

Agri-Gate

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua



Latest news about MPI's Investment Programmes

ISSUE 48 | FEBRUARY 2019



Steve's column

Welcome to our February edition of Agri-gate. I hope you had a relaxing break. I spent mine with family travelling around parts of the South Island, including Golden Bay. It's a great reminder of just how beautiful New Zealand is.

The start to the year has been busy as we forge ahead on a number of fronts. In January, we announced new funding for 31 community-led projects that will kick off in mid-2019. The funding was provided following the final funding round for the Sustainable Farming Fund, held last year. The Sustainable Farming Fund, along with the Primary Growth Partnership, has been superseded by Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures (SFF Futures) launched last October.

In January, we also announced the recipients of funding from the Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF). The HCEF supports proposals to protect our most vulnerable hill country landscapes, where the main treatment is tree planting. Almost \$36 million will be provided to six councils to enable much-needed erosion control in their regions.

Earlier this month we published findings of a review of the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas

Research Centre (NZAGRC) on the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) website. The NZAGRC is a partnership launched in 2010 between leading New Zealand agricultural greenhouse gas research providers and the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium (PGGRC), with funding provided by MPI. The aim of the review was to determine if the NZAGRC had delivered as intended and assess its progress to date. The review concluded the NZAGRC is a scientific success, and made recommendations to ensure it continues to make a tangible contribution towards New Zealand's agricultural greenhouse gas research.

One of our key focuses this year is working with businesses, industry and research organisations, farmers, growers and others on opportunities to partner through SFF Futures to deliver innovative projects that will create more value from, and improve sustainability of the food and fibre industries.

If you, or someone you know, has a potential project – big or small – that aims to make a difference for the food and fibre industries, get in contact with us at funding@mpi.govt.nz or check out mpi.govt.nz/funding for more information.

In the spirit of growing New Zealand's food and fibre industries, MPI and Boma NZ have partnered on Grow 2019 – a world class event on 10-11 April focused on innovation, right across the food and fibre supply chain.

You'll find more information about Grow 2019 and everything else I've mentioned in my column in this



edition of Agri-gate.

Finally, I'd like to mention international recognition of the high-value New Zealand Wagyu beef produced by First Light Foods, MPI's partner in the Marbled Grass-fed Beef programme. Forbes magazine has labelled this beef as the best in the world. Forbes' website attracts about 70 million unique visitors every month, so this is great exposure. I'd like to congratulate First Light Foods on this recognition.

Steve Penno
Director Investment Programmes



John Parker's column

Welcome to this edition of Agri-gate. I trust you had a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

This year, a key focus of the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) will be growing awareness of Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures (SFF Futures), building up the pipeline of new SFF Futures applications, and helping organisations to develop their ideas into workable projects.

Over the past couple of years, some of the larger Primary Growth Partnership (PGP) programmes either finished, or are close to finishing. And, last year's independent review of the PGP found that demand for larger programmes had declined since 2013.

This means MPI has the capacity to invest in large projects through SFF Futures, and are on the lookout for new, exciting innovation projects across the food and fibre industries. As we have seen previously, successful projects enabled through MPI and industry partnerships deliver benefits, not only for the co-investors, but across a range of areas. These include developing new technology, boosting capability and reducing impacts on the environment. These benefits would not have occurred without joint investment – or may have occurred much later.

The Investment Advisory Panel will continue to play a key role in making recommendations to MPI on investment, and tracking current programmes or projects underway.

Proposals for new SFF Futures projects must demonstrate a number of things. For example, there must be clear evidence of an innovative approach and significant advancements on what already exists, be beyond business as usual, align clearly with existing strategies for the relevant sector and demonstrate economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits. It's worth remembering that the projects being sought can range in size and investment – the important thing is that they deliver value to New Zealand beyond the co-investors.

If you're interested in learning more, or looking for guidance on how to apply for SFF Futures, the MPI website is a good place to start. The guidelines provide tips on what to think about when applying for investment, and the process involved. You'll find more information about these guidelines in this edition of Agri-gate.

