

## Richard Fitzgerald - keynote.

Good morning everyone.

Intro Movember.

These images show the rapidly changing face of agriculture. Modern agriculture is a complex system where we see the integration of a whole range of resources such as soil, water, sunlight, human resource and technology, throw in a fair amount of risk; climatic, environmental and economic risk, and you have a tremendously challenging and rewarding career. The classic stereotype of Wal Footrot is a piece of New Zealand history, not a modern reality.

Modern agriculture operates in the life sciences on a day to day basis; understanding biology, chemistry, physics, biochemistry, economics, maths, geology and engineering are all essential skills that a modern farmer employs on a daily basis.

This farmer is supported by a team called the service industry; bankers, consultants, agronomists, field reps, animal health technicians and downstream further there are scientists, marketers and corporate agribusines. Agriculture is the supply chain for the food industry with talented and capable people keenly sought all along this chain.

Agriculture is the business of growing food, and food for a rapidly expanding world population.

#### SLIDE 7 Billion people

A few weeks ago the world population exceeded 7 Billion people and projections are there will be 9 Billion of us by 2050. That is a 30% increase in 40 years. This presents a significant number of challenges for tomorrow's citizens; - these people will need to be fed, watered and resourced within the sustainable limits of our planet, which is something not currently being done on a global scale now. Our planet will need to produce more from less land. Even today there are many of changes occurring at a global level which are impacting on NZ. There:

- are more mouths to feed today than tomorrow;
- Graph Growing middle class
- the buying power of developing nations is increasing with greater demand for protein as the food source, away from carbohydrate sources such as rice.
- Climate change is increasing the volatility of food production and there is a shift in focus to the emerging markets of India and China.

- International politics is changing food production as the world races to secure fuel sources as well as food resources.
- Graph changing economic base.

As you saw in the opening slides, the world will need to double its food production by 2050.

This is the world that you are preparing for your students.

With these challenges comes great opportunity for those that are ready and able to seize it. This scenario sets an exciting stage for NZ. NZ is a food producing nation, this is our comparative advantage. We currently produce enough food for 20 million people and we cannot produce enough food to meet demand.

With demand outstripping supply, the likely result will be for continued increases in food prices, with NZ riding this wave. It is a tremendous opportunity for NZ and the people working in it. The food industry is rich in opportunity, from the paddock to the plate.

To give you a sense of scale of the industry, the Dairy Industry employ 30,000 people and the Sheep and Beef industry directly employ 17,000. They currently make a contribution of 18 Billion dollars to the NZ economy. This is approximately 15% of NZ's GDP.

Technology is changing the face of agriculture and the demands upon the people working in it. Just as you have seen in the opening slides, new technology is bringing exciting new challenges and opportunities. Technologies such as GPS guided equipment, electronic stock identification, computerised feeding, weigh systems, irrigation equipment, on-line services like soil moisture monitoring, pasture growth monitoring, weather data, nutrient modelling and precision agriculture. There is still a place for getting your hands dirty but it will be done while holding a smart phone or some other information gathering device that you will take home, load to your laptop and use for important farm management decision making.

Over the last ten years, agriculture has grown at 1.8% per annum, approximately twice that of the rest of the economy.

Career opportunities in agriculture are as great now as they have ever been.

Opportunities exist for people to progress straight into farming with vocational training, or to gain polytech or tertiary qualifications. These qualification can lead you into the service industry or further along the value chain. People along the whole spectrum from practical to the academically gifted have tremendous opportunities awaiting them.

To give you an example Dairy NZ offer a generous scholarship through a \$300,000 investment. This year there are 58 students on the scholarship

which targets high achieving, talented young people. Bill Barwood tells me that year's 58 DNZ scholarship students averaged an A minus in their papers; all the graduates this year have full time employment. This is consistent over time. Their new positions range from dairy farming, to research scientists, consultants, agronomists and rural bankers. Beef and Lamb have a similar scholarship programme with a smaller number of students but with similar outcomes.

The graph shows the student graduates from Taratahi Polythec for 2010 year where they essentially moved into full employment. The graduates from Lincoln University quote similar experiences.

Agriculturally trained people are highly employable.

A number of you will have met Sarah on our stand yesterday. There are many young people like Sarah in the industry who have succeeded well and for them after only 5 -7 years they are potentially earning over \$100k as a farm manger.

There is also a example of a young man, Ben, who set himself a goal of doubling his net-worth every year for his first ten year of farming, after graduating with a Ag-Science degree. He has achieved this and is now working on his next million.

Agriculture is suitable for practical students and it is suitable for academic students and all those in between. It is about finding your place.

So what am I saying besides quoting a whole lot of facts.

The stereotype picture of farming is gone, it is no longer true. Technology and a rapidly changing world are providing great career opportunities for young people. It is open to the full range of practical and academic ability and the opportunities are available from within the farm gate right through along the food value chain. There has never been a better time.

Now, how about we meet some of those people.....

#### VIDEO OF PROFILES

Now I would like to welcome Rosie Todhunter who is running a new initiative in the careers space.

Rosie, Get Ahead is a new pan industry careers programme for the agricultural industry,

- What is Get Ahead all about? (Experience days, In2 the Field, Toolkit, website and Facebook)
- How is the experience day structured?
- How do people find out about these days?

- What is the plan for 2012?

You mentioned the In2 the Field programme, we have some people who have been involved in this, let's watch them

- So what is In2 the Field?
- What is its purpose?
- Who is it for?
- What else is happening.

So the agricultural industry is a place of opportunities and a place where the people who are in it are very proud of their industry.....just as this video will show.....