



Brief Bytes

Email update from Alliance Group – your co-operative & partner in farming excellence



Top Chinese delegation visit

Alliance Group chair Murray Taggart, General Manager Marketing Murray Brown, General Manager Strategy Nigel Jones, General Manager Livestock Murray Behrent and I have just returned from Queenstown where we hosted a visit by a high-level Chinese delegation.

The delegation of almost 25 officials and business representatives was headed by His Excellency Mr Wang Xiankui, Party Secretary of Heilongjiang Province. Mr Wang Xiankui is the most senior political figure in Heilongjiang and one of the most senior Chinese politicians to visit New Zealand.

Heilongjiang is one of China's strongest provinces for farming, dairy and stockbreeding and also the largest importer of New Zealand beef and lamb.

We were also joined by Mr Xibin Chen, President of Grand Farm, our in-market partner in China and that country's single largest importer of sheepmeat.

We took the opportunity to share our insights into New Zealand farming and the Pure South brand. As well as being treated to a tour of Walter Peak Station and shearing and mustering demonstrations, the delegation enjoyed a lunch at Walter Peak Lodge.

The Pure South food, prepared by chef Graham Hawkes, included lamb pot sticker with dipping sauce tray, lamb loin (removed from the rack) with braised shoulder, creamed kumara cigar, lightly-spiced carrot puree, buttered green beans and lamb jus, and Asian styled wok-fried venison back strap and wok-tossed egg noodles.

James and Lucy Clouston and staff were wonderful hosts. Mr Wang Xiankui made special mention of how they had impressed him with the level of passion, dedication and commitment demonstrated in operating such a well-run farm producing excellent products. The visit is a good example of how our co-operative connects our farmers to our markets. It is fantastic to see New Zealand farmers getting direct high quality feedback on New Zealand products. Building relationships with China is important to our strategy. The Alliance-Grand Farm relationship is viewed as unique and a model of excellence.



Photo: James and Lucy Clouston receiving a gift of appreciation from His Excellency Mr Wang Xiankui, Party Secretary of Heilongjiang Province>

Mercadona visit

Next month, we host a visit from Manolo Izquierdo, a buyer for Spanish supermarket giant Mercadona. Alliance Group is now processing, packaging and exporting Pure South lamb directly to a Spanish supermarket retailer in what's one of the shortest supply chain linkages of its kind in the industry. Our contract sees frozen lamb packed and priced at Alliance Group plants in New Zealand and then shipped to the country.

Register now for Alliance Pure South Conference

A reminder that registration is now open for the Alliance Pure South Conference which is to be held at the Rydges Lakeland Resort, Queenstown, from 25-27 May. We look forward to meeting many of you there. We have lined up an exciting range of national and international speakers including:

- Shamubeel Equb, Economist
- Simon Peterson, Chief Executive, Rowing New Zealand
- Tony Ruffo, The Lamb Company North America
- Mr Xibin Chen, Grand Farm President, China
- Joan Baker, Succession planning expert
- Grant Elliott, Black Caps cricket player
- Rob Achten, formerly part of Icebreaker's leadership team
- Tony Nowell, former CEO of Zespri, NZ's APEC representative
- Sky Sports rugby commentator Tony Johnson will be MC for the event

To register, go to www.allianceconference.co.nz



Contracts

Alliance Group is now offering contracts for lamb, venison and cows for winter and spring periods. These contracts are available from your Alliance Group livestock rep.

Lamb

There has been a steady response to Easter trading in the UK while there is also reasonable sentiment around other key markets, particularly the EU and North America. China is starting to see some tightening supplies out of New Zealand.

Mutton

We are well advanced for the season and may seek more volume for China to process for the balance against the low numbers.

Beef

There has been a limited recovery in the US with considerable offers and a ramp-up of processing numbers over the next six weeks. We do anticipate ongoing demand for manufacturing beef. There has also been sound interest out of South-east Asia and China.

Venison

Our frozen contracts are now all locked away and shipments to our markets remain sound. There is potential for stronger demand for chilled products.

