



The ZQRX index aims to support farmers who use regenerative agricultural practices | Photo source [ZQ](#)

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WOOL SOURCING PLATFORM PROMOTES REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

 FASHION & BEAUTY

The New Zealand Merino Company is encouraging a movement toward regenerative agricultural practices for wool farmers

Spotted: Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming principles and practices whose goals include carbon capture, increasing biodiversity, soil enrichment, improved animal welfare, and even social improvements. It has been [described as](#), “about creating a better, kinder, more positive future for the planet.” Now, the New Zealand Merino Company (NZM) has developed a platform aimed at helping Merino wool growers to adopt regenerative agricultural practices.

NZM had previously established the ZQ, a platform for New Zealand merino growers committed to ethical wool production. Growers awarded the ZQ label meet fibre quality, animal welfare, care for the environment and social responsibility standards. The new ZQRX (ZQ Regenerative Index) platform focuses on helping farmers apply regenerative principles to wool production. These include no-till pasture cropping, composting, holistically-managed grazing, animal integration, silvopasture and more.

The ZQRX index is supported by global Merino wool apparel and footwear brands, such as Allbirds, Smartwool and icebreaker, who are collectively committed to buying wool from farmers supported by the platform. Together, those three brands buy around 2 million kilograms of wool each year and are now committed to sourcing their Merino through the ZQRX platform.

According to NZM, on-farm emissions represent approximately 60 per cent of the emissions associated with wool products. However, regenerative farming represents an opportunity to make big reductions in this figure. John Brakenridge, NZM CEO, [says](#): “ZQRX is an important and necessary evolution of our ethical wool program, ZQ. Through the adoption of regenerative practices that both store more carbon and emit less, we could reduce our on-farm emissions down to zero.”

Farmers are on the frontline of the drive to reduce carbon emissions. As such, we have seen a number of recent innovations that seek to incorporate more sustainable practices into farming. These range from unusual [urban farms](#) to a floating [poultry farm](#).

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Takeaway:

The platform is currently being applied to 167 farms in New Zealand, representing more than two million acres of land. The hope is that as more farms adopt the ZQRX platform, this will result in more carbon being retained and stored in soil and vegetation, as well as additional animal welfare and social responsibility benefits. As global brands adopt the benchmark, it could also benefit farmers who are committed to regenerative agricultural practises. Brakenridge [hopes that ZQRX will be](#), “the start of a global movement toward brands, businesses and growers working together to address critical global issues such as climate change and biodiversity loss. We dream of a day when all wool is farmed with regenerative practices.”