

**'THE FOODBOWL' LAUNCHES TO  
SUPPORT FOOD AND BEVERAGE EXPORT GROWTH TARGETS**

**NZ FOOD INNOVATION NETWORK DESIGNED TO HELP PUSH  
FOOD AND BEVERAGE EXPORTS TO \$150 BILLION BY 2025;  
FIRST OF FOUR REGIONAL HUBS TO OPEN**

Though food and beverage now accounts for more than half of New Zealand's total exports, this isn't nearly enough by the standards of the National-led Government and a group of industry experts, who are together working towards the goal of growing manufactured food exports to \$150 billion (or by 270%) by 2025.

The first step? A major new government-backed food innovation pilot plant. The FoodBowl, operated by New Zealand Food Innovation (Auckland) Limited (NZFIA), opens in October and comprises a purpose-built facility for food and beverage manufacturers to develop and commercialise product to take to national and global markets.

Located near Auckland International Airport, The FoodBowl will be part of a New Zealand-wide open-access network of innovation centres. The New Zealand Food Innovation Network, or NZFIN, will be comprised of food science and technology resources designed to enable New Zealand food and beverage businesses of all sizes to grow, by supporting new product and process development with pre-production pilot facilities and expertise.

In the works for nearly a decade, the network secured agreement for \$20 million in funding from the Minister of Economic Development in December 2009 and is aimed at all food and beverage companies, from start-ups to SMEs and corporates. The network's resources will include commercial and test kitchens, laboratory facilities, pilot plant testing (from existing to leading-edge technology) and short-run processing capability to allow in-market testing of new product concepts.

Of the \$16 million required to build and equip the Auckland facility, the government contribution of \$9.4 million was dedicated to specialist fit-out and production equipment, with the Auckland City Council contributing \$2.5 million and Auckland International Airport providing build and leaseback of the facility.

NZFIA chairman Tony Nowell says, “As a key ingredient of economic growth, the New Zealand food and beverage industry needs ambitious and substantial infrastructure to develop and perfect new added-value products, and the new Auckland facility represents one of the most significant investments in New Zealand’s food innovation to date.

“Overseas data from similar economies indicates that significant growth can come from adding value to the primary sector by constantly innovating on what we are already good at. New Zealand has many SMEs that have excellent ideas but lack the financial, material or knowledge resources to bring them successfully to market.

“The resources of the FoodBowl will overcome a critical deficiency in New Zealand’s new product development process – the ability to upscale sophisticated new products from laboratory to commercial production – and will fill the gap between the idea stage and getting successful product on market shelves. It will also help manage the risks of innovation by minimizing capital and expertise investment until products and markets are proven.”

In addition to the open-access commercialisation facilities, the network will provide an ‘expertise bank’ of approachable, experienced and highly skilled technologists, scientists and consultants to support companies’ use of the facilities, and a knowledge base to identify and develop opportunities for inter-company cooperation to build synergies and operational scale for international success.

The FoodBowl is operational from October, Palmerston North and Canterbury are now operating, and Waikato will follow in 2012. Each regional hub is focused on industries germane to the region (in Waikato there will be a primary concentration on dairy, while the Canterbury centre supports South Island-based manufacturers and the Palmerston North hub draws on the expertise of some 600 scientists and technologists in NZFIN partner facilities, including Massey University and AgResearch).

