



## **Miniature sheep make their debut at Yealands Estate**

Marlborough-based Yealands Estate has introduced a flock of miniature Babydoll sheep to its vineyards as an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional tractor mowing.

Currently grazing amongst 125 hectares of sauvignon blanc vines that will be grown organically, the Babydolls will help reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions. As the diminutive sheep reach just 45-60cm in height when fully grown, they will not be able to reach (and feast on) the grapes.

A second and third delivery of Babydoll sheep are due at Yealands Estate by October this year and, with 1,000 hectares of vineyard in total to take care of, owner and founder Peter Yealands plans to cross-breed the Babydolls with Saxon merino sheep to grow the herd to 10,000. This will provide additional opportunities in the textile industry (as Babydoll wool is fine and has a high lustre), as well as a possibility of selling niche cuts of meat to restaurants.

This latest initiative is part of Peter Yealands' 100% commitment to best practice 'from the vine to the bottle' and ongoing mission to create New Zealand's first fully sustainable winery. In April 2009, Yealands Estate became the largest winery in New Zealand to achieve carbon neutral status, and the first to be certified carbon neutral since its formation.

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For further information, please contact Pippa Askham at Liberty Wines on 020 7819 0333 or [marketing@libertywine.co.uk](mailto:marketing@libertywine.co.uk)