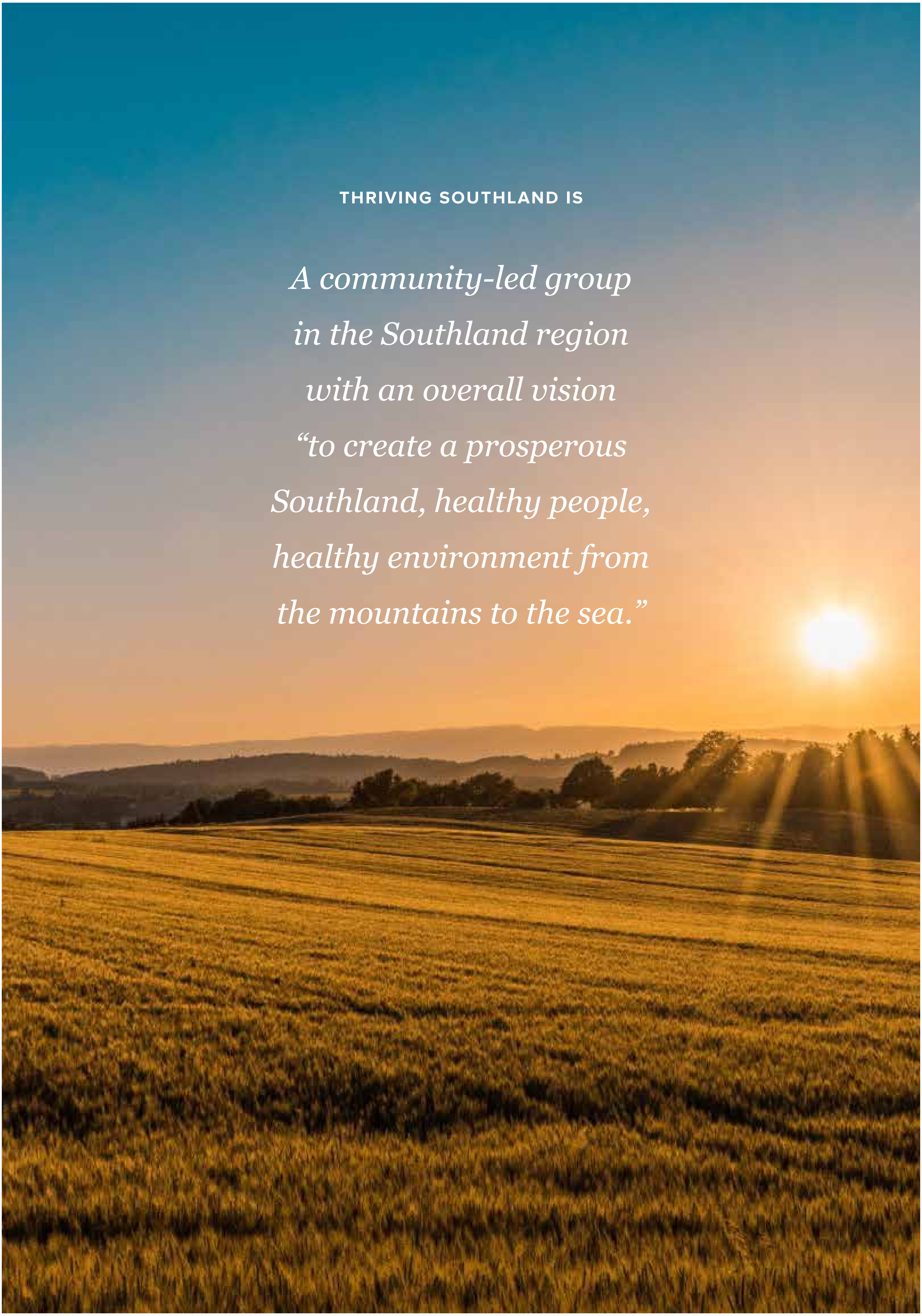
THRIVING SOUTHLAND CATCHMENT GROUP FARMER AND STAKEHOLDER

Annual Survey

2025

THRIVING SOUTHLAND

Tōnui ana te whenua. Tōnui ana te takata.
A thriving, prosperous land. A thriving, prosperous people.



THRIVING SOUTHLAND IS

A community-led group in the Southland region with an overall vision "to create a prosperous Southland, healthy people, healthy environment from the mountains to the sea."

Contents

Summary

» Animal health and waste reduction have increased as goals, while increasing profitability and productivity and reducing costs continue to dominate as priority farm goals.

» In this year's survey, farmers reported they have adopted critical source area protection as a Good Management Practice, along with fertiliser use, application and placement, and paddock selection for wintering.

» Most respondents said they had a Farm Environment Plan or were developing one, although few farmers refer to these regularly.

» The most common things respondents monitor on-farm continue to be fertiliser placement, rainfall, growth rates (grass, crops) and soil.

» While respondents rate their own farm's water quality as excellent (52%) or good (38%), few share the same sentiments about Southland's water quality. Just 12% felt Southland's waterways were excellent (clear, with very little pollution).

» The respondents' rationale for water quality ratings was largely based on personal perception (26%) and implementation of good management practices (24%).

» Levels of optimism have increased this year, with 44% of respondents often feeling optimistic about the future (up from 32% last year).

» More than 60% of respondents stated they had provided support to other farmers over the past year, with practical assistance and discussion groups being the most common support.

» Certainty of information related to rules and regulations, their timeframes, and how to apply these on-farm remains the principal area of information and support wanted by respondents (66%, up 10% on last year).

» Slightly fewer respondents knew the next steps toward their future goals (67%, compared to 71% last year).

» When asked what resources were required in their catchment, respondents reported they were eager for practical support for on-farm change and project funding support. Requests for speakers and experts dropped 6% over the past year (51% compared to 57%).

» There was an increase in those reporting a "moderate" level of involvement with their local iwi continues to be limited interaction between Catchment Groups and local iwi (15% up from 6% in 2024).

» Thriving Southland continues to be pivotal in providing opportunities for people to join and support Catchment Groups, facilitating access to leaders and expertise.

» Awareness of how sector groups/industry groups interact with Catchment Groups is still low, continuing the trend seen in previous years. Overall, 40% of respondents were 'unsure' of the level of collaboration between sector/industry groups and Catchment Groups.

- Like the past three years, in 2025 respondents felt members of Catchment Groups were welcoming to newcomers, listened to each other, and provided an environment where views could be expressed.
- Confidence in the way Catchment Groups were led dropped slightly this year, with 72% of respondents rating, to a moderate or high degree, that Catchment Groups were well-led (down 8% from 2024), well-coordinated (73%, down 8%), and well-run (71%, down 7%) from 2024.
- Respondents stated they were proud mostly of their sustainability efforts and of producing a quality product.

About the respondents

- In keeping with previous years, most respondents had a direct role in farming and were predominantly male farmers who had been farming for more than 10 years.
- For the first time in three years, this survey saw an increase in respondents from council staff and councillors.
- More respondents identify as Māori, although most respondents are predominantly European New Zealanders.
- Overall awareness of Southland's farmer-led Catchment Groups remains high (98%), however, fewer than half of the respondents in 2025 were members of a catchment group (46%, down from 54% last year).
- As with previous years, most respondents were representatives of the Mataura River catchment.

Background

This is the 5th annual survey conducted by Thriving Southland. It is targeted at Southland farmers, Catchment Group members and stakeholders, and is designed to collect information on their environmental practices, knowledge and understanding of the role of Thriving Southland, how they want to be engaged, and on what topics.

Thriving Southland monitors farmer opinions and attitudes regularly to ensure the organisation:

» is delivering what is required in the work programme

» is engaging with Catchment Groups and the broader community at an appropriate level

» remains up to date with Catchment Group support needs and opinions

» can prepare for the anticipated future Catchment Group needs.

Objectives

Thriving Southland seeks to understand:

1. The demographic of respondents
2. Farmer pride
3. Uptake and use of Farm Environment Plans
4. Areas being focused on for on-farm change and/or improved environmental outcomes
5. Understanding of Southland's water quality
6. Good management practice (GMP) habits and attitudes
7. What ongoing support would be beneficial for farming businesses?
8. Farmer personal wellbeing
9. Awareness of Catchment Groups and their functionality
10. Awareness of Thriving Southland and its functionality
11. Connection to Iwi

Methodology

The survey was emailed directly to Thriving Southland contacts in March 2025 via Survey Monkey. There were 210 responses, up from last year's 200 but still down on the 2023 high of 280.

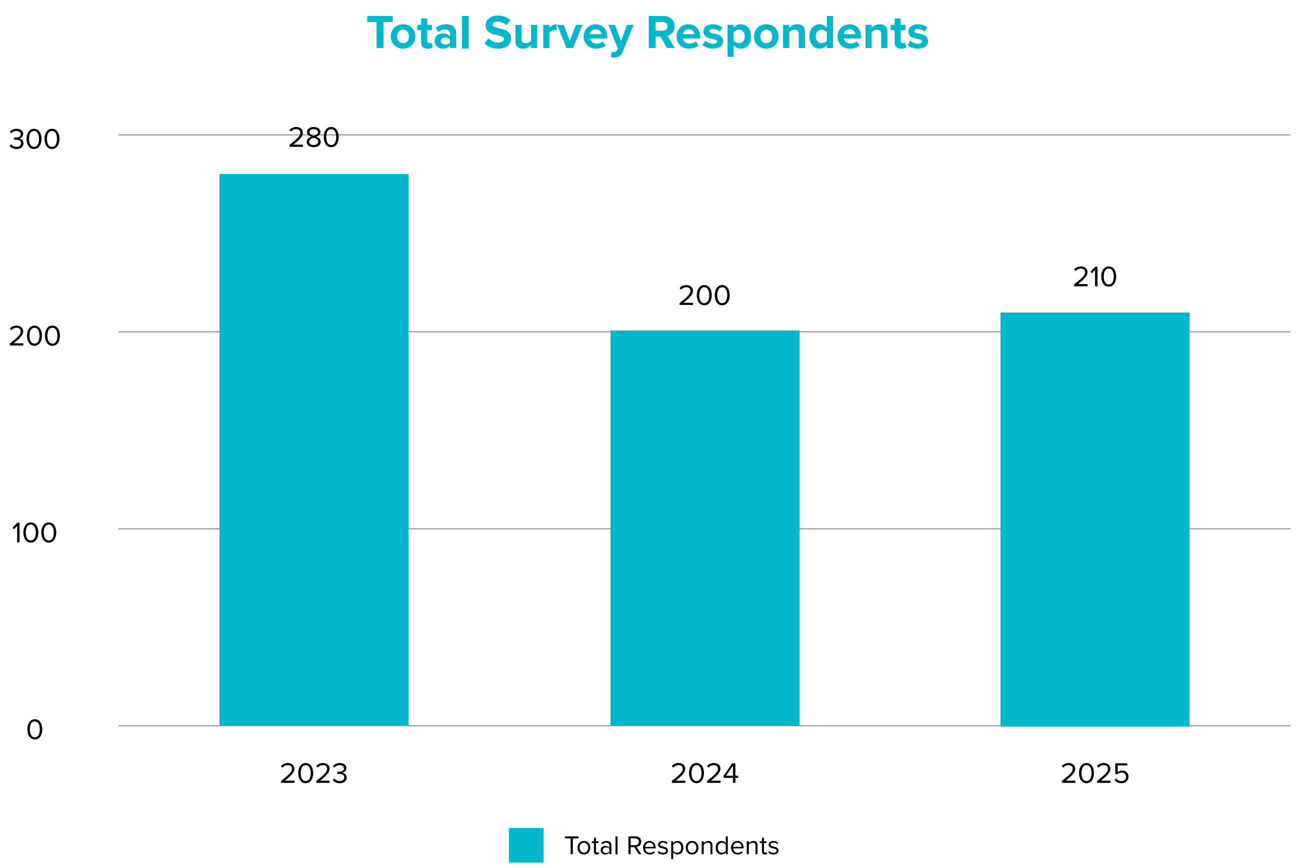


Figure 1: *Total number of survey respondents 2023-2025*

SURVEY RESULTS

Farm details

This section presents the general information collected on participating farms/farmers, including role on-farm, years in farming, gender and ethnicity, as well as catchment group and farm type.

