



Wakame Fresh – Project Whakatiputipu



Snapshot

Project length: 6 months

Start date: 20 May 2019

Estimated completion date:
December 2019

Industry funding: \$114,182

MPI funding: \$75,200

Wakame Fresh aims to turn invasive Undaria, or wakame, into a premium edible export for the Japanese market.

The opportunity

The 2011 tsunami in Japan wiped out many of Japan's local seaweed farms. Wakame Fresh sees an opportunity to deliver this delicacy to Japan, by harvesting Undaria, a "pest seaweed" that can clog mussel farms and choke out native species. The seaweed was first introduced to New Zealand in the 1980s. It is now widespread along the eastern and southern coastlines, from Auckland to Bluff.

The solution

Project Whakatiputipu aims to demonstrate the commercial viability of harvesting, processing and exporting edible seaweed products into Japan. The SFF Futures funding will be used to conduct a feasibility study, including planning and finalising an approach to trial export of samples of wakame for market research.

The benefits

If successful, this project is expected to benefit New Zealand by:

- creating new market opportunities in Japan and other Asian markets;
- establishing New Zealand as a credible source of high quality wakame for the Japanese market place;
- mobilising the aquaculture sector (and other investors) in New Zealand to collaborate and invest in the seaweed sector, including investment in research to identify the nutritional and medicinal benefits of New Zealand grown and processed seaweed;
- creating new jobs in the aquaculture industry.