



EXTENSION 350

FARMERS LEARNING FROM FARMERS



Annual Report 2020/21



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CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

As we head into the final year of the E350 project it's timely to reflect on all we have accomplished over the past four years. I'm proud to say that this year we surpassed our target of 350 farms being involved in the project, with 379 Target, Associate and Mentor farmers having participated to date.

Focussing on the three key planks of environmental sustainability, farmer wellbeing and farm profitability as the foundations of our project approach has been proven successful in driving on-farm change, setting up the farmers involved in the project to capably handle the changes happening now and in the future.

I would like to acknowledge and reflect on the people who have supported in getting E350 to where it is today. As one of our consultants Trevor Cook said, "change doesn't happen by chance, it's the people that make change happen." How true. It's the consultants involved, the Mentor farmers who give up their time and the wider members of the Target farmer teams such as the vets, bankers and environmental planners who all add value to help the farm along on its journey. It's been great attending the E350 field days, meeting the farmers involved and hearing their stories on how E350 has helped them with their operations.

As we reach the final stages of the E350 project, it's important to look forward to what needs to be done to ensure we finish the project strongly and deliver on our commitments to our funding partners. The last of the sheep and beef clusters will wind up during this year, and the final three dairy clusters in Group 3 will finish by June 2022. Evaluation of the project is well underway, ably lead by Scarlatti. While there are some challenges in collecting timely data from the farmers involved, it's important that we persevere so that we can report on all that has been achieved, and that our funders can derive insights into what has driven on-farm change and how to apply those insights to their respective organisations.

I'd like to thank both Claudia Lyons (MPI) and Veronica Gillet (Beef and Lamb), who we farewelled from the Operations Group for their contribution, enthusiasm, and happy faces. On the Governance Group, Bruce Howse from NRC changed roles and has been replaced by Jono Gibbard, and while Tareen Ellis (Dairy NZ) has been on leave for the much of the year, Leo Pekar has ably filled in for her. I would like to thank all Operation and Governance members for their continued support and drive that makes E350 happen.

Finally, my thanks to the project team, consultants, and our funders for their continued support.



Ken Hames – Independent Chair



PROJECT LEAD OVERVIEW

Change continues at pace across the pastoral sector, Northland region and New Zealand as a whole with the impact of this change accentuated by uncertainty, COVID-19 and the wider geopolitical environment which we all operate in. Change that includes central and local government legislation, industry regulation, and evolving societal and consumer expectations across economic, environmental and wellbeing fronts. Change that is both immediate and that will continue well into the future.

This can be a potent brew for those immersed in it and looking to find a way through can sometimes be a daunting challenge for those involved. Farmers continue to deal with this changing, often conflicting, and invariably opaque and uncertain environment, not as an abstract academic or philosophical exercise but in real time whilst continuing to manage their businesses, look after animals, profitability, the environment as well as themselves and their whānau's well being.

Nevertheless, while at times fatigued and knee deep in mud, farmers are arguably in many ways remarkably optimistic and continue to look towards the future with both hope and expectation.

E350's relevance and applicability has arguably been further reinforced over the year with its farmer led and farmer focused approach, triple bottom line lens of improved profitability, environmental sustainability and farmer wellbeing as well as its region wide cross sector and agency collaboration.

While the journey has not been without challenge and has proven to be something of a rollercoaster ride, E350 continues to prove its value to farmers involved, region, sector and wider stakeholders alike.

The year saw a number of significant project milestones achieved including: farmers actively involved exceeding expectations and peaking at ~379 (111% of projected revised targets), Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures (SFFF) funding initiatives integrated and then embedded into project delivery, evaluation gaining significant momentum, project resourcing reviewed, Group One completing and Group Two approaching the end of their respective project journeys along with the adaptation and flexibility required to navigate COVID-19 disruptions.

It's been something of a rollercoaster of a year with momentum and engagement fluctuating as we have moved through lockdown levels and climatic challenges. In many ways it's been a season of mixed results from both farmer and project perspectives, and closing the year is best framed as one of both cautious farmer optimism with sound overall farm performance supported by strengthening market conditions and improved climatic conditions. Sound project optimism tempered by a level of challenge around engagement, momentum and delivery and ongoing support from SFFF investment driving evaluation and sparks of associate farmer engagement evident

KPMG's 2021 Agribusiness agenda helped corroborate the projects often-felt sense of challenged farmer and sector engagement and fatigue experienced over this last six to twelve months, where it 'tells two quite different stories; one of almost endless opportunity for producers of sustainable, healthy food, the other of a sector that is fatigued, straining to cope with the wide range of issues that is having to respond to on a day-to-day basis and with moral failing. One story is global, the other is very much a New Zealand Story.'

The fatigue is felt from the pace and uncertainty of change that is further exacerbated by the series of regionally challenging seasons with for many the third drought/prolonged dry in as many years.

The challenge of this has played out across the project and the results E350 has thus far achieved are arguably an ongoing testament to the resilience of the farmers and consultants involved. The teams relentless drive to execute and the enduring strength of project design and flexibility, along with the willingness and ability to adapt to our changing environment and ensure delivery remains consistent and on target must be recognised.

In what has been both a challenging and rewarding year I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support from the project team, our stakeholders, Northland Inc, our funding partners and steering group members alike; without your commitment, responsiveness and often relentless focus, E350 would not be the successful project that it is. Again, attribution must go to all of the farmers involved - to our Targets, Mentors and Associates, thank you for your involvement, support and trust in us.

While key challenges continue around momentum, ensuring appropriate resourcing and final year delivery, leadership strategies are in place to drive outcomes and ensure E350 not only delivers on time, in scope and within budget but also captures learnings and continues to build collaboration. The relevance of E350's farmer focused approach, farmer to farmer-based learning and three plank focus of wellbeing, environmental sustainability and profitability remains current, critical, applicable and worth striving for.

We take into the final year of E350 a focus on finishing strong, navigating our way through the uncertainty of external factors such as COVID-19, and successfully delivering the commitments of the E350 project to our stakeholders, farmers and ourselves.



Luke Beehre - Project lead



PROJECT BACKGROUND

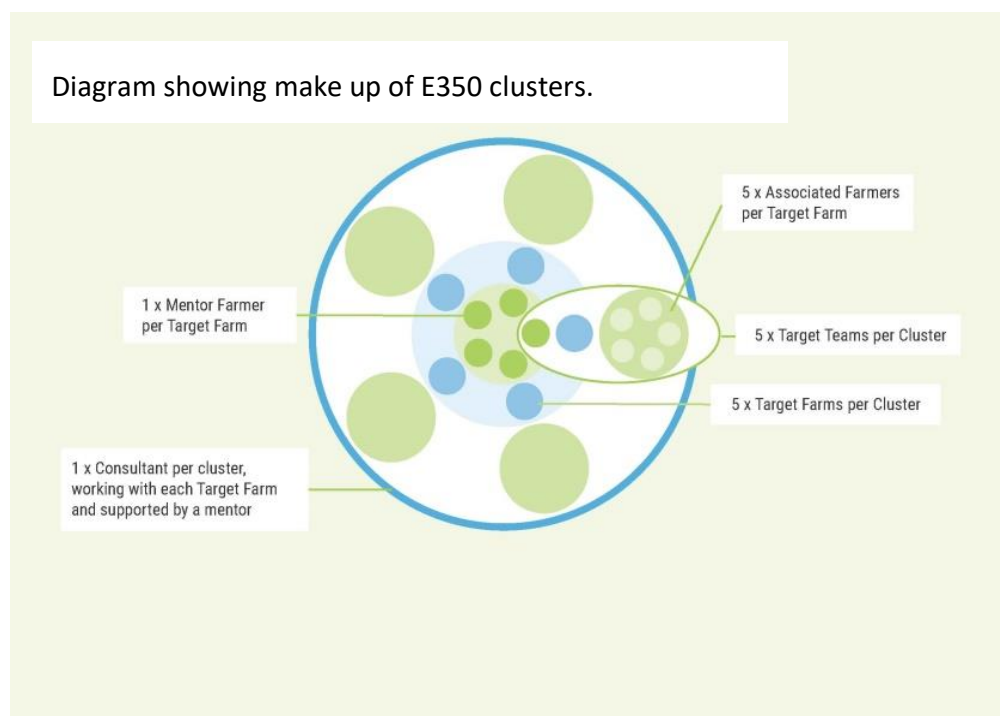
Agriculture is a major economic and social contributor to Northland and New Zealand and, if anything, its importance has again been highlighted with the economic turmoil of the past six months. With the industry as at 2019 accounting for 31.8% of Northland's exports and contributing \$720.82m to Northland's GDP¹, the investment in the project can bring significant sector and regional change.