Role on-farm

Over the past three years, more survey respondents had a direct role in farming. This year, 50% of respondents identified as an on-farm role and 22% as sector support role.

This year recorded the highest response in three years from council staff and councillors (8% – up from 1% in 2024 and 5% in 2023). Community member responses dropped slightly compared to last year's survey (12% down from 2024's 15% response rate), but still up compared to 2023's responses (9%).

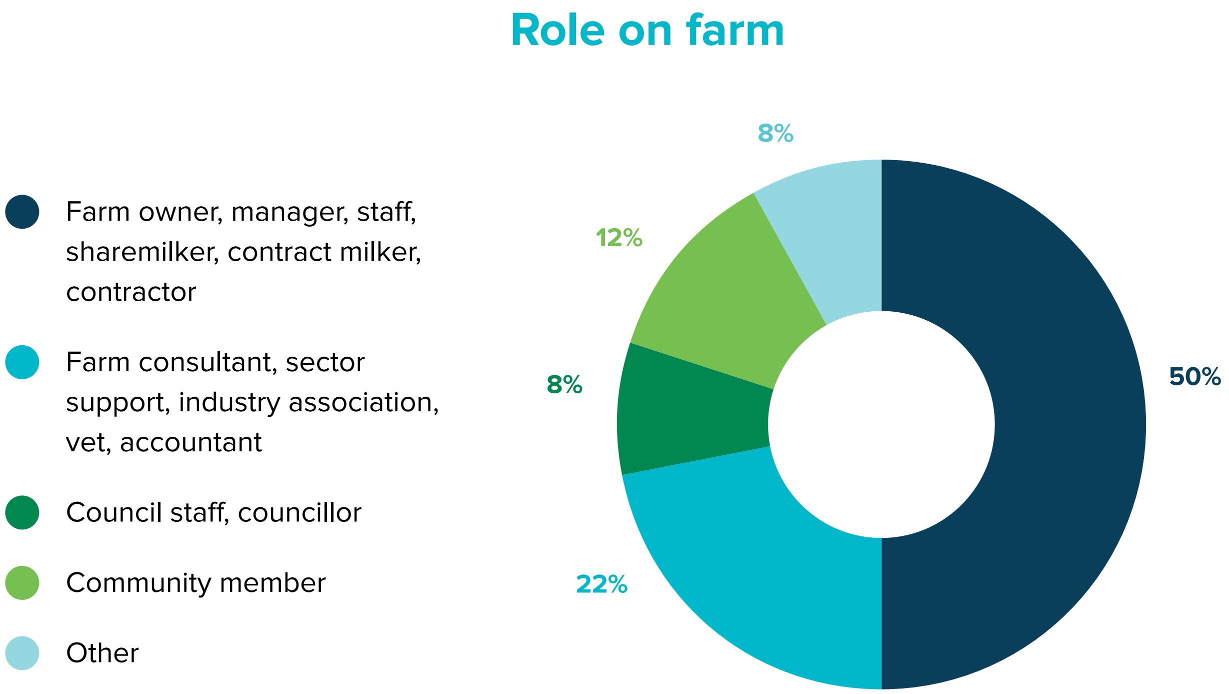


Figure 2: *Role on-farm 2025 (n=210)*

Years in farming

Of the respondents directly involved in farming (n=78), 94% had been farming for more than a decade. This is a slight increase on the last two years' surveys (2024: 91%, 2023: 93%).

The percentage of respondents who had been farming for 5-10 years dropped slightly this year (4% compared to 6% recorded in 2024 and 2023), while those who had been farming for fewer than five years remained static at 2%.

How many years have you been directly involved in farming?

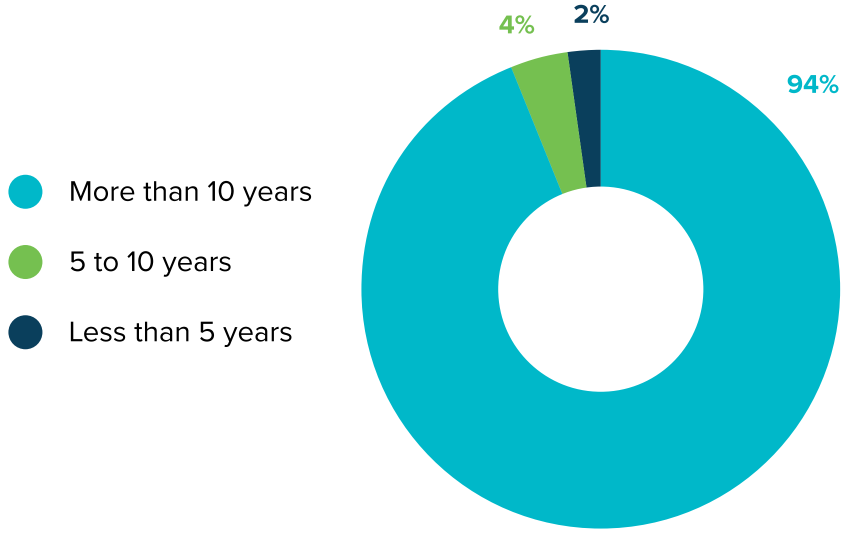


Figure 3: *Years in farming (n=78)*

Age

Over the years, the Thriving Southland survey has received responses from a wide range of respondents. In the past three years, most respondents have been aged between 35 and 64. This year, there was an increase in respondents aged between 55 and 64 (2025: 30%; 2024: 25%).

What is your age group?

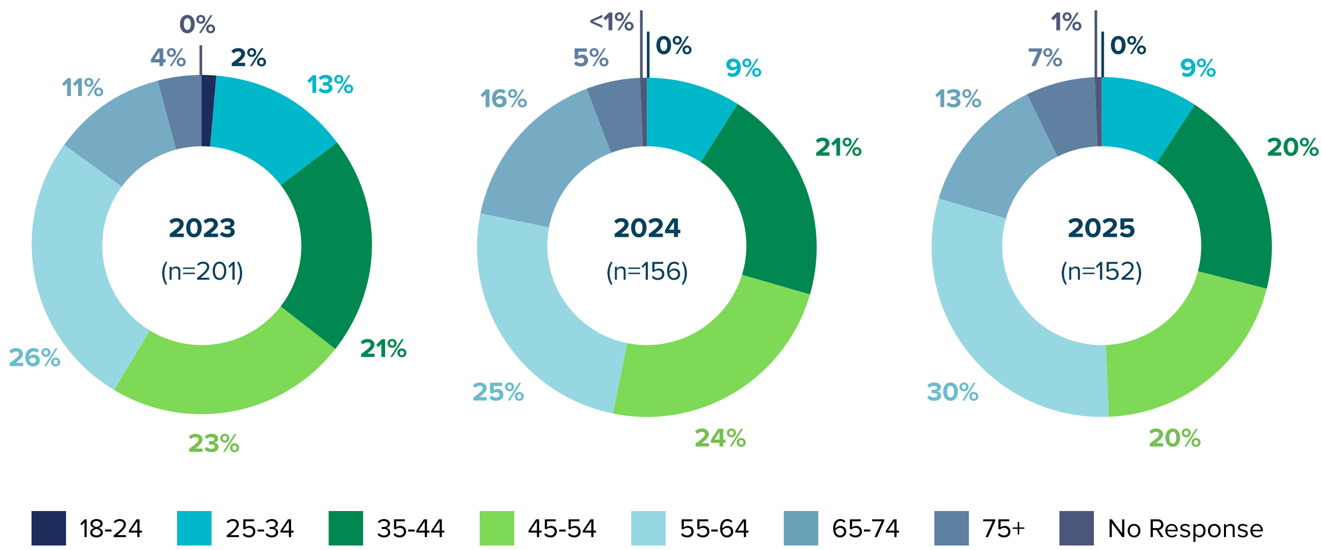


Figure 4: *Age group (n=152)*

Gender

This year saw a 60:40 split in responses between male and female. This reflects a trend seen over the past two years for a slight male skew (2024: 54:44, 2023: 58:42).

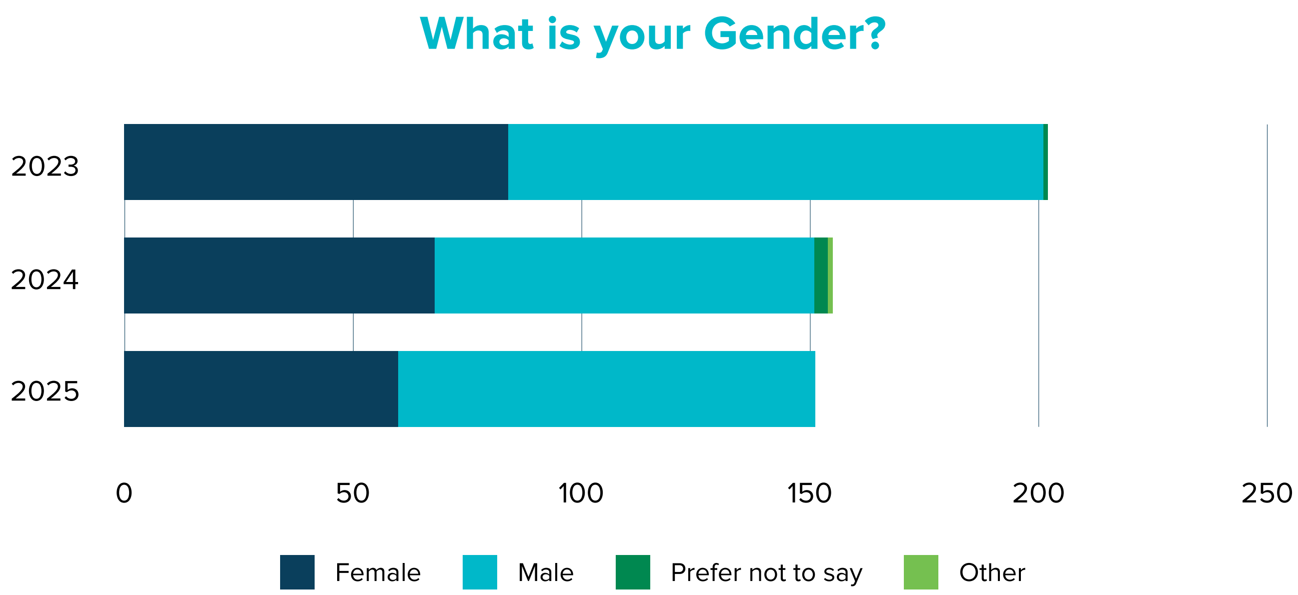


Figure 5: *Gender*

Ethnicity

In keeping with previous years, most respondents to the 2025 survey identified themselves as European New Zealanders (88%, down from 92% last year). There has been an upward trend in the respondents identifying as Māori (8%, up from 7% in 2024 and 3% in 2023).

Type of farm

Continuing the trend over the past five years, most respondents to the 2025 survey were from sheep and beef, and dairy farms. Interestingly, there were no respondents from solely beef farms this year (down from 5% last year), half the number of respondents from solely sheep farms (9% down from 14% last year), and just 2% of respondents came from dairy support farms (down from 10% in 2024).

What farm type would you say mainly describes your farm?

