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New Manukau Food Innovation Centre to be built at Auckland Airport

Part of national food innovation network and Auckland Food Bowl

The Board of New Zealand Food Innovation Manukau (NZFIM) announced today the development of an exciting new regional food innovation centre to be developed with the support of Enterprising Manukau and the Ministry of Economic Development.

The Manukau Food Innovation Centre (MFIC) is a 2000sqm export certified purpose-built plant due to open in July 2011 that will support food manufacturers to develop and test products for commercialisation, specifically for the fast moving consumer goods market. This initiative will be located at Auckland Airport, New Zealand's primary export hub, and over time will attract and develop into a cluster for associated food businesses.

NZFIM Chairman Tony Nowell said, “This initiative is unique to the Auckland regional Food Bowl and New Zealand Food Inc. The MFIC will be the first publicly available facility of this nature in New Zealand, and will help address critical gaps in the food product development pipeline. It will also provide a serious boost to the economy which will in turn benefit the wider community.”

“Within the food sector, there is a wide gap between those companies who want to commercialise products and the resources available to enable that commercialisation. This gap constrains the economic and development activity of those companies and of New Zealand in general. The MFIC is a significant step towards filling this market gap” said Mr Nowell.

The MFIC is part of a national food innovation network that is a joint initiative involving the Ministry of Economic Development, industry, research, education and local economic development agencies, including Enterprising Manukau. Already responsible for over half of New Zealand’s export earnings, the food and beverage industries have been identified by the government as a critical opportunity to accelerate the growth of high-value exports based upon kiwi innovation and research. A national food innovation network will have four regional hubs, this one at Manukau, Waikato, Palmerston North, and Canterbury. The network will be overseen by a New Zealand Food Innovation Network Ltd.

Manukau has a catchment of over 1000 food companies who can use the facility, plus a wider base of potential users from other regions of New Zealand, all of whom can participate in the collaborative New Zealand Food Innovation Network.

The benefits of this regional initiative are enormous and are estimated to exceed \$26 million by June 2014 and by more than \$100 million over the life of the MFIC. This represents a significant return on investment for NZ Inc.”, said Mr Nowell, “A focus on the food industry of this nature will decrease fragmentation and bring together a powerful force of relationships to enhance the Food & Beverage Sectors quantity and speed of innovative product development, profile and export earnings.

The MFIC provides a capital asset of \$18.1 million for the food sector. Significant funding is being provided by both Manukau City Council and the Crown to enable the MFIC establishment.

Features

- The MFIC will be a 24 hours a day, seven days a week operation, featuring world-class, state-of-the-art, flexible food and beverage manufacturing facilities for companies to trial innovative “near market” processes and food products on a flexible and cost-effective basis.
- It will also support standard food processing unit operations that can be flexibly combined in many configurations to suit the specific needs of a client from any sector of the food industry
- The centre will have stringent industry “redline” hygiene standards, certified for export (and located alongside New Zealand’s primary export hub)
- The centre will offer unique opportunities for suppliers to showcase new or improved technologies or equipment.
- A commercial facility for tertiary students and industrial workers seeking advanced training in all aspects of industrial operations
- An “own brand” which clients may use for test marketing

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