



Steph Mann – Programme Leader and Principal Lecturer (and pony Tam)

I'm a mother and grandmother with a plethora of animals, including horses, dogs, cats, fish, birds, amphibians, pigs and hens. I'm based in the North Island - yes, I work offsite, from home. As you'll find out from studying offsite, there are pros and cons. The best advantage is being able to dig my toes under the warm animal bodies that lurk under my desk during winter, with the fire in my office roaring!

Having studied and now working "off site" for Otago Polytechnic, I'm really aware of the difficulties that can arise, and have some tricks for being part of the class, instead of feeling isolated.

I have worked for Otago Polytechnic since 2004 at the School of Veterinary Nursing. I am a Principal Lecturer and the Programme Leader of the Rural Animal programmes delivered by Te Kura Oraka Kararehe | the School of Animal Health. I also run our equine short courses.

I come from a background of horses and farming, predominantly sheep, cattle and deer. I have previously been a senior coach and assessor for NZ Pony Clubs, I'm a registered veterinary nurse and a recidivist student.

As well as the education side of things, I'm very much involved in our industry and am on the Exec. Committees of both the NZ Veterinary Nurse Association, and the Large Animal Veterinary Technicians Group of NZ Veterinary Association.



Catherine Rice – Principal Lecturer

I started my veterinary nursing career working with horses and training as a RCVS VN in Northern Ireland. I practiced mostly in a small animal and equine hospital, later working in rural practice and as a locum. I moved home to NZ about a decade ago and have enjoyed working at OP since then. Based in Dunedin, I work both with on-campus students veterinary nursing students and distance RAT learners. My area of interest is the connection between human and animal welfare. I have recently joined a '[One Welfare](#)' working group developing free access guidance for veterinary, medical and social services professionals on the link between animal and human abuse and neglect.

My family life is busy enough, a husband and three lovely children as well as Jojo the cat. Just waiting for my daughter to be old enough and we will add a pony, maybe two.



Selena Johnson – Lecturer

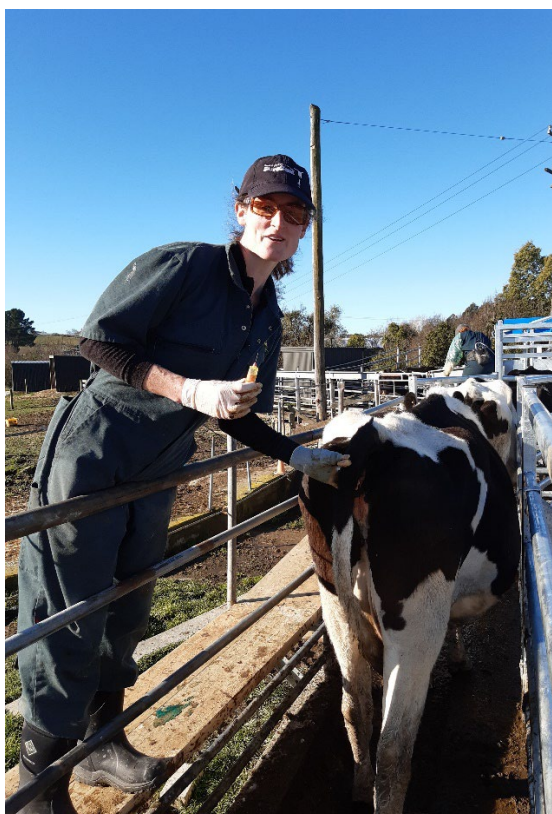
Kia ora, I'm Selena — one of the lecturers in the Rural Animal programmes.

I'm based in Palmerston North, and I teach and support learners online via distance.

I first joined the team in 2021 after completing the NZCAT RAT course in 2018/19 and working casually as a marker. Since then, I've completed my Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education, which has helped me better support learners in the online space.

Outside of teaching, I work as a Large Animal Veterinary Technician (RAVT) at a local clinic. I've also completed a Bachelor of Science at Massey University and have always had a strong connection to rural life — even if I wasn't born a farmer's daughter, I spent plenty of time on friends' farms and around horses growing up.

I understand the challenges of studying online while juggling work and life, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you're feeling stuck or need support. My office days are Wednesday and Thursday, 7am–4:30pm, but I work flexibly when needed. Email is the best way to get in touch.



Fleur Chapple – Lecturer

I hold a Bachelor of Veterinary Technology (BVT) from Massey University. My interests have always been rural animal focused. Most of my experience is with cattle, predominantly in the dairy industry. I have spent most of my working life to date as a career technician in mixed animal practices within Canterbury, aside from a brief stint in Western Australia. I have enjoyed the logistics of running a capable, efficient and respected team of technicians. My main interests have always been calf health, preventative herd health and ultrasound pregnancy scanning.

These days I live with my partner and our Handy dog, on a farm in North Canterbury. I work as a part-time Lecturer for the Rural Animal Team (School of Animal Health/Te Kura Oraka Kararehe) from the farm. I am also currently a (distance) student at Otago Polytechnic, while I study for my New Zealand Certificate in Adult Tertiary Teaching (NZCATT).

Talking with students is one of my favourite parts of being a Lecturer, so don't be shy about getting in touch.



Rob Mills – Lecturer

I'm an Otago man, and a cow man! I grew up in Dunedin, but I've spent much of my adult life living on the banks of the Mighty Clutha Awa, in Central and South Otago, before returning to the big smoke of Dunners.

As a veterinarian, I started as a mixed practitioner (all species, even cats), before finding my way to a role predominantly dealing with dairy cows, with a few sheep, deer, horses, beefies and pigs thrown in. And now I live with two alpacas (please don't ask why). So "largies" are my thing. I've also held management roles in a large rural veterinary practice, and been involved in all aspects of training clinic staff.

As a teacher of rural animal health workers here at Otago Polytech, my aim is to help you earn a qualification that is directly relevant to the animal health industry – equipping you with the skills and knowledge to make a real difference within veterinary clinics and on farms. You'll most likely see me in your and Anatomy & Physiology and Reproduction & Obstetrics courses, but also lurking in the background of other courses too.



Wendy Jarnet – Senior Lecturer

I completed my Certificate in Rural Animal Technology (Level 5) in 2013 and went on to work predominantly in mixed practice. Alongside this, I am a qualified veterinary nurse, which saw me split my time between small animal surgical support and large animal technician work—particularly during busy seasonal periods such as teat sealing.

My rural animal career has also included contract research projects with Bayer, where I was involved in lameness scoring, blood sampling, milk testing, and managing research herds. In addition, I spent six seasons working as an artificial insemination (AI) technician. I began as a student assistant and later progressed to working independently alongside local AI technicians—work I found both challenging and rewarding.

I have a strong interest in preventative herd health management, with a focus on vaccination protocols, body condition scoring, parasite control, pasture and feed management, and farm systems designed to reduce lameness, injuries, and disease.

Before stepping into my lecturing role in 2022, I worked with Otago Polytechnic as a casual marker over several years. That experience gave me valuable insight into supporting students in their learning journey, which I now combine with my practical industry background. Based remotely in the Bay of Plenty, I completed my own study as a distance student with Otago Polytechnic and therefore understand first-hand both the challenges and opportunities that come with distance learning.