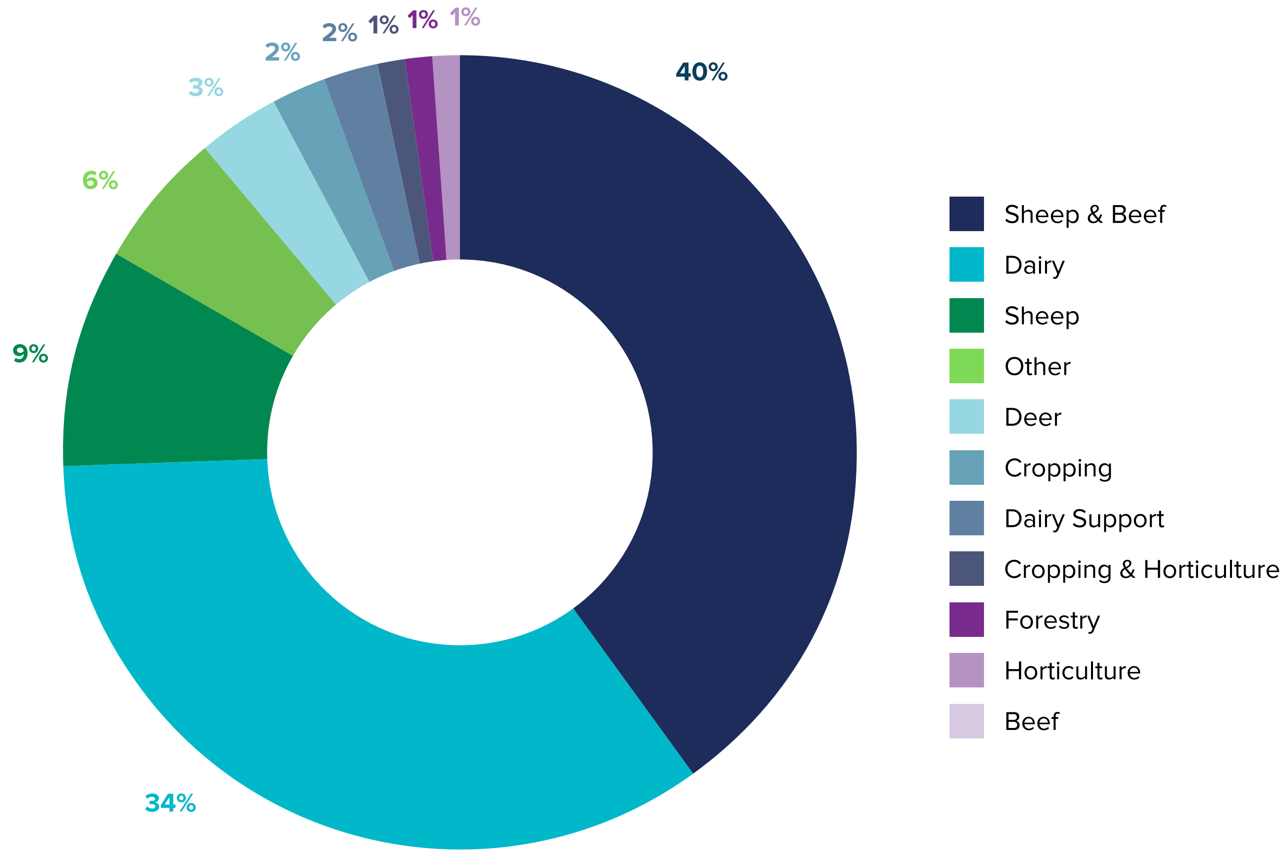


Figure 6: *Farm type (n=90)*

Catchment awareness

Respondents were asked what river catchment their farm linked to and their awareness of Southland's farmer-led Catchment Groups. As with last year's survey, most respondents were from the Mataura catchment (n=39). Proportionately, this year, more respondents were linked to the Oreti catchment (25%, up from 18% in 2024), followed by the Aparima catchment (21%, down from 24% in 2024).

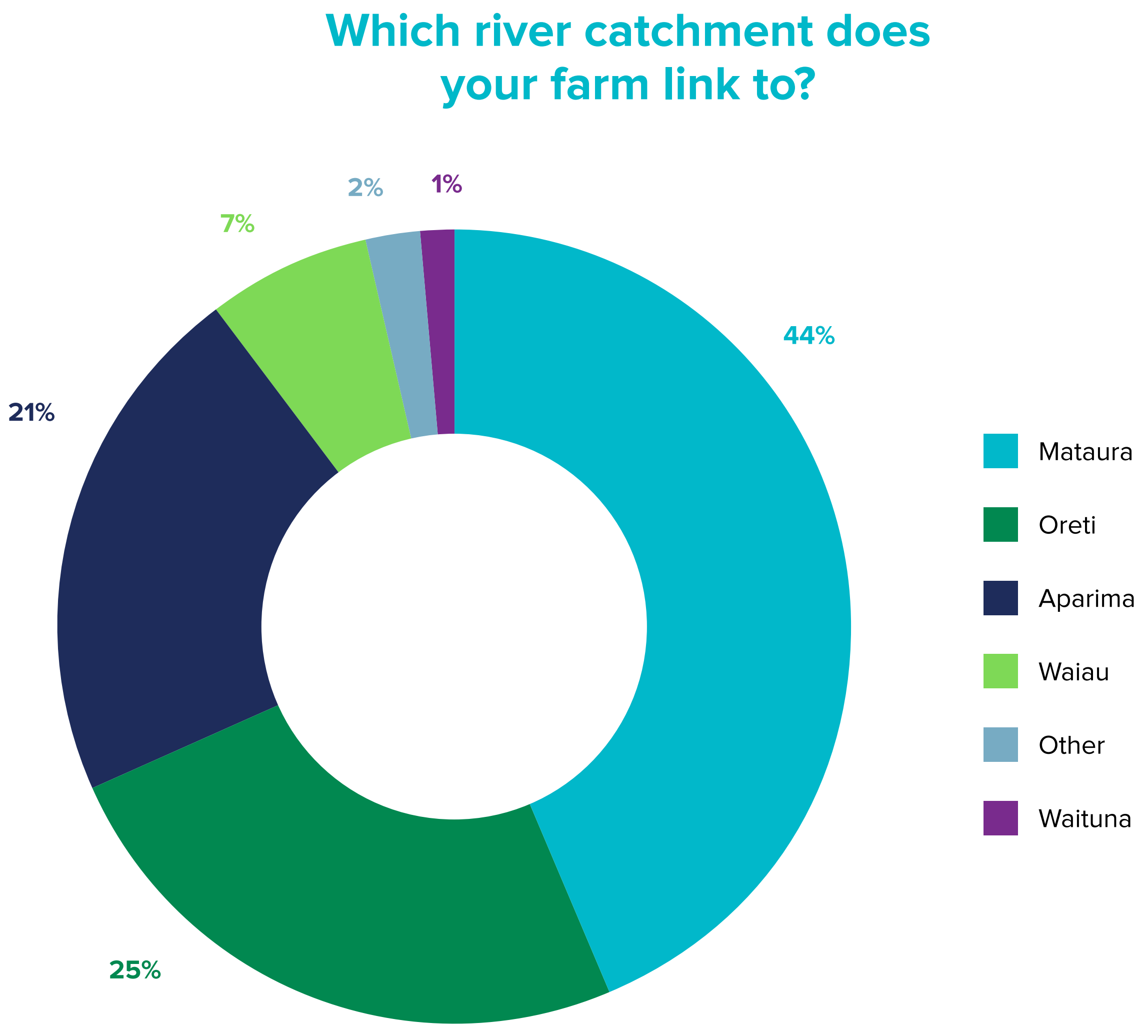


Figure 7: *Catchment Group (n=89)*

Overall awareness of Southland's farmer-led Catchment Groups remains high, with 98% of respondents aware of Southland's farmer-led Catchment Groups (up from 97% in 2024). Despite this increase, fewer than half of the respondents in 2025 were members of a catchment group (46%, down from 54% last year).

Actions on-farm

This section presents information regarding actions on-farm, such as Farm Environment Plans, on-farm monitoring and Good Management Practices.

Main farm goals

There was a marked change in goals among 2025 respondents compared to previous years. While increasing profitability remained the top goal, the percentage of respondents focused on this area was down 7% on previous years, as was reducing costs (down 6%), increasing productivity (down 3%) and improving wellbeing for myself/staff/family (down 8%). Retaining sediment recorded the largest percentage change as a goal from 2024 (38%) to 2025 (25%).

Q. Here are some areas of focus other farmers have said have been their main farm goals. Which (if any) have been yours in the last 5 years?	2024 (n=104)	2025 (n=76)	% change
Increase profitability	77%	70%	-7%
Increasing productivity	64%	61%	-3%
Reducing cost	67%	61%	-6%
Improving wellbeing for myself/staff/family	66%	58%	-8%
Improving animal welfare	56%	57%	+1%
Increase farm business resilience	64%	57%	-7%
Improving water quality	54%	46%	-8%
Waste reduction	41%	45%	+4%
Providing the next generation with options to farm (succession)	50%	41%	-9%
Improving biodiversity	35%	30%	-5%
Retaining sediment	38%	25%	-13%
Diversification	24%	18%	-6%
Changing land use	15%	11%	-4%
Reducing greenhouse gases, emissions, footprint	15%	9%	-6%
Regenerative farming	9%	7%	-2%
Other (please specify)	3%	5%	+2%
Organic farming	4%	0%	-4%

Table 1: *Farm goals*[1]

[1] Note that was a multiple-selection question, i.e., the respondent could give more than one answer. Percentages here therefore represent responses over sample, and will add to more than 100%.

Good Management Practices

As with previous years, this year's survey found the most common Good Management Practices (GMP) to be adopted in the last three years were fertiliser use application and placement, paddock selection for wintering, and riparian planting and buffers, along with wintering systems, although to a lesser degree than in previous years.

Q. In the last 5 years, have you adopted Good Management Practices (GMPs)? (Tick as many as you like)	2023 (n-115)	2024 (n=107)	2025 (n=79)
Fertiliser use, application and placement	85%	89%	80%
Paddock selection for wintering	74%	82%	77%
Critical source area protection	69%	66%	63%
Riparian planting and buffers	73%	70%	62%
Strategic grazing	64%	66%	59%
Wintering systems	60%	68%	54%
Stocking rates or classes	41%	50%	53%
Nutrient budgeting	46%	49%	41%
Improved effluent management and effluent system	36%	36%	30%
Other (please specify)	20%	16%	23%
Infrastructure (please specify under 'Other' below)	13%	14%	19%

Table 2: *Good Management Practices*[2]

[2] Note that was a multiple-selection question, i.e., the respondent could give more than one answer. Percentages here therefore represent responses over sample, and will add to more than 100%.

Farm Environment Plans

Existence of FEP

Most respondents said they had an FEP or were developing a plan (86%). Only 13% didn't know or didn't have one. This is comparable to 2024 but down from 2023.

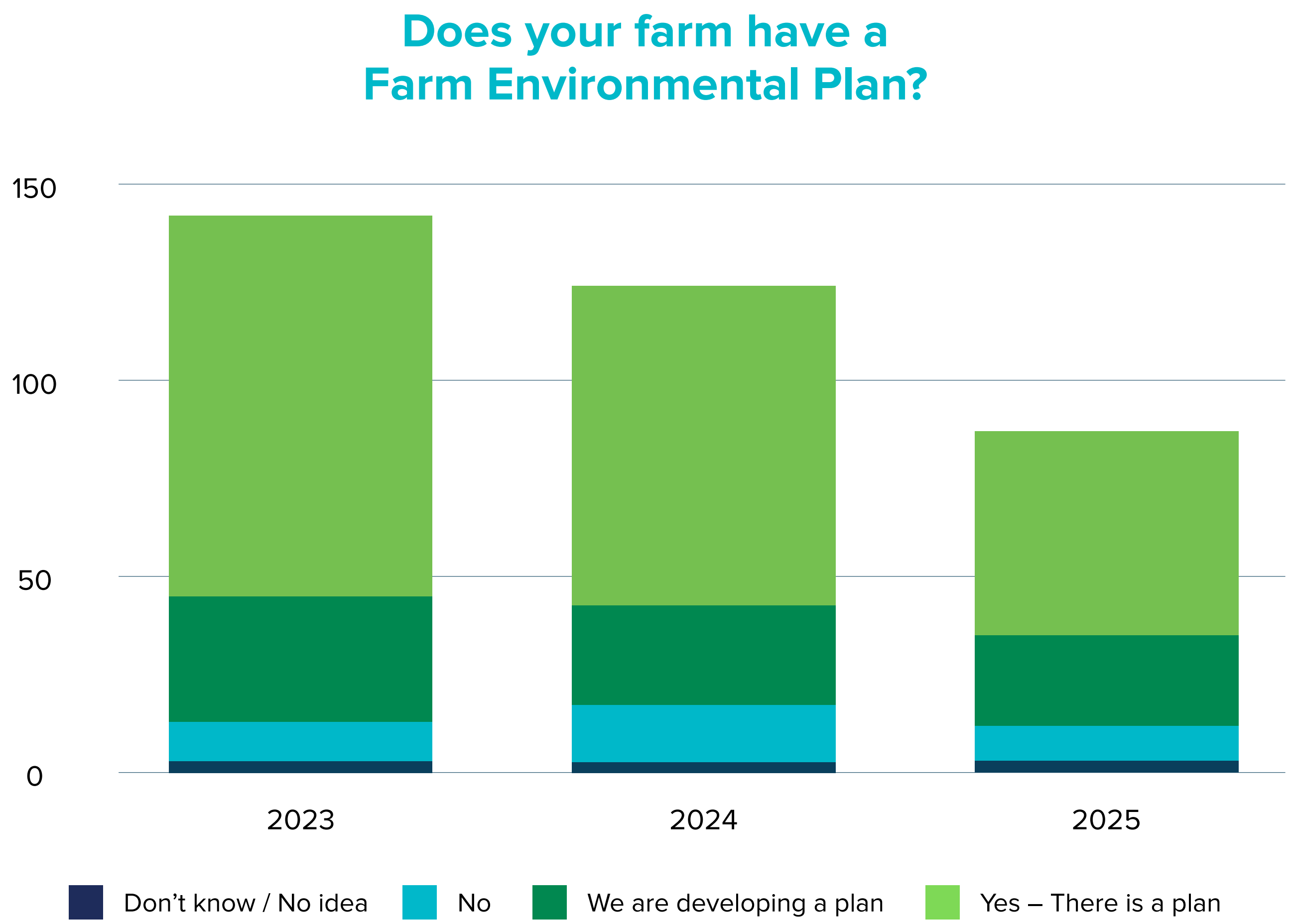


Figure 8: *Farm Environment Plan*

Use of Farm Environment Plans

In keeping with last year's responses, most respondents only occasionally refer to their FEP (49%, down from 2024's 66% and 2023's 58%). Very few respondents refer to the plan regularly. This is consistent with previous years' responses.