Below is the E350 delivery model. With seven dairy clusters and three sheep and beef clusters spread across the Northland region, the project is working with farmers from the Far North to Southern Northland.

The project is based on 10 clusters of around 35 farms, with each cluster made up of five target teams - one Target farm, one or two Mentor farmers and five Associate farmers. An agri-consultant works closely with the Target and Mentor farmers of each target team and the learnings are passed on to the Associates at meetings throughout the year and via online farmer reporting. E350 is a five-year project, with three intakes. G1 (2017-20), G2 (2018-21) and G3 (2019-22).

At the heart of Extension 350 is a farmer-led, farmer-focused approach and a farmer-to-farmer learning ethos supported by our three planks, or focus areas: increasing farm profitability, improving farmer wellbeing, and increasing environmental sustainability. The project uses these to ensure a triple bottom-line approach is followed, which recognises farming is not only, and farmers are not just about, production or profitability.

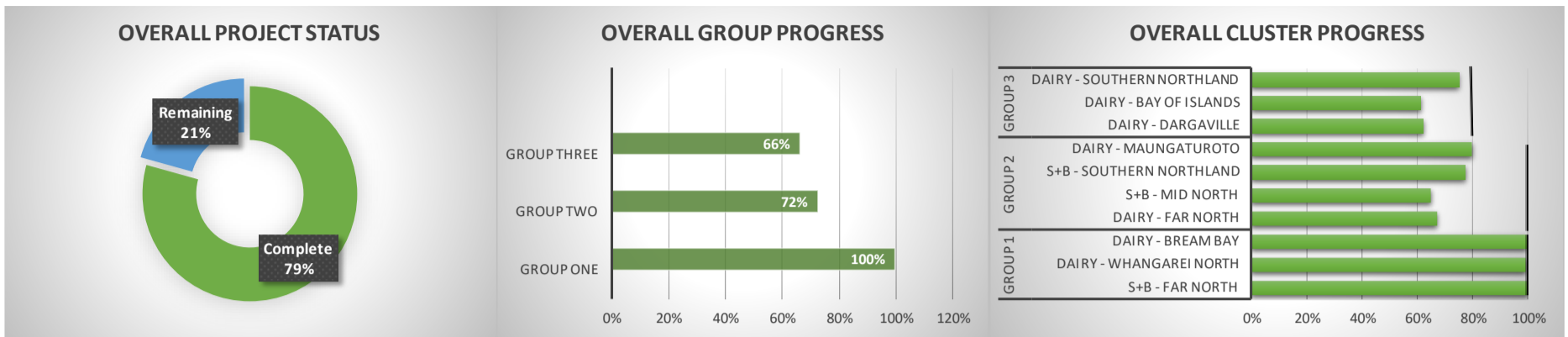
While this approach brings an additional level of complexity and at times requires a different skill set from traditional agri-consulting, we believe it is essential. For our farmers to recognise the changes that are coming, to both the sector and farms, we need to learn, change, and adapt at an ever-increasing pace. Collaboration and interconnectivity continue to be crucial to E350 across the agri-industry and our relationships with Fonterra and AgResearch, along with funding partners DNZ, B+LNZ, MPI and NRC, are an ongoing focus.



¹ Source Infometrics

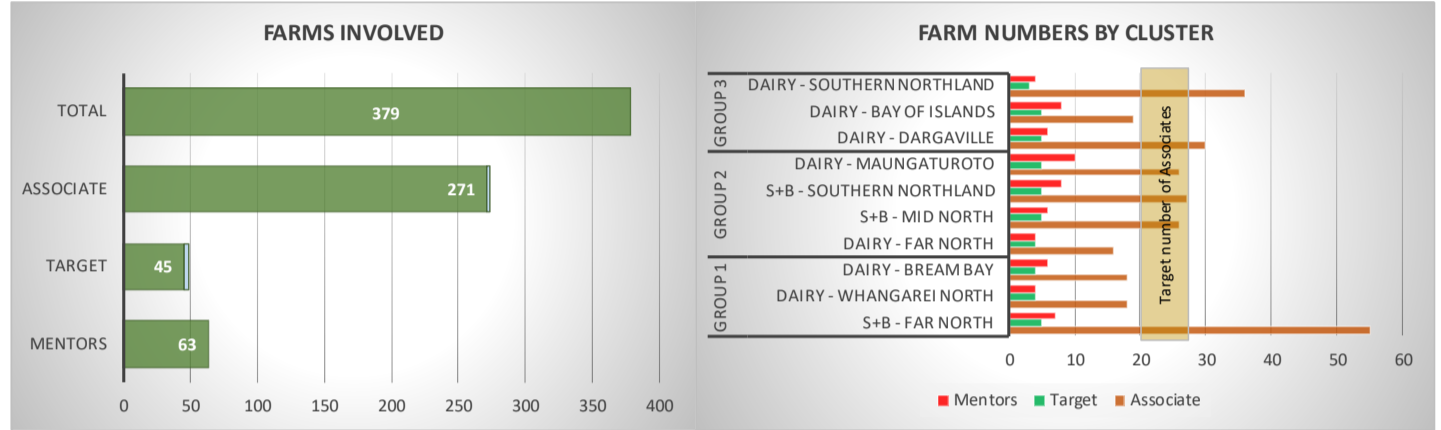
PROJECT DASHBOARD

The dashboard is a snap shot of the project progress as at the end of the financial year 2021. Participation has reduced as expected in 2021 with group one finished and group two farms starting to finish.

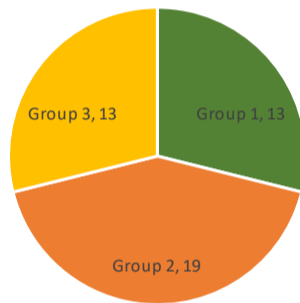


Progress and current farms participating in E350

TOTAL FARMERS

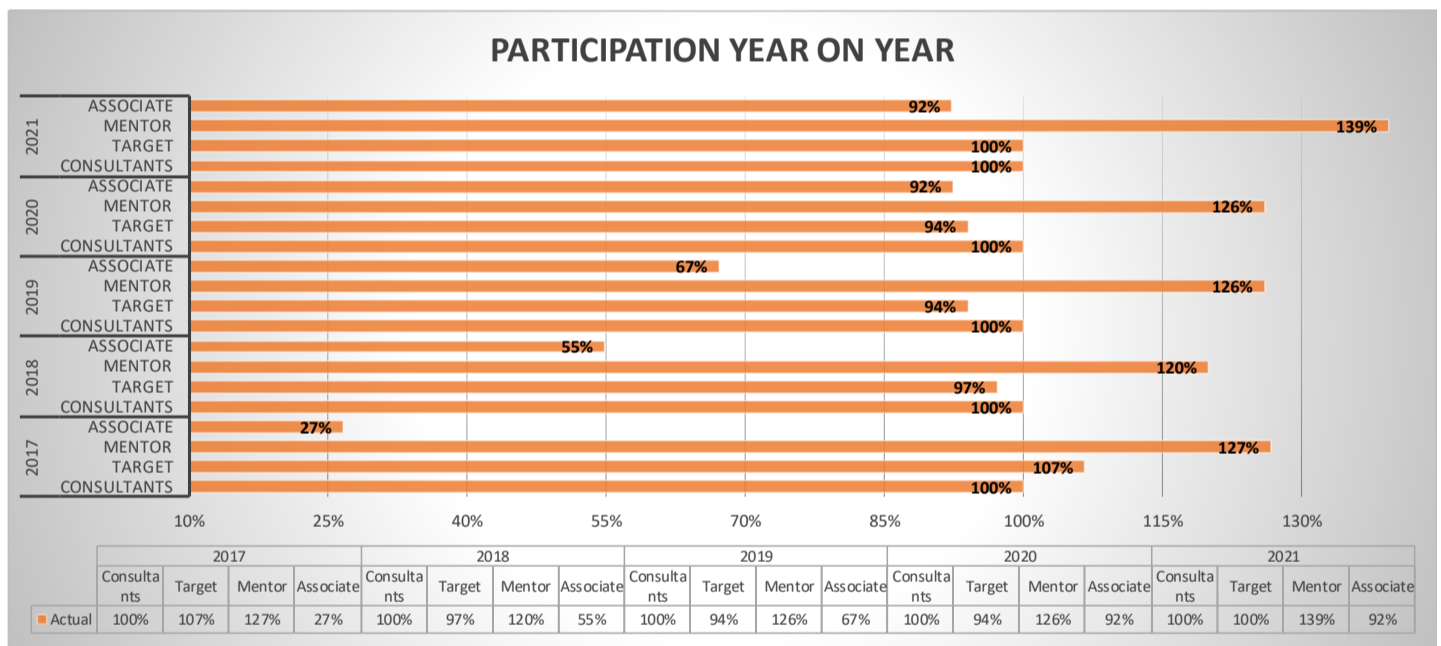
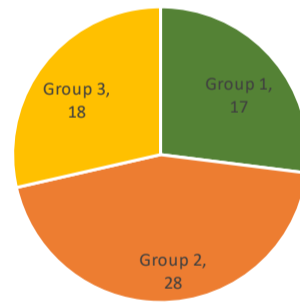


