: Employer Experience and Employer Obligations.

Lifelong learning and employment is critical to ensuring the learner is at the centre of the transition skills pipeline. As a result, the project team undertook a programme of engagement to hear the learner voice from a wide range of sectors across the country. This work will complement the focus group intelligence in informing the design and delivery of phase 3 of PiPI.

Phase Two Activity

One of the discoveries during phase one (ideation) of PiPI was the natural grouping of the workstreams thematically according to the stage of employment; that is to say: Pre-employment; transitioning into employment, and in employment. It was also identified that these workstreams although distinct are also inherently interconnected and as such cannot be assessed in isolation from each other.

This reinforces one of the main principles of PiPI: an all of industry, joined up approach to attraction, recruitment, and retention.

Lifelong learning and employment is critical to ensuring the learner is at the centre of the transition skills pipeline. As a result, the project team undertook a programme of engagement to hear the learner voice from a wide range of sectors across the country. This work complements the focus group intelligence in informing the design and delivery of phase 3 of PiPI and is discussed later in this report.

Investigations

We undertook a nationwide survey for those within and outside the industry to understand the perceptions of employment within the sector. Along with this we conducted focus groups across New Zealand to hold in-depth conversations with employees and employers within the industry to understand what is currently happening within the employment process within the sector. To properly understand this we broke this up into Before Employment, Transitioning into Employment and In Employment. This allowed us to pinpoint the areas that were and weren't working in industry capability.

The survey was built in Alchemer and promoted via paid boost on LinkedIn and Facebook, targeting anyone in New Zealand aged 15+.

The focus groups were advertised via paid boost on LinkedIn and Facebook as well as organic reach.

The intelligence gathered through the survey and focus groups was then analysed through data visualisation software PowerBI to measure sentiment.

Survey

Objectives

The first action of phase two (research) commenced in March 2021. This was a large-scale survey to ascertain perceptions of the primary industries as a workplace.

Audience 1: people employed in the industry

- barriers and pain points to entering the industry

- the traits of a good manager

- what makes an attractive job

Audience 2: people not employed in the industry

- understanding of what is 'the primary sector'

- perceptions of what a career in the primary sector is like

- perception of what the opportunities of primary sector careers are or aren't

Results

Respondent demographics

The survey was open for six weeks. During this time, 260 people partially completed the survey and 185 people fully completed the survey.

Rural/ urban

- 48% of respondents live in urban environments

- 53% of respondents live in rural environments

Employed in the primary industries

- 48% of respondents are currently employed in the primary industries

- 52% of respondents are not currently employed in the primary industries

Note; although these percentages are similar, there is not necessarily a direct correlation between those that live rurally and those that work in the primary sector. A breakdown of where people live in relation to whether they work in the industry is provided below.

Graph of people working in the primary industries and people living in urban/ rural settings
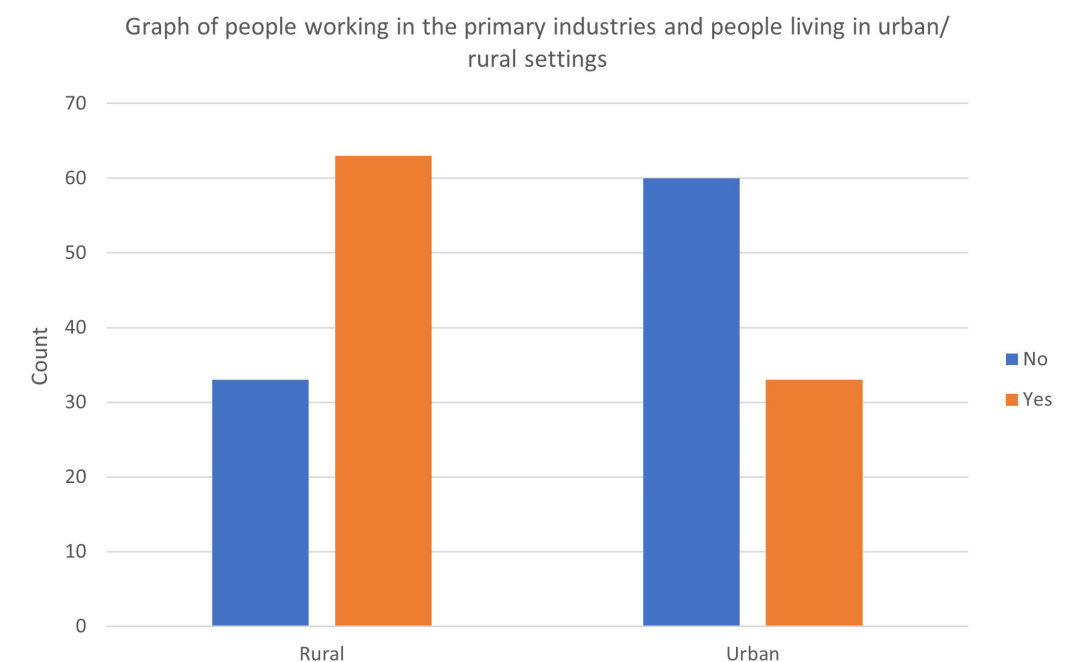
Survey *Cont.*

Age & gender of respondents

- The median age of respondents, 35 – 39, is roughly aligned to the median age for primary sector employees, 30 – 41 years.[1]

- 71% of respondents are women. According to MPI research, 65% of employees within the primary sector were male, 35% female.[2]

Graph showing age of respondents

- Under 15
- 16-19
- 20-24
- 25-29
- 30-34
- 35-39
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50-54
- 55-59
- 60-64
- 65+

Graph showing gender identity of respondents

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
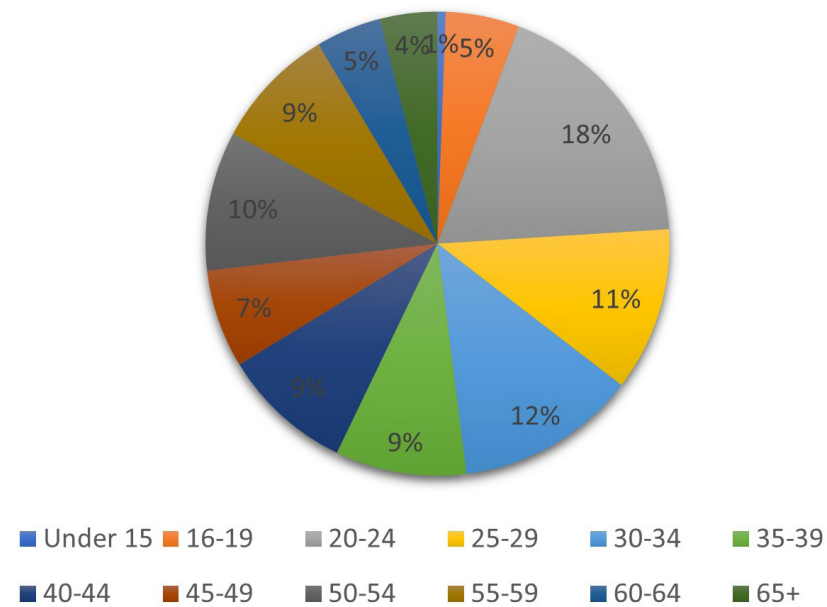
Education

- 30% of respondents are currently enrolled in study at any level between secondary school (20%) through to workplace training (4%).

- Most of our respondents had achieved a Bachelor's degree. Only 4% of respondents do not have any qualifications.

Are you currently studying?

- Not studying
- University
- Secondary School
- Workplace
- Other education provider

What is your highest qualification?

Trades Certificate 7%
Bachelor's 30%
Tertiary Diploma 19%
High School 16%
Post Graduate 23%
Other 2%
Nothing 3%

[1]Primary Industries Workforce 2019, produced by Ministry for Primary Industries. Accessed: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29270/direct
[2]Primary Industries Workforce 2019, produced by Ministry for Primary Industries. Accessed: https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29270/direct

Survey *Cont.*

Previous exposure to the primary industries

We asked respondents whether they had any connections to the primary industries. The below word cloud shows the answers provided with the size of the word correlating to how often it was repeated.

