



## Eat Well, Work Better

Stu Richards manages a 550 hectare, bull finishing unit at Whatawhata, just west of Hamilton. It's a busy operation with new owners at the helm.

At the height of spring the farm runs 1,100 bulls and Stu aims to finish 800 two-year-old bulls between November and the end of April. He considers himself lucky to have a job he's passionate about.

"I've really enjoyed seeing the farm progress and develop with new owners. I love being outdoors and I enjoy the variety of farming and the skills you develop."

Bull finishing brings its share of challenges too. Managing pasture conditions and keeping feed levels up to hit weight targets are all part of the demands Stu faces, on top of his regular weekly workload.

### Farmstrong makes an impact

In recent times, Stu has changed how he approaches farming and made some crucial adjustments to his lifestyle to take better care of himself. His 'lightbulb moment' came at a Farmstrong Healthy Thinking workshop.

"That Farmstrong workshop was a very positive experience for me. It made me realise that we all have a choice in how we live our lives. Farmstrong gave me a toolset to manage my work and life more positively," he says.

"Farming can be a very busy job. I used to try and do everything. Now I make sure I set realistic expectations of what I can achieve in a week. I've learnt to prioritise and delegate."

Stu says since the workshop, he has also 'made a hobby of his own personal health'. At the top of his list was a healthier diet.

I think there is a correlation between how you live your life and the success of your business. Farming well is about keeping yourself motivated, fresh and focused.



## Eat Better, Feel Better

“I want to see my kids grow up and be there for them. So in the last year, my family and I have really got into trying to eat better. We’ve cut out a lot of sugars and unhealthy food products from our diet and just tried to eat more healthily. I’ve also tried to get more consistent with taking breaks and getting enough sleep so I am getting enough rest.”

These days, Stu takes his breaks, eats at regular times and has a diet that will give him the ‘fuel in the tank’ to cope with a physically demanding job. In his kitchen there’s plenty of fresh fruit, salads and greens for sandwiches and rolls, water in the fridge to keep him hydrated during the day and healthy snacks for ‘fuel’ top-ups later out on the farm.

“It’s all about keeping my energy levels at a good point and just feeling better in general. It’s important to start the day feeling like you want to get out there.”

## Look after yourself, it’s good for business

Stu believes his health gains have benefited the business.

“I think there is a correlation between how you live your life and the success of your business. Farming well is about keeping yourself motivated, fresh and focused.”

He says farming is a job like no other and requires good planning and preparation for the farmer as well as the farm.

“Farming can be pretty tough at times. It is not like an 8 to 5 job. There are so many things that don’t go according to plan. I’ve made a conscious effort to work smarter, not harder and longer. To get out and mix with others and not just bury myself in work. To eat better, sleep better and exercise.”

“Nutrition is probably one of the biggest aspects of keeping well and managing work effectively. There’s plenty of science around that to back it up.”

“So, a big part of my life and my family’s life now is eating healthily. It’s definitely made a difference to my energy levels. I don’t get as sick as often or feel as tired any more. Eating healthy is just better for you.”

## Lock it in – make it happen

The key to a successful change is to lock in daily habits in achievable steps, explains Stu.

“Changing your diet is not something that you can do in a day. It’s something you need to work on. What I’ve found is that if you work on something consistently enough, it will become a habit. If you change a habit and you’re seeing results on your farm from your change, it keeps you motivated.”

“There are lots of things in farming you can’t control, like the weather. One of things you can control is what you eat. Just like we refine our farming systems, we need to learn to take better care of ourselves and improve where we can. It’s about making a choice and then deciding to live your life that way.” ■

Founding Partners



Strategic Partners



Co-Funding Partner



Official Media Partners

