



## Big potential for monitor farm

Blair Ensor - The Marlborough Express    Last updated 13:31 17/07/2009

Marlborough's new monitor farm has the potential for 1200 new stock units if developed properly over the next 10 years, says New Zealand Meat&Wool South Island manager Gary Walton.

About 50 farmers from Marlborough and Nelson attended the Marlborough Monitor Farm Day earlier this month to discuss the business plans for Greg Harris' Mt Adde Station.

Mr Walton said the 800-hectare property, which was stocked with 1500 Corriedale sheep and 150 Angus cows, was "exciting with lots of potential to uncover".

"It's producing bugger all compared to what it could be, and it's about unlocking that potential."

He said hill country development on the property was worthwhile, but the payback would be long term.

Ideas for middle country development, which Mr Harris has already started, included ideas for getting rid of gorse and broom and improving fencing and water.

"What he's done to date has worked well, though," said Mr Walton.

People had plenty to say about the back block of the farm which is largely undeveloped.

Better management systems like improved fencing, water supply, sub-divisions, fertiliser and new grass "the whole nine yards" were also discussed.

There were also suggestions for the feed arrangements on the property's flat land and how to improve its potential.

The land was sown in grass and irrigated year-round, but there were suggestions that winter and summer feed crops may improve the potential of the farm, he said.

Mr Harris said it was good to receive feedback, which was the whole idea of the monitor farm program.

He said the primary focus for the property remained a sustainable, long-term hill country development.

"There's no point rushing into these things, but we plan to do development every year."

The next field day, to be held in October, would be focused on fine-tuning the farm's strategy.

The day would also focus on pasture renovation and hill country development, Mr Harris said.

"There are plenty of things to be interested in and people should come along and have a look."