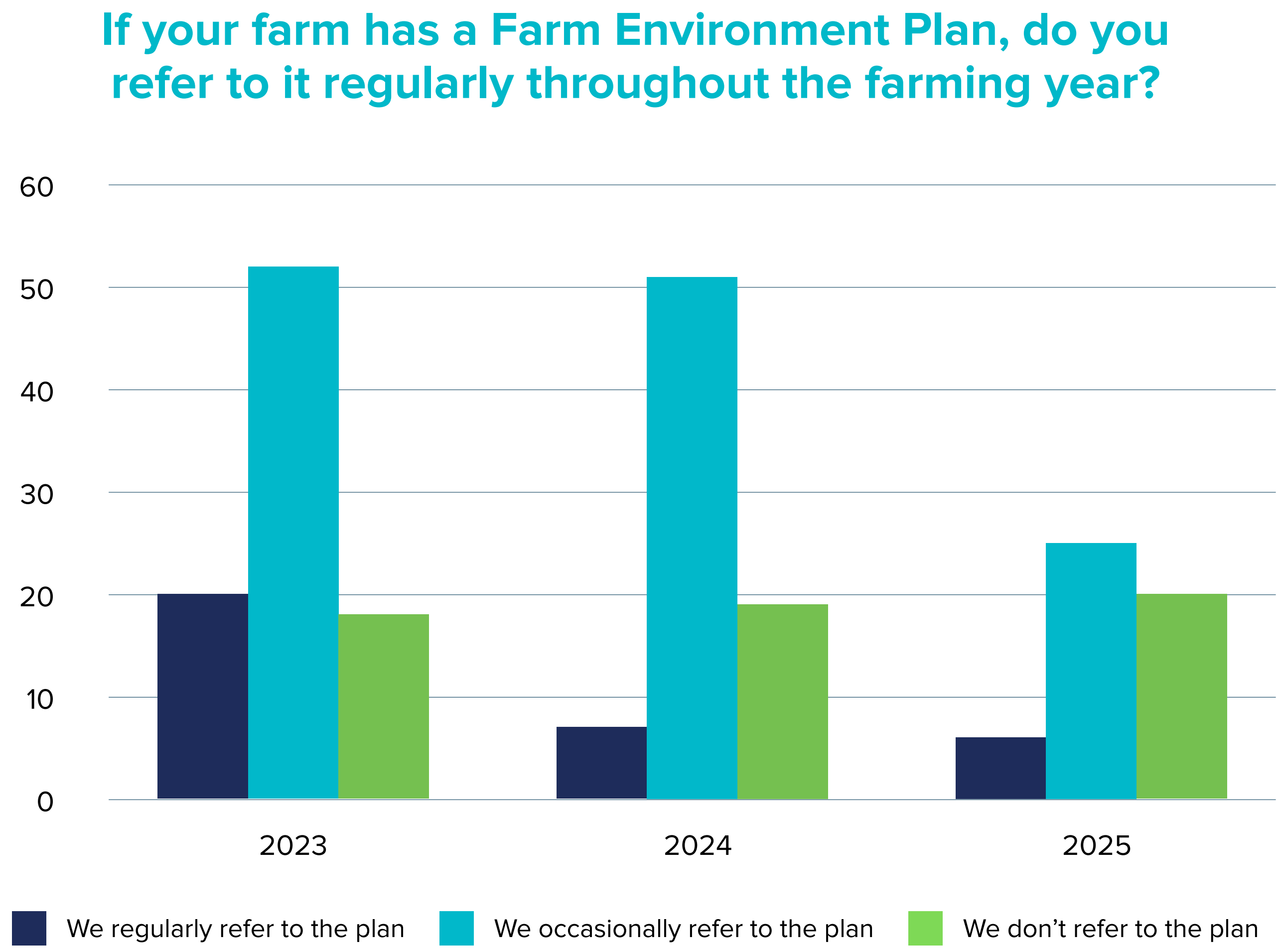


Figure 9: *Farm Environment Plan usage*[3]

[3] 2025 responses: n=51; 2024 n=77; 2023: n=90

Monitoring on farm

In keeping with the past three years' survey responses, the most common things respondents monitor on-farm are fertiliser placement, rainfall, growth rates (grass, crops) and soil.

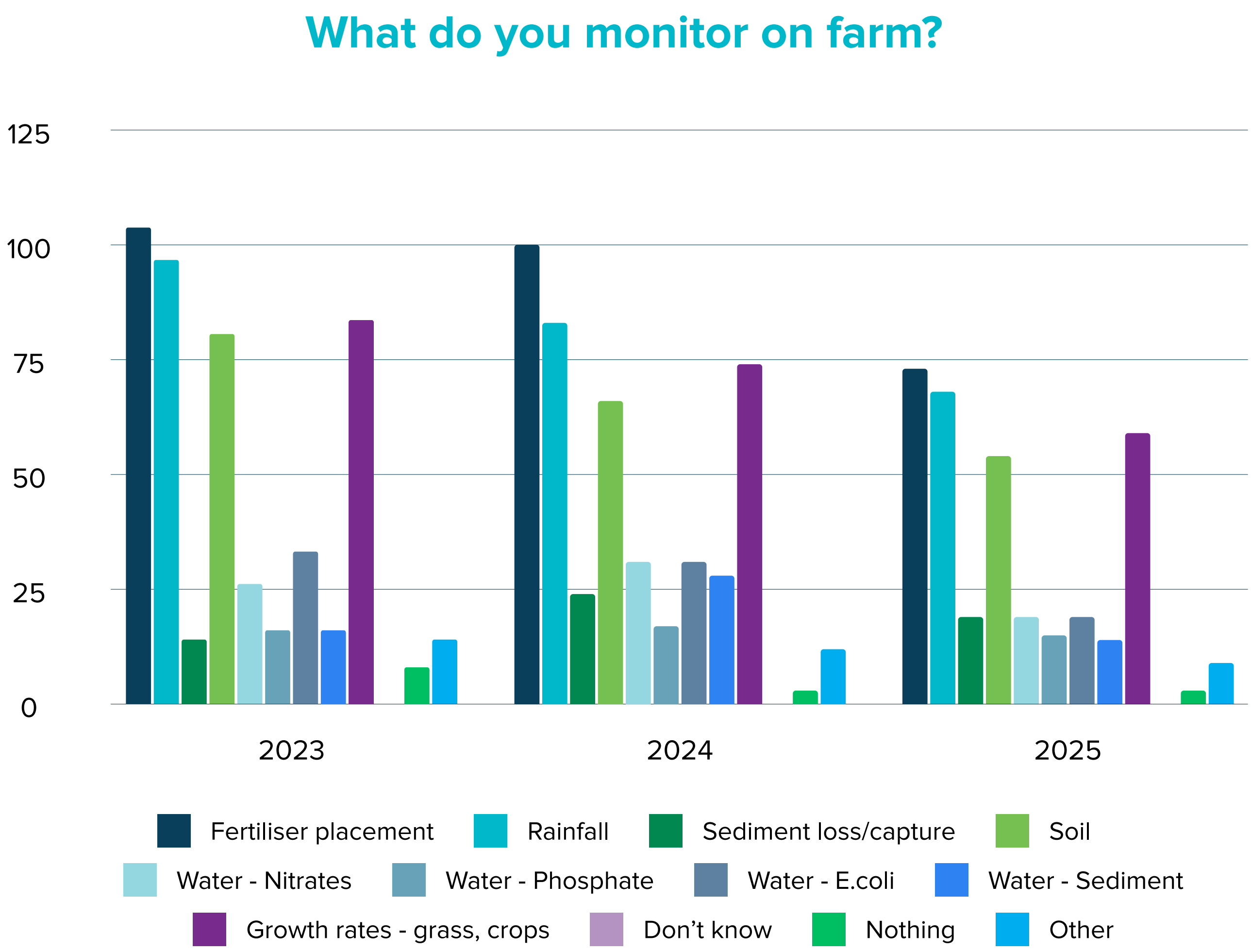


Figure 10: *Monitoring on-farm*

Farm water quality and Southland water quality

As in previous years, most respondents for 2025 rate their own farm's water quality as either excellent (52%) or good (38%), with few respondents rating it as fair (8%) or poor (1%).

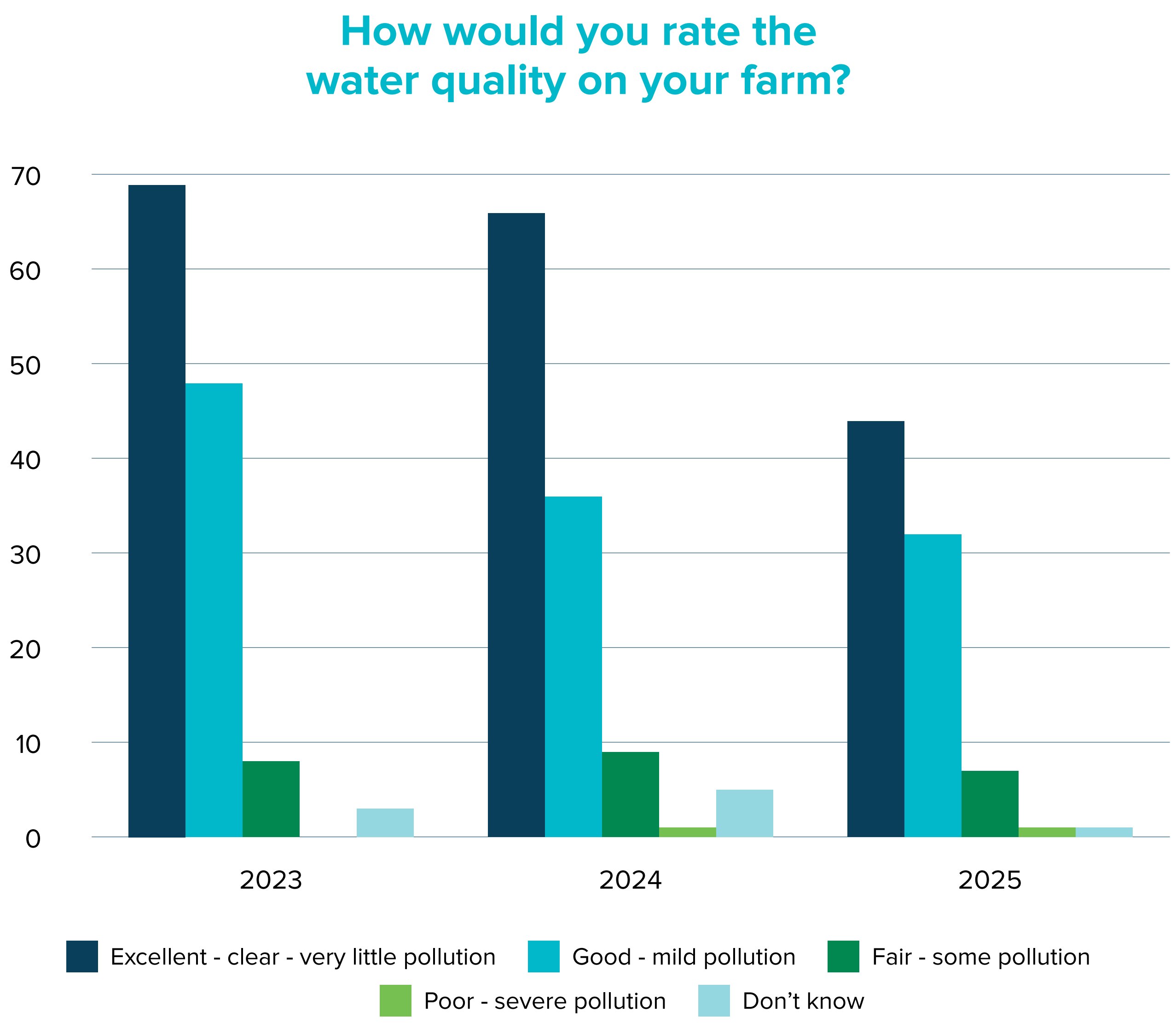


Figure 11: *Water quality on-farm*[4]

[4] 2025 responses: n=85; 2024 n=117; 2023: n=128

Why did you select this farm water quality rating?

