



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY LISA PONWEISER

The first crop of Mt Hutt College Young Farmers (from left) president Thomas Holmes, Stephen Laird, and James Fleming.

Students keen for YFC challenge

By Lance Isbister

Mt Hutt College Young Farmers Club is among the new generation of school clubs in which members hone their rural skills.

Thomas Holmes is the first president of the Mt Hutt Young Farmers Club, which has been running for the past six months and is based at Mt Hutt College hall or in one of the classrooms.

When he first heard the Young Farmers organisation was looking to establish secondary school clubs throughout New Zealand, Thomas was keen to be at the helm of a club in Methven.

Methven arable farmer John McCaw reinforced the benefits of Young Farmers when he spoke to members of the new club when it formed earlier this year.

As the 2006 National Bank Young Farmer of the Year Mr McCaw inspired the students about the opportunities through the rural organisation.

The club now has 15 members and comprises year 11 and 12 students, but Thomas is keen to involve more members of a wider age range.

Thomas said the Young Farmers club provided a good opportunity to meet new people through outdoor activities such as paintball.

"The whole programme is great to meet new people. It's a great social and learning experi-

ence." Thomas is hoping to develop competition among other Aorangi regional Young Farmers school clubs such as St Kevins and Waitaki Boys in events such as fencing and tractor pulls.

With exams coming up in the next few weeks, Thomas has changed his focus from the family farm to study, but encourages anyone who wants to join to talk with him when they see him around at school.

Thomas said next year the Methven Young Farmers will have developed their meeting procedure and he already had two year 11 students being trained to take over from him when he plans to move on to tertiary education the following year.