

Veteran vet calls it a day

By RACHEL MACDONALD

Long-serving Culverden vet John Turner has finally hung up his overalls, almost 42 years to the day since he started his first job.

He will be farewelled by friends, colleagues and clients at a function tonight, where the guest list had already attracted more than 200 RSVPs a week ago.

John grew up in Southland and said he always knew he wanted to be a vet.

"So I studied at Massey after leaving school and got my first job, in Waikari, by fluke, really.

"It had been advertised and a few of us had applied, but I thought I'd call in on my way home from the North Island. I got offered the position then and there.

"It was just what I had dreamed of. There was lots of driving in those days, but we treated everything and the variety of animals kept my interest engaged."

He says modern vets now tend to specialise, given the sheer amount of technological advance and information constantly coming online.

"The problems we see are still the same, but technology has leapt ahead," he says. "We now do a lot of digital cow and sheep pregnancy scanning, for example, so that

farmers can plan the future management of resources such as feed."

The start of his career also coincided with the introduction of irrigation to the region in the 1980s, he says, and as dairying gained traction and grew, he grew with it.

"The movement towards dairy was something different, with a lot of potential."

Rather than being traditional family businesses, these were bigger clients with specific expectations.

"So we started North Canterbury Veterinary Clinics, with me here in Culverden, and other partners in Waikari, Cheviot and Amberley.

"The four of us were good friends, getting together monthly, and learning from each other too.

"Since then, we've grown the business by taking on good people who have the same values that we have had right from the beginning."

John also tips his hat to the local North Canterbury community in general when it comes to the practice's success.

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Stepping into retirement . . . "The people up here are amazing," says Culverden vet John Turner. "They have stuck with us through thick and thin, and I cannot say how much I have appreciated that support."

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