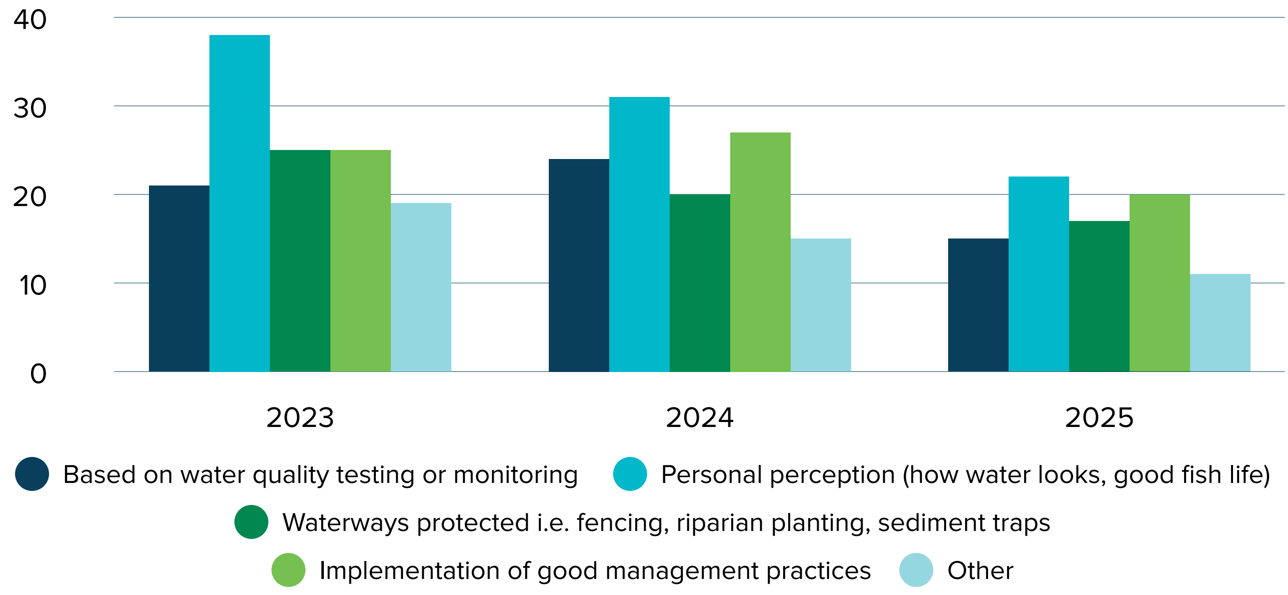


***Figure 12:** Reasons for selecting the water quality they did for their farm*[5]

Respondents, not just farmers, were also asked their opinion of the region's water quality. Only 12% of respondents felt Southland's waterways were excellent (clear, with very little pollution). Most respondents (69%) felt there was some or mild pollution, while 13% felt there was severe pollution among Southland's waterways, ranking the water quality poor. This could be that individual farmer perception, knowing their land and water, rated water quality more highly than those who are not directly linked to a waterway.

What's your view of water quality in Southland waterways overall?

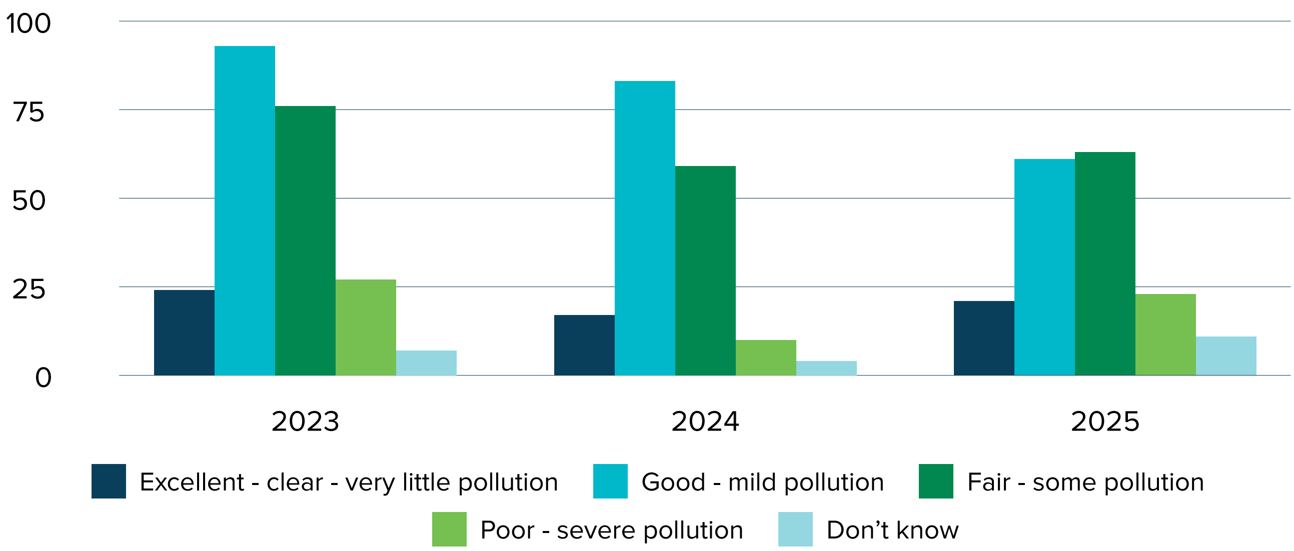


***Figure 13:** Southland water quality*[6]

[5,6] 2025 responses: n=85; 2024 n=117; 2023: n=128; 2022 n=116

Wellbeing

Respondents' sense of wellbeing has increased this year, with 44% of respondents often feeling optimistic about the future (up from 32% last year). More people are also connecting with people outside of work/home often (49% compared to 43% in 2024), and more are taking part in social activities outside of work often (60%, up from 36% last year).

Respondents reported they were often making decisions easily (60%, up from 50% in 2024).

More respondents felt relaxed some of the time (45%, up from 37%) and often (38%), up from last year's response (36%).

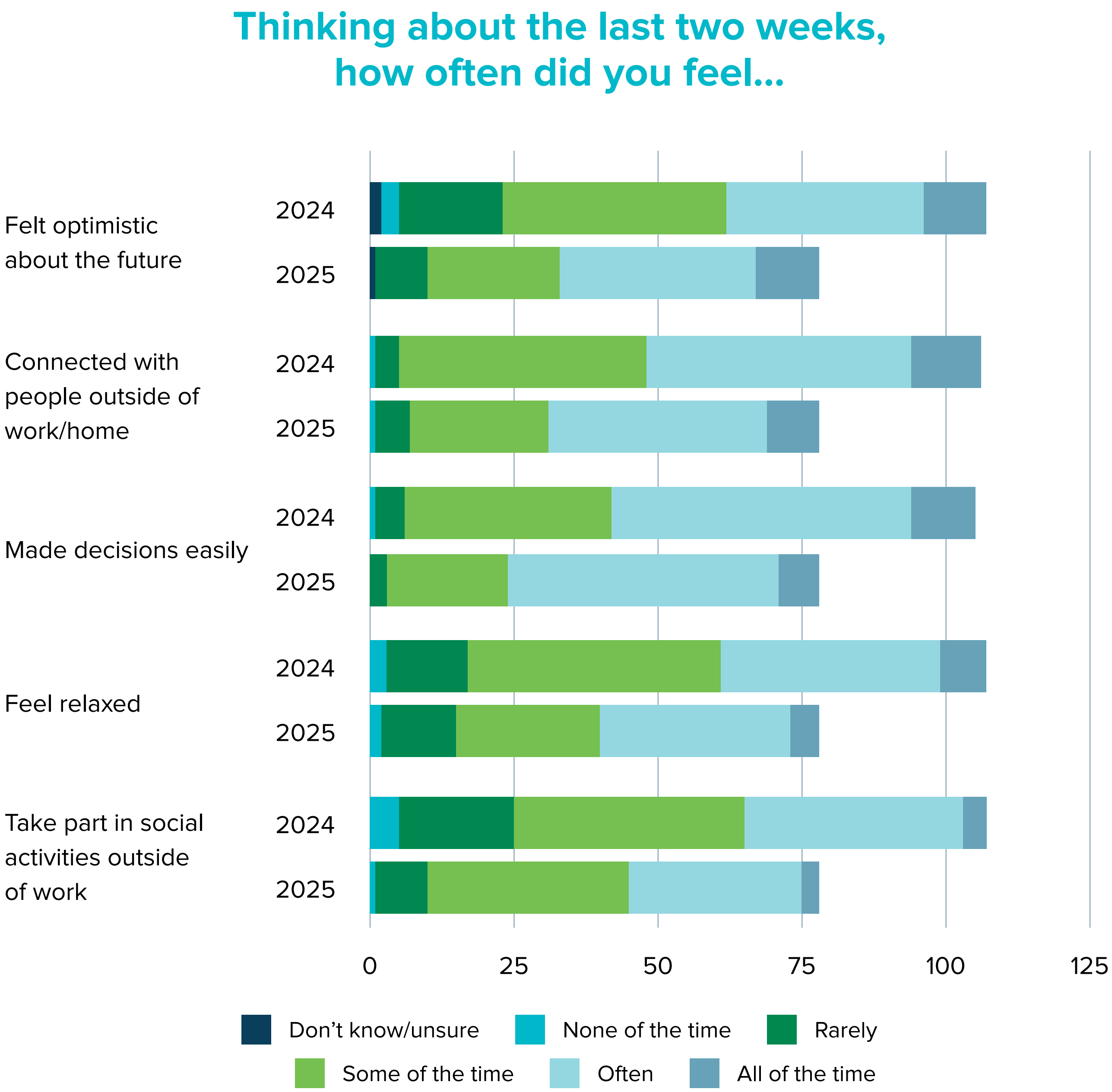


Figure 14: *Comparable wellbeing questions*[7]

[7] 2025 n=78; 2024 n=107

Most important thing you learnt from Thriving Southland in the last year

In comparison to previous years where this question has fielded more than a hundred responses (n=120 in 2023, 94 in 2024), just 91 respondents in 2025 gave insights as to what they had learnt from Thriving Southland in the past year.

In keeping with previous years, almost a third of respondents reported that Thriving Southland was pivotal in providing opportunities to join and support Catchment Groups. Collectively, 22% reported access to leaders, science, research and information was beneficial.

Mentions of tactical information increased this year (11%, up from 4% in 2024 and 2023).

