New Zealand farmers producing more with less

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Innovation

Efficiency

Policy disruption

Climate change resilience
Disruption... 1984;

Removal of family benefit for sheep
30 different production subsidies and export incentives
were cut - OVERNIGHT........
It was not easy... BUT....
Farmers responded to market signals,
Efficiency and yield increased
Since the 1990s, the sheep and beef sector has made major productivity and eco-efficiency gains and is producing more from less.

Sheep numbers have dropped from 57.9 million to 27.6 million (-52%); resulting in significant reductions in GHG emissions; but lamb export volumes have only declined 8%.

- Sheep numbers: ↓ -52%
- GHG emissions: ↓ -40%
- Lamb production: ↓ -8%

Compared to 1990:

- Land under sheep and beef farming: ↓ 28%
- Beef cattle numbers: ↓ 23%
- GHG emissions per kilogram of saleable product: ↓ 40%
- Nitrate leaching per kilogram of saleable product: ↓ 21%

Sector contribution to GDP has doubled $5 billion

Absolute greenhouse gas emissions from sheep and beef farms ↓ 30%
Exceeding NZ’s international commitment of 11% below 1990 levels by 2030.

But sheep and beef farmers recognise that there is still work to be done, especially around erosion, sediment loss and climate change.
The agricultural sector is larger
Gross domestic product (GDP) rose from 14.2% in 1986-87 to 16.6% in 1999-2000
Agriculture accounts for 11.4% of the total workforce.

Employment on farms has fallen BUT...
Rural employment has increased
Rural economy has diversified
Rural communities are now less vulnerable to cyclical downturns in agriculture
EMISSIONS PROFILE

- High proportion of emissions from the agriculture sector
- Over 40% of emissions are methane emissions
- Emissions intensity of our economy has decreased by 34% since 1990
Latest climate projections for NZ

Source: Our Future Climate NZ – https://ofcnz.niwa.co.nz
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