TARGETS

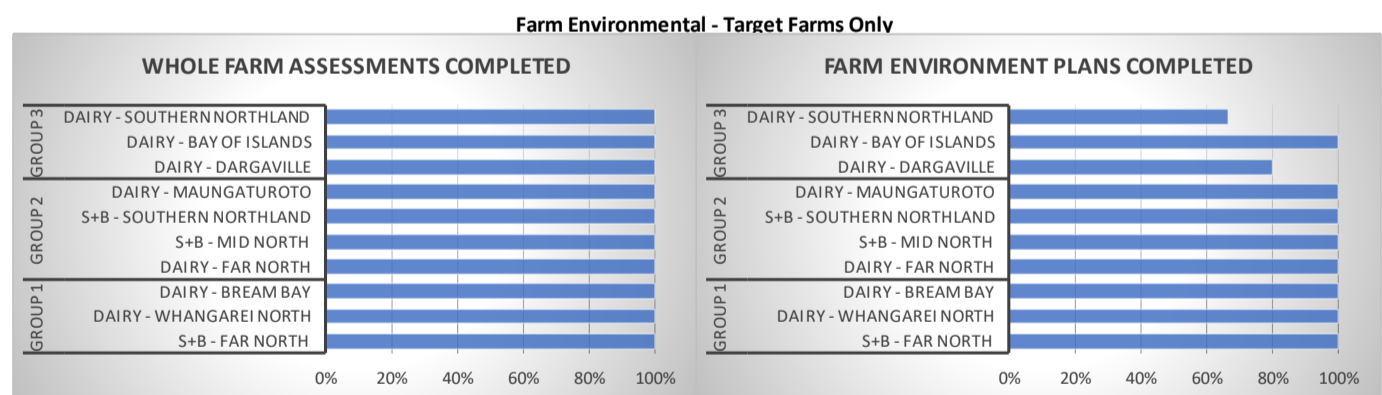
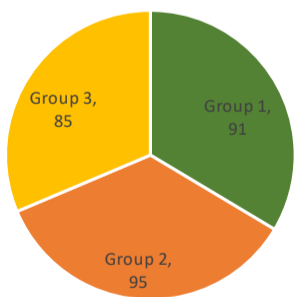


Some clusters have more associates than required

MENTORS



ASSOCIATES



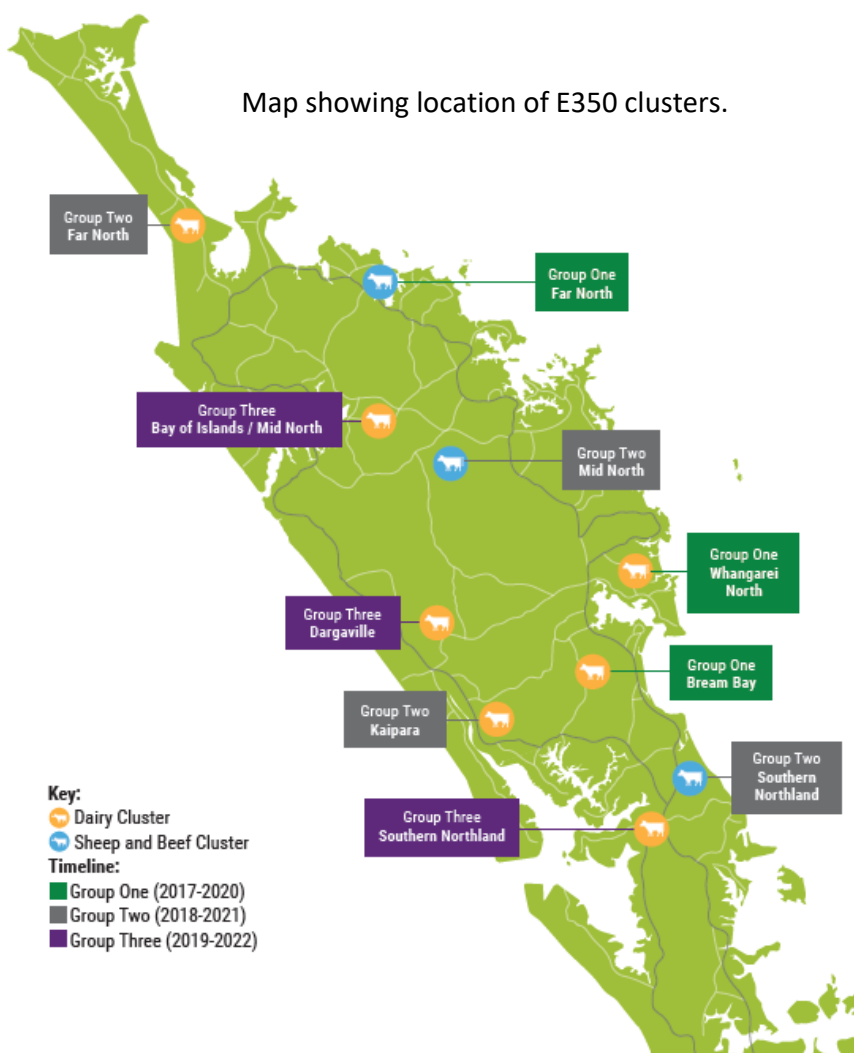
FEP delivery delays due to Covid-19

PROJECT PROGRESS

Now at the end of our fourth full year, this year has seen the remaining seven clusters working well together.

The project peaked with a cumulative total of 379 farmers that have participated in the project, exceeding our target of 350 farmers. As expected, numbers are now decreasing as clusters finish their journey.

Group One finished with the project at the beginning of the year. The impacts of COVID-19 and resourcing have seen the finish of Group Two delayed to 2021/22. Group Three are now in their last year of the E350 journey.



Dry Conditions and COVID-19

2021 saw the region experience its third successive significant dry period which challenged farmers systems, resilience, and wellbeing. Along with the COVID-19 Alert Level lockdowns, these factors have impacted farmer operational management and engagement, and delayed some key project activities. Nevertheless, on balance the project has continued to strongly deliver.

The 2021 dry reverberated across the region's pastoral sector and impacted project outcomes across all three planks. Profitability, while strong was lower than forecast as revenue impacted due to lower levels of milk production, lower stock weights and challenges regarding timing of processing along with increased production costs - predominately supplementary feed along with an ongoing lift in general farm working expenses. Environmental sustainability, such as enviro planting, stalled due to timing and farmer energy, and planting survivability was impacted. Wellbeing was under pressure as farmers have ground through the challenges of the day-after-day realities of a third successive dry compounded by the effect of COVID-19 lockdowns on operational efficiency, a heightened market and supply chain uncertainty, and a sense of imposed isolation.

Farmer goals: While farmers were at times frustrated that they were unable to achieve all of their goals, greater planning skills and discipline developed through their E350 journey has seen them better prepared in facing this year's dry, and overall helped them achieve better outcomes.

Farmer Facing events: While parts of project delivery have been delayed as farmer facing events were postponed and farm visits deferred due to COVID-19 restrictions, plans are in place to have these delivered over the upcoming two quarters of 2021/22. There has been a level of frustration around the postponed Field days, Mentor Recognition days and Farming into Your Future events, the rework involved and the impact on sense of momentum nevertheless commitment to deliver these events remains intact.

