

Media Release
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Ex-farmer now helping others run viable, profitable businesses

Ex-farmer Daniel Payton is now using his knowledge and practical experience to help farmers make changes to their system, while retaining a viable and profitable business.

Daniel (37) is Perrin Ag's newest consultant. One of his first projects is working as part of a larger team to complete work for the Government's One Billion Trees Programme – an initiative that aims to increase tree planting across New Zealand, reaching one billion trees planted by 2028.

Perrin Ag is being funded by Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand) and key industry organisations to develop case studies from ten farms across the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Rangitikei. The aim of these studies is to demonstrate how different species of trees can be successfully integrated into a variety of farming systems.

Daniel started with Perrin Ag in June and brings both farming and business know-how to the job.

Originally from a dairying background, he also worked as a business manager for Landcorp Farming Limited where he was responsible for large scale sheep, beef and deer operations, predominantly on the North Island's East Coast.

He has also spent time in rural finance and banking, as well as 8 years dairy farming, which included contract and variable order sharemilking roles in the Taranaki.

"From a young age I have lived and breathed agriculture and had a deep connection with the land," he says. "I enjoy helping clients find solutions to achieve their business goals, but I also love the human element of my role, that is building relationships and helping people grow in their business," he says.

His varied career has allowed him to specialise in both dairy and sheep and beef operations. His corporate farming experience means large systems do not faze him.

"From time spent farming myself and running a business, I know what it's like to be on the ground in gumboots every day," he says. "This experience means I can drill down into the mechanics of what's happening on a farm and understand issues and challenges from a farmer's perspective."

And when it comes to trees on farm, Daniel knows his stuff. He says in New Zealand there has been a real focus on planting radiata pine as the main commercial species.

"The One Billion Trees Programme aims to identify alternative species to pine. The case studies we're working on are based around a philosophy of the right tree in the right place, for the right purpose.

“What our work demonstrates is the potential for other species to be used within the farming system, while still achieving the Programme’s aim, the landowner’s objectives and allowing for land diversification.”

One of the areas in which Perrin Ag has been working with farmers is assessing the benefits of planting totara for timber using mānuka as a cover crop to provide shelter for the seedlings and promote upright growth. This approach also delivers additional value from mānuka honey production during the early years of forestry establishment.

As part of the One Billion Trees Programme, coast redwoods are being investigated as an exotic species alternative to radiata pine. A commercial market exists for this species’ timber and these trees have carbon sequestration potential.

“It’s a little bit chicken and egg. In New Zealand, we’re not commercially growing certain exotic and native species with significant potential for timber production because there isn’t a developed supply chain or market for them,” says Daniel. “But there isn’t the market because we haven’t been growing them. We hope these case studies will help provide options for landowners considering alternatives to mainstream commercial species.”

Daniel believes recent regulations, including the Zero Carbon Act, winter grazing standards, and the national policy statement for freshwater management, mean most farmers are very aware of their environmental obligations and have a real desire to be good stewards of the land.

“However, through our research, we have discovered that sometimes farmers don’t know where to start or who to ask for help and advice,” says Daniel. “That’s where Perrin Ag can help them achieve what they would not otherwise be able to do on their own.”

The case study results from the One Billion Trees Programme will be released later this month. Daniel says he is looking forward to working further with industry partners and farmers to get the most out of the learnings.

The One Billion Trees Programme is funded by Te Uru Rākau, with supporting funding from DairyNZ, Living Water (Fonterra-DOC partnership), Waikato Regional Council, BOP Regional Council, Forest Growers Research, Horizons Regional Council and Farmlands Co-operative Ltd.

For more information about Daniel and Perrin Ag visit www.perrinag.net.nz

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Media contact (not for publication)

Daniel Payton

Consultant, Perrin Ag

027 349 1612

daniel@perrinag.net.nz