Impact of Covid-19 on employment

- For the most part, Covid-19 has not had an impact on employment. This aligns with what we saw nationally; the large-scale unemployed that had been anticipate did not eventuate

- Instead, people took cause to reassess their work-life balance and priorities.

How has COVID impacted your employment?

Perceptions of primary industry careers

The strongest positive relationship for primary industries roles was that with it being *a great pathway to business ownership and career opportunities for those pursuing management opportunities*. This is a great awareness that people have, but it is concerning that people are not able to see clearly defined career progression pathways. This is reflected in the focus group findings and is discussed further below.

Based on what you have heard, which of the following statements about working in the primary sector do you agree with?

Based on what you have heard, which of the following do you agree with?

Jobs in the Primary Industries...

|				
Are well paid	24		Provide a healthy working environment	25
Have flexible working hours	22		Involve working on your own a lot	51
Provide comfortable work/home life balance	29		Are suitable for a primary carer of children	7
Provide training opportunities	46		Involve long hours	63
Provide good working conditions	22		Involve tough working conditions	56
Mean having a good boss	10		Other - *Involve abusing and killing animals which can lead to trauma and poor mental health*	
Lead to career advancement	36			
Provide a supportive working environment	22			

Survey *Cont.*

The qualities that people look for in a new job are not specific to industry and can apply to any sector. For example, access to a vehicle (frequently part of a primary sector employment package) ranks lowest. This, combined with the findings from the previous question, show that there is a perception gap to overcome, and also provides us with valuable insights into what is important to the future workforce.

Graph showing what people look for in a new job
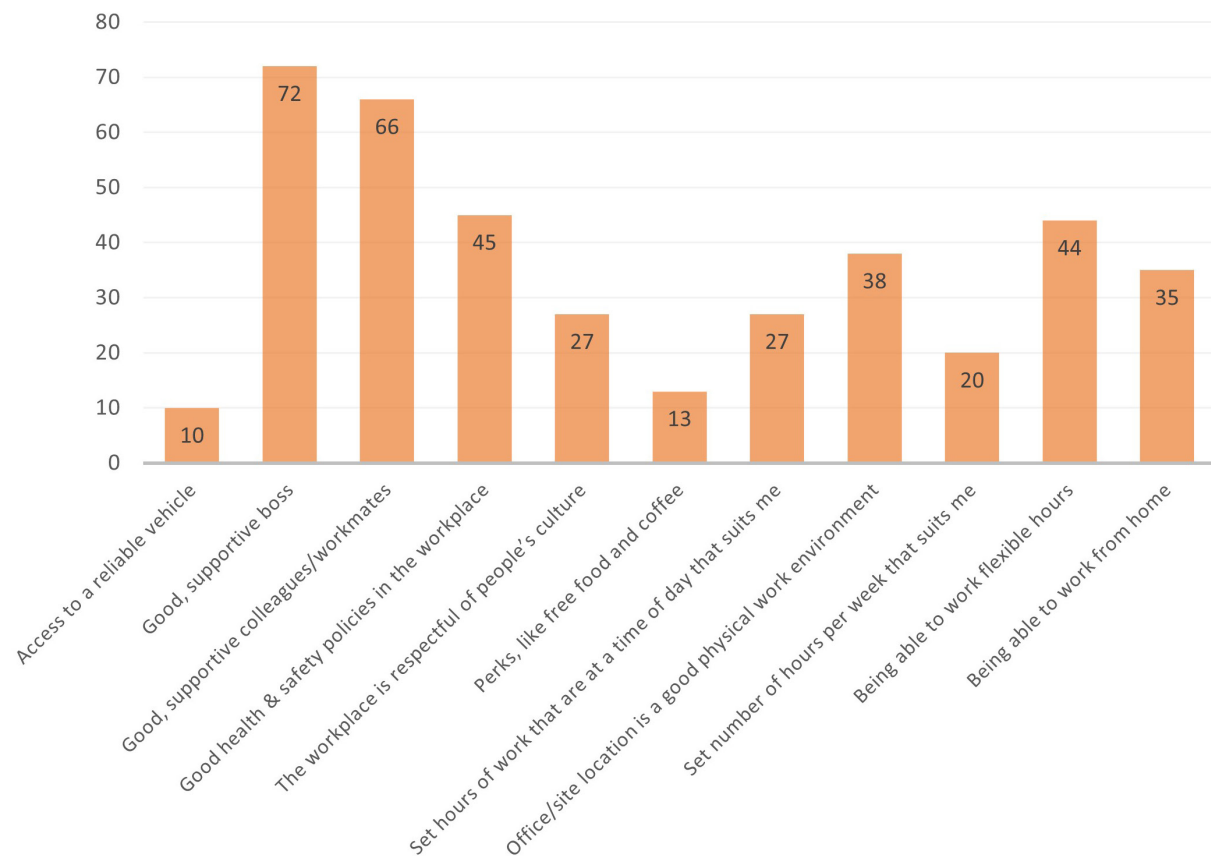
What do you look for when going into employment in a new job?

Access to a reliable vehicle	10	Set number of hours per week that suits me	20
Good, supportive boss	72	Being able to work flexible hours	44
Good, supportive colleagues/workmates	66	Being able to work from home	35
Good health & safety policies in the workplace	45	Others	
The workplace is respectful of people's culture	27	- Can make a difference.	
Perks, like free food and coffee	13	- Good pay and bonus payments	

Set hours of work that are at a time of day that suits me	27	- Education and training development opportunities.
		  - Going to other workplaces to see how they operate.
		  - Meet others in a similar role.
		  - Growth and clear purpose.	

Office/site location is a good physical work environment	38	- Staff treat animals, plants, machinery, and other staff appropriately.	

Career change motivators

What would change your mind about going into a job in the primary industries?

From the responses to this open ended question we note that career progression is a key attribute in getting people to change perceptions on changing industry. This, along with help and guidance are also key factors into increasing the demand for primary industry employment.

It's important that we are able to offer a reliable understanding of the breadth of roles as well as the average pay (including package definition) that each role is usually entitled to. The role should list what skills are necessary and where to find training for towards attaining these skills.

What qualities do you look for in a manager?

We note that the attributes of a good manager are universal across all types of work, and not specific to the primary industries. Having good communication skills is one of the most frequently requested qualities, but there is also a need for them to be knowledgeable and understanding. These people should also incorporate development into their workforce and promote extra opportunities to their workforce.

Survey *Cont.*

What is the best bit about your job?

This question was asked of respondents who work in the industry to describe the best aspects of working within the primary industries. The ability to work outdoors and with animals were some of the most common responses. The idea of nurturing the land was echoed through our focus groups: appealing to people's hearts and minds. The most popular response was 'people', which is not surprising as having a good group of people around you is one of the biggest variables of whether you will enjoy a job or not. This goes for all areas of life.

What is the most challenging part of getting started in the primary industries?

This question met with a mixed range of responses. Some of the answers ranged in needing experience, a clear pathway, accommodation, training, and relationships. This was echoed throughout the focus groups.

Focus Groups

Objectives

The second action of phase two (research) commenced in June 2021. This was a series of focus groups around the country.

In order to gain an understanding of the current sector reality we facilitated discussions with employers, employees, learners and people with an affinity for, connection to and lived experience of the primary industries.

The purpose of the focus groups was to identify opportunities, challenges, what works and what doesn't work in the pre-employment, transition into employment, and in employment spaces. We then workshopped some potential solutions.

These focus groups were facilitated by PiPI project lead, Eve Williams, with PiPI Data Analyst Jack Leslie assisting with facilitation. Notes were captured using MURAL, and circulated to attendees after the focus group to review the discussion and add any further comments. This meant that people who were not able to attend the focus group could provide input and understand the discussions that took place.

The focus groups ran between 31 May and 12 August, to allow enough time for the project team to circulate notes after each focus group.

The locations of the focus groups was based on key primary industry areas. Additional focus groups were added, and some were cancelled, in response to demand or the lack thereof. In total, we facilitated 12 focus groups.

This included one held virtually, so that geography was not a barrier to participation.