Associate Farmers: There has been positive progress with associate farmers over the past 12 months, however, there remains a relatively high level of variability of effectiveness, impact, and depth of engagement across the project, within clusters and between target teams. This variability was further compounded by the impact of COVID-19 and dry on recruitment, engagement, and delivery.

SFFF funding saw a greater level of support available and 2020 saw the start of a targeted process to build associate farmer outcomes with a series of independently facilitated reviews. These reviews were designed to intentionally work with the farmer to stop and reflect on where groups are at, think what they could or would like to achieve and then plan forwards. While attendance was at times disappointing, it did provide a robust process, intentional focus, and a springboard to work from.

Following this, the associate groups have slowly built momentum which is continuing into 2021/22.

While the momentum and uptake hasn't been consistent across clusters or target teams, they are building and learnings developed regarding the level of resourcing and energy required for these groups build their own momentum.

A particularly pleasing example of the impact, effectiveness and innovation delivery was seen across five associate groups from one of the sheep and beef clusters, who had a three-day farm tour of the Waikato in June 2021 funded by SFFF. This was successful in firstly getting farmers off farm, and secondly seeing different farming systems and how these can be applied to their own farms. The group are reenergised and have firm plans in place on what they want to achieve for their remaining involvement in E350.

Group One: Group One finished structured involvement in the project at the end of year three, now some 12 months ago. It has been encouraging to observe that a number of target groups continue to meet for a mix of social and business catchups, which helps demonstrate the enduring nature of E350 relationships and networks.

Group one continues to join wider E350 networks for a range of events including field days and recognition evenings.

The Lincoln University and DairyNZ interviews and analysis which they completed for this group as part of the evaluation work is due in 2021.

The project team acknowledge the many successes and challenges that have been met along the way, wishing these farmers well post-Extension 350 and will watch their ongoing journeys with interest.

Group Two: This group consists of two dairy and two sheep and beef clusters in the Far North, Mid North, Kaipara, and Southern Northland areas of the region.

Group Two farmers are now approaching the end of their journey, however due to delivery delays arising from COVID-19 lockdowns and consultant resourcing, two clusters are now scheduled to finish

later than initially planned to help ensure the best delivery for each farm. This group is now planned to finish early 2022.

Group Two farmers have largely consolidated operational farm management gains of E350 engagement and are embedding strategic focus into business.

Overall, 100% of Whole Farm Assessments (WFA) and Farm Environment Plans (FEP's) for Group Two farmers have been completed.

As farmers finish E350, planning and discussion is underway on how they continue post-E350 with a range of approaches from structured management teams through to a more informal continuation of relationships and developed networks.

Group Three: The farmers in Group Three, our final intake, have completed their second full year and are now heading into the final stages of their E350 journey. This group is made up of three clusters of dairy farmers in the Bay of Islands, Dargaville and Southern Northland.

While outcomes were disrupted due to the dry, the benefit of robust planning delivered on improved farm results and farmers continued to consolidate their strategic focus. Farm management team meetings have shifted from a day-to-day operational focus to a more strategic basis, ensuring reporting and management tools are embedded with a clear vision for the future.

Group Three WFA and FEP's are also largely completed, with the final two FEP's approaching delivery.

Consultants: E350 consultants have continued to work above and beyond their contractual obligations with significant ongoing pro-bono contributions welcomed.

As noted, the COVID-19 lockdowns, pending legislative and regulatory changes, and dry conditions have culminated in a challenging period for our farmers. Throughout this time, consultants once again demonstrated their engagement and agility as they responded to the changing needs of a new and different environment.

Nevertheless, the impact of repeated lockdowns and disruptions is evident and impacting on delivery across their portfolios. Where there have been delivery constraints, these have been addressed and in two clusters supporting consultants were bought in to ensure robust delivery.

The coming year will see six consultants continue to work with the remaining seven clusters.

Evaluation: Scarlatti are undertaking the E350 project evaluation, and since starting work in September 2020 they have developed a strong working relationship and have proven to be a valuable addition to the project. They have brought to the table rigour, perspective, objectivity, along with a specialist skill set and focused delivery.

Milestones have been consistently achieved and in addition to contractual commitments, Scarlatti have also provided significant pro-bono resourcing, in particular with longitudinal research.

As part of the wider evaluation, Scarlatti are conducting a series of deep dives into specific areas of interest which are showing some great insights and the value of E350 for those involved. The evaluation working group, representing partner organisations, continues to meet on a quarterly basis to review progress and ensure direction and reporting aligns with project vision.

One question we ask our farmers as part of the biannual survey is related to how valuable they see their participation in E350. The data below shows us that, as farmers move through the project, they view their participation as increasingly valuable.

Target farmers: The data shows a marked increase for “very valuable”, in relation to how our target farmers find being involved in E350 as they further progress on their journey within the project.

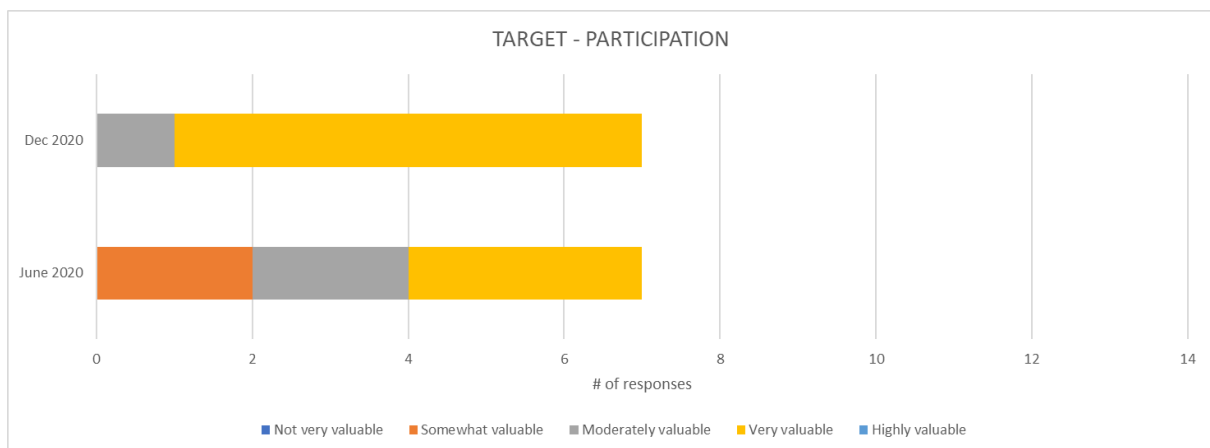
Farmer comments:

“Working with different farmers”

“Getting good base knowledge and creating good systems/plans that we can build on”

“Pushes us to do better. Monitor review and plan”

“E350 has introduced the strategies to enable us to improve all facets of our farming operation”



Mentor farmers: Mentor farmers show consistent recognition of the shared learnings and the value of being involved in E350.

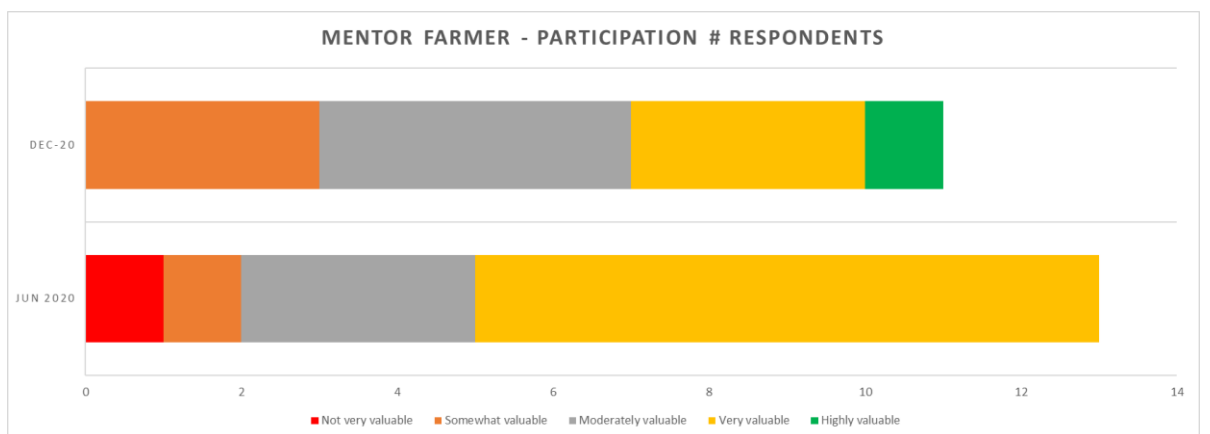
Farmer comments:

“It has made me more accountable”

“Ability to network and get ideas for own farming business”

“We are enjoying helping our target farmer, some of the actions are a mild reminder of actions that need to be organised on our own farm.”

