

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 19 December

A break off the farm with Sam Whitelock

Wairoa locals spent the day with professional rugby player and Farmstrong Ambassador Sam Whitelock last week, thanks to resident farmer Andrew Powdrell and his winning entry to Farmstrong's 'Win Sam Whitelock for a Day' competition.

Whitelock joined the rural wellbeing initiative as an ambassador back in July, drawing on his rural background, along with life as a professional rugby player to share his strategies on managing pressure, and the importance of 'locking in' small daily habits to help farmers look after their wellbeing.

To 'Win Sam for the Day' farmers and growers were asked to share with us a positive behaviour change they were willing to 'lock in'. Sheep, Cattle and Angus Stud farmer Andrew Powdrell and his wife, talked about making time for themselves and training for a marathon—after committing much of their recent spare time to supporting their local Wairoa community.

"We're community-based people and if we were lucky enough to win Sam, we thought we'd put it to use in the community," says Andrew.

That's exactly what happened. After a powhiri at St Joseph's school, Sam ran a rugby training session for kids, where he encouraged them to "dream big, work hard and have fun." He told them he once went to a small country school like them and that anything was possible.

Sam visited the Powdrell's farm, before attending a charity luncheon Andrew had organised at his Turiroa Angus Stud bull complex. This gave around 100 local farmers the opportunity to meet Sam, learn more about Farmstrong and raise funds for local community sport.

At the luncheon, Sam talked about how he manages the pressures of his own career, revealing that he regularly schedules downtime off the field to stay fresh, relax and unwind with his wife. He also urged farmers to stay hydrated, keep fit and eat healthy.

Sam told farmers that 'locking in' small improvements in their lifestyle would help them manage the ups and downs of farming. "Farmers have got to remember, if you're healthy, then your farm will be healthy—it's as simple as that," commented Sam.

"We don't think the day could've gone any better", says Farmstrong's Gerard Vaughan. "Sam felt very relaxed and welcomed by the locals, and we're really proud to have been able to create a moment like that for a small rural community like Wairoa.

Andrew has recently 'locked in' lifestyle changes of his own to stay on top of things. He's just run a half marathon to get off the farm and keep fit. He says Sam's message to farmers about the need for recovery time also hit home.

"There are always challenges in farming. A lot of what we do is dictated by the weather and things beyond our control. Taking time out can make a big difference to how you feel. If you're working long hours, you need to take time to freshen up and get that balance back in your life."

Check out video coverage of the day at <http://farmstrong.co.nz/sam-whitelock-inspires-small-town-dream-big/>

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About Farmstrong:

Farmstrong is a non-commercial give back initiative which has been founded by rural insurer FMG and the Mental Health Foundation (MHF). The Movember Foundation has also provided funding via MHF. It aims to give farmers access to the tools, resources and information needed to take better care of themselves and in turn, their farming business, their families, staff and community. For more information on Farmstrong please visit:

<http://farmstrong.co.nz>