Focus groups had been proposed and advertised for Auckland, Hawera and Dunedin, however due to lack of registrations these focus groups were cancelled.

A high amount of interest in Blenheim resulted in a second focus group being held, and a second Christchurch focus group was held at the express interest of the equine industry. A full table of the locations, attendance numbers and sectors represented at each focus group is provided as an appendix to this report.

Focus groups were promoted via paid posts on social media, and through Primary ITO's Primary Connect newsletter. It was also shared with industry organisations who shared them with their networks. As PiPI has gained traction and attention, we have established a database of contacts to whom we send regular project updates.

Results

We set out to facilitate conversations around the areas of before employment, transition into employment, and in employment, and purposely did not structure these focus groups around the workstream priorities identified in phase one. This was because while phase one was initially focussed on identifying possible tools, in phase two we have focused on deeply understanding the current sector realities and allowed us to test our hypotheses against solutions proffered by the focus group participants. The conversations focussed on three areas

Area 1: Before employment

- opportunities and problems in the attraction space

- what is working? What isn't?

- How might we address the problems, tweak what isn't working, optimise what is working, capitalise on the opportunities?

Area 2: Transitioning into employment

- opportunities and problems in the recruitment space

- what is working? What isn't?

- How might we address the problems, tweak what isn't working, optimise what is working, capitalise on the opportunities?

Area 3: In employment

- opportunities and problems in the retention space

- what is working? What isn't?

- How might we address the problems, tweak what isn't working, optimise what is working, capitalise on the opportunities?

They key overall discovery was that, notwithstanding some minor specificities, challenges and opportunities across sectors are broadly the same, as are the broad themes of suggested solutions developed by the focus groups. Far more significant are the challenges identified regionally. Any tools developed in the design phase of PiPI should consider regionally specific challenges.

This is both logical and heartening, because first what it indicates is that our employers, and people managers, are considering their staff in the context of the whole being, not just as a labour unit. For example, employers in Southland identified that frequently staff attrition is due to spouses and families not being able to establish firm networks in the region. It also shows the importance of the social networks that are built at work: whether through workplace-instigated sports teams in local tournaments, or organic connections.

The discussion section of this report will be structured in the same manner as the focus groups were conducted: before employment; transitioning into employment, and in employment. We will then examine 'how might we' maximise on opportunities, fix the challenges, capitalise on what is working, and tweak what isn't working.

This discussion builds on the data as presented in the previous section, which outlines the methodology and findings of the research.

Before employment

What is working

One of the strongest sentiments that has come through from the focus groups is that the people who are in the industry understand that there are fantastic examples of people who have thrived in their roles. Our sentiment analysis showed that the most favourable sentiments were associated with key phrases such as "clear message, house, good success stories, young engaging people, experiences." [3] When we compare this with the survey findings where to people outside of the industry, the positive aspects of employment are among the lowest – "mean having a good boss" was only 3% of responses, and "provide good working conditions" was only 5% of responses. At the other end of the sentiment scale, the most popular responses were "involves long hours" at 15% and "involve tough working conditions" at 14%.

This demonstrates that the biggest barrier to entry into the primary industries is the lack of understanding and awareness of what a career in the industry is actually like – the lack of cohesive, authentic storytelling. As an industry we are really good at sharing our stories with each other, but the lack of stories in the general public arena is filled by what we refer to affectionately as "the comments section" – the immediacy and unfiltered nature of social media, in particular lacks any consistent rebuttal. There is huge opportunity to capture authentic storytelling to show the bigger picture. We need to tell a better version of our own story- "everyone still loves Country Calendar!" [4]

There are several examples of successful authentic story telling – Tangaroa Walker and Farm4Life was cited at several focus groups for his success in bringing awareness of the opportunities in dairy farming to more people. There is a need for real social media from trusted, embedded, authentic people.

One of the major comments on pre-employment that came through in Phase One of PiPI is that there is no substitute for lived experience. While multimedia approaches will go some of the way, there must be consideration of the benefits of 'feet on the ground' familiarisation. This was echoed and reaffirmed through the focus groups: some of the key examples of what is working are focused on the opportunity to have a valuable conversation with people in the industry. Some specific examples include Speedmeets, run by the ITO consortium and funded by the Ministry of Education, and career fairs- although these were also noted as more valuable for people who are seeking a career, rather than a 'browsing environment.'

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[3] A full table of the underlying sentiment data is provided in the appendices.
[4] Verbatim comment, Hawkes Bay Focus Group

Before employment *Cont.*

Opportunities

The key opportunities that were identified in the focus group follow a similar theme to what is working.

Practical skills appeal to many learners

One of the key challenges that sectors face in highlighting the career opportunities is the breadth of roles that make up the industry. "What is the primary sector?" is a loaded question and the answer is as long as a piece of string!

It does mean that the "elevator pitch" is a bit more of a challenge. This is also one of its greatest assets as well, though – and by showing people what skills are required and what skills you can learn, we will be able to tell the story of the significance of the primary industries to New Zealand's economy.

Hearts and minds

We know that we need to tell our story better so that people can know the opportunities. Food is trendy, and people want to know more: in a generation where the entirety of human knowledge is available at our fingertips, people expect transparency. We noticed during the initial Covid-19 lockdowns the way that food producers responded by sharing their stories as well as selling direct to consumer. People are connected to their food at a level that has perhaps not been seen since the agrarian age. Food production is for profit – but it's also for fun. By appealing to people's value systems, whether it be caring for animals, land husbandry, and nurturing for future generations, being a part of a community, or achieving career milestones, we can position the primary industries as one in which anyone can find a career which aligns to their values.

Pathways

The primary industries are diverse and segmented, comprising of more than 30 unique sectors, with a highly diverse customer base. This comes with its challenges and its opportunities, one of which is the ability to build a career pathway not limited to one specific industry. There is huge opportunity to promote the career pathways that bridge many industries.

What isn't working

So many options, so little structure

The survey suggested that people did not consider the primary sector as offering career advancement (8.69% of responses) or training opportunities (11.1%). However, we know that there is a huge amount of formal and non-formal learning opportunities available in the primary sector. One of the challenges is that it is so varied, both in structure and delivery. By building the connection between learning and career advancement opportunities, we would increase the perception of the primary sector as a place to find a career, not just a job.

Mind the gap!

We need to build a cohesive model for career pathways, and tailor the pathways from education to employment. The focus groups showed that there is a large cultural gap between employers and the younger generations, and we rely heavily on assumptions. We need to change perceptions on both ends of the scale – we need to understand who the younger generations are and what's important to them and use this to develop valuable messaging.

So what?

Current attraction tends to rely on traditional promotional activities – websites, careers expos. But we also heard from secondary educators that there is a missing link – the 'so what?' between the initial contact and how to follow it through. Careers expos in particular for an employer are a long game – and there aren't hard metrics on the success of these. The lack of 'next step' means that despite the efforts to promote careers in the industry, potential employees may not know where to look for more information, or for the next step.

Problems

Lack of confidence

There is a distinct sentiment that career changers or career seekers are hesitant to enter the industry because they have limited skills or confidence that they have the skills needed to work in the industry. We have seen this echoed throughout the research – the gap between perception and reality seems chasm-like. However, we know that perception informs reality – how can we demonstrate that this skill gap, insofar as it exists, or is felt to exist, is not insurmountable?

More pressure on businesses around pastoral care responsibilities

We know that the reality of the sector can be hard work. Not working a traditional 5:2 week, and working in adverse weather conditions, and in some instances, away from urban centres, presents a unique set of challenges. We heard that employers are cognisant of their responsibilities to their team members, not just in relation to their physical wellbeing but also mental wellbeing. How can we equip those entering the workforce with these skills, or resources to manage their mental wellbeing, and how can we ensure that there are tools available for employers to play their part without adding undue burden?

Transitioning into employment

The critical piece of pathways into the primary industries is the transition into employment. How do we ensure that we are successfully converting interest into employment?

It is clear from the focus groups that there are some activities that are working really well in this area- and there are some gaps.