“I’m a mentor, (I) question myself if (my) host farm is moving forward”



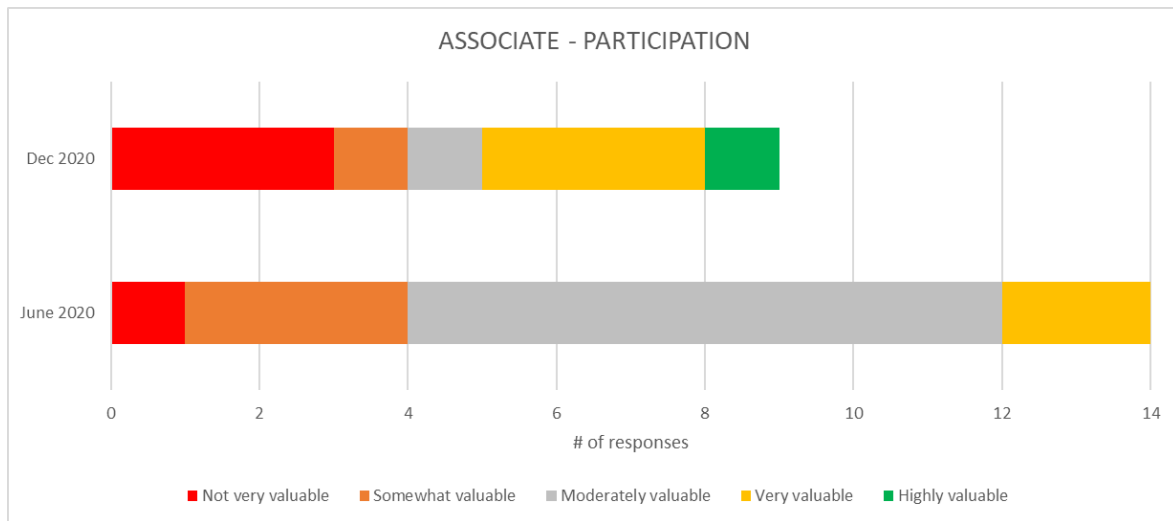
Associate farmers: These farmers were not surveyed in 2018, so data is only available from 2019. There are mixed survey results from associates, as some groups are extremely engaged while others are less so. The coming year will see a significant focus on lifting the overall associate farmer offerings and engagement with the additional SFFF funding.

Farmer comments:

“Very little contact with our group”

“Only been to one day so far”

“You only do the second half of meeting”



Participation and Engagement of Māori Farmers and Incorporations

We continue to work with the target, mentor and associate Māori farmers who are part of E350.

As a project, we have continued to look for opportunities to extend the reach and depth of our Māori engagement, encouraging others to address opportunities identified (where these sit outside our scope and resourcing), and intentionally collaborating with other agencies involved like Te Puni Kōkiri.

Project Team Update:

In October 2020 we farewelled project support Jan McPhail. We would like to say thank you and acknowledge Jan's significant contribution over her time with E350 and wish her well for the future.

We were pleased to welcome Sarah Selkirk in the project support role and team. Sarah has brought a strong background in administration with over thirty years in the travel industry and has fitted well within the team.

Project team resourcing was reviewed in Quarter three with additional resourcing approved for year five to ensure the project finishes strongly and delivers against expectation. Additional work is underway to review and recommend project end/year six resourcing requirements.

Project Update:

In a seeming reprise of 2019/20, the majority of the second half of 2020/21 saw farmers heavily focused on the impact of the ongoing dry conditions. Combined with the heightened COVID-19 uncertainty and lockdowns, this impacted on farmers operational management, project and community engagement along with their ability to implement project plans as initially scheduled.

The implications of COVID-19 and Alert Level lockdowns on the project team and wider industry have also been significant.

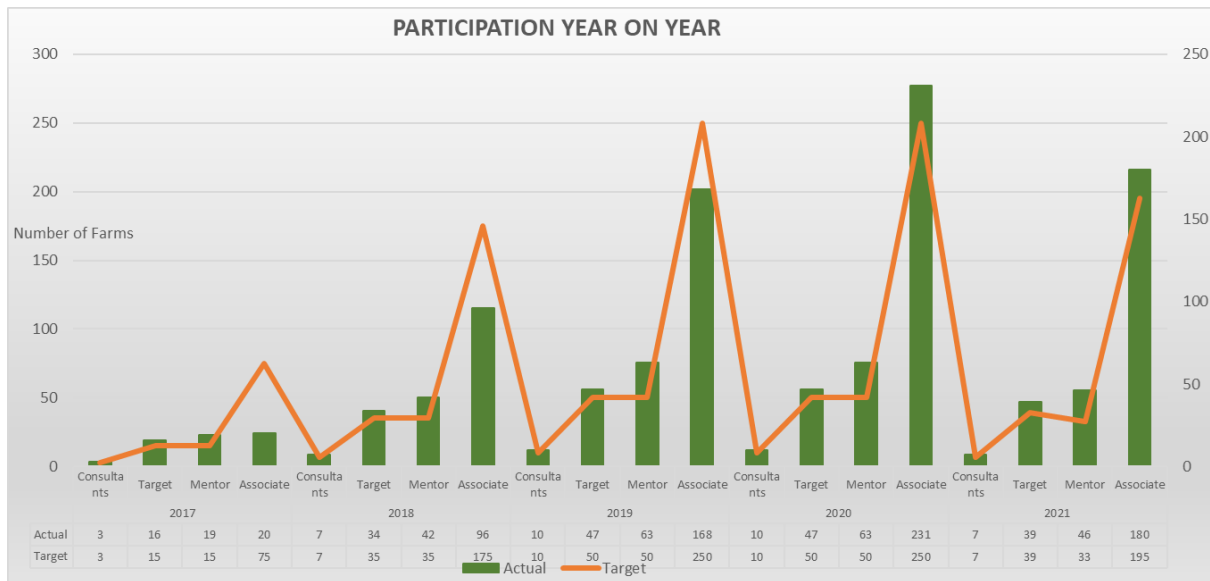
Business continuity plans were again implemented, the project management team, along with the rest of Northland Inc again successfully transitioned to a work from home environment. While there has been disruption to project plans, operational delivery and farmer events, the project has responded strongly and to a high degree effectively managed key risks.

As a project we continue to work through the key challenges of momentum, with both farmers and consultants under pressure, along with the consistency of associate farmer engagement. While COVID-19 and the region wide dry conditions have brought an unprecedented level of uncertainty to Tai Tokerau, to farmers and to the project itself, there remains a strong sense of resilience within E350, Northland Inc and farming communities.

SFFF funding has been significant and enabled the implementation of a refocused and resourced associate farmer engagement strategy and a more in-depth ongoing and end of project evaluation.

While it will take some time for the environment to settle into a new normal, it will, and we have every confidence that E350 will continue to be well supported, nimble, and robust enough to respond, realign and continue to deliver against our project objectives.

E350 participant figures to date



Figures show actual numbers vs target.

