

MEDIA STATEMENT

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STATE OF THE ART ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY INSTALLED AT ALLIANCE GROUP PLANT

State-of-the-art robotic technology is now operational at Alliance Group's Dannevirke plant as the co-operative focuses on introducing processing innovation across its operations.

The primal/middle cutting machinery is part of a \$10.6m investment programme in the plant, which also included a reconfiguration of the boning room.

The technology is the most advanced system of its kind in New Zealand. The custom-built primal/middle cutting technology features an x-ray unit which analyses each carcass and instructs the two cutting machines where to cut.

It automatically adjusts to a wide variation in carcass size, a significant challenge in the red meat processing sector. The technology also minimises waste and improves the accuracy of the cut.

The co-operative has also invested in changing the way the boning room operates to improve performance and quality.

David Surveyor, Chief Executive of Alliance Group, said the investment fits with the company's strategy to boost returns to its farmer shareholders.

"As a 100% farmer-owned co-operative, we can combine the talents of our people with the latest technology such as the primal cutter to lift the efficiency of our livestock processing and deliver the gains back to our shareholders. This technology will result in higher product yields with additional productivity and safety benefits.

"Investments in technology and a commitment to innovation are major drivers in Alliance's Manufacturing Excellence Programme to further build on improving operational performance within the co-operative."

Mr Surveyor said the investment reflects Alliance Group's commitment to its farmer shareholders and the Dannevirke community.

"Our Dannevirke plant is a vital part of our business. We are pleased with its performance and committed to further lifting that performance. Our goal is to lift the performance and productivity of all our plants and ensure we remain the leader in New Zealand red meat production."

Dannevirke is the third of the company's plants to receive the technology following Smithfield(Timaru) and Pukeuri (Oamaru).

"The installation of this technology builds on the previous experience from the other plants by improving the operation of the further processing room," said Mr Surveyor.

NOTES TO EDITOR

Alliance Group is a co-operative owned by approximately 5000 farmer shareholders and is the world's largest processor and exporter of sheepmeat.



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