Problems

Finding a job

We know that the primary sector is hugely diverse. One of the problems that comes with this is that the industry is so diverse there isn't one centralised hub where you can browse jobs and career options. There is a very clear need that there needs to be a unified voice about career opportunities and where to find them. As an industry, we need to ensure that people can see a future in the primary industries. By approaching this in a collaborative, all of industry way, we can offer people flexible career paths that can be tailored to their individual interests.

Seasonality of work

A lot of the sectors that make up the primary industries are seasonal in nature. This means that there may not be work available at the time that a career seeker is looking – and we then lose them to other industries. This is apparent in Trades Academy students who, at the end of the school year, secure apprenticeships in other trades with transferable skills, rather than waiting it out. We have heard through the focus groups of instances where employers have paired up with other employers to offer more consistent employment, or diversified their operations to keep their teams on longer. The problem remains that without a formalised pipeline into the industry, this attrition remains a problem.

"just a job"

One of the flow on effects of seasonal work is that it can be seen as "just a job." There is the potential to earn really good money through hard work – and the work is sometimes viewed as a temporary measure. Whether it's school leavers securing 'jobs' until they can start their 'careers'- the distinction is important – or the high profile seasonality of industries that require large amounts of manual work for short periods of time. This means that employers may find themselves going through the recruitment process often, which is an expensive and time-consuming process.

Opportunities

Mentors to ease the transition

"If we look after our industry from within, the rest will look after itself." [5] One of the key elements of the NZ Apprenticeship programme is the tripartite relationship between the Training Adviser, Apprentice and the Employer:

Three parties to a New Zealand Apprenticeship

There are three parties to a New Zealand apprenticeship – the apprentice, the employer, and the Primary ITO (Industry Training Organisation).

The trainee must have a current Training Agreement signed by all three parties. This is a formal agreement between the employer, the apprentice and the Primary ITO. All three parties are expected to comply with the Code of Good practice for Apprenticeships as issued by the Tertiary Education Commission.[6]

There is huge opportunity for this model of pastoral care to be implemented to support all people entering the industry: pastoral care, or a mentor programme for the employer, would build collegiality and social networks between employers, and ease the transition into employment for the employee.

What is working

Regionally embedded employment coordinators

Horticulture New Zealand's regional career progression managers[7] were often cited in the focus groups as an example of employment coordinators working successfully. This is because they are regionally embedded, and already a part of the industry. They hold relationships with employers, industry and local government and can use these relationships to ease the transition into industry.

Similarly, the Primary ITO Training Adviser network is made up of people who understand industry, and importantly, understand the region and regional focuses and priorities. The strength of these roles is that they are people who understand business and training, and the unique experiences of working and training in their specific regions. In many areas, people cited their local training adviser by name, so embedded are they in the local industry.

What isn't working

Expectations versus reality

We heard from employers that they often lost team members within the first six to twelve months because the expectations did not meet the reality. Whether it be people's expectations that they will be progressing through careers faster than the reality, or if the grind or repetitiveness of the work involved, or it didn't live up to the glossy pictures, there is an opportunity to use real, relatable people as career ambassadors, and to give genuine testimony of what a lifestyle in the primary industries can provide.

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[5] Hamilton focus group observation
[6] Primary ITO Code of Practice for Apprentices can be found here:
  https://www.primaryito.ac.nz/assets/Downloads/Code-of-Practice-for-Apprentices-Aug-20.pdf
[7] www.gohort.co.nz

In employment

Problems

According to data from the Food & Fibre Skills Action Plan, retention rates in the food and fibre sectors are lower than the New Zealand average, with only 29% of workers still employed in the food and fibre sectors after three years, based on MPI's analysis of 2013 new entrants.[8]

For a new entrant working in the industry, particularly remotely, the change in lifestyle can be dramatic. With less need for workers on dairy and sheep & beef farms due to technological advancements this only hinders the feeling of isolation. With fewer workers means fewer people on farm. Fewer people on farm leads to smaller farming communities. It's important new entrants are supported when often working by themselves. Our focus groups suggested that employers could utilise social networking events for their staff, as well as incorporating a 'family-friendly' environment. Having shared breakfasts or doing activities as a group are opportunities that we have heard teams are doing, and goes a long way to helping morale overall. In Gore, the Mataura Milk company have got employees helping out the community by setting up a badminton league.[9] Little things like this go a long way, especially in our smaller rural communities.

Opportunities

It's important that people understand precisely what a role encompasses, by knowing what general day-to-day operations looks like, the expected skillset, what training will be made available, and what the general pay packet looks like. In the primary industries the wage can be confusing due to some roles using a 'package.' This comes with normal wage, along with vehicle usage, a property, free food, internet, etc. For a new entrant this can be unclear, especially for those who are transitioning directly from school through to the sector. We need to be able to communicate to these new entrants a clear pathway into a role with all the details they may need to know. We have heard that there are a lot of misconceptions in the primary Industries, as the 'good bits' are showcased through entities like Country Calendar but do not directly show the negatives of a job. When a new employee turns up to the workplace expecting to be feeding calves in the sunshine but find out they have to work in the mud doing dirty jobs we can expect a direct drop off. We need to be honest with our new entrants so that they know what a new job will involve, so that expectations are realistic, leading on to a better retention.

Understanding an employees expectations of a job are the most important first step for an employer. By having a goal setting meeting from their first day will help employers understand what an employee wants to attain out of a role. Whether it's training, experience, or the simple ability to afford a car after the season, understanding this will have benefits for both the employee and the employer.

What is working

Employers and businesses are in a position to maximise retention through simple yet effective changes that increase overall well-being in their employees. A great example off this is Pāmu, who have recently changed working hours for some staff members to 5AM – 2PM daily, which has increased job retention by 30% in the first 12 months. We have often heard through our focus groups that because something has historically been done a certain way doesn't mean that it has to continue in this fashion. With a rapidly changing workforce, individuals must adapt to this and understand what an employee needs in order to meet expectations, while finding enjoyment through their role.

Employees appreciate when they are paid in accordance with their output, skill level and experience. Giving staff accountability for their actions within their roles is a great way of retaining staff. An example of this was giving each staff member a row within an orchard that is their sole responsibility. The staff are told what is required of them for this opportunity, and if their row is successful and so is the staff member, then an extra row can be rewarded. People like to know when they are doing a good job, so by having these rewards to encourage positive work can go a long way to making a business successful overall.

What isn't working

It's important that employees are able to utilise the vast amount of training available. Employees are more likely to stay in their role if they believe they are constantly learning and upskilling their own soft and hard skills. With free training available for most areas of the primary industries, it's surprising how many workplaces do not incorporate this opportunity into their own workplaces.

Many new entrants into the sector will often be given the mediocre to unappealing jobs. This is a simple process into getting employees a thorough understanding of the job on a whole. For the employee though this can negatively impact their chances of staying. Employers need to recognise this and work out how to make jobs more interesting. Employers can turn these tasks into a game, making it more fun and incentivising these employees to do a good job. It's also important that employers are able to explain to their staff the reason 'why' a task is done. Giving employees an understanding of why something happens increases their understanding of the operation on a whole, and why these tasks are important for the entire business operation.

[8] Food & Fibre Skills Action Plan 2019 – 2025. Accessed from https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/37751/direct
[9] As discussed at Invercargill Focus Group

School visits

Data Analyst Jack Leslie, talked to 40 students who were studying a variation of Agriculture, Marine Science, Forestry, Agri-business Forestry or were in the Wine School within New Zealand High Schools, so we could understand the perceptions of those who have the best potential to be the primary sectors new entrant employees. As the next generation of the workforce, what are their motivators? And why/ not would they pursue a career in the primary industries?

The students were asked a variety of questions to understand what they know about the industry and what they enjoyed and disliked about it. This helped us to understand what employment may look like within the industry for them and why. These focused loosely around the questioning within our survey.

What would you say the major differences are between growing up in the country compared to growing up in a city?

Apart from the generic words we can see that experience, learn and people are some of the key words associated. These words go to speak of some of the extra life experiences they have had working around animals and machinery that a lot of those who have lived within a city missed out on. They also believe that they meet a lot of people within their rural communities, which have both helped them learn certain life skills that might not be the same as an individual who has grown up in the city. The students also mentioned that this would give them certain advantages to taking over farms in the family, or at least a head start for getting into future primary industry jobs.

