

Rural Directions Hawke's Bay Shepherd 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 Rural Directions Hawke's Bay Shepherd of the Year Award recognises an outstanding shepherd who is developing their career within the farming sector, demonstrating strong practical skill, initiative, and professionalism.

The purpose of this award is to identify, acknowledge, and celebrate up-and-coming farmers who show exceptional promise, capability, and commitment to Hawke's Bay's primary sector. The award provides a platform to support emerging talent, highlight career pathways, and inspire the next generation of farming leaders across the region.

2. Why Enter?

Entering the Shepherd of the Year competition is an opportunity to gain recognition, highlight your skills, and share your career aspirations with the sector.

All entrants:

- Are invited to attend the Primary Sector Awards Dinner and Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year Field Day
- Connect with farmers, sponsors, and industry leaders
- Receive an annual membership to the Hawke's Bay A&P Society

Winner receives:

- Recognition as the Shepherd of the Year at the Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year Field Day, acknowledged in front of industry peers
- \$500 cash, \$1,000 worth of additional prizes
- The opportunity to share your story and gain recognition across the wider sector
- Entry into the Shepherd of the Year alumni network of past winners
- Media exposure and ongoing professional development opportunities

3. Eligibility & Entry Conditions

The competition is open to:

- Entrants in a full-time shepherding role (permanent staff or fixed-term contract) within the Hawke's Bay region

Entrants must:

- Provide a current CV
- Submit a written statement outlining their career plan for the next five years
- Provide written employer endorsement to participate
- Take judges around their workplace
- Demonstrate dog control on-farm
- Upload at least one high-resolution image of themselves plus at work (e.g., with stock, dogs, fencing, or other farm tasks)
- Attend the Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year Field Day in May 2026 for the announcement
- Consent to their information being treated as confidential. Finalist names will be announced.
- Ensure they meet all eligibility requirements before beginning their online entry.

The winner must be available for media enquiries and promotional opportunities if required.

4. Judging Criteria & Process

Judging will be conducted by a panel of three: a representative of Rural Directions, and two representatives of the Hawke's Bay A&P Society.

How Judging Works

- After entries close, a judging panel will review all applications.
- Selected entrants will take part in a practical on-farm assessment with the judges.
- Entrants must demonstrate dog control on-farm as part of the assessment.
- Final results will reflect both your entry application and the on-farm judging.
- The winner will be announced at the Silver Fern Farms Hawke's Bay Farmer of the Year Field Day.

5. 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• Summary of current shepherding role and responsibilities
Career Overview	This section captures information about your experience and future direction through the documents you provide, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your CV• A written career plan outlining your goals for the next five years
Supporting Material	You may upload any supporting material that strengthens your entry, such as reports, references or any other material (optional)
Images	<p>Please provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 5 high-resolution landscape-oriented images of yourself and/or you at work <p>Images should show a representative view of you at work, including stock, dogs, or relevant farm tasks.</p> <p>Only submit images you are comfortable being used for promotional purposes.</p>

All submitted material will be kept confidential unless used for agreed promotional purposes.

6. Key Dates – 2026

Entries Open	1 October 2025
Entries Close	28 February 2026
Judging	March 2026
Awards Dinner	2 April 2026
Field Day (Winner Announcement)	Date TBC

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. Be available to attend the Silver Fern Farms Hawke’s Bay Farmer of the Year Field Day (date TBC)

8. Contact

For questions or more information, contact:

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9. Acknowledging Our Sponsors

With thanks to Napier Port, Rural Directions and our valued sponsors who make these awards possible.