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For immediate release

Water on-farm workshops touring region

A series of workshops will be touring the Manawatu-Whanganui region this month, highlighting opportunities with water on-farm and benefits of hill country stock water reticulation.

The seminars, to be presented by AgFirst, with the support of Accelerate25, Beef + Lamb New Zealand and the Ministry for Primary Industries, are a result of a recent study looking at the economic evaluation of stock water reticulation on hill country. The study involved 11 case study farmers from across New Zealand, focused on farmers who had installed systems in the last decade and that had been running for at least 18 months. Analysis revealed farmers on average experienced an Internal Rate of Return of 53 per cent, which is a significant return on investment.

The workshops, to be held in Whanganui, Taumarunui, Taihape and Pahiatua throughout July are an extension to similar workshops held during the Central Districts Field Days in March.

Head of the farmer-led Accelerate25 Primary Reference Group Shelley Dew-Hopkins believes these workshops will be helpful in encouraging farmers to install stock water reticulation systems. The Primary Reference Group have been charged with implementing actions listed within the Land Use Optimisation opportunity of Accelerate25's Manawatu-Whanganui Economic Action Plan.

"These seminars are a great opportunity to learn and better understand the benefits of installing these systems," says Mrs Dew-Hopkins.

"Farmers can talk to the experts face-to-face, consider different system options and make informed decisions on how to potentially improve their bottom-line."

The study revealed financial benefits were realised from increased stock performance and stock numbers. Other benefits included better animal welfare and lessening the impact of drought, particularly improved 'peace of mind'. Environmental benefits were also observed with a number of farmers fencing off waterways, and additional sub-division and water allowing supplementing protection of areas such as wetlands, native bush, and dams.

"The upcoming workshops are targeted at farmers, rural professionals and financiers," says AgFirst consultant and report author, Phil Journeaux.

"They will be a great opportunity to share information and experiences, look at innovative solutions and discuss the potential to increase productivity, profitability and sustainability."

The workshops are only one of a number of activities being carried out to benefit the primary sector, in conjunction with the Accelerate25 programme. Professional development opportunities for young farmers are currently being set-up in the Ruapehu district under the guise of the Next Generation Farmers Extension project. Other mentoring opportunities across the wider region are soon to be

announced, plus Building Better Companies (BCC) are calling for interested farmers to be involved in the next Hackathon, scheduled for later this year.

The dates and locations for the four water on-farm workshops are:

- Whanganui, 18 July, 2pm-5pm, Kingsgate Hotel
- Taumarunui, 19 July, 9am-12pm, Central Park Hotel
- Taihape, 20 July, 2pm-5pm, Taihape Golf Club
- Pahiatua, 21 July, 9am-12pm, Tui Brewery

To find out more about these seminars visit www.accelerate25.co.nz or pre-register with Erica.vanreenen@agfirst.co.nz. There is no cost to attend these seminars.

To find out about the other projects mentioned please contact Shelley Dew-Hopkins on hopdew@inspire.net.nz.

ENDS

Editors notes: The full report on the Economic Evaluation of Stock Water Reticulation on Hill Country can be found at <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/publications/>

Accelerate25 is an implementation programme which aims to grow our regional prosperity and economic potential between now and 2025. As part of this programme, in August 2016, the Manawatū-Whanganui Economic Action Plan was launched, with business, iwi, local and central government now working together to implement the opportunities and actions identified.

To find out more about the Accelerate25 Manawatū-Whanganui Economic Action Plan visit www.accelerate25.co.nz. You can register for updates via our bi-monthly Growing Our Region e-newsletter, and follow us on Twitter @accelerate_25 to stay informed on latest developments.

For further information contact:

Chrissie Morrison
Media and Communications Manager
Horizon's Regional Council
Phone 027 6959 747