- With Group One now finished and as expected active numbers have now reduced to 265 farmers
- This year saw the project reach 379 farmers involved
- One of the group three clusters reduced by two target farmers, one farm sold, and another exited as they found change difficult; interestingly, this farmer also placed in the Diary NZ industry awards which, as they commented, was a reflection of their E350 involvement
- All target farmers have at least one mentor farmer, across all clusters
- The project closed formal associate recruitment mid-year 2021, however we have still seen the numbers grow in one of the Group Three target farms as groups continue to develop their own lifecycle

OUTCOMES AND ADDITIONAL EXPECTED BENEFITS

Increasing Farm Profitability

Raising on-farm performance of Northland farms

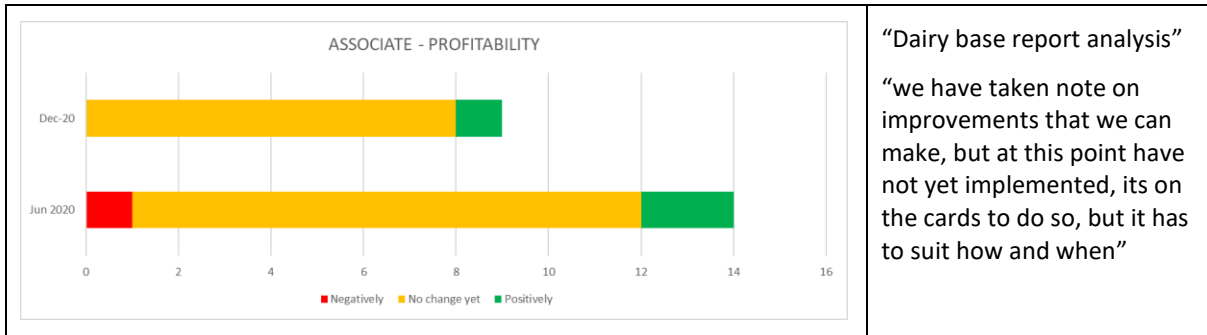
The 2021 dry has impacted overall profitability vs initial forecasts as lower milk production, stock weights and stock numbers, while buffered by strong milk price and schedules, have seen revenue not achieve budgeted levels for many farmers.

Farm working expenses have also been under pressure with both rising supplementary feed costs, input inflation (especially labour and fuel), and additional emphasis on compliance costs. Nevertheless, anecdotal reports from farmers and consultants continue to support the positive impact of E350 on improved profitability relative to where these farmers would otherwise have been. We await the DairyBase and Yardstick analysis with interest.

Farmers comments centre around either disappointment at not being to take full advantage of the strong pay out/schedule vs relief that the higher pay out/schedule provided a buffer to lower production and increased cost structures.

While a slow and challenging process to change long term practice, the structured and disciplined approach to budget planning and forecasting that E350 has brought to the table is delivering strong results to overall profitability.

Survey Results 2020-2021													
“How has being involved in E350 impacted on the profitability of your farm?”	Farmer comments												
<p>TARGET - PROFITABILITY</p> <table border="1"> <caption>TARGET - PROFITABILITY Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Time Period</th> <th>Negatively</th> <th>No change yet</th> <th>Positively</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dec-20</td> <td>0</td> <td>6</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jun-20</td> <td>0</td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Time Period	Negatively	No change yet	Positively	Dec-20	0	6	11	Jun-20	0	8	8	<p>“Looking at different ways of making profit good outcomes so far still early days”</p> <p>“Forced us to have a detailed look at our costs and ensuring money spent is in the right area”</p>
Time Period	Negatively	No change yet	Positively										
Dec-20	0	6	11										
Jun-20	0	8	8										
<p>MENTOR - PROFITABILITY</p> <table border="1"> <caption>MENTOR - PROFITABILITY Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Time Period</th> <th>Negatively</th> <th>No change yet</th> <th>Positively</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Dec-20</td> <td>0</td> <td>8</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Jun 2020</td> <td>0</td> <td>4</td> <td>10</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Time Period	Negatively	No change yet	Positively	Dec-20	0	8	3	Jun 2020	0	4	10	<p>“Succession planning and lowering expenses for better profit”</p>
Time Period	Negatively	No change yet	Positively										
Dec-20	0	8	3										
Jun 2020	0	4	10										



“Dairy base report analysis”
 “we have taken note on improvements that we can make, but at this point have not yet implemented, its on the cards to do so, but it has to suit how and when”

Improving Environmental Sustainability

Across the board we are consistently seeing a positive long-term change in attitudes and paradigms towards environmental sustainability across our farmers. Where initially this focus felt like a demanding task and may still not be most enjoyable job, it is now becoming much more like business-as-usual entering into management practice and strategic focus.

As part of the FEP consultation process, our farmers have been encouraged to apply for funding through the NRC Environment Fund. To date, 28 of E350’s 47 Target farms have accessed \$231,083 of funding to erect 55,125 metres of fencing through the scheme.

NRC Environment Fund support provided to E350 target farms 2020/2021	Dollar value of NRC Environment Fund allocated to target farms	Metres fenced on Target farms through NRC funding support	Other grant funding provided by NRC
G1	5947	826	
G2	15000	1539	
G3	18599	4039	
Total	39546	6404	

We anticipate a higher uptake from all groups in the coming year’s funding round as Group Three complete their FEPs and Groups One and Two continue with their work programmes and KMR accelerates.

Reporting continues to support that there is a receptive attitude to the integration of environmental considerations into farm systems and associated plans amongst E350 farmers, particularly to fencing and planting with farmers seeing management benefits in carrying out these works.

While outside initial project KPIs, ongoing reporting on FEP actions is underway to help develop a deeper understanding of the environmental work that farmers are undertaking. Although this data has been difficult to collect, the reporting strategies remain in action.

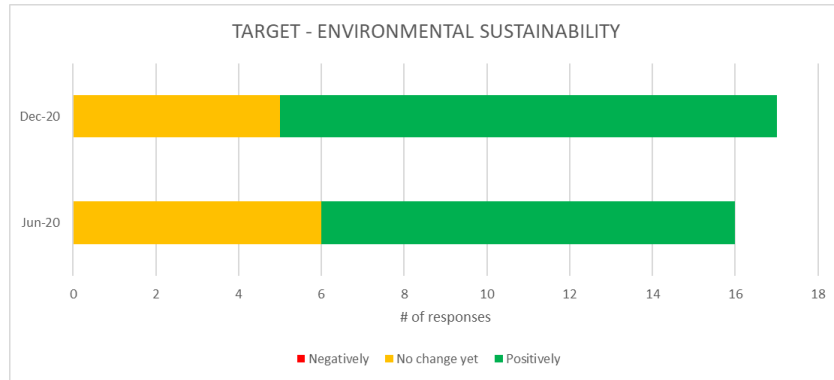
Quarterly environmental snapshot workshops for a wider industry group have continued throughout the year. These are facilitated by E350 in conjunction with DairyNZ and Northland Regional Council and concentrate on topical issues along with any impending changes or new information of relevance to the sector.

Over the last four years we have observed and experienced a significant shift in both farmer’s and consultant’s attitude and approach to the importance and integral nature of sustainability to their long-term business. This change has been built into operational and strategic management discussions and decisions and is evidenced by FEP completion and NRC environmental funding uptake. Furthermore, it is of particular note to observe the marked shift in collaboration that has occurred over this period.

Survey Results 2020-2021

Survey results in response to “How has being involved in E350 impacted on the environmental sustainability of your farm?”

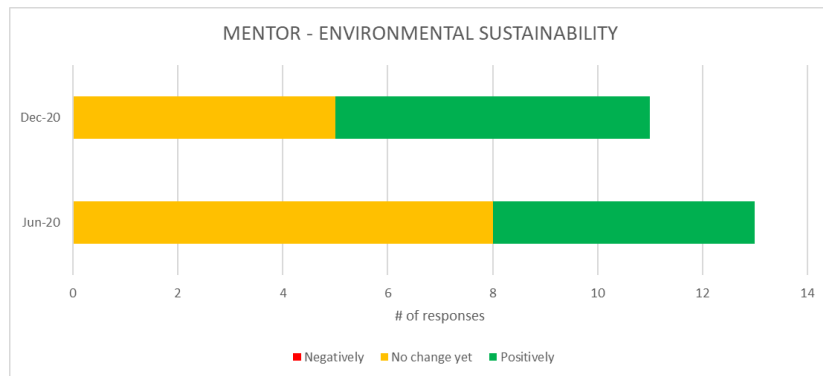
Farmer comments



“Am applying to NRC for funds to fence off a wetland, and looking at other slipped areas to plant”

“We haven't really got into the environmental side of things yet but have FEP being done this week”

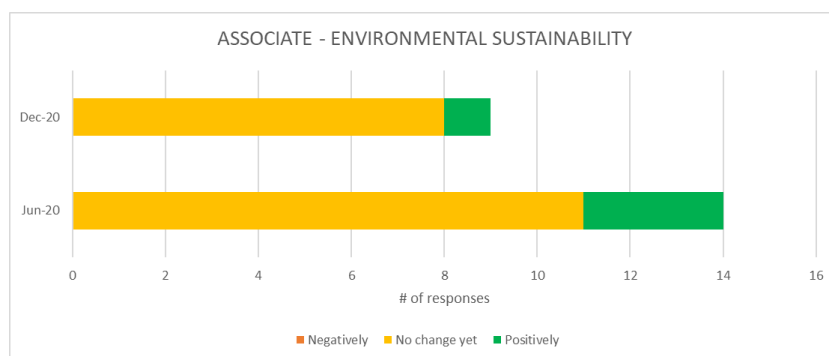
“Looking at areas and putting to good use instead of staying the same as it is”



“Keeping up to date with what is needed”

“We were already implementing most of the actions that were needed.”

