



## Food Innovation Network

The government has established a Food Innovation Network of food development facilities throughout the country to help businesses develop, test and prove new products.

### Questions and answers

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### 1. What is the aim of the Food Innovation Network?

Providing independent, food safe, and export-accredited open access facilities for product testing, the Food Innovation Network initiative aims to reduce barriers to new product development.

This will enable New Zealand's food and beverage industry to more easily respond to consumer demands and international market opportunities. It will also increase speed to market and allow samples to be produced. The initiative has a number of aims.

- Encourage collaboration between firms to create the scale necessary to succeed in international markets.
- Help link science and research with food manufacturers. New Zealand has some world class science capability, but often we are unable to convert these bright ideas into real, value-added products that our food manufacturing sector can successfully take to market.
- Improve businesses' access to experience and skills in business development and commercialisation. Having input from people with experience in bringing a new product to market lowers the risk of product failure.
- Improve knowledge of market opportunities to better enable research and product development to be informed by, and respond to, international consumer demand.

### 2. How will the four hubs work?

Each of the four regional food product development centres has a different focus depending on the needs, maturity, strengths and capabilities of local businesses. Between them, they offer a complementary suite of services.

#### Auckland



- Seven production halls located a five-minute drive from Auckland Airport's domestic terminal at The FoodBowl, Te Ipu Kai, 28 Verissimo Drive

- Development and commercial focus targeting a full range of clientele
- Wet and dry processing with an emphasis on finished food products
- Available from September 2011.

## **Waikato**

- Located at Waikato Innovation Park in Ruakura Rd, Hamilton
- Development and commercial focus targeting small and medium enterprises
- Dry processing of up to 500kg powder per hour
- Open from mid-2012.

## **Palmerston North**

- Research and development focus targeting large businesses
- Wet and dry processing of 30-50 litres per hour
- State-of-the-art research scale equipment has been added to Massey University's existing pilot plant, and further equipment will be bought as the industry need is confirmed.

## **Canterbury**

- Focus on targeting small and medium-sized enterprises engaged in new product development
- Wet and dry processing in batches of 50-100 litres
- Operating as an information and referral centre at this stage, rather than providing facilities.

## **New Zealand Food Innovation Network Company**

- To be established in late 2011
- Co-ordinates the regional hubs and investment in facilities
- Facilitates knowledge sharing between regional hubs, research and education providers, and businesses
- Provides international businesses and organisations with a gateway to New Zealand's food development capability
- Provides information about the food and beverage industry to the government.

### **3. Why focus on the food industry?**

The food sector is one of the most significant sectors in New Zealand's economy. It is at the centre of production, employment and export earnings, and advances our international reputation for innovation and quality.

The sector has undergone significant transformation over the last 10 years and has increased its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP). Exports have doubled to around \$15 billion annually and today account for more than half of total merchandise exports, a significant proportion of which can be characterised as added value.

The sector's growth rates and productivity increases have consistently been above the average for the whole economy, and there is significant potential for this level of growth to be maintained and enhanced.

The sector involves more than 30,000 companies and provides jobs for 20 percent of the total workforce or about one in every five New Zealanders.

### **4. When will the government expect to see results?**

The Food Innovation Network is a long-term investment in the improvement of the food industry, however the government expects to see an increase in new product development within two years.

### **7. How will the Food Innovation Network be supported?**

The government has provided an initial \$22 million to establish facilities and provide pilot scale equipment.

Regional economic development agencies will also contribute up to \$10 million.

Economic development agencies and the regional offices of New Zealand Trade and Enterprise will provide services to support business management capability, and help identify market opportunities and access to develop food production.

## **Related information**

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