What are the benefits of working in the Primary Industries?

The most common answers to this were the chance to work outdoors, working with a motorbike and the ability to live with your family. It was also a great pathway, living on a family farm or orchard, for them to take it over once they got old enough.

What do you think are the issues for getting a job in the Primary Industries?

Some of the most common responses were that some may not have the physical strength to handle some jobs, especially those that were in the orchards and that people may not know how to behave around animals. A lot of people thought it may be hard to find easy connections in the Primary sector, which was seen more commonly at one school. People might not have the passion, or the passion might change when they realise how dirty you get.

School visits *Cont.*

Outcomes of audit and mapping exercises

Why would people not want to work in the Primary Industries?

The students believed that they may be scared of working with animals (especially dogs), heavy machinery or the lack of breaks. They also thought that people had heard of the false impression of abusing animals. It was also hard for people to have weekends off and they would have to have hand-on, back-breaking work.

The answers received to this question had some underlying regional differences, with the students focussing on roles within their own regions. For example, the requirements to meet the needs of a winery role compared to a dairy apprentice are very different in the eyes of the students and getting a new entrant into a role would follow different steps.

If you were an employer, what do you think are the most important traits you'd look for in a new employee?

This was a great question into understanding what the students may need to prepare for or show to their future employers when they go into the workforce.

The key takeaways were that they must be reliable, have the right soft and hard skills, willing to learn, being a great team member and trustworthy. Most of these are what was expected, but it was great to see how in-depth the students' knowledge of what was required and had made steps to encourage their future in the industry. Having experience was one of the reasons they had gone into studying aspects of the industry in school.

Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) is currently engaged in a programme to take stock of the training opportunities available across the food and fibre sector. This stocktake is due to be completed by the end of 2021, with a pan-sector skills and employment dataset developed afterwards. This programme of work is borne out of the Food & Fibre Skills Action Plan.[10]

The very nature of informal and non-formal is training is that it is not quantified; by carrying out this work, MPI will be able to develop a workforce supply and demand model and improve forecasting capability. Looking to the future, this work will allow the industry to plan strategically and collaboratively to fill needs gaps.

Another piece of work underway is the Taking Stock project, managed by the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) which is due to be completed by December 2021.

We believe that the outputs of these two pieces of work sufficiently cover the proposed outputs of the needs mapping exercise originally proposed in our application. As a result, we are working closely to support these two initiatives and have not pursued a duplicating effort.

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[10] Focus Area One: Knowledge. "We will have the information and enabling systems required to develop and evaluate food and fibre workforce development initiatives." https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/37751/direct

How might we?

Across all the focus groups, the most often recurring suggestions of "how might we" can be categorised as follows:

1. Story telling
2. Work environments
3. Wider industry initiatives
4. The training landscape

Story telling

Interestingly, 'good news stories' which was an originally suggested workstream in phase one and was determined by those consulted to not be its own focus area but rather "a robust communications strategy" has emerged with employers and employees as one of the strongest bargaining chips that the industry holds: there are some tremendous opportunities in the primary sector, and we are really good at telling them to each other, but not so good at appealing to the hearts and minds of the potential workforce which is not yet engaged in the primary sector.

There are few key points, which echo the points of the scoping and ideation of phase one:

1. the strongest stories are authentic, and relatable: tell the stories of real people who are working in the industry.

2. Success means different things to different people: for one person, success may be drenching sheep all day because that is the job they enjoy the most. For another, success may be earning enough consistent income to buy a car. For another, success may be progression career-wise. We must be mindful that success is not necessarily linear – a career is a jungle gym, not a ladder – and success is not necessarily associated with one's employment.

3. We are good at telling our stories to ourselves – but we need to get better at telling them to people not in our industry already.

4. We need to tell stories that appeal to other people – appealing to hearts and minds.

5. Kāore te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna ake reka. The kūmara doesn't speak of its own sweetness. The greatest promoters of the opportunities for careers in the primary industry perhaps do not come from the industry itself, but should come from the people who experienced it.

6. There are lots of awesome stories being told about all our different industries – so let's focus on telling the stories of the people who make up these industries. By telling our stories of our people, we will transcend sector, and it will be easier to highlight the transferability of careers across the many and varied sectors that make up the food and fibre sector.

Work environments

We are getting better at recognising that employment relationships are not purely transactional; that is to say, that the employer not only has a duty of care to their workforce in terms of their health and safety on site (whether related to machinery use, working conditions, fatigue etc) but also their personal wellbeing. There are several ideas that recurred throughout the focus groups, and most are themed around 'understanding':

1. Understanding and meeting the needs of employees regarding hours, goals, development – this creates an environment where the employee can thrive

2. Customising work environment for the people - understanding what hours work best and creating flexibility where there needs to be

3. Making people feel included in the decision-making process across the business, which links the 'what' with the 'why'

4. Celebrating successes and acknowledgement of good work

5. Demonstrating the whole 'package' – the salary, yes, but also other additional benefits- transport, housing, meat for the freezer, diversity of role, career opportunities, social aspects of the role e.g., sports teams, etc.

Wider industry initiatives

Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi.

This whakataukī talks to community, to collaboration and a strengths-based approach. It acknowledges that everybody has something to offer, a piece of the puzzle, and by working together we can all flourish.

One of the key things that came out of the focus groups was the understanding that the future of capability in the industry doesn't lie with any one person, organisation or initiative. PiPI can serve to prop up and amplify the work that others are doing to enhance the capability landscape. Industry bodies and industry educational organisations are developing initiatives and programmes to support the development of people before, in and between employment, and employers themselves are coming up with creative and innovative ways to improve their worker welfare and make the industry a desirable place to be.

The key messages that we heard about the role of wider industry initiatives are:

1. Showing, not telling, the career progression opportunities

2. The power of grassroots community building efforts

3. Advertising the industry as a career to raise perceptions progression within the industry

4. Integrating the primary sector into core school subjects, particularly STEM

5. Understand the power of our words in the media: it highlights to others what is important to us

6. The need for role models in the industry.

7. Increasing engagement and access to grants and funding mechanisms to enable innovation

The training landscape

Mā whero, mā pango ka oti ai te mahi

This whakataukī is similar to 'Nau te rourou' in that it refers to working together, however it talks more directly to the need for collaboration. Traditionally 'whero' signifies chiefs/leaders and 'pango' the community/workers. It acknowledges the need for both to work together in order to complete the work.

PiPI is borne out of a need to develop a joined up, all of industry approach to capability within the primary sector. Much has been made of the fact that there does not exist a lack of training opportunities throughout the industry at all levels; in fact the industry is lucky to be full of innovative people, businesses and sectors who develop training opportunities and programmes to answer the demands of industry.

PiPI can make sense of all these training opportunities, promote them and provide a cohesive framework to place them in relation to each other. A structure in place pan-sector that will allow uniformity for all learning opportunities.

1. There is a need for an holistic approach to curricular and training/education materials

2. We need to be able to document the generic skills that people have, and that people need

3. Being able to fit training into your work schedule. Training tools being online can help fit in with prior commitments.

Much like ouroboros, all of these solutions do not exist independently of each other, or linearly. You can see from the suggestions that there are commonalities and strong clear themes between the proposed solutions. This was indicated in phase one as well: that the system or framework is something that can be dipped in and out of, with interconnected and responsive parts.

How might we? *Cont.*

Options analysis and preferred option

> Our recommendation is the construction of a 'hub/spoke model' that serves as the one central point for access to the tools and resources for attraction, recruitment and retention.

Hub/ Spoke model

The hub/spoke model is most commonly found in distribution paradigms; whereby traffic planners organise routes as a series of 'spokes' that connect outlying points to a central 'hub.'

