



**Title:** “Start them young”

**Description:** Freddie Hutton practises on his father’s dog whistle.

**Photographer:** Tansy Hutton

**Where, when:** Southland, October 2021

**Sustainability?** Tailing is as much about family, friends, and community as it is about animal husbandry. On this warm spring day, my son Freddie was attending his second year of ‘tailing’ (that’s what us southern farmers call docking). This year he was able to help push some of the 4500 lambs through the yard. He also managed to get his mouth on his uncle’s dog whistle to start practicing.

It’s always a big day for the farmer who needs to make sure they bring in all the ewes and lambs. Each lamb needs to be vaccinated, have their tail docked, scratched to prevent scabby mouth. The boys have their testicles ringed. Each lamb is checked by at least 4 people who will be scanning each animal visually for any abnormalities or ill health.

Tailing is such an important day, not just because it ensures each one of the thousands of lambs who pass through is in the best possible health, but also because it’s a day when farmers come together for what can sometimes be their first ‘get together’ after lambing. For a sheep farmer, lambing (give months) can be the most draining and stressful time of year. Its often made up of long dark days, and very few social outings. So, when tailing comes around it’s a welcome time to work together, share food, talk, and de-stress. It is a long hard day, but is usually filled with music and laughter. Farming is a wonderful mix of ‘alone time’ and hard work, and real rural community connections.

Commitment to sustainable farming grows from loving the land, the animals and the lifestyle. It's different from commuting from home to work in someone's office – our home is our workspace, and vice versa. Keeping our eyes and ears open day and year round allows us to read the land, the pasture, the stock, and all the other biodiversity that shares our place.

Freddie is proud to be a budding farmer and we are grateful to give him this opportunity to learn and love it like my husband and I do.

**Photo notes:** *Camera: Canon EOS 800D Settings: f/4, 1/100 sec, ISO 100, 18 mm.*

**Digital specs:** 6,000 x 4,000 pixels (24 MP).

**Key words:** Tailing, Community, Family, rural lifestyle, farming, Tansy Hutton, Ecosystems Photography, Aotearoa, New Zealand, sustainability

**Price:** \$160 (incl. GST) for use of the digital image.

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**Donation:** The price includes a \$100 donation to a sustainability organisation or project of your choice, or otherwise for *Will To Live* <https://www.willtolivenz.com/>. They promote mental health awareness, provide one on one support, free education and wellbeing tools to small rural communities that are often isolated from mental health resources.

**Image Ref:** THu#001 (Please refer to this reference in orders and correspondence).

**Tansy Hutton**  
May 2022