Co-products

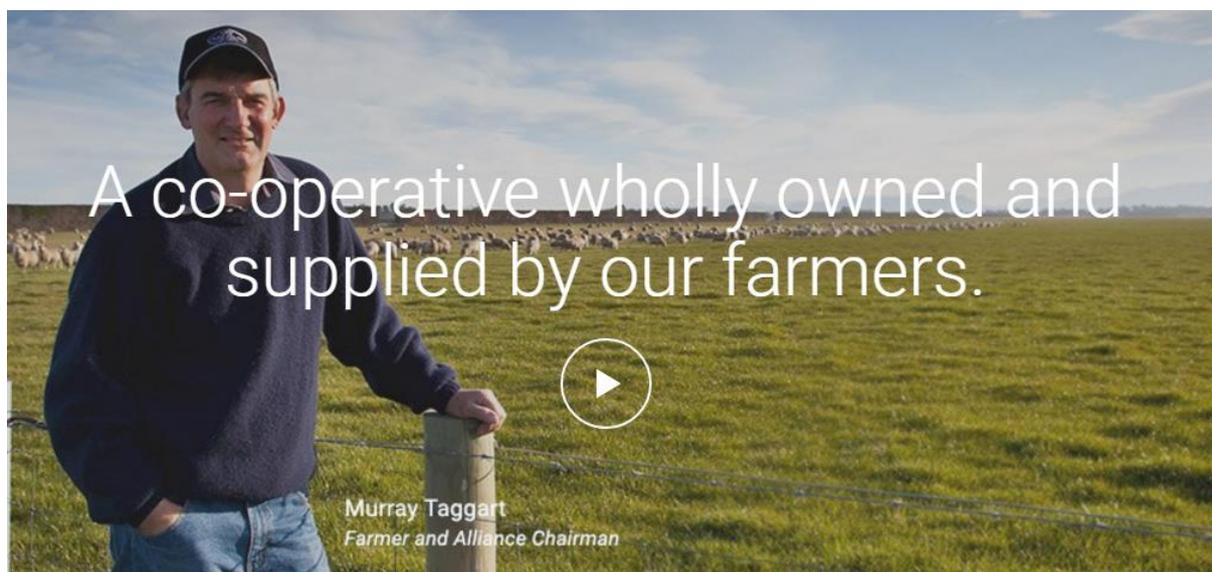
Sales staff at Hong Kong's leather fair have reported mixed results. There is good demand for wool on skins and some hides but lower grade pelts continue to show lower recovery signs.

Pure South Sharp Blacks

Alliance Group is proud to sponsor the 2016 Pure South Sharp Blacks - New Zealand's national butchery team that competes internationally each year. The Pure South Sharp Blacks will defend their three-time title in the 2016 World Butchers' Challenge, which sees the best butchers in Australia, Britain and France travel to the Gold Coast in September to take on New Zealand's national team. I am sure you will join us in wishing the team the best of luck.

New website

I encourage you to visit your co-operative's eye-catching new website, which went live this week. An exciting development for the co-operative, the website demonstrates our commitment to improving our marketing efforts and providing a virtual front door to meet the needs of you, our farmers, and our global customers. It also includes some interesting case studies on some of our farmer-shareholders across the country. It's designed for optimal use on mobile devices such as your phone or tablet. Some features of the site may not work correctly on older computers, especially when running older versions of Internet Explorer. That's not due to the function of the website, but rather the speed of technology change. If you do experience any issues we recommend installing an alternative browser, such as Google Chrome, which can be downloaded here: <https://www.google.com/chrome/>



Belgium launch

Finally, I am pleased to include some pictures from our recent launch of a major new campaign in Belgium to encourage Europeans to eat venison in the summer. Alliance Group is working with Belgium retail giant Metro Cash & Carry to promote Cervena™ venison as a summer product to Europe's food service sector and ultimately sell more high-quality venison worldwide at a premium price outside of the traditional game season.



Photo: Shannon Campbell, a New Zealand chef based in Germany



Photo: Deer Industry New Zealand chef Graham Brown