It has been adapted for a wide range of other systems, including in response to an increase in flexible working environments. The model is often implemented by companies who follow a centralised model where the headquarters maintain consistency over regional offices. It is common in regulated industries to sustain a coordinated model. [11]

The model would adapt well for PiPI because of the regionalisation of the model, supported and consistency maintained by the central hub. It would be a platform that can coordinate all the various initiatives and provide a cohesive framework that encompasses regional sensitivities from a national, pan-sector lens. It would capitalise on the success of regionally embedded and industry connected coordinators, as well as recognising the strength of a national, pan-sector joined up approach to industry capability. It would provide context for regional and industry specific initiatives and provide a framework to "fill in the gaps" from a national level.

What we know

We have gained significant insights through research and are in a position to develop a framework that underpins the various pathways into the primary industries. Such a resource will be beneficial for any organisation considering stock takes of, or investment into new initiatives in the food and fibre capability ecosystem. Discussion with the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) General Manager suggest that this framework aligns with their work to enhance and advance the quality and reputation of food and fibre vocational education and training delivery to help grow the Food and Fibre workforce capability and capacity. PiPI aims to create a joined up, pan sector approach to attraction, recruitment and retention: at a macro level, this framework would underpin a technological solution to this project and ensure that it remains fit for purpose into the future, with a lens to a post-RoVE world.

We know that to attract people to the industry we need to ensure that the industry is attractive. "The industry" is not an amorphous concept; it is the farm, orchard, processing plant, business that people go to work at every day. By ensuring that the workplace is attractive, the rest will follow.

Integral to the approach that we have undertaken with our PiPI research has been ensuring that the learner is the centre of everything we do.

This hub would require multiple lenses for multiple audiences: careers advisers/ educators/ whanau; career seekers; employers; and people already employed in the industry.

Physician, heal thyself

Physician, heal thyself

We are in a period of change; the demographic of our workforce is changing, and the balance of power has shifted; we now need workers more than they need us. Our potential workforce can be selective as to where they spend their time and how they build their futures. This creates a fantastic opportunity for us as an industry to show the unique career and lifestyle opportunities that the food and fibre sector affords.

But how can we ensure that the employers, the people who are 'the industry' are not just equipped, but empowered to adapt to the changing future workforce?

Employers are an extension of our learning network.

We know that careers mean the opportunity for lifelong learning and progression. But learning doesn't happen in a vacuum. Arguably the most important teacher at work is the boss, the manager, the employer. So let's ensure that when we centre the learner, we are centring all learners – whether the newest team member, the person looking to learn more about the industry, and the employer who wants to learn how to help their team members flourish.

Without the 'how' it's just 'so what?'

Technology is not a panacea to fix the capability challenges in the food and fibre industry, but it is a powerful tool to bring us together.

This is why the hub that we propose to design in phase three will complement and supplement – not replace – the other programmes of work happening and that will happen across the industry.

Recommendation on training and training pathways

It is clear from our engagement with employers, employees, educators and associated organisations that there is a vast array of training opportunities available for people at all levels; from familiarisation short courses; to training days; to workshops for supervisors through to Level 6 Diplomas for continuous learning. The difficulty is knowing where to go to find out about all of these opportunities; there is no centralised repository for this information. You have to know where to look – and what you are looking for.

Our recommendation is that a 'hub' is built, that provides portals for employers, employees, potential employees and those seeking knowledge on the careers and opportunities in the primary sector. There will be the ability to log in and track one's progress, as well as access information on career advancement opportunities (for example, short courses, or scholarships). It will have a job board which sweeps all appropriate listings from other job hosting sites (for example, Seek, TradeMe, Indeed).

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[11] From this article on how the hub and spoke model benefits the flexible office sector:
https://www.workthere.com/en-gb/news-guides/locations/what-is-the-hub-and-spoke-model-and-how-does-it-benefit-the-flexible-office-sector/
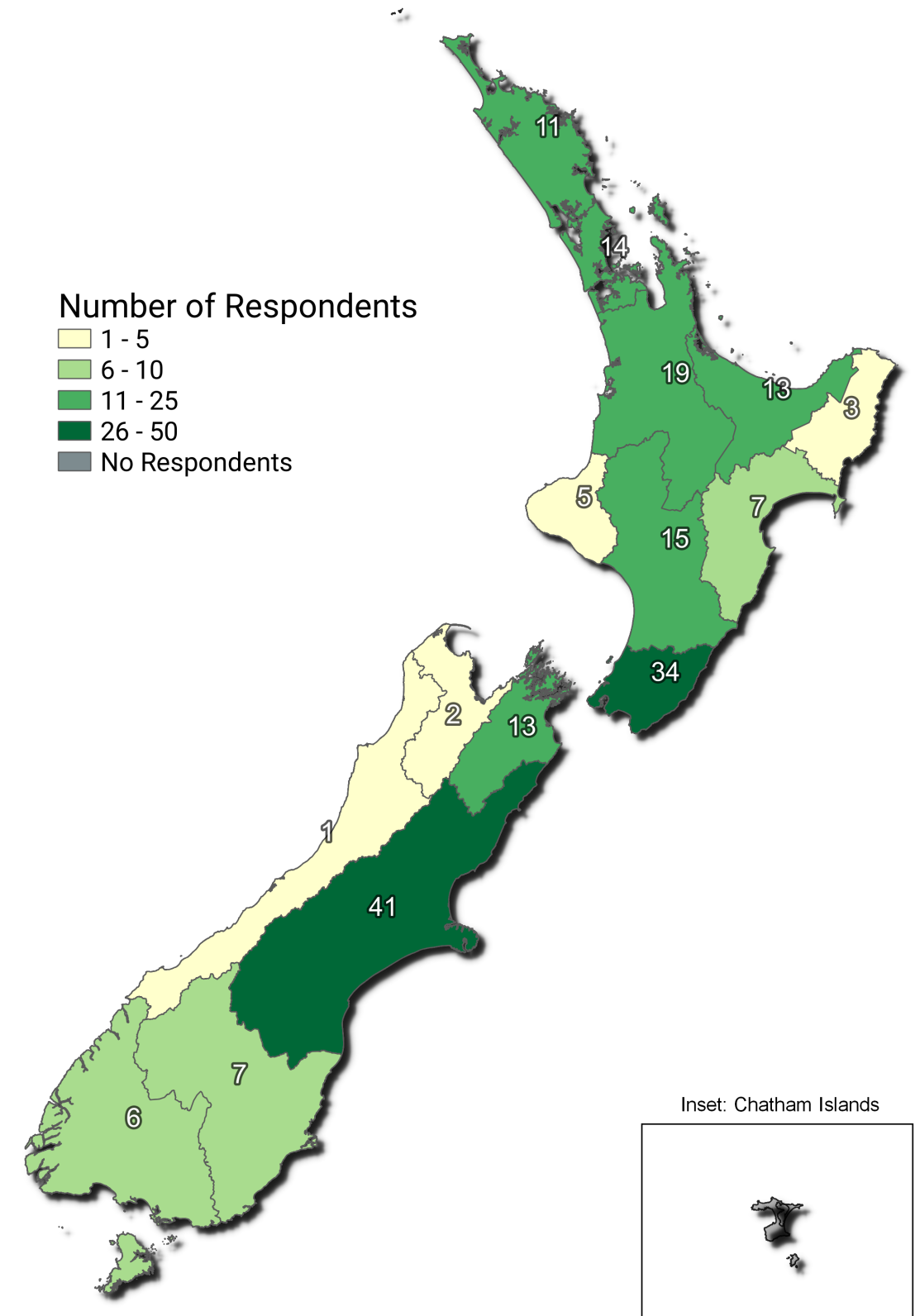
Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey response heat map

Number of Respondents
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 10
- 11 - 25
- 26 - 50
- No Respondents

Inset: Chatham Islands

Appendix 1: Survey response heat map

Date	Town	Sectors represented	No. of participants
31 May 2021	Wellington	Sheep, beef, deer farming, industry training, associate organisations	13
21 June 2021	Tauranga	Production horticulture	4
28 June 2021	Hawkes Bay (held online)	Government, industry training, sheep and beef farming	6
30 June 2021	Blenheim	Viticulture, seafood processing, chamber of commerce, government, plant propagation, labour contractors, tertiary education	9
5 July 2021	Christchurch	Plant propagation, production horticulture, equine, dairy processing, secondary education, tertiary education	9
9 July 2021	Virtual[12]	Viticulture	6
13 July 2021	Feilding	Industry training, secondary education, sheep and beef farming	4
14 July 2021	Masterton	Sheep and beef farming, dairy farming, equine	4
19 July 2021	Invercargill	Dairy processing, sheep and beef farming, agribusiness, industry training	7
28 July 2021	Hamilton	Equine, dairy farming, dairy processing, sheep and beef farming, industry training	4
10 August 2021	Virtual[13]	Ram breeding, sheep and beef farming, ecological science, local government, agriscience	8
12 August 2021	Christchurch[14]	Equine	4

Appendix 3: High level cost breakdown to date (phase 2)

Staff cost	$135,687
Focus group cost	$48,663
Promotion	$829
Total cost PIPI phase 2	**$185,179**

[12] This focus group was held at the request of people who were unable to attend the Blenheim workshop on the specific date but were keen to be involved in the process.