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Q. What is the most important thing you learnt from Thriving Southland in the last year?	2023 (n=120)	2024 (n=94)	2025 (n=91)
Leaders/improve farming practices	16	10	13
Funding support	0	2	4
Tactical, e.g. Native seeds, recycling, fertiliser use	5	4	10
Opportunities/ support for CGs/ supporting farmers	32	31	26
Science/research/information/experts	21	13	7
Takes time for change	2	2	4
Events	10	4	7
International perceptions	1	2	-
Nothing/not sure	26	21	12
Other	11	5	8

Table 3: *The most important thing you've learnt from Thriving Southland*

Respondents identified several positive learnings. The following is a sample of responses:

About the organisation

- “How important their role and existence are in making sure that catchment groups can be successful in Southland. Without their people, catchment groups wouldn’t be effective.”
- “They (Thriving Southland) care deeply about catchment groups but are aware without funding, their ability to effect change is limited.”
- “Thriving has a very good network and provides a lot of good information to farmers so they can improve the environmental performance of their farms.”
- “They have a huge reach into the community and are adding a lot of value in focus areas that haven’t been supported before”
- “The work Thriving Southland does goes beyond Catchment Groups. The support they offer for community-linked projects has been fantastic.”

Knowledge and information

- “The range of different projects of interest to each group, not a roll out to try one size fits all.”
- “Keep going! Progress over perfection, catchment groups motivation and action go up and down but as long as we are slowly making progress, we are doing well.”
- “The ability to facilitate change through science and local partnerships.”

Events

- “Visiting the Limehills site. The Woolshed discussion at Woodlands and seeing innovations such as the electric cherry orchard and Hop farm.”
- “Their Tech day at Waimumu lead us to getting livestock collars.”
- “I was impressed with the landscape science presentation and would like to see again, pest control plans and approach in that catchment.”

FEEDBACK

Feedback

This section presents information that may guide Thriving Southland in the upcoming year, such as information on where farmers seek advice on Good Management Practice and what information and support they seek.

Source of Good Management Practice (GMP) advice

Similar to previous years, most respondents in 2025 reported they sourced GMP advice from other farmers (71%, up from 67% in 2024 and 65% in 2023). More respondents sourced GMP advice from catchment group events in 2025 (51%) than sector support (45%) – in contrast to last year's results (49% and 54% respectively).

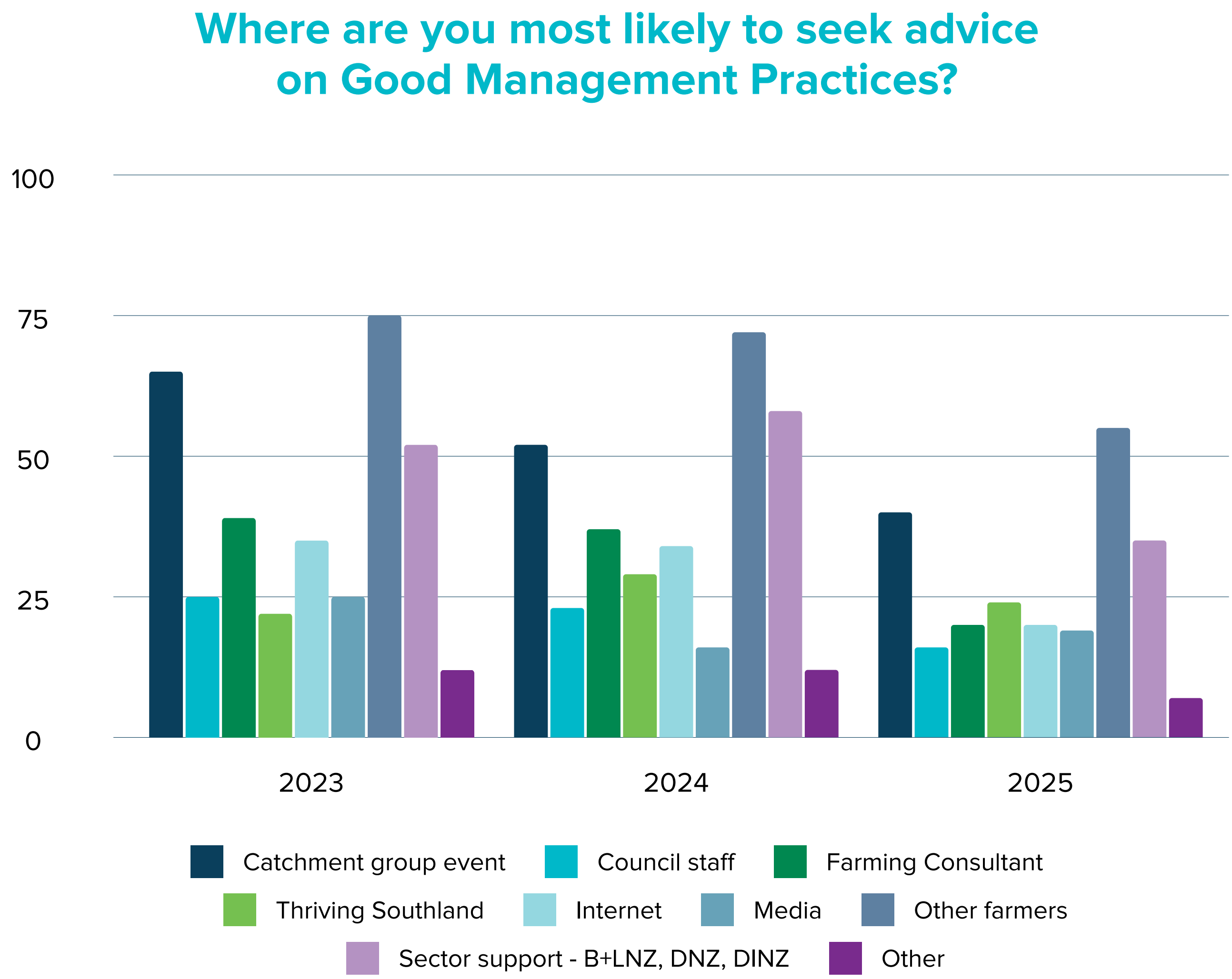

Figure 15: *Source of GMP advice*[8]

[8] Note that this was a multiple-selection question in all years, i.e., the respondent could give more than one answer. Percentages here therefore represent responses over sample, and will add to more than 100%.

Supporting other farmers

The 2024 survey included a new question: "In the past 12 months, how have you supported another farmer on their change journey, or how has another farmer supported you?"

This year, 55 respondents answered the question (down from 66 last year), of which 64% stated they had supported other farmers through practical assistance and discussion groups.

- "Networking through catchment group"
- "Through discussions with other farmers as to the work the Catchment Group is involved with, and trying to raise awareness and engagement in this area."
- "Using ideas about how to manage winter grazing especially with weather events."
- "Showed another farm how to block graze winter crops with sheep, greatly reduces mud, runoff and improves animal welfare."

Q. In the past 12 months how have you supported another farmer on their change journey or how has another farmer supported you?	**2024 responses**	**2025 responses**
Practical assistance / sharing farming practices and knowledge	12	14
Hosting, facilitating or attending events	10	5
Discussion (either individual conversations or as part of discussion groups)	13	21
Mentoring	1	2
Unspecified	4	2
Did not help or unsure	26	9

***Table 4:** Farmer Support*

Information and support needed for farming business

In keeping with the previous three years, most respondents to this year's survey wanted certainty around rules and regulations and their timeframes (up 10% on last year), understanding the expectations and timeframes of Local and Central Government rules and regulations (up 1% on last year), and how these applied to their farm (up 9% on last year).

Respondents showed an increased desire for engagement with processors/cooperatives (up 6%), sharing farmer-driven innovation (up 5%), and engagement with other farmers (up 3%).

Notably, compared to 2024, there were 9% fewer respondents eager for information and support on understanding and addressing their farm's environmental changes, and understanding consumer expectations and market trends (down 6% from 2024).

Q. What information and support would benefit your farming business the most over the next 18 months? (tick as many as you like)	**2023 (n-113)**	**2024 (n=104)**	**2025 (n=76)**
Certainty around rules and regulations and their timeframes	67%	56%	66%
Understanding current rules and regulations and how they apply to my farm	65%	49%	54%
Understand expectations and timeframes of Local and Central Government rules and regulations	56%	56%	57%
Interpretation of new relevant science	43%	46%	45%
Sharing farmer driven innovation	47%	41%	46%
Engagement with other farmers	43%	38%	41%
Understanding and addressing my farm's environmental changes	42%	35%	26%
Applying current rules and regulations on my farm	49%	27%	36%
Understanding consumer expectations and market trends	28%	28%	22%
Succession planning	26%	31%	33%
Attraction and retention of staff	22%	12%	13%
Information on climate change and its impact	16%	11%	12%
Engagement with processors/cooperatives	22%	19%	25%
Financial advice and planning	24%	21%	26%
Professional farm advisory services	17%	17%	16%
Engagement with local sector support	18%	16%	14%
Improving animal welfare	16%	13%	16%
Other	3%	12%	4%

Table 5: *Information and support needed*

Do you know your next steps towards your future goal?

In the 2024 survey, we introduced a new question around goals. This year, slightly fewer respondents reported they knew the next steps towards future goals, with 23% unsure and 10% who did not know their next steps.

Q. Do you know your next steps towards your future goal?	2024 (n=106)	2025 (n=78)
Yes	71%	67%
No	6%	10%
Unsure	24%	23%

Table 6: *Future goals*

Resources needed for catchment

This year most respondents were eager for practical support for on-farm change (such as Farm Environmental Management Plans), and project funding support (53% respectively). Requests for speakers and experts dropped 6% over the past year (51% compared to 57%).

What resources would support your local Catchment Group to thrive over the next 18 months?

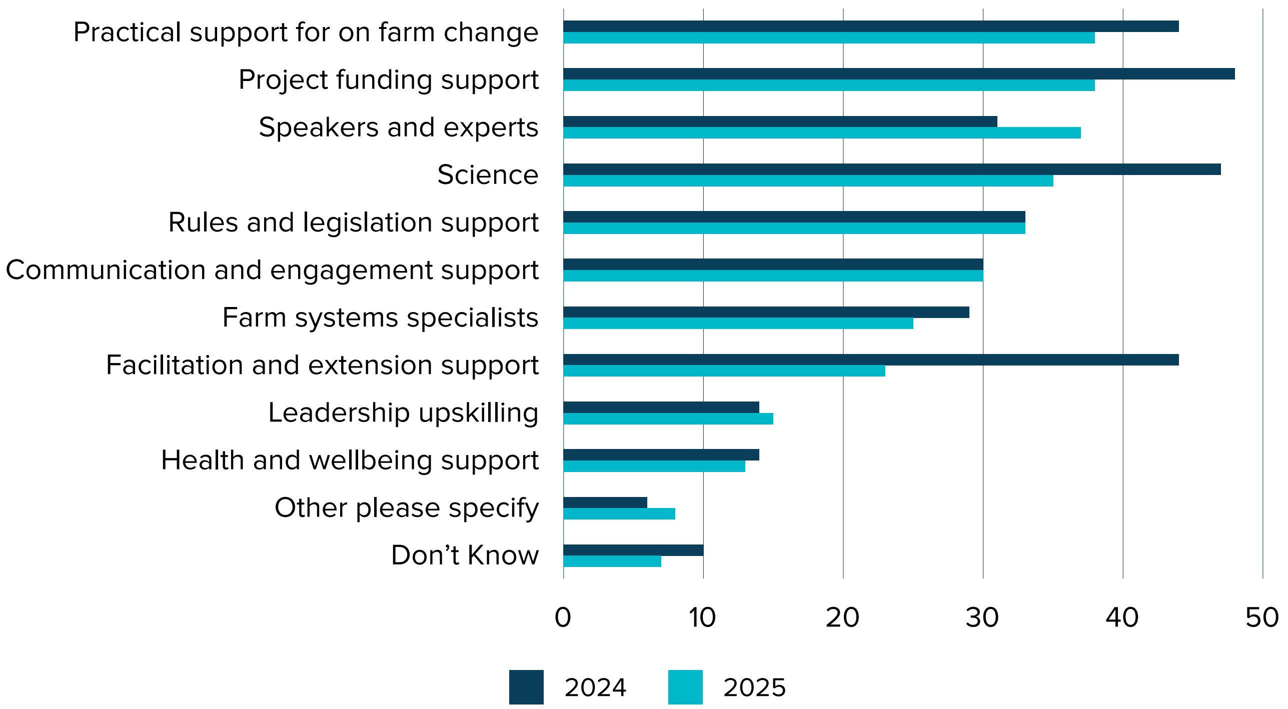

Figure 16: *Resources needed for catchment*[9]

[9] (n=72)

Iwi connection

The percentage of respondents noting a "high degree" level of involvement between local iwi and Catchment Groups has not changed in the past year (6%), however there has been a marked increase in those reporting a "moderate" level of involvement with their local iwi (15%, up from 6% in 2024).

