

**For Immediate Release**  
**17 January 2019**

**EAT-Lancet report a good opportunity for New Zealand**

The EAT-Lancet Commission's report on *healthy diets from sustainable food systems* highlights the importance of sustainable, grass-fed red meat produced in countries such as New Zealand.

"New Zealand is already adopting many of the strategies recommended by the report's authors including committing to healthy diet goals, reorienting agricultural priorities to producing high quality healthy food in a sustainable way and supporting biodiversity," says Beef + Lamb New Zealand's Chief Insight Officer, Jeremy Baker.

"It is also important to remember EAT-Lancet is making many of its recommendations based on farming systems not commonly used in New Zealand such as grain-fed livestock production when in fact we are a world leader in producing grass-fed red meat."

However, the report's recommendations on red meat consumption differ from current national and global health guidelines.

Beef + Lamb New Zealand's Head of Nutrition, Fiona Greig, a registered nutritionist, says "We support a range of healthy dietary patterns with and without meat, however I have concerns that the suggested reduction could have implications for vulnerable groups especially young women who may already be suffering from nutrient deficiencies."

"Advocating a plant-based diet is not new and is something Beef + Lamb New Zealand has been advising for over two decades. Our advice has always been to ensure when eating red meat, that three-quarters of your plate is made up of plant-based foods."

Meanwhile, Mr Baker says New Zealand's sheep and beef sector is committed to continuing the improvements it has made over the past three decades.

"Sheep numbers have reduced by half since 1990 while we have maintained similar levels of production and doubled the value of our exports. We've also reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent over the same period.

"Our farmers are helping to preserve unique flora and fauna, with some 2.8 million hectares of native vegetation. This includes 1.4 million hectares of native forest, on sheep and beef farms, almost a quarter of the country's total – contributing to sequestering or removing carbon from the atmosphere.

"However, we know the job is not done. The sector will continue to implement our environmental strategy, which is to be carbon neutral by 2050, support thriving biodiversity, ensure clean water that New Zealanders can gather food from and swim in, and foster healthy, productive soils."

"The report also backs matching food production to land capability, which means that New Zealand's expertise in producing sustainable, lean grass-fed red meat gives us a competitive advantage.

"New Zealand can't and isn't aiming to feed the world with our farming, as we can only feed around 40 million people. But we can definitely own and win in that premium space."

**ENDS**

**For more information, please contact: Kit Arkwright, Marketing Manager, Beef + Lamb New Zealand Inc [kit@beeflambnz.co.nz](mailto:kit@beeflambnz.co.nz) 09 869 2994 | 022 457 055**

**For more information about farming and environmental practices, please contact Beef + Lamb New Zealand Ltd's Senior Communications Advisor Gwynn [gwynn.compton@beeflambnz.com](mailto:gwynn.compton@beeflambnz.com) 027 838 6353**

**[Please click here for the Beef + Lamb New Zealand FAQs regarding the EAT-Lancet Report.](#)**