“Moving environmental sustainability higher up our priority list.”



“Looking to fence off more Bush etc”

“we have always been aware of our environment, and have put in place many actions to show our years of farming, and being able to share and show what we have done”

Improved Farmer Wellbeing

Strengthened farmer networks and lifting farmer interactions

Enhanced farmer wellbeing and engagement

Again, reporting, and anecdotal feedback from across the sector has consistently indicated that the 2021 dry was a real concern for our farmers throughout the middle to end of this period.

This was the third successive drought/dry period and proved to be hard slog. Farmer fatigue was evident through this period despite strong revenue from strengthening pay out and schedules. As was a level of frustration at not achieving plans and strategies set in place for the year, nevertheless structured plans have helped mitigate risk and lowered the overall impact of adverse environmental conditions with significant work around feed and financial planning now in place

Farmer facing event continued throughout the period with our Mark and Measure workshop, recognition evenings and public field days held. While a number of events were postponed due to lockdowns planning and preparation is in place to ensure these events will occur as environment and farmers calendars allow. We expect delivery of postponed field days throughout the remainder of the 2021 calendar year.

While not an easy space for farmers and many of our consultants to work in, our collective approach to wellbeing has changed significantly over the project lifecycle. Wellbeing scoring and kitchen table conversations between target farmers, mentors and consultants are now accepted practise as is the recognition of the importance of wellbeing. Farmer conversations, feedback and field day discussions reflect and support this.

Thanks to our consultants, farmers, B+LNZ and DNZ for the work they do to make the projects public field days a success. Thanks also to FarmSource and FMG for this past year's contributions of barbeque lunches - these provide a great opportunity for people to catch up socially, share ideas and discuss the days learnings.

Mentor Training:

Programmed mentor support and development to be led by Gideon Hanekom was postponed due to covid lockdowns and is now rescheduled for late 2021 delivery.

Planned delivery has been reviewed and augmented to reflect stage of project to a greater focus on network development and less structured content.

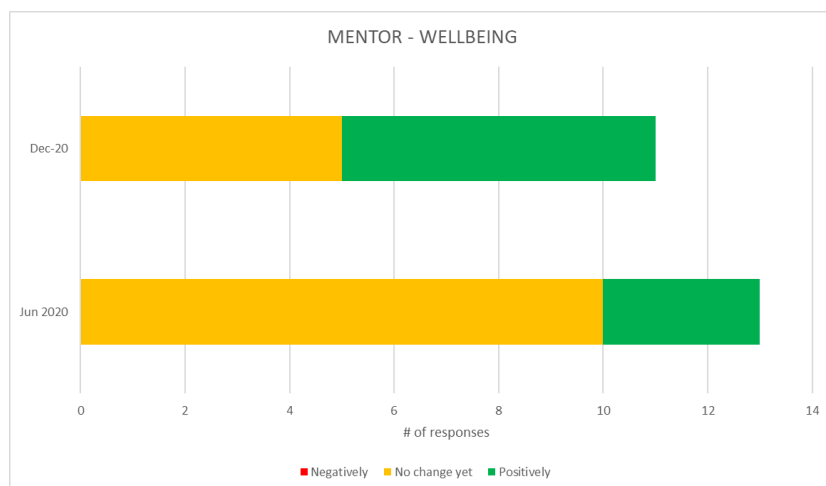
Survey Results 2020-2021

Survey results in response to “How has being involved in E350 impacted on your wellbeing?”

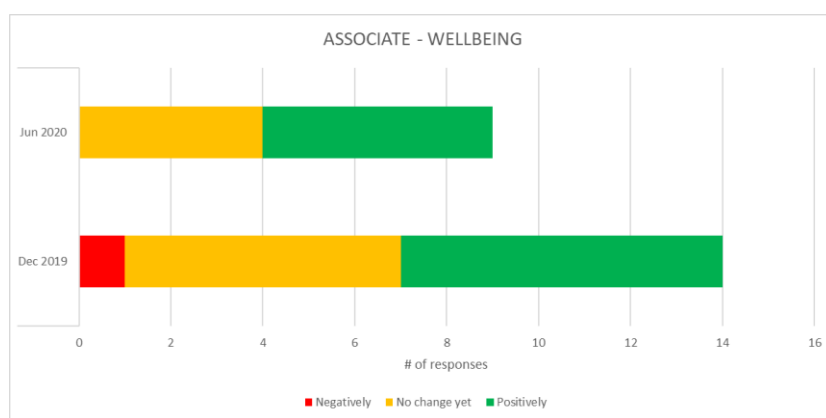
Farmer comments



“Different ways of doing work with less time and still being efficient “
 “More engaged with staff ensuring their wellbeing is good, which has a flow on effect”



“Meeting new people”
 “A collaborative approach has been positive”



“Networking”
 “Extra motivation”
 “Helped thru drought seeing others in same boat”

SUSTAINABLE FOOD and FIBRE FUTURES (SFFF)

This project is in addition but complimentary to the existing E350 project.

Project

Extension 350 – Enhancing Associate Farmer Engagement and Project Evaluation

Current Extension Model

A group of associate farmers following the journey of the target farmer, applying learnings that they have observed, in their own farming systems. The current approach to recruiting and engaging with associate Farmers has had mixed results.

Project goal

The project aims to achieve deeper and more consistent engagement with associate farmers and to provide more value to them through facilitated workshops and additional associate group meetings. Evaluation will be used to inform improvement.

Outputs

A series of facilitated workshops to develop and test a more effective farmer engagement and improvement model.

Evaluation report including final quantitative return on investment analysis of Extension 350 and farmer interviews.

Outcomes

Enhanced Associate Farmer engagement and improved farmer performance, with a focus on increased profitability, environmental sustainability, and farmer well-being.

Associate Farmer Engagement Workshops

A series of workshops were held across Northland aimed to engage target teams and associates to identify common elements each group would like to focus on within the project and provide the E350 team with insights on how to best use the available funds and resources in the future.

Analysis highlights the need to improve different aspects of the project such as engagement and communication across all members of the groups. Farmers expressed their desire to receive more information, share knowledge with their peers and engage in upskilling courses and workshops. The workshops gave the participants the chance to also express their need for more social interactions and fun activities that boost feelings of well-being. The results reiterate the project's main objectives and confirm the fact that farmers are willing to participate and benefit from peer-to-peer learning and community interactions.

Researching the ways to incorporate the needs and wants of the associate farmers into the program, reshaping their action plan, role and expectations, and establishing regular associate meeting are essential steps at this stage of the project.

Associate Farmer Meetings

This year saw an increase in associate farmer meeting that have followed on from the workshops held in November 2020. By combining groups together to pool resources, we have enabled strong collaboration and ideation.

A Sheep and Beef cluster combined five associate groups and got off farm in June for a three-day tour of the Waikato covering what the associate farmers wanted to see and experience.

Day One: The group departed Whangarei to a bull beef farm in Raglan, seeing how they developed a farm from a relatively low level of production and profit to a high level of production and profit in just 2-years.

Above: Group looking over the cell grazing system of the Bull Beef farm in Raglan



Next stop was a Wagyu farm in Te Miro, where the group learned about farming Wagyu cattle for First Light Foods, seeing a farming operation focussing on achieving high farm profits from a high price per kilogram.

Day Two: The group visited Pāmu Rangitaiki Station, 8,306 hectares of a sensitive environmental area with accordingly restrictions on how farming can be undertaken on the land. The station has a Level III Land and Environment Plan which is the backbone to how they manage the land and livestock.

Above: The group looking at a large mob of 240 R1 bulls



Day Three: The group attended the national Field Day at Mystery Creek to visit Halter collars where the group was shown a presentation on how the collars work, followed by a group discussion. There were additional education and learning opportunities across the Field Days event before the group headed home.



