

## Guest Speaker Profiles Conference 2024

Kia ora tatou

The Royal Agricultural Society of New Zealand is delighted to announce the following guest speakers for the Centenary Conference in 2024:

### **Peter Nation**

#### Chief Executive of New Zealand National Fieldays



*Peter will talk about the challenges of running agricultural events in the current climate and where he thinks they are going nationally and internationally. The event market is changing rapidly, both post COVID but also as consumer needs change and the cost of living bites, there is only so much for discretionary spend. Shows that work in with other shows for mutual benefit, understand legislation and their medium to long term financial position, risks etc stand a better chance of doing well and thriving. The long term viability of events requires us to look to future ways of serving the local community, our trade exhibitors, and competitors.*

Peter is CEO of the NZ National Fieldays Society, owner of Mystery Creek Event Centre and the world acclaimed Fieldays® event. Joining the organisation in March 2016 after a 12-year journey as National Sales Manager with internationally renowned company Gallagher, Peter has an extensive background in Sales management, business management and finance. Having spent over 26 years in the banking industry, working primarily in rural financing and debt recovery, and a further 30 years in business management, distribution, and manufacturing. Most of his career has involved taking businesses/business units and growing them to make them profitable and well managed, and most importantly growing culture. In his role for the Society, he is responsible for guiding the leadership team to enable delivery of the Society's strategy and business plans.

Peter devotes time to other governance and advisory roles outside of work and supporting various business and community groups to ensure the communities and the people in them keep growing.

Peter has devoted his entire life to supporting rural New Zealand, and believes that without the agribusiness sector, New Zealand would not be held in the high regard it is now, on the world stage. The agribusiness sector is well known for its innovation, supply of world-class proteins and nutrition and world-renowned leadership. Peter strongly believes that without collaboration within the industry, innovation and continuous improvement would be seriously compromised.

Peter is married to Ali, who is a partner in a large urban Accountancy firm – PKF Hamilton. They have 2 adult children and reside on a Lifestyle block on the outskirts of Hamilton City NZ.

## Peri Drysdale MBE

Chief Executive Officer / Founder at Untouched World Ltd and Chair of Untouched World Foundation



*Peri will talk about how she has innovated alongside a traditional sector. She will share her experience making changes when those one needs to engage have done things the same way for a long time. She will cover how to bring people along with new ideas and how to generate interest in those ideas. Our member shows are often filled with passionate people who have been doing the same things the same way for decades – how do you ignite enthusiasm for doing it differently?*

Peri Drysdale is the founder and CEO of sustainable lifestyle fashion brand Untouched World and the founder and chairperson of the Untouched World Foundation, and founder of Merinomink, a wholesale knitwear brand focused possum blended with merino.

With \$200 in capital, she began a knitwear cottage industry at home in 1981. Peri had little experience of how to knit but employed ten outworkers to knit clothes branded Snowy Peak, the name of the high-country sheep and beef farming property up the Rakaia Gorge she grew up on. She initially supplied a few Christchurch stores then others in NZ. This quickly grew to 500 outworkers over a period of just four years and early on Peri began to export to other markets.

As her exports grew, Peri travelled extensively around the world, and became increasingly aware of the pollution and degradation happening to the planet. She knew the fashion industry was a big part of the problem and was determined to show the world that being good to the planet didn't mean having to give up on quality, luxury, and great design. And so, the Untouched World brand was born, with the aim of using fashion as a vehicle for change. Since day one Untouched World collections have been made from natural fabrics and fibres, with an emphasis on quality, comfort, and sustainable design.

Always working on new innovations, Peri, along with Sir Peter Elworthy, president of NZ Federated Farmers at the time, pioneered the development of the world's first commercial yarn blending possum fur with merino wool. Created in response to the possum being a major ecological threat to the New Zealand environment, EcoPossum™ (merino, possum, and silk) has now become widely heralded for its pill-resistant durability and weightless warmth.