When asked to what degree Catchment Group members are learning about what matters to iwi, the percentage of respondents reporting "not at all" was considerably lower than the past two years (11% compared to 16% in 2024 and 21% in 2023). Meanwhile, 15% of respondents reported "to a moderate degree" (up from 8% in 2024 and 9% in 2023).

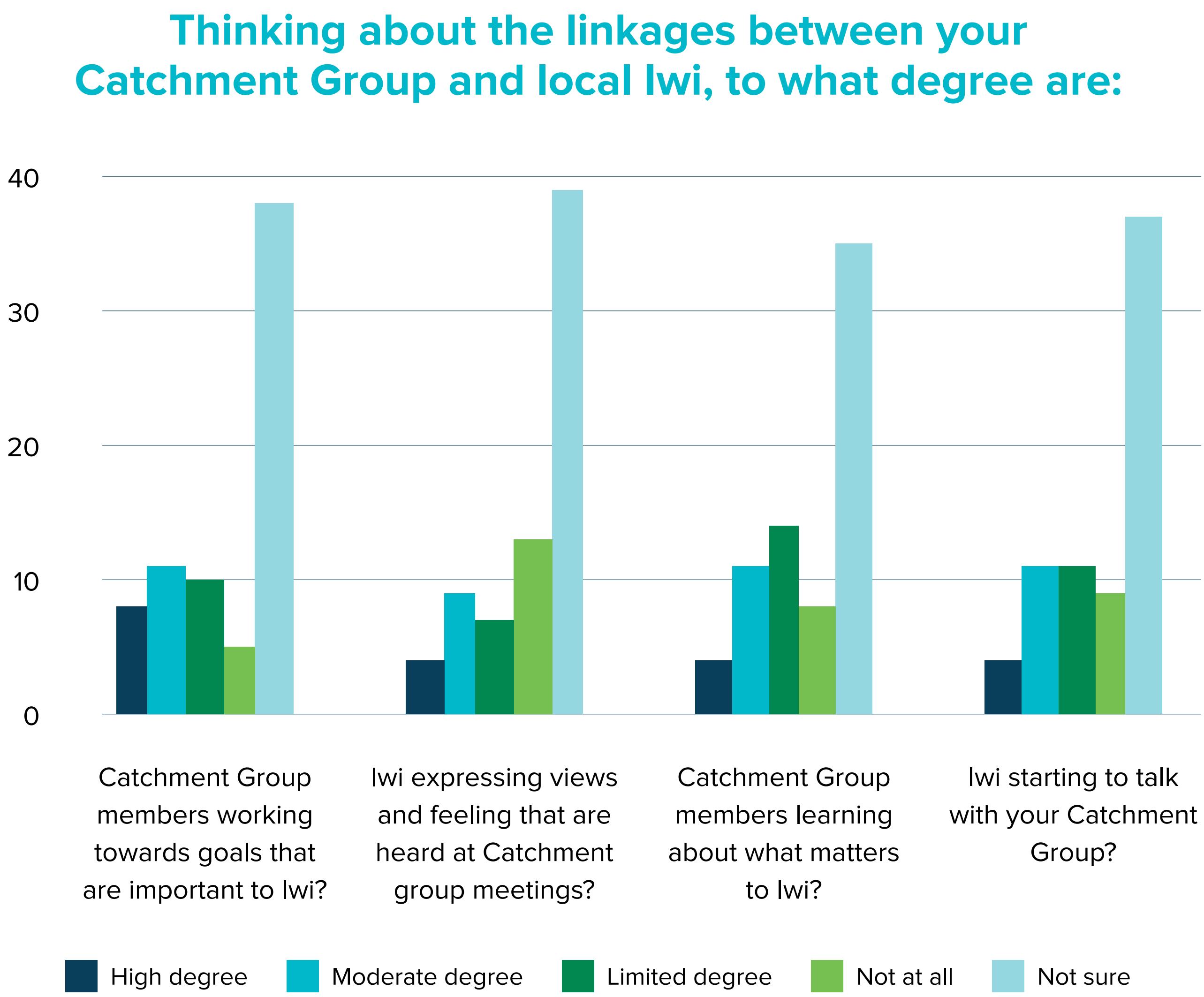

Figure 17: *Iwi connection*[10]

[10] (n=73)

Effectiveness of Thriving Southland

More than a third of respondents felt Thriving Southland was effective in helping the Catchment Group achieve its goals (35%, up from 27% last year) and was working well to provide requested support to the Catchment Group to a high degree (36%, up from 33% last year).

Fewer respondents stated they didn't know or were unsure of Thriving Southland's effectiveness in helping the Catchment Group achieve its goals (30%, down 8% on 2024) or its level of support (34%, down 6%).

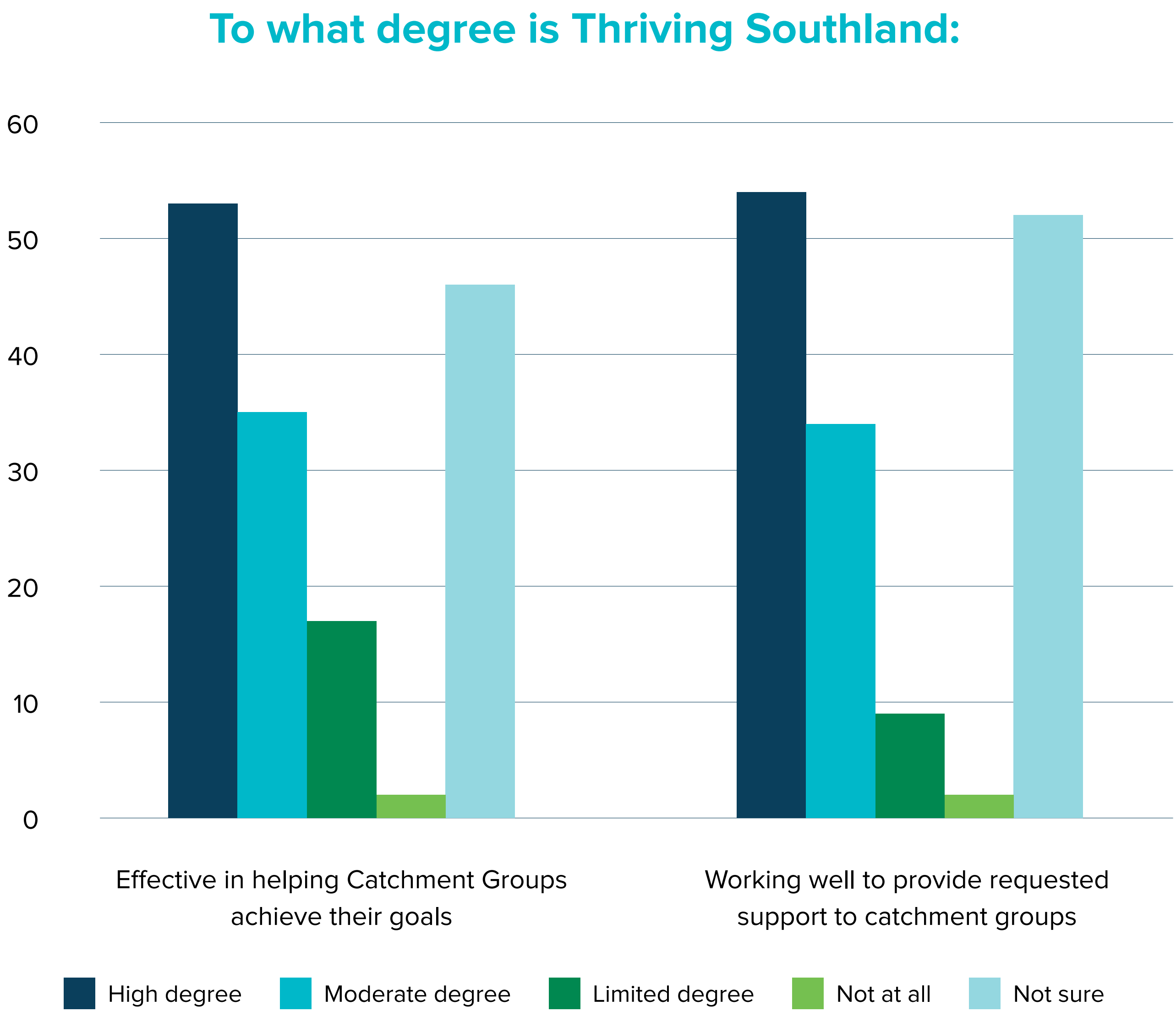

Figure 18: *Thriving Southland effectiveness*[11]

[11] (n=153)

Collaboration of sector groups / industry associations

Awareness of how sector groups/industry associations collaborate with Catchment Groups remains low, with 40% of respondents 'unsure' of the level of collaboration (down from 49% last year, and 41% in 2023).

There was however a noted increase in the percentage of respondents who reported a high degree of collaboration between sector groups/industry associations and Catchment Groups increased (9%, up from 6% in 2024), and a moderate or limited degree of involvement (49% collectively, up from 46% in 2024).

To what degree do sector groups/industry associations collaborate well with the Catchment Groups?

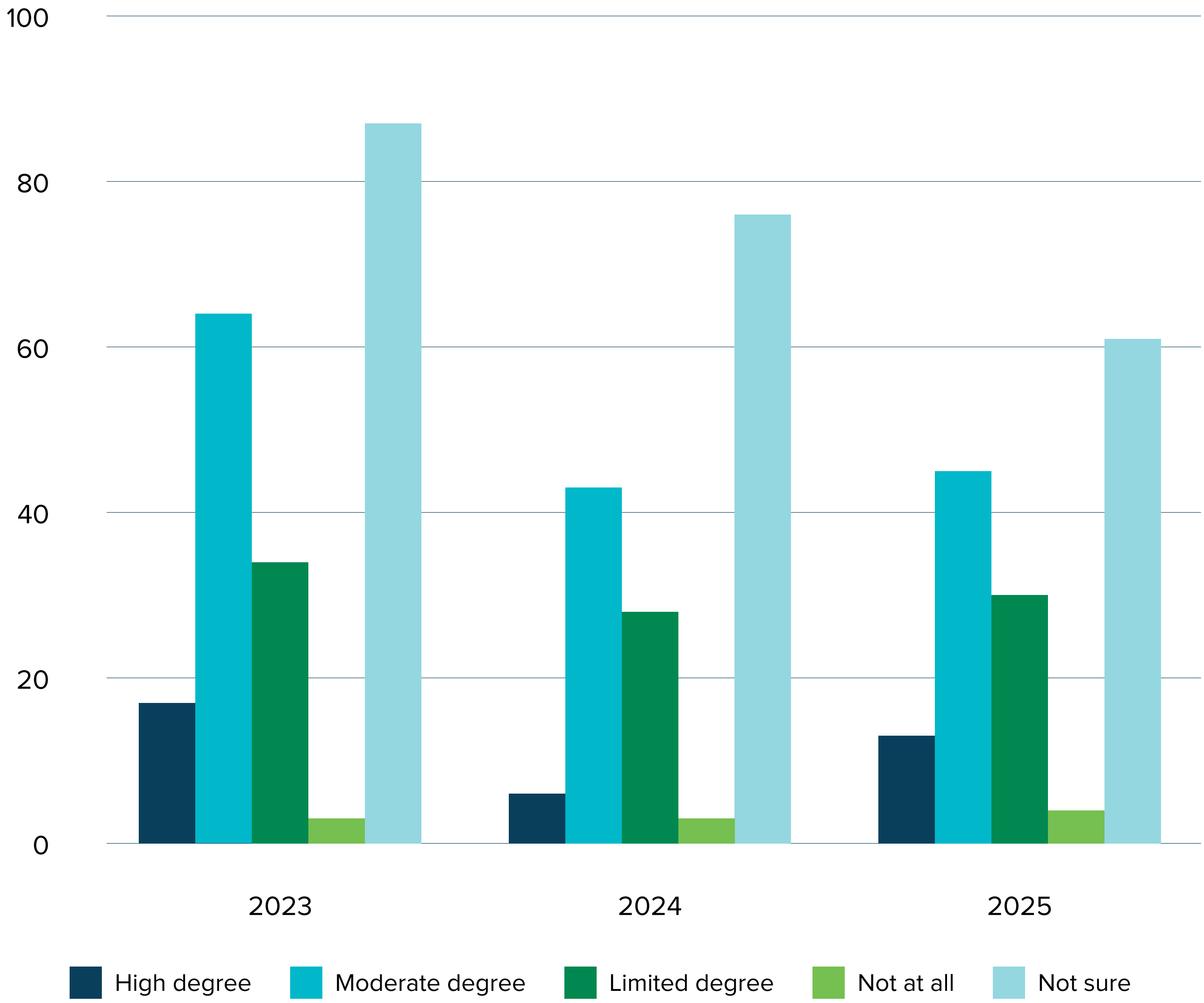

Figure 19: *Sector group/industry association collaboration*[12]

[12] 2025 n=153; 2024 n=156; 2023 n=205

Catchment Group evaluation

In keeping with previous years' surveys, Catchment Group members continue to work well together, with respondents predominantly reporting a high degree of confidence in Catchment Groups making newcomers feel welcome, focused on solutions and understanding issues, and creating an environment where views can be expressed and heard openly.

