



SAFETY STAR RATING PILOT CASE STUDY

Ngāi Tahu Farming

NGĀI TAHU Farming

The Safety Star Rating (SSR) is proposed to be an injury prevention initiative to help lift the performance of workplace health and safety in New Zealand. Between November 2015 and June 2016, the SSR pilot checked how well businesses performed against 15 best practice health and safety standards and provided businesses with guidance and advice on how to improve.

NGĀI TAHU FARMING

Ngāi Tahu Farming is committed to best-practice farming and the continuous improvement of environmental, social, cultural and economic outcomes associated with its operations.

Concentrating on the development of Te Whenua Hou and Balmoral Forest into irrigated farm land, Ngāi Tahu Farming's business activities include farm design, consenting, development, project management, cultivation and small works contracting. Ngāi Tahu Farming signed up to the SSR Pilot in recognition that accidents, injuries and fatalities are unacceptably high in the farming sector. As a company they are committed to minimising incident rates associated with high-risk activities, not only in their

business but in the dairy and forestry sectors in general.

“At Ngāi Tahu Farming our motto is kia hoki ora atu; everyone home safe every day. Safety is our number one priority across every site, every day.”

Michelle Cathcart - Health, Safety, Environment and Risk Manager

The SSR assessors visited Ngāi Tahu Farming's Christchurch corporate office and two of its dairy farms in the Waimakiriri District, Canterbury.

Interviews were conducted across the business from the Chief Executive and senior managers to

frontline workers to get their views on how the business is performing in relation to the fifteen different SSR standards.

The assessment covered the activities of dairy farm workers, in particular how the risks of livestock handling, vehicles (two-wheelers, quad bikes and side-by-sides), fatigue and exposure to farm chemicals were being managed.

AREAS OF STRENGTH IDENTIFIED BY SSR

The SSR onsite assessment highlighted that one of Ngāi Tahu Farming's particular strengths is its commitment to the values and culture of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, which is about **encouraging people to look after themselves and those around them.**

“Manaakitanga is one of our key values. It simply means ‘looking after the people’, which is the fundamental basis of health and safety. It’s about making sure everyone is well cared for, and encouraging people to look after themselves, their workmates, and their families, and to embrace the wider community.” explains Ngāi Tahu Farming’s Michelle Cathcart.

Ngāi Tahu Farming’s approach to manaakitanga and whanaungatanga has played a key role in the development of the company’s new drug policy. This has involved a significant consultation process to canvas the views and concerns of Ngāi Tahu Farming’s workers.

The SSR assessment process also identified that Ngāi Tahu Farming’s **senior leaders (kaiarataki) demonstrate a genuine commitment to improving workplace safety outcomes in the dairy sector** and that the business is focused on addressing High Risk Activities.

“It is important that we are seen as providing leadership in everything we are doing. Our operations not only cover dairy farming, which is what the SSR assessed, but also grazing, and forestry. It’s about making sure that we are demonstrating leadership in whatever we are doing across all of those sectors.

We held a Health and Safety Forum for people in roles similar to mine on other commercial dairy farms in the Greater Canterbury Region. We all benefit by sharing what’s working well for us and learning from them as well. By working with WorkSafe and some planned discussions with Dairy NZ, we are looking at how we can collaborate better to come up with ideas and better share resources,” explains Michelle.

DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

The SSR process aims at providing participating businesses with insights as to where improvements can be made, and guidance on how to implement these. One of the SSR Pilot recommendations to Ngāi Tahu Farming was to better manage the risks associated with vehicles including side-by-sides.

“We are working on training. We’re developing a competency matrix as well as a lot of new health and safety training. Recently, we completed a NZQA training course on the safe operation of side-by-sides, which was rolled out across both the dairy and grazing side of the business” says Michelle.

Another outcome from participating in SSR is improvements to Ngāi Tahu Farming’s signage to assist staff and others working on its converted forestry block to navigate more safely between farms. Ngāi Tahu Farming has also completely isolated the risks associated with working from heights on its farms’ silos.

“We’ve prevented people from climbing up by locking both the silos and the ladders. We’ve also implemented a maintenance programme where we engage an appropriately trained contractor to come in on an elevated platform to service the auger machine at the top of the silo, so we’ve isolated that risk from our staff duties”, explains Michelle.

Ngāi Tahu Farming is also working with Zero Harm Farms to develop induction programmes for all of its farms. These inductions will cover all hazards and risks on each farm, and allow visitors and contractors to induct themselves onto each site.

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE SSR PILOT

As a result of Ngāi Tahu Farming’s participation in the SSR, the company is also introducing work-related health monitoring for its workers. “We’re in the process of consulting with our staff and are about to roll out a health monitoring programme. Initially we are monitoring lung function, hearing and eye sight tests,” says Michelle Cathcart. This monitoring should result in significant future benefits to its workers’ long-term health and the wellbeing of their families.

“We realise we’ve got a long way to go to improve health and safety practices in the dairy sector. There is a lot to do, but we’re certainly trying. There is an absolute commitment from our Chief Executive and the Board in that space.”

Michelle Cathcart - Health, Safety, Environment and Risk Manager

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.worksafe.govt.nz/worksafe/about/what-we-do/the-safety-star-rating-scheme

Case study
prepared by
Research NZ

