

MEDIA STATEMENT

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DEMAND FOR MORE SILERE ALPINE ORIGIN MERINO AS ALLIANCE BUILDS BRAND

Leading food company Alliance is seeking more farmers to meet the demand for the SILERE Alpine Origin merino season as it invests in building a premium positioning for the product.

Alliance took on full brand management of SILERE last September as part of the co-operative's premium portfolio expansion and has spent the last 12 months exploring options to grow the markets and build the lamb's profile as a luxury dining experience for the food service sector.

Wayne Cameron, Marketing Manager Premium Products for Alliance Group, said about 40 farmers have committed to provide merino for the SILERE season, which runs from late September through until January 2018.

"We are looking for more fine-wool alpine origin merino to top up supply from November into January and are currently talking with more farmers," said Mr Cameron.

"While we offer frozen SILERE products throughout the year, our marketing initiatives and investment programme is strongly focused on our 'best in season' strategy for SILERE - promoting its story and benefits to the hospitality sector – with its high demand for premium seasonal produce.

"We're getting excellent feedback from the market. Chefs are excited about best in season offerings and about the potential for different flavours. SILERE has a very well developed, robust flavour. In season, it has very good marbling, ensuring succulence, a finer grain and appealing density.

Mr Cameron said SILERE has a loyal core base of farmer suppliers with strong "philosophical buy-in" to the brand.

"Our farmers are very committed and they understand that Alliance Group is investing in positioning SILERE to the food service sector, with the aim of achieving greater rewards for farmers."

Mr Cameron said that while most SILERE Alpine Origin merino is culled at between 12 and 15 months, there is currently "something of a renaissance" among chefs for more developed hogget flavours.

"Merino are more seasonal than cross-bred lambs. They grow slowly and are often cutting their teeth as they reach optimum condition. Most SILERE farmers will tell you they select merino hogget over lamb for the best flavours, so that offers really exciting potential as to where we can take SILERE."

International promotional events are planned for the upcoming season, he said.

"SILERE has undergone a transition with the partnership and Alliance has great confidence in its future as a premium brand.

"It is a long-term proposition. We are currently working on building our UK and Hong Kong markets with season launches planned for both. After that, we will be looking at Singapore and Shanghai."

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NOTES TO EDITOR

Alliance Group is a co-operative owned by approximately 5,000 farmer shareholders and exports lamb, beef, venison and co-products to customers in more than 65 countries



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