

Lincoln University Foundation  
PO Box 84  
Lincoln University  
Lincoln 7647

Dear Trustees,

We would like to thank the Lincoln University Foundation for awarding us the 2008 South Island Farmer of the Year. As sheep and beef farmers from North Otago we were surprised and amazed at being placed in the top percentile of South Island farmers.

Our win was the highlight of mine and Stefan's farming careers. To get the opportunity to benchmark our farming systems against the best in the South Island and to win was overwhelming.

Due to the arrival of Stefan's fourth child he stayed behind to run Braemorn while his mother, Denise, and I spent six weeks on a farm tour of Europe and the United Kingdom in June 2009.

Our trip included England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, France, Belgium, Italy, Austria and Switzerland. The beautiful country-side was well above the expectations we had on leaving New Zealand.

The sheep and beef farms we visited were small highly intensive units that required a lot of labour and used outdated systems – in one case a farmer was shearing outside. The industry in both Europe and the UK is heavily regulated and relies on subsidies. However what stays with me the most is that every farmer was almost paralysed by fear of foot and mouth disease.

Interestingly, the cropping farms we visited were the exact opposite and many were more mechanised than those in New Zealand. It appears many sheep and beef farmers have moved into cropping or sold to arable farmers due to the fear of foot and mouth disease.

Since winning the 2008 South Island Farmer of the Year title we have hosted hundreds of people from various farm clubs and discussion groups. We have really enjoyed the opportunity of being able to pass on the knowledge that we have gained from running Braemorn – a steep to rolling irrigated sheep and beef farm.

As the custodians of Braemorn, the title has provided us with the enthusiasm required to push boundaries and grow our business so that it is sustainable in the long-term to support the farm succession process.

On behalf of myself, Denise, Stefan and Teresa, I want to thank you once again for the wonderful opportunity to be involved in the South Island Farmer of the Year.

Yours sincerely

Colin Mavor