## Fact Sheet

- The New Zealand government has set the goal of growing food and beverage exports by 270% by 2025, to \$150 billion;
- The sector's growth and productivity rates have consistently been above average, and the sector now includes more than 30,000 companies and involves approx 20% of the total workforce;
- The FoodBowl in Auckland cost \$16 million to build and fit out;
- NZFIN will enable and develop active links between science and research and the food and beverage manufacturing sector to help the food manufacturing industry achieve commercial success through innovative process and new product development for local and export markets;
- The national Food Innovation Network and regional Food Innovation Centres operate in concert;
- The idea for the Food Innovation Centre was first mooted in 2001 by Professor Ray Winger (formerly Professor of Food Science and Technology at Massey University), whose vision was to provide a facility for small and medium food and beverage companies to use while developing their ideas into commercial products;
- The network will have four regional hubs, in Auckland, Waikato, Palmerston North and Canterbury (at Lincoln University);
- The four regional hubs:
  - Auckland: opening October 2011, focusing on processed foods
  - Waikato: scheduled to open mid-2012, focusing on dairy
  - Palmerston North: now operational, draws on expertise of 600 scientists and technologists in NZFIN partner facilities, including Massey University, Riddet Institute, AgResearch, Plant and Food Research and Fonterra Innovation
  - Canterbury: operating now, is aimed at scaling up South Island producers and facilitating the move into overseas markets
- Auckland centre includes seven process halls:
  - Process hall 1: equipment for extrusion and milling/blending, filling equipment to handle bulk bags or retail packs for both extruded product and powdered blends

- Process hall 2: UHT / aseptic filling line and other equipment for beverage development and production
- Product hall 3: general purpose, for consumer goods including cans, retort pouches, stand-up pouches, pottles and jars; general purpose food processing; and bar extruder for and capacity to bake biscuits, health bars and novelty items
- Process hall 4: high-pressure pasteurization
- Process hall 5: freeze drying
- Process hall 6: microwave thawing
- Process hall 7: production kitchen

**ends**

### **About New Zealand Food Innovation Network (NZFIN)**

NZFIN is a New Zealand-wide open network of science and technology resources designed to enable New Zealand food businesses of all sizes to grow, locally and internationally, by supporting new product and process development with facilities and the expertise of leading scientists and technologists.

NZFIN provides equipment and expertise to companies, enabling them to develop ideas into commercial food products. The network, which will have four hubs nationwide – in Auckland, Waikato, Palmerston North and Canterbury – has resources including commercial and test kitchens, laboratory facilities (including high-end capabilities), pilot plant testing (from existing to leading-edge technology), and short-run processing for in-market testing.

Initial funding of NZFIN is provided by the Ministry of Economic Development, and the network is designed to support the National-led Government's goal of increasing the value of food and beverage exports by 270%, to \$150 billion, by 2025. The first hub (The FoodBowl, adjacent to Auckland International Airport) opens in October 2011. The other hubs will open in 2012.

### **About Tony Nowell (NZFIA board chairman)**

Tony Nowell is the former CEO for Zespri International Limited, New Zealand's world leading kiwifruit export company, and former managing director of Danone Group company Griffin's Foods (2000 to 2006). He earlier spent 13 years in Asia, where he held a number of general management roles for multi-national companies L'Oreal and Sara Lee Corporation, with responsibility for eleven Asian markets extending from Pakistan to Japan to Indonesia, and with extensive joint-venture experience in Indonesia, India and China.

In 2008 Tony established two new businesses: Valadenz Limited, a company focused on facilitating the export and trade development of New Zealand SMEs, and Collaborenz Limited, which works on the development of collaborative opportunities for medium-sized New Zealand food and beverage businesses seeking to invest and grow internationally.

He has extensive engagement on economic development issues with the Ministry of Economic Development, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Investment New Zealand and Auckland City.

Tony is Chair of Scion (The New Zealand Forest Research Institute), Wellington Drive Technologies (a publicly listed technology company), Deputy Chair of Leadership New Zealand, a director of Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) and the Export Advisory Board of Business New Zealand.

He is Past Chair of the New Zealand Food & Grocery Council, the New Zealand Government's Food & Beverage Task Force, the ASEAN New Zealand Combined Business Council and the New Zealand Packaging Accord Governing Council, and past Deputy Chair of the New Zealand International Business Forum.

Tony has extensive community interests outside of business, as Vice Chair of Leadership New Zealand, a board member of the Professional Golfers' Association of New Zealand, and formerly as a board member of the Royal New Zealand Ballet Company, the Kid's Help Foundation of New Zealand and as a trustee of the Asia: New Zealand Foundation. He has represented New Zealand as a member of the

APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) since 2007, and was awarded a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2008 for services to business.

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