[13] This focus group was organised for those who had expressed interest in a previous focus group but had been unable to attend due to illness or prior commitments.

[14] This focus group was held at the request of the equine industry after a presentation to the Equine Industry Partnership Group (IPG)

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

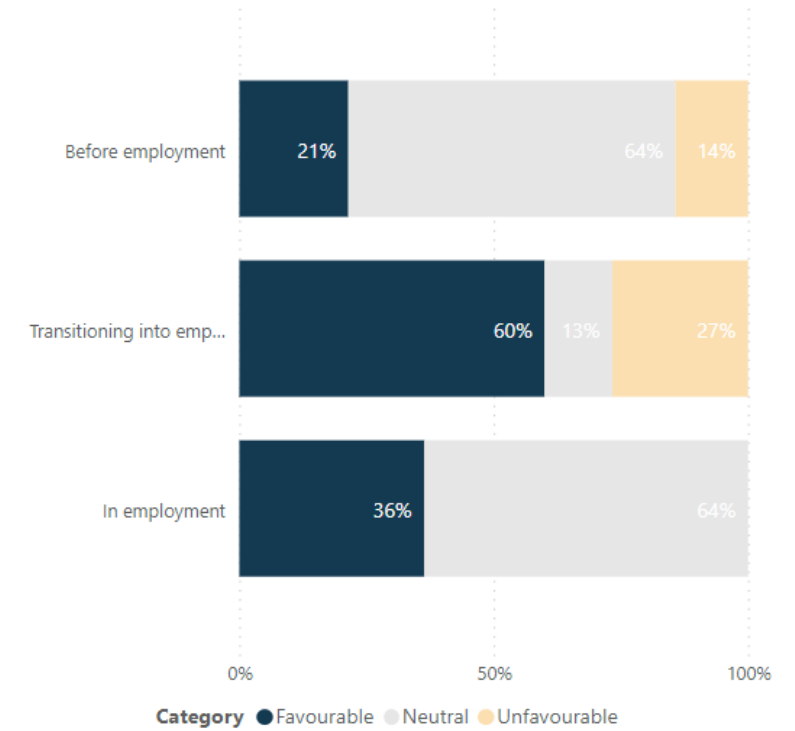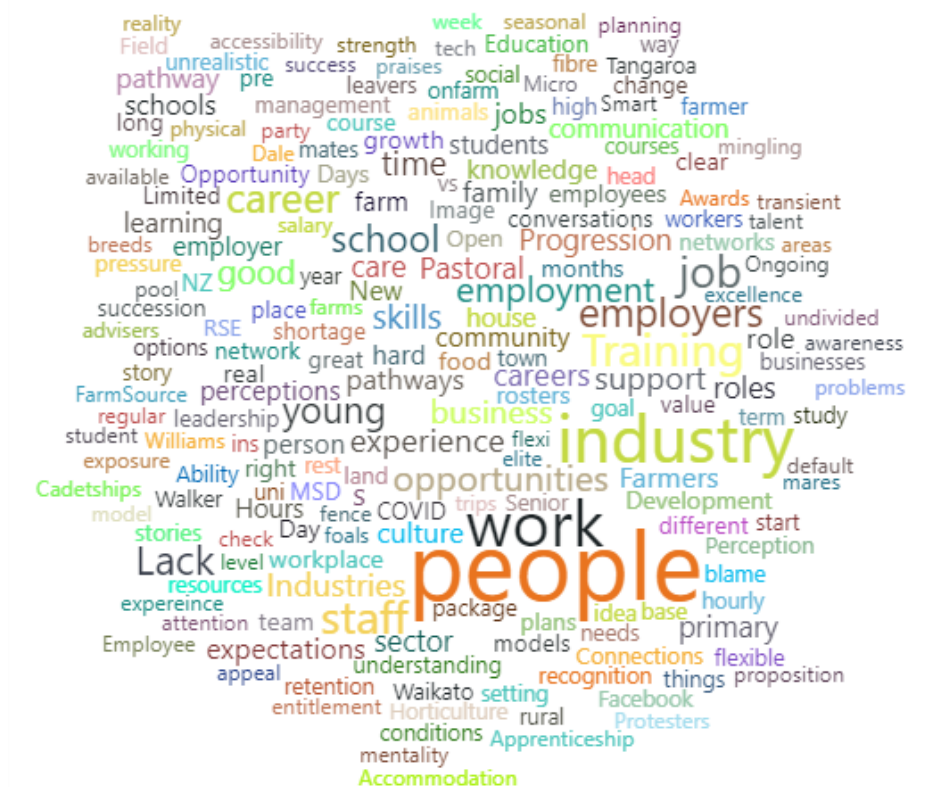### Blenheim focus group

Feedback insights

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Christchurch focus group

Feedback insights

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Feilding focus group

Feedback insights

	Favourable	Neutral	Unfavourable
Before employment	17%	53%	31%
Transitioning into emp...	16%	66%	19%
In employment	26%	42%	32%

Category ● Favourable ● Neutral ● Unfavourable
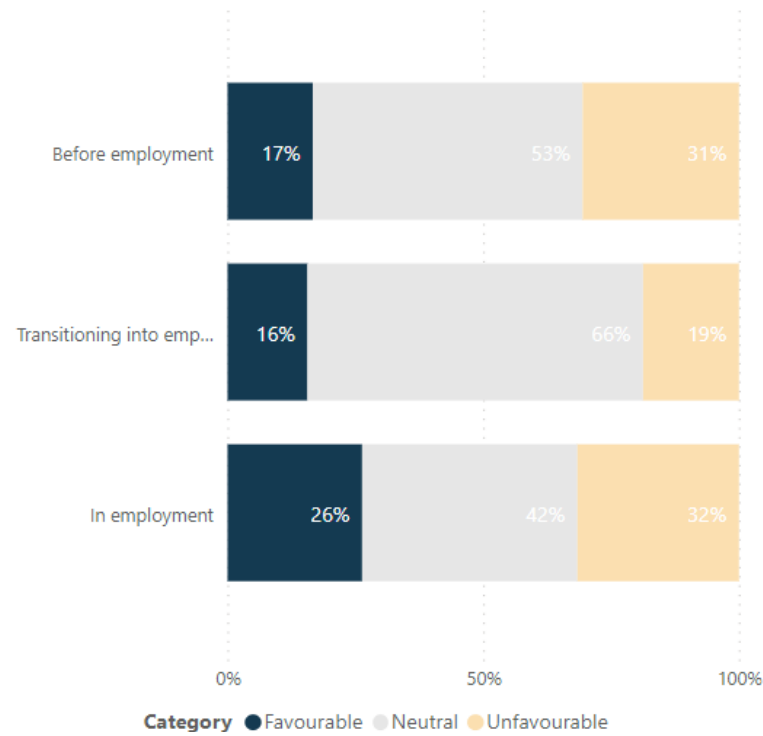
Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Hamilton focus group

Feedback insights

	Favourable	Neutral	Unfavourable
Before employment	21%	64%	14%
Transitioning into emp...	60%	13%	27%
In employment	36%	64%	

