



Media information

Friday 30 June 2023

Trustees dig deep to plant trees for Wairarapa College Farm

Trustees of Masterton Trust Lands Trust, staff and volunteers rolled up their sleeves alongside Wairarapa College principal Matt White and students to plant close to 1000 trees on the school farm today.

The planting day was initiated by the Trust. It's the culmination of a long-term partnership to develop the 13 hectares leased by the Trust to Wairarapa College for agricultural education.

Each year, Masterton Trust Lands Trust contributes money for ongoing farm maintenance. This year, it included gardening improvements by Gian Singh and a landscape design by Rachel Callaghan for a native shelter belt, an orchard and a nut grove.

"The Trust's connection with the farm dates back to the 1950s - it's quite unique. We're committed to nurturing the farm's development and there's no better way to do that than to start planting for the future, now," says Andrew Croskery, General Manager of Masterton Trust Lands Trust.

"It's also a great opportunity to connect our farm students with the Trustees," says Dan Grace, Head Agriculture teacher. He's passionate about the educational opportunities the college farm provides to students of all backgrounds in an urban setting. This year the farm offered 12 ag/hort courses over five year levels to 350 students.

Dan sees his role as "growing future farmers in Wairarapa." It's part of the wider objectives of the Trust and the College for the farm to be used as a teaching facility. Through hands-on learning, the college farm promotes agricultural industries and farming as a viable career path.

Students learn everyday farm skills – fencing, building, managing livestock (including shearing) along with growing, harvesting and selling crops. They learn about genetics and have successfully selected characteristics from four varieties of sheep: Romney, Texel, Suffolk and Dorset Down to produce Wairarapa College Farm's unique breed, the *Kaimac*.

Masterton's *Akura Plant Nursery* supported today's planting by donating around 900 locally grown native trees. College neighbour *Millennium Reserve* also gifted propagated natives grown onsite. The Reserve is another Trust supported green space where a community-led restoration project on the corner of Pownall and Hillcrest Streets was seeded almost thirty years ago.

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