



## Pfizer New Zealand

**Farmer:** Scott Armstrong  
**Location:** Becks, Central Otago  
**Stock Type:** Sheep/Lambs

With last year's predictions for lamb prices to break the century mark coming true, one Central Otago farmer has double the reason to smile this autumn.

Scott Armstrong finishes 4500 lambs a year on his family's property at Becks, in the Maniototo region. This year he can see a good future in lamb finishing after some tough years, both climatically and financially. Getting \$115-\$120 a head for this year's crop in early March is hugely positive after a winter-spring period best forgotten for most in the industry. In a "season of two halves" scenario, the region also received good summer rains meaning the property that is usually irrigated from November to April has not needed any irrigation post-Christmas, helping keeping costs down while lamb revenue jumps.

This year's finishing weights that average 18.5kgCW are 1kg up on last year's, something Scott attributes not only to exceptional summer growth, but also to his decision to use Pfizer's new drench Startect, back in December.

The new combination drench has only been on the market one season, and is already gaining acceptance among farmers keen to avoid drench resistance developing, thanks to the presence of an entirely new active derquantel in a drench formulation that also includes the established and potent abamectin active. His decision to give the new drench a go was prompted by the slow start he had noticed in his hoggets as grass growth lifted later in spring. "We were having trouble with them, they were simply not growing the way they should. Thinking it could be a worm problem I did not want the same thing happening with my lambs and rang the vet for some advice. The recommendation was to try Startect." On reflection the tough winter and early spring period had done little to set the hoggets up for a good start once conditions improved, but Scott was loathe to take any chances with the lambs, particularly given such positive prospects for returns this season.

The lambs received their first drench in December, and Scott re-assessed the need for a second treatment six weeks later, ultimately deciding to only treat the bottom 10 percent of the crop. "There was no real sense they all needed to be treated, they looked so good and have done ever since." Trial work done in New Zealand proves Startect's extremely high efficacy rate against worms, recording at least 99% efficacy against a broad range of worms exhibiting single and multiple resistance to other actives.

While aware of resistance development, Scott acknowledges the presence of resistance to clear drenches and has used a combination drench in the past. He says he would also consider using Startect as an exit drench on his 1000-1100 hoggets before winter. Such a treatment would deliver a final cleanout treatment, eliminating parasites remaining, and the possibility of any resistant populations building up.

This year the lambs have stayed a lot cleaner, although the summer growth has been a welcome challenge to that, and overall he feels the animals look brighter and healthier. Opting for Startect when growth proved so positive has seen this year's crop get the best possible combination of protection and feed, reflected in carcass weights 1kg on average up on last year, despite the hard spring start. "I really wanted to be able to get the jump on everyone else and get them away quicker. We are getting them to target weight faster and are about a month ahead of our usual killing schedule. Startect has helped that and I would be sticking with using it for our lambs in the future."

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