



The ponds, numbering around 2,000 at present, and expanding, are situated among 30,000 hectares of forest and are fed by spring and rain water. A habitat suitable for the crayfish is created by the addition of native watercress and carex grasses, broom and bracken, which over time provide a food source and refuge.

This is environmentally-sustainable farming at its best; nothing artificial is added to the ponds. The quality of the environment can be assessed by the health of the crayfish—they will only thrive in clean water. The crayfish are allowed to breed naturally in the ponds and stocking rates are carefully managed to ensure low densities and a stress-free environment. Crayfish are omnivores and feed on the natural food that the ponds provide, such as small insects, leaves, and plant roots. Due to the cool water temperatures it can take 3-4 years for the crayfish to be of size large enough to sell commercially. The slow growth rate, natural food source and clean environment is reflected in the delicate flavour and sweet taste of the crayfish when cooked. The commitment to environmentally sustainable farming has been recognised when Keewai won a prestigious environmental award at the Environmental Southland Awards. Further recognition for the Company's achievements was celebrated when they won an award at the NZ Food Awards.

John sees the opportunity here for New Zealand to export a quality product to a niche market, farmed in a natural and sustainable way. He is looking forward to seeing the venture progress further and being able to have a regular supply of saleable Keewai available for both the local and export markets.

John's Keewai Recipe

John enjoys the delicate flavour of the Keewai and his favourite cooking methods are simple:

Plunge the fresh Keewai into boiling water and serve with butter, sea salt and lemon or, split lengthwise and cook in their shells on the barbecue brushed with fragrant fresh chilli and parsley oil.

Left and right:

The ponds are planted with native plants and grasses, creating an ideal habitat for the crayfish to live in

