

# Power of the Positive

Simon Hopcroft

Gummies Bush (near Riverton)

- Married to Janine, 3 children under 4 years of age
- 280ha sheep operation
- 140ha dairy operation

Winning the Young Farmer of the Year in 2004 was a personal goal that I had set in 1999 after being involved in my brother-in-laws victory of the same title. What I had witnessed during his campaign was how much work he and his team had put in to achieve the result. The challenge of winning this penultimate prize for young farmers was what I was after.

The goal was set and the plan laid out on what we needed to do to achieve it.

Analysing my strengths and most importantly my weaknesses was the starting point. Sourcing the expertise to help me turn these weaknesses into strengths was the next stage.

The formation of a team of positive people that included family and friends with one goal in mind meant that we had a strong foundation to work from. These people I had great trust in and respect for, they provided the mentoring that was needed to give myself the belief that I could achieve the goal. I was aiming high and focused on the goal totally prepared to put the hard yards in and make sacrifices to achieve it.

The planning of our build up to the national final in 2004 highlighted the prioritisation of time, a weakness of mine that was identified from previous attempts. This was one of the main skills I worked very hard on and was reinforced into me by my mentors, this I believe was crucial to winning.

Achieving the goal and getting my name etched on the trophy was rewarding not only for me but the team that carried me through. What a privilege to be part of history of this event and a privilege to have been at the front leading my team.

Many of the skills learnt in preparing for the final have given me more confidence to seek further opportunities within farming.

Growing up as part of a fifth generation farming family again has taught me the value of a team and what they can achieve. It was during these years that the values of hard work and the rewards for that hard work were learnt. Children growing up on farms have a unique opportunity to learn many life skills that their town counterparts do not get.

For me growing up in a farming environment where top performance was needed survive set the standard for our generation. It reinforced that to push the boundaries and make progress a farming operation must aim to be in the top ten percent of its type.

After winning the Young Farmer we decided to set down some new goals and the main one of these was to grow our existing farming operation. The growth has happened quickly. We have been able to seek opportunities that have fitted our criteria and we have been successful in obtaining these so far.

Like setting the goal for the winning the Young Farmer we are committed to being successful and extending ourselves given the opportunities and utilising the resources that we have. Sacrifices have been made but we are focused on the next decade of our working careers. We are young and enthusiastic. With careful planning and prioritising of our time we believe we can meet our goals.

Like winning the Young Farmer the key to success in our farming business will be surrounding ourselves with a network of positive people including the most important people in our minds, our staff.