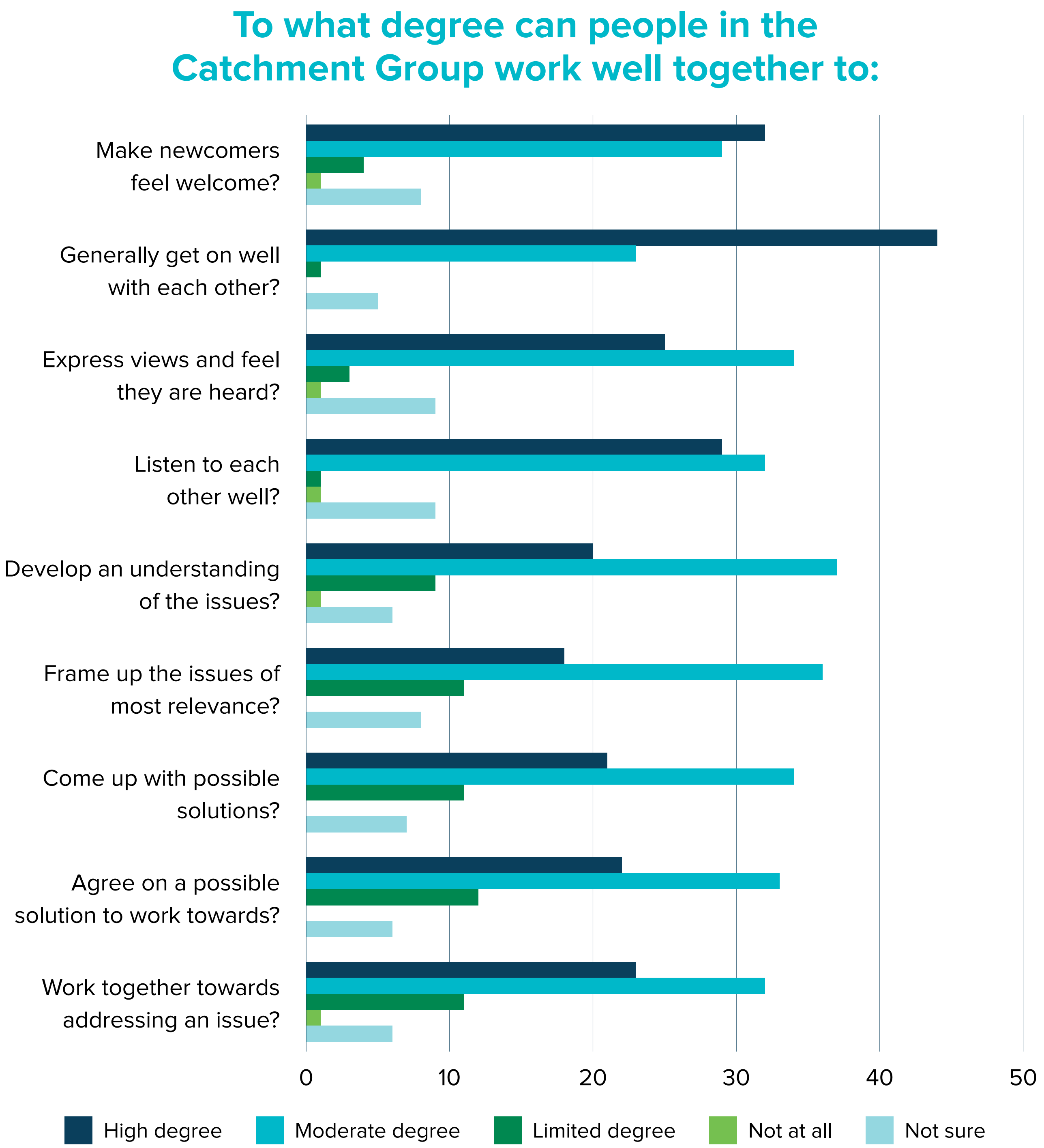

Figure 20: *Catchment group collaboration evaluation*[13]

[13] (n=74)

There was a slight reduction in confidence in how well Catchment Groups were led in 2025 with respondents rating, to a moderate or high degree, that Catchment Groups were well led (72%, down 8% from 2024), well-coordinated (73%, down 6% on 2024), and well-run (71%, down 7% on 2024).

To what degree is the catchment group

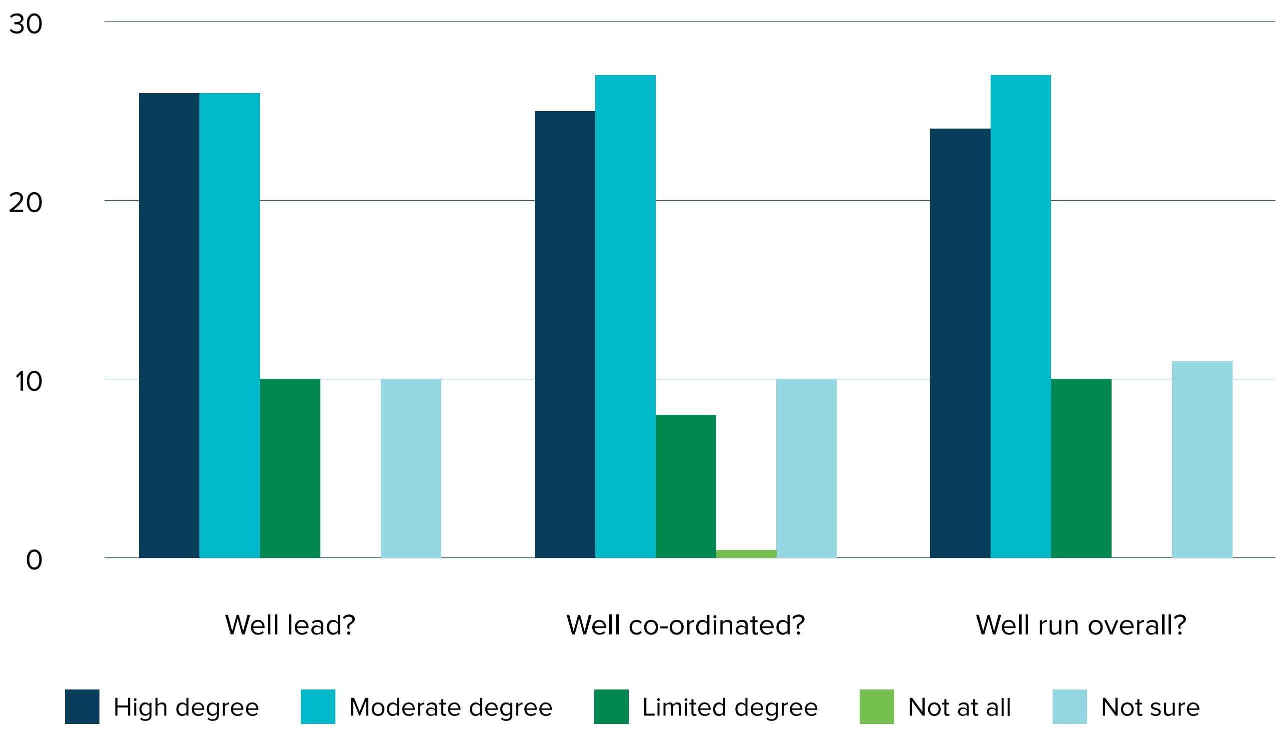

Figure 21: *Catchment group leadership evaluation*[14]

[14] (n=73)

Pride – what makes you proud of farming

Producing a quality product while nurturing the land and farming sustainably is something farmers take great pride in. Although the number of respondents to this question decreased compared to previous years, similar themes emerged: sustainability, quality product, great community, people, and lifestyle.

Q. What makes you proud to be a farmer, involved in farming in Southland?	2023 (n=111)	2024 (=91)	2025 (n=69)
Our sustainability efforts	35	20	14
Producing a quality product/stock	33	13	14
Feeding the nation/ world/ supporting the country	14	8	7
Our great community	4	6	8
Our historical connections to the land	7	8	3
Our animal welfare standards/love animals	11	7	7
Improving things for future generations	5	8	6
The lifestyle	19	6	11
The people	10	5	7
Dynamic industry/ innovation	8	4	3
Other	13	6	2

Table 7: *Pride in farming in Southland*[15]

[15] Note that this was an open answer question i.e., the respondent could write in an answer. The data has been segmented aligning comments to these themes. Some comments included several themes so the totals will add up to more than 'n'.

Further Comments

There were 39 further comments in the 2025 survey. These are a sample.

Complimentary of Thriving Southland:

- “I think you have been doing a good job, and I appreciate all the coordinating and idea spinning you do.”
- “Thriving [Southland], in my opinion, is the reason that so much environmental action is kickstarted – you are helping the community, which helps more of the community. Keep up the amazing work!”
- “I appreciate all the assistance from Thriving Southland.”

Suggestions for improvement / to address:

- “Keep facilitating catchment groups and empower farmers to lead these local actions. Make sure you involve experts to help stay up to date and connected to the newest science. Keep doing the great mahi!”
- “Keep up the good work Thriving Southland. You are going well. But from what I hear and see, there is still a major problem with participation and perception with a large number of highly profit-oriented farmers/managers (and their associated shareholders).”
- “People are very busy about the time a meeting is announced; rarely suits during good weather. Newcomers to the district still feel awkward, and old residents are shy of new faces.”
- “Good communication by persons supporting Thriving Southland. Surprising lack of knowledge of real science/engineering and mathematics within leadership groups. Decisions should link everyone in our community together.”

An eagerness to be part of a Catchment Group:

- “How can we establish an urban group?”
- “Our group has gone into hiding but needs more involvement with members.”
- “I have joined the group only weeks ago... and attended one function before Christmas. The group is very friendly and inclusive, and I appreciate their offer of help with a native bush reserve in the catchment.”

Focus Areas

There are some clear areas for focus identified in the 2025 survey:

Farmer Wellbeing

- Farmers are feeling more optimistic and are connecting more socially, which is positively impacting wellbeing. There is an opportunity to continue to foster social opportunities and engage in wellbeing initiatives that encourage interaction beyond work.

Enhance Practical Support and Project Funding

- Farmers are asking for more practical, on-farm support and funding for projects rather than just access to speakers or experts. There are opportunities to provide resources for practical assistance and allocate funding to support on-the-ground projects.

Support Peer Networks and Farmer-Led Initiatives

- Peer support is highly valued, with over 60% of respondents supporting others and discussion groups seen as important. There are opportunities to strengthen and expand peer networks, and encourage more farmer-led initiatives and discussions.

Build Collaboration with Iwi and Sector Groups

- Interaction with iwi is increasing but still limited and awareness of sector/industry group collaboration is low. There are opportunities to proactively build relationships with iwi and increase visibility and engagement with sector and industry groups.

Address Water Quality Perceptions and Realities

- Farmers rate their own water quality highly, but perceptions of Southland's water quality overall are less positive. We can bridge the gap between individual and regional perceptions by sharing best practices, data, and success stories around water quality.

2025 Annual Survey

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