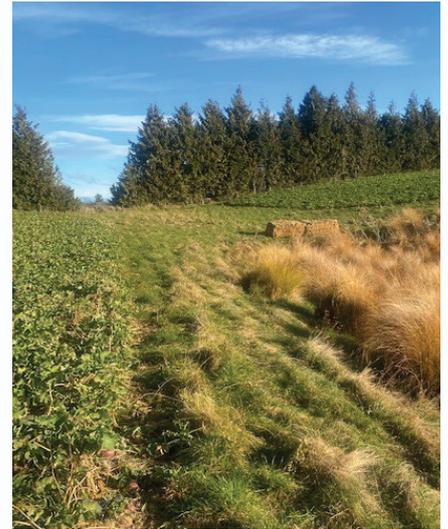


# Everyday water heroes – Sam and Liz Barton



## Sam and Liz Barton won the Otago Regional Council Quality Water Management Award at the 2020 Ballance Farm Environment Awards. We interviewed them to find out their winning formula.

Sam and Liz Barton farm at Moa Flat in West Otago. The farm, Montana Pastoral Ltd, is made up of 4,800 sheep and beef stock units. Montana’s on-farm objective is to “consistently maximise profit by sustainably producing to a very high standard, while minimising any negative impact on the stock, staff and the environment.”

Sam and Liz want to be high performing, but also to preserve what they have, and enhance it where they can.

“We believe that by preserving natural resources we will also increase our capital as demand for farms that have incorporated modern farming systems and infrastructure increase,” they told us.

“It’s great for our waterways, but also for our stock health and wellbeing – it seems to be interrelated.”

Sam and Liz educated themselves about good practice for waterways by completing the Beef + Lamb NZ Land Environment Plan levels. Sam says his approach to farming has evolved.

“I was always focused on stock performance and improvements, but now it’s the bigger financial picture, environmental considerations and sustainable farming. I look at it like this: I treat my management practises as if I was constantly being viewed by anyone—urban, rural or foreign; I would like them to see happy, healthy stock and staff, clean fresh water, minimal hazards and to really portray the clean green image of NZ.”

The 2020 Ballance Farm Environment Award judges noted that the Bartons’ farm practices are guided by a comprehensive business plan and the couple was commended for continually improving their business skills through industry initiatives, self-development and professional learning.

By protecting waterways from sediment, Sam and Liz have managed to maintain or improve the population of freshwater crayfish in the creeks around the farm.

“If you go up the creek with the kids and a spotlight, it is just loaded, which is great to see and respect.”

Sam feels that little things can make big differences and they don’t have to affect your cash flow or your workload. He acknowledges it can be hard to change habits of previous generations, but he believes “minute changes can have a remarkable impact on the environment.”

“I know personally we are doing everything we can to protect waterways. I want things to look pretty, I want our stock to be happy and healthy and I want them to taste good. We give it our all and we do our best and I hope people respect that. We love our land and animals and people.”

To continue reading about how Sam and Liz are employing good practice to protect the environment at Montana Pastoral Ltd., visit [www.orc.govt.nz/everyday-water-heroes](http://www.orc.govt.nz/everyday-water-heroes)

### Farm facts:

- **553 hectares**, including **42 hectares** of trees and laneways
- High-altitude property ranging from **1,550-2,500ft**
- It’s warmer than expected due to shelter ranging from large areas of snow tussock and gullies, to a variety of plantations and shelter belts.
- **3,200 ewes, 880 hoggets, 100 mixed-aged cows**
- **30-40 hectares** of winter brassicas