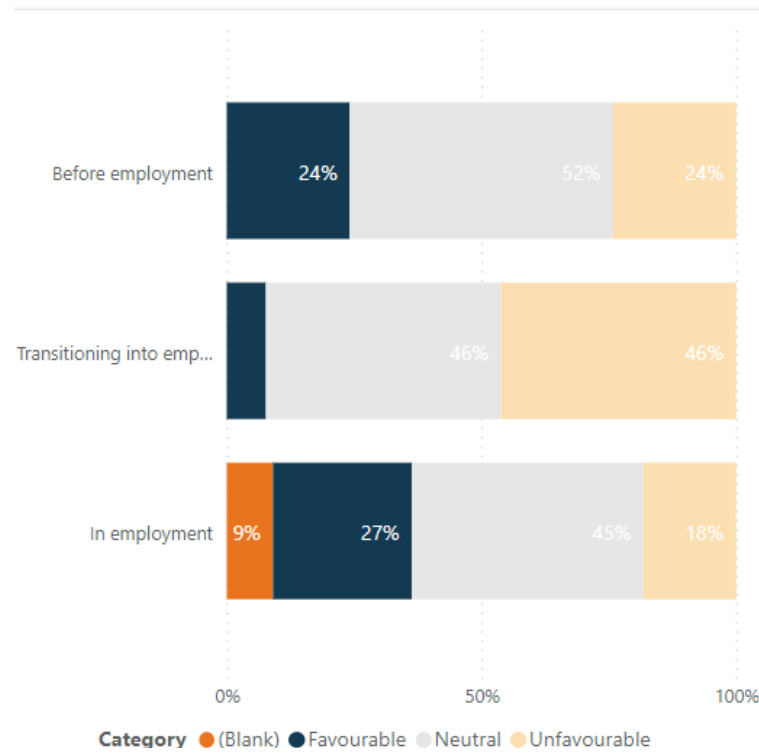Category ● Favourable ● Neutral ● Unfavourable

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Hawkes Bay focus group

Feedback insights
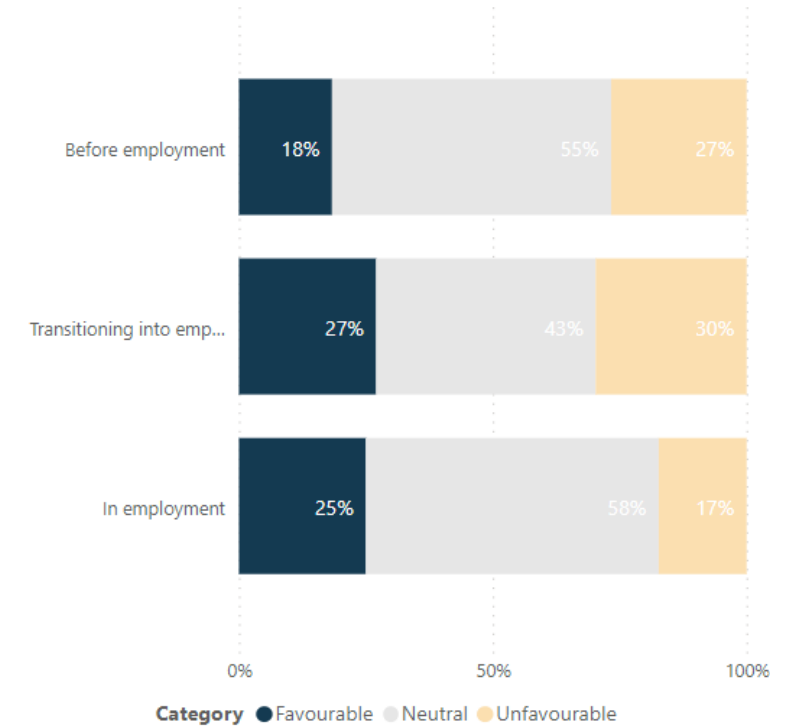

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

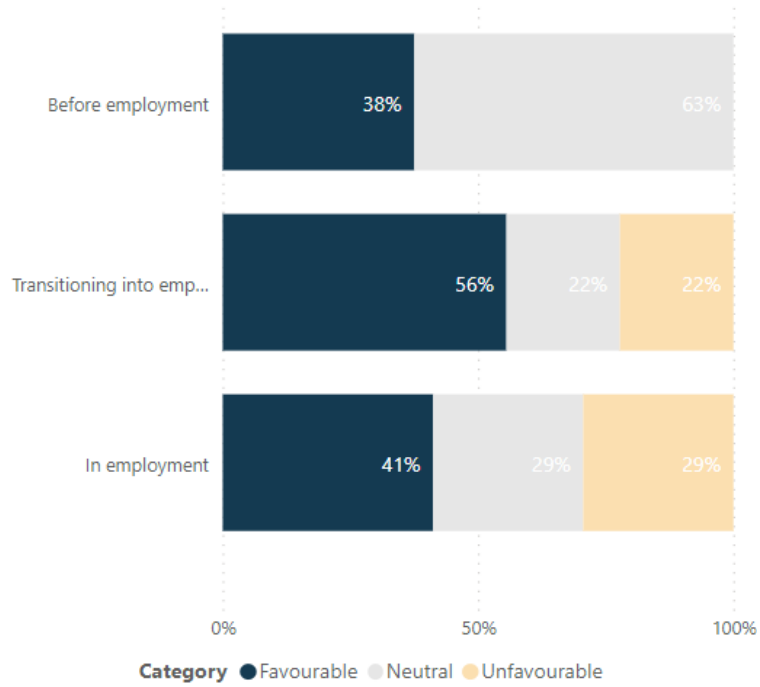### Invercargill focus group

Feedback insights

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Masterton focus group

Feedback insights

Key phrases

Second Blenheim focus group

Feedback insights

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Tauranga Workshop

Feedback insights

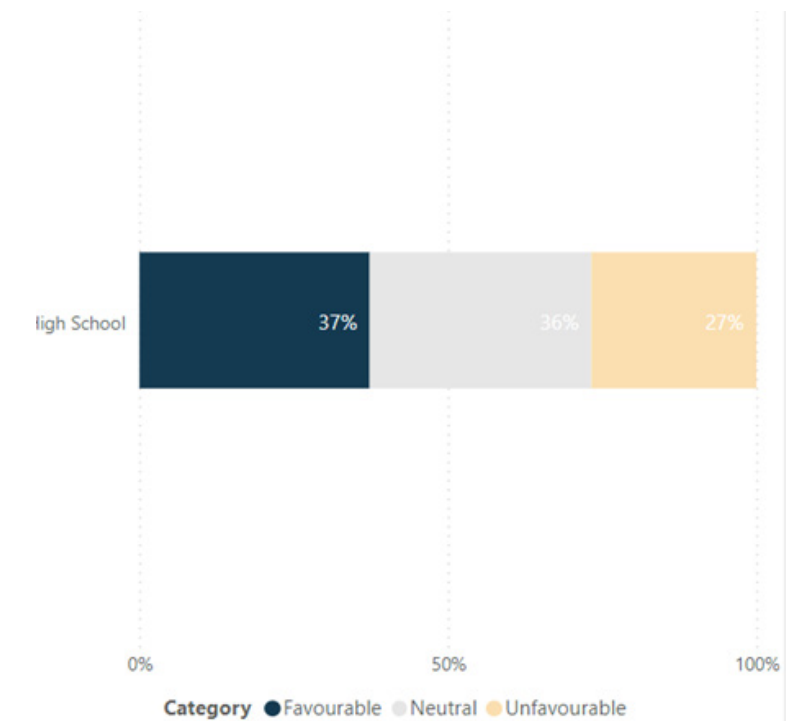|	Favourable	Neutral	Unfavourable
Before employment	38%	63%	
Transitioning into emp...	56%	22%	22%
In employment	41%	29%	29%

Category ● Favourable ● Neutral ● Unfavourable

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group word clouds

Schools Visits Analysis

Feedback insights

	Favourable	Neutral	Unfavourable
High School	37%	36%	27%

Category ● Favourable ● Neutral ● Unfavourable

Key phrases

Appendix 4: Focus Group PowerBI word clouds

Survey results

Feedback insights

Key phrases