

An Early Contribution to Beef + Lamb New Zealand's Taste Pure Nature Brand

Evidence from the Integrating Value Chains programme supported a country-of-origin brand that reached hundreds of millions of people in the US and China, and could ultimately earn New Zealand hundreds of millions of dollars per year



By collaborating with the sheep and beef industry, Our Land and Water (OLW) generated evidence supporting investment in a country-of-origin brand that reached at least 640 million people in the US in 2019–20 and thousands in China during 2020 through multiple campaigns.

In late 2017, [Beef + Lamb New Zealand](#) (B+LNZ) commissioned six research projects from the OLW-funded [Integrating Value Chains](#) programme (IVC), to apply its research methodology to six target markets in the US and China.

This research produced robust estimates of what consumers were willing to pay for attributes such as environmental stewardship associated with New Zealand beef. It found the potential to achieve a 20% price premium in the US market, equating to extra revenue of \$238 million p/a in export returns for the sector.

The research found it was possible to identify different preferences for attributes in different market segments, and identified current on-farm practices that could add value (some with modification). The research validated other market research undertaken by B+LNZ and contributed to its decision to focus on a market segment it labelled '[Conscious Foodie](#)'.

In June 2018, B+LNZ created a formal proposal to increase the sheepmeat and beef levy by \$4.1 million. Of this, \$2.7 million was to increase investment in the country-of-origin brand [Taste Pure Nature](#). The proposal was accepted by the vote of levy payers and enabled promotion of Taste Pure Nature in key markets – starting with the US and China markets analysed by IVC.

Following a significant work programme by B+LNZ to develop and validate the brand, Taste Pure Nature launched in California March 2019 and in China May 2020.

Early activities in China saw Taste Pure Nature campaigns run in collaboration with different meat processing companies in physical retail outlets, and those that directed consumers to China's two biggest e-commerce platforms resulted in millions of unique website visitors at TMall.com (340.8 million daily unique visitors) and JD.com (85.2 million daily unique visitors).

Activities in the US over 2019–20 aimed to highlight the qualities of New Zealand grass-fed beef and lamb, using digital and social media, influencer relations and advertising. This included a segment on Good Morning America by chef George Duran (72.5 million online and social reach), an influencer trip to New Zealand (social reach >40 million with >126,500 engagements) and a sustainable living survey (>102 million impressions).

B+LNZ reports improvement in the US for every key metric it is tracking for consumer awareness and preference for New Zealand grass-fed meats. In China, social media monitoring of consumers' perceptions of protein origin shows Chinese consumers are increasingly positive about New Zealand beef, lamb and mutton following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The [IVC programme](#) tested whether New Zealand's world-renowned reputation for food and fibre would allow our producers and processors to capture higher returns for agri-food exports. Led by Paul Dalziel, deputy director of Lincoln University's Agricultural Economics Research Unit, the research team developed knowledge on how to bring more value from premium consumers back to New Zealand producers through improved value chains, rewarding good environmental, social and cultural practices.

This research reinforced B+LNZ's decision to require users of the Taste Pure Nature brand to participate in the [New Zealand Farm Assurance Programme](#) (NZFAP), developed to provide quality assurance for the brand and enable any price premium to be shared with food producers. There are now circa 8000 beef, sheep and deer farmers certified under the programme.

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The IVC collaboration with B+LNZ ensured research was useful and connected to the Taste Pure Nature brand development through two regular mechanisms:

- B+LNZ's Nick Beeby (General Manager – Market Development) and Hugh Good (Global Market Intelligence and Research Manager) sat on the IVC stakeholder advisory board, which met twice yearly;
- IVC researcher Professor Caroline Saunders was invited to join the B+LNZ Economics and Insights Advisory Board, which meets quarterly.

The knowledge developed by IVC contributes to the development of better value chains that support the OLW objective: to enhance the production and productivity of New Zealand's primary sector, while maintaining and improving the quality of the country's land and water for future generation.

From the early contribution of OLW research to the Taste Pure Nature brand launch, this work demonstrates that New Zealand producers and processors can work together to provide consumers with evidence supporting a product's claimed attributes, improve market access and deliver value to consumers.

Ultimately, global value chains will capture higher returns for agri-food exports – an essential element in the transformation of New Zealand's primary sector from volume to value.

This article was prepared as an impact case study for MBIE as part of Our Land and Water's 2020–21 annual reporting requirement.

Additional information:

- [Integrating Value Chains](#) research
- [Rewarding Sustainable Practices](#) research
- Beef + Lamb New Zealand, [Unlocking market potential in China](#)
- Beef + Lamb New Zealand, [Unlocking market potential: Collaboration within the sector](#) (PDF)
- Beef + Lamb New Zealand, [Red Meat Story Journey](#) (PDF)
- [Beef in California](#) digital tool
- [Consumer insights and willingness to pay for attributes: beef products in California, USA](#) report (PDF)

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