Above: Hearing about the Halter Collar virtual fence story

This tour showcased different farm systems outside the region that can be applied to Northland farms and how quickly you can increase profitability whilst being environmentally sustainable and improve farmer wellbeing with work life balance.

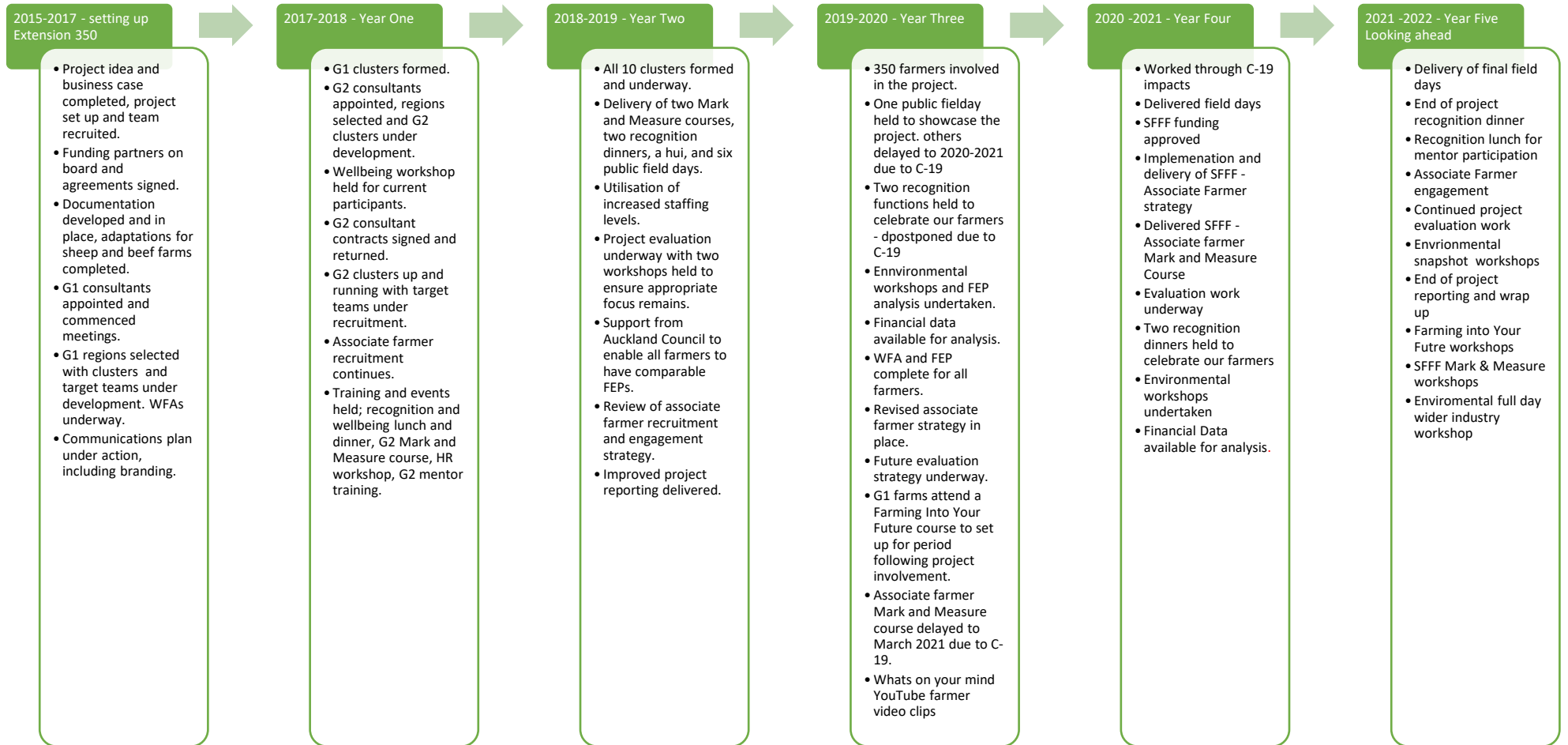
One of the purposes of the tour was to encourage farmers toward positive change and the feedback indicates this was achieved.

Another target group pooled resources and held a facilitated workshop covering relationships and goal setting with partners.

Project Evaluation

An evaluation group was established with representatives from our funding partners to ensure the evaluation work covered off partner needs and to ensure the direction and depth of the evaluation process remained on track and relevant. This group meets every quarter to finalise and maintain direction for each of the quarterly report that is submitted to SFFF.

MILESTONES



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Significant savings this year in communications have been used to create a balanced project end Y5 budget.

	2016/17 Actual	2017/18 Actual	2018/19 Actual	2019/20 Actual	2020/21	Comments	2021/22 Forecast
Income							
Actual	\$357,000	\$550,811	\$685,400	\$557,900	\$437,670		
Annual Budget	\$289,500	\$547,500	\$661,500	\$590,590	\$433,500		\$244,100
Variance	\$67,500	\$3,311	\$23,900	-\$32,690	-\$870		
Operating Expenses							
Actual	\$78,953	\$100,355	\$193,033	\$215,496	\$178,858		
Annual Budget	\$87,000	\$80,000	\$183,450	\$199,295	\$182,596		\$170,933
Variance	-\$8,047	\$20,355	\$9,583	\$16,201	-\$3,738		
Communications and Farmer							
Actual	\$2,669	\$30,367	\$41,074	\$5,032	\$41,506		
Annual Budget	\$17,000	\$25,000	\$53,000	\$71,000	\$86,000		\$112,000
Variance	-\$14,331	\$5,367	-\$11,926	-\$65,968	-\$44,494	Underspend in events across all events this year. This savings used to ensure Y5 balanced budget	
Steering Group Costs							
Actual	\$10,000	\$23,107	\$20,624	\$25,951	\$25,886		
Annual Budget	\$15,000	\$26,000	\$22,250	\$27,000	\$27,000		\$27,000
Variance	-\$5,000	-\$2,893	-\$1,626	-\$1,626	-\$1,114		
Project Development and Evaluation							
Actual	\$21,950	\$3,168	\$72,081	\$59,033	\$3,118		
Annual Budget	\$115,000	\$45,000	\$77,000	\$60,443	\$5,000		\$5,000
Variance	-\$93,050	-\$41,832	-\$4,919	-\$1,410	-\$1,882		
Project Farmer Costs - Consultants, Target and Mentor farmers							
Actual	\$55,988	\$274,844	\$437,115	\$280,936	\$156,064		
Annual Budget	\$120,000	\$362,500	\$500,800	\$432,285	\$179,747		\$178,350
Variance	-\$64,012	-\$87,656	-\$63,685	-\$151,349	-\$23,684	Underspend due to C-19 delivery delays, spread of consultant visits aligned to best deliver for farmers and slow receipt of invoices.	
Total expenses	\$169,560	\$431,841	\$763,929	\$586,448	\$405,432	This years spend lower than forecast due to C-19 delays	\$493,283

	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/21	Comments	2021/22
Annual overspend/ delayed spend	\$187,440	\$118,970	-\$78,529	-\$28,548	\$32,238	2020/21 surplus used to ensure Y5 project end zero budget	\$2,733
Total project overspend / delayed spend	\$187,440	\$306,410	\$227,881	\$199,333	\$231,571	Delayed spend due to aged creditors, delayed events and farm visits. Delayed but programmed to be spent in Y5 with consultant farm visit, Mentor recognition, Farming into Your Future and field daays. Balanced end of Y5 budget	\$2,733

In Kind Contributions	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Comments	2021/22
MPI		\$16,400	\$10,240	\$1,500	\$0		
NRC		\$3,000	\$28,455	\$34,740	\$20,240		
Beef + Lamb NZ		\$19,740	\$8,985	\$5,060	\$13,200		
DairyNZ		\$122,000	\$45,940	\$43,620	\$73,601		
Northland Inc		\$66,240	\$62,430	\$80,000	\$60,000		
Total In-Kind		\$227,380	\$156,050	\$164,920	\$167,041	In kind data is provided by each funding partner on a quarterly basis.	\$110,000

Additional contributions	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Comments	2020/2021
DNZ - In Kind			\$48,217	\$81,251	\$103,100	Outside contractual in kind contribution	
Beef + Lamb NZ		\$10,000	\$20,000	-\$9,125		Additional cash contribution, less 2019/20 contract neg delays	