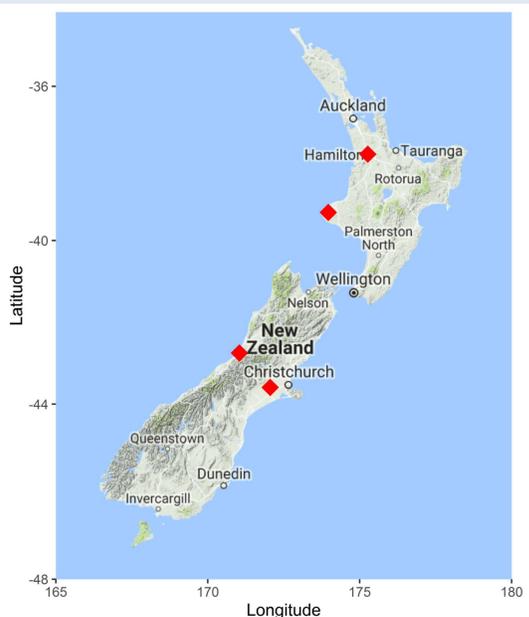


Farmer decision-making around livestock trading practices

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Background

- Many economically important diseases spread through livestock movements
- Risk of disease transmission through livestock trade depends on (a) animal characteristics and (b) farmers' biosecurity practices (e.g. quarantine, testing)
- Failure to account for farmers decision making on trading can undermine the success of disease control programme

Objectives

- To understand how farmers make decisions around buying and selling livestock

Materials and Methods

- Qualitative interviews on 19 farmers and 1 livestock agent from 4 different geographical locations in New Zealand (red square in the map)

Key factors farmers consider when buying animals

- Time/labour to find cows
- ↓ hassle in trade deals



- Trustworthy price
- ↓ transport cost/animal stress



- "Good" cows
- Disease risk



NZ farmers rely on livestock agents because they expect agents to...

- Have local knowledge of available livestock
- Solve conflicts in deals

- Understand fair market prices
- Access to nationwide livestock sale information

- Know the seller's trading history and decency
- Check each individual cow's status



Discussion and Conclusion

- Stock agents are key actors that influence farmers' decision making in livestock trading in New Zealand
- Both stock agents and farmers value trusted relationships, which adds "security" and reduces "uncertainty" in livestock trading
- Farmers expect stock agents to have good knowledge about disease epidemiology, but there are currently no formal qualifications or training required to be a stock agent in New Zealand
- Some farmers rely on stock agents too much to assess the credibility of livestock they are buying and may not seek independent and objective data on the disease status of the selling farm
- Livestock agents use their established networks to match buyers and sellers, which creates some stability in movement network patterns over time in New Zealand (Hidano et al., 2016 *Prev Vet Med* 133, 31-41)
- Further studies are warranted to understand what is "good" cow and "decent" agent for farmers

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