

Media Release

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### **Principals Big Day Out**

Key principals will be schooling up their knowledge of agribusiness in Mid Canterbury today as industry leaders showcase agricultural careers.

Invited by Enterprise Ashburton, principals and board of trustees members from 13 schools in regional Canterbury will visit some top performing local agribusinesses and hear firsthand the educational journeys of people in a variety of successful agricultural roles.

Respected agriscientist Dr Jacqueline Rowarth and internationally regarded rural business consultant Andy Macfarlane will give keynote presentations in Methven outlining the role of agriculture in New Zealand's economy and how it impacts on local economies and schools.

Enterprise Ashburton chief executive Rob Brawley said the idea for 'Principals Day Out' was sparked by a similar initiative in Tauranga.

"There's the perception of a disconnect between secondary school education and agricultural sector careers, though the strong support this project has received from principals belies this. However, New Zealand needs more students taking agricultural subjects in their many forms at university level. Secondary school teachers are perceived as focusing on training for humanities, law and commerce degrees at the expense of agriculture.

"While law and commerce are important subjects in their own right the vast and growing opportunities in agribusiness are often unknown to students considering university education. We want secondary school leaders to see firsthand the opportunities that are there now and in the future for students in agriculture and just how significant their schools are in shaping attitudes."

Participating schools include Timaru Girls High School, Timaru Boys High School, Geraldine High School, Opihi College, Craighead, Roncalli College, Ashburton College, Waimate High School, Mackenzie College, Darfield High School, Mt Hutt College, Ashburton Intermediate and Mountainview High School.

Activities begin with a flight across Mid Canterbury in a restored DC3 followed by hands on visits to Winslow's Stradbrook Robotic Dairy Farm and South Pacific Seeds. Presentations will be given during lunch at Methven Resort Hotel and mid afternoon at Hotel Ashburton by eight career

agriculturists from throughout the agricultural industry supply chain, including Synlait's John Penno, Jamie Gordon from ANZCO and Assoc Prof Hamish Gow from Michigan State University.

Ends

**For more information, please contact**

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