If you know anyone who has an idea that could make a tangible difference for the food and fibre industries encourage them to get in touch with MPI.

John Parker
Chair, Investment Advisory Panel

New Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures applicant guidelines now available

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has published a handy guide for people wanting to apply for investment through Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures (SFF Futures). It includes eligibility and assessment criteria, the process for applying for investment, and other relevant things to think about.

SFF Futures supports projects from all over New Zealand, created by businesses, non-government organisations, researchers, training institutions, Māori landowners, community groups, and industry bodies.



It provides a single gateway for people to seek investment in projects that prioritise product value over volume, encourage greater collaboration and information-sharing, and deliver economic, environmental, cultural, and social benefits that flow through to New Zealanders. This could include developing new products or services, ideas for creating new jobs, or innovative ways to increase skills and capability. They can range from small, one-off initiatives requiring a small grant, to long-running, multi-million-dollar partnerships.

The guidelines are available in the SFF Futures section at mpi.govt.nz/funding. If you're unsure about whether or not your idea or project might be eligible for SFF Futures investment, contact the team at funding@mpi.govt.nz and they'll be able to talk you through.

New funding for 31 community-led projects

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has announced funding of \$9.8 million for 31 new Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) projects.

The SFF provides funding for projects led by farmers, growers, and foresters aimed at building economic, environmental, and social sustainability in the primary sector. It has recently been replaced by MPI's new Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures (SFF Futures) programme. The 31 projects were in the pipeline prior to the launch of SFF Futures in October 2018.

"SFF has been instrumental in kicking off both small and large innovative, community-led projects, and laying the groundwork for SFF Futures," says Steve Penno, Director Investment Programmes at MPI.

"The new 31 projects cover areas from apiculture and dairy to soil management and horticulture and are great examples of innovative thinking.

"These projects look at tackling problems or advancing opportunities for the community. They'll contribute towards growing our regional economies, protecting our environment, and providing social benefits for New Zealand.

"They range from a project aimed at building our apiculture industry's capacity by training people on tree species that support bee populations, to one that's about improving water quality through the use of plantain pastures to reduce nitrogen leaching.

"Another project is looking to understand fish behaviour at pump stations and how to reduce the threat the stations have on native fish, while another involving 5 properties in the Central Hawke's Bay, will assess the opportunity for growing kiwifruit in the region.

"These 31 new projects, along with future SFF Futures projects, will help New Zealand continue to prosper."

Further information about these new projects is available at mpi.govt.nz/funding

Future applications for new projects will be considered under SFF Futures.

Background information

Twenty-four of the 31 new projects were funded through the Sustainable Farming Fund (SFF) as part of the 2018 funding round and 7 were through Sustainable Farming Fund Tere (SFF Tere), a smaller funding programme for projects needing funding of up to \$100,000. This was the last funding round held and approved under these funds. Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures (SFF Futures) has replaced the Sustainable Farming Fund and the Primary Growth Partnership (PGP).

Grow 2019 Agri Summit – sign up now

Grow 2019 is a two-day, action-packed event, featuring the latest information on future farming trends, exponential change, new business models and product pathways impacting the food and fibre sector across New Zealand.

It's being brought to you by Boma NZ and the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), who are assembling an inspiring line up of speakers from New Zealand and abroad. Speakers will cover topics including innovation and developing new markets (disruption), transformation and guardianship of our environment and resources (Kaitiakitanga), all the way to adapting to and seizing opportunities and challenges in the food and fibre space.

Grow 2019 is being held on 10-11 April 2019 in Christchurch, so apply now. It's set to be a helpful, valuable and thought-provoking couple of days, where you'll be able to connect with like-minded people.

To register and keep up to date about Grow 2019, check out www.grow.nz.boma.global



\$36 million investment approved to tackle regional erosion

Te Uru Rākau (Forestry New Zealand) has announced funding of almost \$36 million through the Hill Country Erosion Fund (HCEF) to enable much-needed erosion control in the regions.

The HCEF supports proposals to protect our most vulnerable hill country landscapes, where the main treatment is tree planting.

