



RURAL AFFAIRS

United**Future** New Zealand recognises the importance of primary industries to the security and prosperity of New Zealand. At a time when there are strong opportunities in the international marketplace, the importance of strong, resilient and responsive primary industries is paramount. They must be supported so the opportunity for diversification and added value is identified and encouraged.

Our policy is more than just an economic prescription for our primary industries. It is about ensuring that the often neglected rural communities receive fair and reasonable access to educational and health services.

Agriculture, Aquaculture, Forestry

It is United**Future** policy to:

- Promote a strong and viable economic policy framework to underpin the role of primary industries as our major export earners.
- Undertake an immediate review of all legislation and regulations that impose coercive powers and administrative burdens on farmers to ensure their impact is minimised, consistent with the overall public interest.
- Conduct regular reviews of the Resource Management Act to ensure that is working as well as possible with regard to improving certainty, shortening timelines and reducing user costs.
- Upgrade the BIZ website and hotline, so that farmers can make enquiries relating to any government department using a single point of contact, and have their queries answered by staff from these departments (e.g. Department of Labour, Occupational Health and Safety, IRD, ACC).
- Investigate alternative local body funding arrangements with the aim of abolishing rates on domestic and commercial properties.
- Support free and fair trade and embrace free trade agreements.
- Continue to increase agricultural workforce skills by encouraging more people into industry training e.g. through modern apprenticeships in the agriculture and horticulture sectors.
- Establish a global online service that matches potential skilled migrants with job opportunities in New Zealand to help fill critical skill shortages as recently experienced by the horticultural sector.
- Ensure that advice and information is available to businesses to support them in hiring migrants to fill skill shortages.
- Continue the 'no-fault' regime and mandatory workplace accident insurance, but support competition in the provision of accident compensation services.
- Actively support the role of research and development into the sustainability of primary industries and the ongoing development of new niche industries, with a particular emphasis on adding value.
- Ensure that biosecurity remains a top Government priority.
- Promote the planting of native trees and bush along or close by all inland waterways where practical in order to limit soil erosion and reduce agricultural runoff (via Government subsidy);
- Encourage landowners to return non-viable farming land to native regenerative forest, possibly with assistance from the QEII National Trust and carbon credits allocated through New Zealand's Kyoto obligations;

- Boost funding for Crown Research Institutes to conduct research into the health, wellbeing and productivity of New Zealand soils, and to develop new techniques for remedying any deterioration that has occurred over time;
- Support the current policy of allowing the application of GE and GM technology to proceed – but with caution;
- Support through Government subsidy voluntary environmental codes of conduct such as the Clean Streams Accord;
- Accelerate the position of declaring Aquaculture Management Areas around NZ so that aquaculture investment can take place in a climate of certainty.