

# GFF Quarterly Muster



Edition 1 – 2025

Rounding up the latest from the land – student wins, farm updates, and programme progress from across the Growing Future Farmers whānau.

Kia ora koutou,

2025 is off to a cracking start, and there's a real sense of energy and momentum across the Growing Future Farmers community.

We kicked off the year by welcoming 134 students into the programme, with placements spread across 12 of New Zealand's official regions. That's been supported by the onboarding of 25 new Farm Trainers, bringing us to a total of 108 farms in the GFF whānau this year.

At the time of writing, we have 124 students actively training on-farm. Naturally, we've seen a few early transitions—some of our Year 2 students have taken up full-time roles, and a small number of Year 1s have chosen to step back, deciding this pathway wasn't quite the right fit for them. These are normal shifts that reflect the real-world nature of GFF's work-based model. It also reinforces the strength of the pathways GFF offers, giving rangatahi a supported space to explore their future in the primary sector.

We've also just wrapped up the WoOF period for our Year 1s, and it's been heartening to see so many students finding their rhythm and settling into farm life. With that phase complete, progress reporting is now underway, providing the opportunity to reflect on each student's early development and help set meaningful goals for the months ahead.

It's also a time to celebrate our 51 recent graduates—an incredible milestone for each of them. Of those, 46 have secured permanent employment, (1 student has changed pathways and is doing a diesel mechanic apprenticeship), 3 are working casually (1 of which this is preference), 2 have headed off to Australia (one for work, and one to pursue a professional sporting career in the NRL!), and 1 unable to work currently due to medical reasons.

We're aware that the job market is a bit tighter this year, and some graduates are experiencing the contrast between the high levels of support they received from their GFF Farm Trainers, and the independence expected in their new workplaces. We'll continue to monitor this space closely and stay connected with our grads.



On-farm, the mahi is well underway. Our Essential Farm Skills training has kicked off across the country. In the North Island, students have tackled vehicle handling and handpiece training, while in the King Country and Waikato, they've taken on crutching and had their first go at shearing. Down south, Year Ones in Otago and Southland are hands-on with crutching, and Year Twos are honing their shearing skills. Pup training and butchery introductions have also featured as regional highlights.

Our students and alumni are also making their mark in the community: **Briar Joines** (Y2, King Country) has been excelling in shearing events and will join the 2025 Share Mongolia Trainers team, living and working alongside Mongolian herders this June. **George Parke** (2023 graduate, Castlepoint Station, Wairarapa) is a finalist for *Shepherd of the Year* at the Wairarapa Sheep & Beef Awards. **Jack Delaney** (2021 graduate, Ruakaka Station, Gisborne) has been named a finalist in the *Shepherd of the Year* category at the Napier Port Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards.

Behind the scenes, our Board and Management team continue to work through GFF's long-term strategic goals. With the support of our 2023–2027 strategy, we're steadily transitioning from a high-growth start-up phase into a more stable and scalable organisation with greater reach and deeper impact.

And as we cast our eyes ahead, we're getting ready to launch our **2026 Student Attraction Campaign this June**. We're calling on you—our GFF community—to help us get the word out. Whether that's introducing a young person to the programme or encouraging someone to become a Farm Trainer, your support makes all the difference.

Finally, we want to take a moment to thank our Farm Trainers, all our sponsors, funders, and industry partners. Your backing is what enables us to do what we do—from supporting students on-farm to delivering high-quality training and pastoral care. You are truly helping us grow future farmers together.

Thanks for being on the journey with us. Together, we're not just filling jobs—we're shaping futures, growing people, and building the next generation of leaders for New Zealand's primary sector.

Ngā mihi nui,  
The GFF Team

