

MEDIA RELEASE

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Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern opens new venison plant

New Zealand Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon Jacinda Ardern, has officially opened Alliance's new \$15.9 million venison plant in Southland.

The Prime Minister joined Agriculture Minister, the Hon. Damien O'Connor, other dignitaries, Alliance leaders, staff and farmers at today's opening ceremony at Lorneville, near Invercargill

A plaque commemorating the opening of the plant was unveiled by the Prime Minister before guests enjoyed Pure South venison cooked by chef Graham Hawkes.

David Surveyor, chief executive of Alliance, said the investment demonstrated the co-operative's commitment to the venison industry and regional New Zealand.

"This plant shows how serious we are about New Zealand's deer industry. It ensures we have world-class modern facilities, reflecting our position as a leading and innovative processor.

"Venison is a vital part of our growing business. In addition to our long-standing European markets, we are diversifying venison into the United States and United Kingdom food service sectors with value added propositions. We are capturing greater market value and passing these gains onto our farmer shareholders.

"Our people are also contributing to the success of the co-operative, not only at this plant, but across the country, and we appreciate their hard work and dedication."

Murray Taggart, chairman of Alliance, said: "As New Zealand's only 100% farmer-owned major red meat co-operative, we put our farmers at the heart of everything we do.

"Our skilled and passionate farmers produce high quality free-range grass-fed venison for the world's most discerning consumers.

"This investment is another example of Alliance delivering on our strategy of investing in maximising our operational performance to benefit farmer shareholders and create a stronger co-operative."

The new plant includes design innovations, improved handling facilities, enhanced configuration, a larger slaughter board and wider boning room and a bigger offal area than Alliance's former Makarewa plant in Southland.

The venison plant, which began processing in September 2018, employs approximately 70 people when operating at peak capacity. The Lorneville plant, which also includes ovine processing, is one of the largest industrial sites in New Zealand, employing almost 2,000 people in total at peak capacity.

Meanwhile, a burger featuring Alliance venison and created by American celebrity chef Elizabeth Falkner won a coveted award at an international chefs' convention in October.

The 'Last Year at Marienbad' burger won the Blended Burger Battle title at the 13th annual StarChefs International Chefs Congress, held in New York.

Entries had to include at least 25 per cent mushrooms and the winner featured Alliance venison blended with ground oyster, crimini and shiitake mushrooms. It was served with microgreens, a cucumber-wasabi raita and Bourbon-habanero hoisin sauce, in freshly-baked focaccia.

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