"We're pleased by the level of interest from councils, with 12 applications received in this latest round – 4 of which were from regions that had not previously applied," says Julie Collins, Deputy Director-General Forestry and Head of Te Uru Rākau.

"It shows the importance they are placing on sustainable land management and treating erosion in their regions."

Julie says the loss of productive land through erosion has a significant impact on the environment and the sustainability of New Zealand land.

"The annual cost to New Zealand associated with hill country erosion is estimated to be between \$100 million and \$150 million through lost soil, nutrients and production, and damaged infrastructure and waterways."

"The 12 new HCEF programmes will take place between July 2019 and June 2023 and will deliver significant improvements in erosion control. For example, these range from building regional capacity and capability to plant trees, to farm planning and land treatments including planting poplars, willows and other indigenous and exotic species.



"We estimate that over 4 years, these programmes will result in more than 13 million trees being planted and treatment of more than 21,000 hectares of land."

"These will contribute to the Government's One Billion Trees Programme, and deliver environmental and a range of other benefits across the country."

More information about the successful applicants is available at mpi.govt.nz/hce

Additional information about the HCEF

The HCEF was launched during 2007/2008. Funding is contested in a 4-yearly cycle, aligned with planning cycles for regional councils. The previous funding round was in 2014. Since the HCEF was launched, the fund has enabled erosion treatment on more than 40,000 hectares of land.

The HCEF takes a total catchment approach involving landowners and community members to identify issues and create solutions within their own catchments. Regional councils and landowners work together to identify the most suitable land use for their erosion-prone land, then develop and implement appropriate treatment plans. The main erosion treatment is tree planting, including appropriate species for natural vegetative cover.

A one-off \$1.8 million funding round was also held in June 2018 for smaller HCEF projects to be completed by 30 June 2019. Funding was awarded to five regional council partners: Northland, Horizons, Wellington, Nelson and Marlborough.

In the 2014 HCEF funding round, MPI awarded \$8.8 million between six regional councils:

- Manawatu/Whanganui (Horizons)
- Taranaki
- Wellington
- Hawkes Bay
- Northland
- Waikato.

These regional councils, along with landowners, are contributing a total of \$35.7 million towards a total budget of \$44.5 million between 2015 and 2019. This will enable planting of around 6.4 million trees.

Review finds New Zealand world leader in the field of reducing methane emissions from livestock

A review has hailed the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre (NZAGRC) as a scientific success.

The NZAGRC is a partnership launched in 2010 between leading New Zealand agricultural greenhouse gas research providers and the Pastoral Greenhouse Gas Research Consortium (PGGRC). It also actively supports other bodies such as the Global Research Alliance (GRA) on agricultural greenhouse gases.

The aim of the review was to determine if the NZAGRC has delivered as intended and assess its progress to date.

“The review found New Zealand is a world leader in all fields of agricultural greenhouse gas research and strongly endorsed the research programme’s performance to date,” says NZAGRC Director Dr Harry Clark.

“New Zealand is a small country, but we punch above our weight in climate change-related agricultural research. The reviewers noted the high quality research and international recognition enabled by the NZAGRC through showcasing its scientific activities and capability internationally.”

The NZAGRC is investing almost \$49 million over ten years into New Zealand agricultural greenhouse gas emissions research.

“The NZAGRC has a strong history of capability development, particularly in supporting young researchers into permanent positions,” says Dr Clark. “Effort has also gone into identifying capability or expertise gaps that could be critical for New Zealand in the future, such as soil science and modelling.”

The review has made recommendations including increasing the pace and breadth of the NZAGRC’s research, developing wider partnerships, seeking further relevant stakeholder input, and focusing on science extension and commercialisation.

“The NZAGRC has made fantastic progress,” says Neil Williams, Manager Sustainable Resources at the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI).

“The opportunity and challenge now is to ensure we continue to support New Zealand’s scientific excellence and leadership, while putting our research into practice. We continue to strive towards offering New Zealand farmers practical, cost-effective solutions to reduce their on-farm greenhouse gas emissions.”

The review report is available on the MPI website at www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/32911

