

MEDIA RELEASE

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ALLIANCE GROUP AND THE NEW ZEALAND MERINO COMPANY FORGE NEW SILERE PARTNERSHIP

Leading meat processor and food company Alliance Group and The New Zealand Merino Company have announced a new partnership to further build the SILERE alpine origin merino luxury meat brand.

New Zealand Merino launched a market development programme in 2011 to establish SILERE alpine origin merino lamb as a luxury food experience available on some of the world's best menus.

Chief Executive John Brakenridge said the partnership with Alliance, which markets red meat to customers in more than 65 countries, would build on that solid platform to accelerate SILERE's growth.

Five years ago NZM embarked on an ambitious project to design and implement an innovative approach to the marketing of merino sheepmeat, partnering with the Ministry for Primary Industries through an NZM-led Primary Growth Partnership programme called NZSTX.

"Merino meat was one of the high country's best kept secrets. We wanted to share the taste and eating experience of SILERE with discerning consumers and bring greater surety of profitable and sustainable markets to farmers," said Mr Brakenridge.

"A firm foundation of brand and market development and a grower base committed to the supply of quality stock has the programme well poised for growth in volume and value.

"We are now at a point where change is required to fully realise the potential of the programme. The partnership with Alliance Group will 're-boot' and accelerate SILERE's growth."

Alliance Chief Executive David Surveyor said SILERE would form a part of the farmer co-operative's value add strategy.

"This is another step in the transformation of the Alliance co-operative and we look forward to sharing our strategy with SILERE growers."

The SILERE alpine origin merino brand will be retained, with stock processed at Alliance's Nelson, Smithfield and Pukeuri facilities.

Mr Brakenridge said value creation for growers remains core to the philosophy of the alpine origin merino programme.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

Alliance Group is a co-operative owned by approximately 5,000 farmer shareholders and is the world's largest processor and exporter of sheepmeat.



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