

Environment investments support New Zealand's high-value exports

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New Zealand Government has announced a suite of measures to support farmers to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions while also maintaining their global competitive edge, Chris Hipkins Prime Minister and Damien O'Connor Agriculture Minister announced.

“Our goal is to partner with farmers to ensure New Zealand retains its brand as a low emissions, environment-friendly source of food and fibre,” Chris Hipkins said.

“Farmers can’t do it all on their own and agriculture is too important for the Government not to be investing in better environmental outcomes. We want the best price for the best products, produced by the best farmers in the world and our plan is working.

“More and more people are choosing to buy products that come from a place where animals are treated well, there is a low impact on the environment and production contributes minimally to global emissions.

“New Zealand farmers are already well placed to meet that demand, and this package is about the Government being at the table to help them do even better.

“Markets like Europe and the UK, where we’re signing new trade deals, are the perfect places to get greater value for the products we’re exporting.

“These investments in further research and development will make our farms more resilient, improve pasture productivity and reduce emissions, while also ensuring there is a local support network to help farmers right now,” Chris Hipkins said.

Damien O’Connor said our primary producers made over \$53 billion dollars in export earnings for the first time ever last year and the sector is set to reach new heights again this year.

“The announcement, alongside industry, sees \$17.7 million go towards the construction of a new greenhouse gas testing facility that will provide the permanent measuring equipment and facilities needed to support our emissions reduction plan without burdening farmers,” Damien O’Connor said.

The facility is funded by the Centre for Climate Action on Agricultural Emissions, its primary sector joint venture partners, and AgResearch. Massey University in Palmerston North will supply land for the facility and cattle for testing. The new build will include 12 respiration chambers which allow researchers to measure and monitor changes to methane emissions in individual cows.

This latest project follows recent joint venture investments of \$2.5 million to further work on a livestock methane vaccine and a \$1.8 million boost to develop a slow-released methane-inhibiting capsule.

“The Government is also backing two new pasture projects with \$4.3 million co-invested with industry through its Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures fund looking at soil and grass to help farmers reduce costs, maintain good pastures, and remain a world-leading sustainable producer of high-value food,” Damien O’Connor said.

“The other project, “Ensuring a Sustainable Future Pasture Presence in NZ”, will look at increasing the productivity of pasture grass. The new ryegrass pastures under development are expected to increase productivity by around 20 per cent and provide farmers with options to reduce nitrate leaching, increase carbon sequestration and improve water use efficiency.

“Demand for tools and technologies to help mitigate agricultural emissions is only increasing, both here and overseas. New Zealand can, and should, be a leader in this space and Government is investing to ensure that we stay at the cutting edge of research and development.