Peri launched the Untouched World Flagship retail store and café in Christchurch in 1998, and has since opened stores in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Wanaka.

"I wanted a brand that would model a new way of doing business, to show the world it was possible to deliver stylish, quality pieces without polluting the planet, filling up landfills or treating workers badly in the process."

Peri believes in a less-is-more approach and says that collections need to balance design and sustainability. When she started out in business, sustainability wasn't a concept that anyone talked about in fashion, or any other industry for that matter. For Peri this was the number one priority for her brand.

Looking for ways to positively impact the planet beyond the reach of the business, Peri set up the Untouched World Foundation in 2000. The Foundation, funded by sales from the business and with the help of supporting partners, is focused on developing 'Leadership for a Sustainable Future' programmes for young adults. The programmes are designed to grow students' awareness of just how their actions can affect the environment and to help them unlock the leader within so they can achieve their full potential. Over 3000 students have now graduated from the UN recognised leadership programmes, and Untouched World and the Foundation have been acknowledged by UNESCO as a global exemplar for sustainability. The Untouched World Foundation was a founding partner of the GAP (Global Action Programme).

Over the years, Peri and Untouched World Ltd have received numerous awards including recognition as one of 100 New Zealanders who made the most significant contribution to New Zealand, in 1992 Peri was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire and was North and South New Zealander of the Year in 2006. In 2007 Untouched World was recognised by the United Nations, the first clothing company in the world, and given permission to put the UNDESD label in garments. In 2007 Peri was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Commerce from Lincoln University and in 2008 she was Supreme Award Winner at the World Class New Zealander Awards. Peri was awarded with Exceptional Services to Entrepreneurship at the EY Entrepreneur of the Year awards in 2018, and the following year in 2019, Untouched World was awarded a UK Common Objective Brand Leader award for setting a new standard in best practice within the global fashion industry. In March 2021 Peri was inducted into the New Zealand Business Hall of Fame. In 2022 Untouched World won the UK Global Common Objective CO10 award ahead of Gucci parent Kering and in 2024 won the Consider Beyond Global Conscious Brand award.

Untouched World is now being sold online to 49 countries and retailed by stockists in several countries. Peri states that "Building a brand that is pushing the boundaries to create a better tomorrow for people and planet, is really worth getting out of bed for in the morning." She says, "Drive, belief and passion will carry one through many seemingly insurmountable challenges."

## Nigel Woodhead BAgSci

President of the Tokomairiro A&P Society, FMG Young Farmer of the Year 2017,  
Sheep and Beef Farmer



*Nigel is an astute leader within the rural sector, coming from a multigenerational farming family. He sees where shows sit in their local community and the role they play bringing the community together. At his show, they are already discussing the tough questions like “what will we do when we no longer have any competitors and how do we successfully showcase rural excellence when that is the case?”. They are already planning for just that scenario in the next 5 – 10 years and will share how they are answering that question.*

Nigel and wife Leanne run a 400ha sheep, beef and production forestry property south of Milton farming approx. 3000 stock units and 100ha of forestry. After completing a B. Ag. Sci at Lincoln Uni in 2009 he worked for five and a half years for Midlands Seed in Ashburton in the research and field production teams responsible for assisting farmers to produce high quality vegetable and forage seed for the export market.

In 2015 Nigel and Leanne moved home to ‘Remote’ and started a family along-side running the farm and Leanne’s business Remotelea Creative. He won the 2017 FMG Young Farmer of the Year and has been involved in governance on the NZ Young Farmers contest sub-committee along with numerous community groups and organisations. Now he sits on the Milton Primary School Board of Trustees and is president of the Tokomairiro A&P Society.

His future goals are based around sustainably growing their farming business as well as venturing into higher level governance roles.

## RAS Conference 2024

Elms Hotel in Christchurch on 7 – 9 June 2024

The [Programme](#) is available on the RAS website. [Accommodation bookings are now open](#)