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MEDIA RELEASE

New dairy academy to develop future farming leaders

A dairy academy, aimed at dairy farmers with career aspirations to be Herd or Dairy Production Managers, was opened by industry leaders in the Central Plateau today.

The Central North Island Dairy Academy is a \$1.1 million investment by Shanghai Pengxin on its Ariki farm located on the outskirts of Taupo. The investment forms part of the additional \$20m capital injection Shanghai Pengxin has made into the 16 farms, formerly owned by the Crafar family, since they were acquired in 2012.

The training facility is a collaboration between Shanghai Pengxin and Landcorp Farming's joint venture company, Pengxin NZ Farm Management.

Ten students have enrolled and commenced study in the inaugural 32 week residential programme which combines theory and practical training with on-farm experience. Graduates will receive Massey University's Diploma in Agriculture (Level 5). The programme has been designed to appeal to people with some level of technical skill or knowledge in the dairy sector.

Students live in housing on nearby farms and combine classroom study provided by Taratahi Agricultural Training Centre with practical application of learning on the Ariki dairy farm.

Shanghai Pengxin's New Zealand representative, Terry Lee, said the new training facility will contribute to the development of future dairy farm leaders in New Zealand.

"Well educated, experienced farmers are the lifeblood of any dairy industry and, notwithstanding the Academy's establishment was a condition of the Overseas Investment Commission's approval of our acquisition of the 'Crafar farms', we are delighted and proud to reinforce our commitment to, and support for, the New Zealand dairy industry.

"The programme is fully funded by Pengxin NZ Farm Management so attendance is free for all participating students. We will also award annual 'Theland' scholarships worth \$10,000," Terry Lee said.



Landcorp Chief Executive, Steve Carden said Landcorp is committed to the development of young talent in New Zealand’s agriculture sector and the Dairy Academy will sit beside Landcorp’s other investments in training programmes across the country.

“There is strong demand for skilled people, particularly in mid-management level roles such as herd or production managers and we’re really proud of our involvement in this initiative,” he said.

Selected students may also gain employment as Herd Manager/ Dairy Production Managers on Landcorp or Shanghai Pengxin dairy farms after completion of the programme.

A report by the Ministry of Primary Industries, produced in partnership with DairyNZ and Beef + Lamb New Zealand in 2014, found the dairy workforce is expected to expand by 2300 workers by 2025, and the number of workers needed with a formal qualification is forecast to increase by 8300.

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Notes for editors

About Shanghai Pengxin

Shanghai Pengxin Group Company Limited is privately owned with a diversified business scope covering real estate development, urban infrastructure construction, high-tech investment and investment in industry and commerce around the world. The company made a strategic decision to diversify its portfolio to include agribusiness in New Zealand.

Established and registered in 2011, Milk New Zealand has expanded its farm operations to now have ownership interests in 29 dairy and support farms. It partners with Landcorp for the operation of the North Island farms (to May 2017) and with Miraka for the production of dairy consumer products.

About Landcorp

Landcorp Farming Limited is a leader in New Zealand agriculture and strives for best practice in dairy, sheep, beef and deer farming, for sustainable use of resources and continuous improvement in livestock genetics and farm systems. Landcorp is a State Owned Enterprise and one of New Zealand's largest farming organisations, with 140 properties. Landcorp's Pāmu brand simply means “to farm” and reflects the provenance and quality of Landcorp’s products and its commitment to productive partnerships.