

Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year

2026 Entry Information Pack

Presented within the Napier Port Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards

Recognising excellence, innovation, and sustainable farming in Hawke's Bay.

Celebrate your farming excellence - and share your story with Hawke's Bay.

1. Overview & Purpose

The Hawke's Bay A&P Society owns and manages the Napier Port Hawke's Bay Primary Sector Awards, which celebrate excellence, success, innovation, and growth across Hawke's Bay's rural industries. These awards have a long history of telling the story of excellence within rural Hawke's Bay and play an important role in recognising leadership, innovation, and contribution across the sector.

The Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year Award recognises an outstanding agricultural or pastoral farmer who demonstrates exceptional skill, leadership, and commitment within their farming business.

The purpose of this award is to identify, acknowledge, and celebrate those farmers who continually strive for excellence through innovation, sustainable practice, and strong business performance. The award showcases leaders who are shaping the future of farming in Hawke's Bay and provides a platform to share their achievements and inspire others across the rural community.

2. Why Enter?

Entering the Farmer of the Year competition is an opportunity to gain valuable insights, strengthen your business, and be recognised for your contribution to Hawke's Bay farming.

All entrants:

- Receive a constructive feedback report from the independent judges, offering practical insights and fresh perspectives to support your farming business
- Are invited to attend the Primary Sector Awards Dinner
- Connect with fellow farmers, growers, sponsors, and industry leaders
- Contribute to celebrating and strengthening Hawke's Bay's primary industries
- Receive an annual membership to the Hawke's Bay A&P Society

Winner receives:

- Recognition as the 2026 Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year at the Primary Sector Awards Dinner, acknowledged in front of industry peers
- The E.B. Hindmarsh Trophy (donated by the wife of the late E.B. Hindmarsh) and a prize package valued at over \$20,000, made up of cash, products, and services

- The opportunity to host a public Field Day on their property to showcase their farming business
- The opportunity to share your story and gain recognition across the wider sector
- Entry into a respected alumni network of past winners
- Feature media coverage and industry networking opportunities as the year's leading Hawke's Bay farmer

3. Eligibility & Entry Conditions

The competition is open to any agricultural or pastoral farmer who demonstrates high performance, strong business practice, and a commitment to sustainable and progressive farming within Hawke's Bay.

Entrants must:

- Be located within one of the eligible districts:
 - Wairoa District (south of the Mohaka River)
 - Napier City
 - Hastings District
 - Central Hawke's Bay District
- Be a farm owner, manager, or lessee operating a full-time commercial farming business that provides at least one full-time role
- Be pursuing a system of agriculture, pastoral, or livestock farming that maintains high and sustainable performance over the long term
- Be available for on-farm judging if shortlisted
- Be available for media enquiries and promotional opportunities if announced as the winner
- Agree to host a Field Day approximately 4 weeks after the Primary Sector Awards Dinner, organised and managed by the Hawke's Bay A&P Society, if announced as the winner
- Ensure they meet all eligibility requirements before beginning their online entry

Diversified farming systems (including cropping, horticulture, and complementary enterprises) are welcome and eligible for this award.

Entries may be submitted by farm owners, managers, or authorised representatives of the farming business.

4. Entry Criteria

The Farmer of the Year will have:

- Demonstrated excellence in farm performance, business management, and long-term sustainability
- Achieved strong and consistent financial and physical results in their farming operation
- Implemented sound natural resource management practices, contributing to environmental stewardship
- Demonstrated strategic thinking, innovation, and a forward-focused approach to farming
- Shown strong people leadership, including health & safety, team development, and community involvement
- Displayed integrity, resilience, adaptability, and values that strengthen Hawke's Bay's rural sector

- Contributed positively to Hawke's Bay farming through leadership, industry-good involvement, or sector engagement

These criteria align directly with the judging areas and reflect the qualities expected of the region's top Farmer of the Year entrants.

5. Judging Criteria & Process

Judging will be carried out by a panel of independent judges with expertise across farming, business, and the primary industries.

Entrants will be evaluated across four key areas:

Financial & Physical Performance (30%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardised accounts analysis • Physical farm description • Stock units • Breeding performance • Wastage rates • Fertiliser usage • Physical production • Financial KPIs (including economic farm surplus and percentage return on total farm capital) 	Natural Resource Management & Sustainability (30%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and documentation • Land and water management • Environmental stewardship • Climate change / resilience • In-business practices
Strategic & Business Management (20%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan • Risk management • Financial and physical monitoring • Use of technology and innovation • Value chain • Structure • Systems 	People (20%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment relations • Health & safety • Training and development • Wellbeing • Succession • Values • Community footprint

How Judging Works

- After entries close, a judging panel will review all submissions
- Selected entrants will take part in on-farm judging
- Final results will reflect both your entry submission and on-farm judging
- The winner will be announced at the Primary Sector Awards Dinner and will later host a Field Day

6. What You Need to Prepare Before Entering

To help you prepare, the online entry form will guide you through providing the following information:

Entrant Information	This section captures basic details about the entrant, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact details• Farm and business information (location, ownership structure, staffing)
Farm Overview	A brief overview of your farming business, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land area breakdown (freehold/leasehold, total/effective hectares)• Livestock, cropping, or production systems• Recent development or improvement projects
Farm Performance & Business Management	Information to help judges understand your farm's performance and direction, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Production data and management policies• Short, medium, and long-term business goals• Strategic planning, innovation and future opportunities
Annual Accounts (Confidential)	Accounts for the past two financial years (ending 30 June 2024 and 30 June 2025). Judging will focus on the most recent year, with the previous year used for comparison. Accounts may be provided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supplying accountant contact details to arrange secure access, or• Granting secure viewer access via your accounting system (e.g. Xero, Figured, MYOB)
Supporting Material	Optional material that supports your entry, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Business plans, policies, development summaries• Benchmarking or environmental reports and plans• Other relevant documents
Images	Please provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 10 high-resolution landscape-oriented images of your property• At least one of yourself and/or your team Images should represent your farm, stock, systems, and environment. Only submit images you are comfortable being used for promotional purposes.
Supplier List	Please provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A list of your key business suppliers (e.g., transport operators, stock agents, bankers) to be used for media purposes if you are announced as the winner

All submitted material will be kept confidential unless used for agreed promotional purposes. Runner-up names will remain anonymous.

7. How to Enter

1. Complete the online entry form
2. Upload the required files listed in “What You Need to Prepare Before Entering” as part of your online entry
3. After submitting your entry, shortlisted entrants will be contacted by the judging panel to arrange on-farm judging
4. Be available to attend the Awards Dinner (2 April 2026) and Field Day (date TBC) if you win

8. Key Dates – 2026

Entries Open	1 October 2025
Entries Close	28 February 2026
Judging	March 2026
Primary Sector Awards Dinner	2 April 2026
Field Day	Date TBC

9. Contact

For questions or more information, contact:

Kahlia Ritchie – Event Manager, Napier Port Hawke’s Bay Primary Sector Awards

Email: psa@hbap.co.nz Phone: 027 342 6071

10. Acknowledging Our Sponsors

With thanks to Napier Port, Silver Fern Farms, and our valued sponsors who make these awards possible.