



Building the Future:

Growing More to Feed the World



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New Zealand's farmers and growers are the best in the world. When they do well, the whole country does well.

Food and fibre earns around four in every five dollars of our goods exports and supports about 360,000 jobs, most of them in our regions. That export income pays for the hospitals, schools and roads in every New Zealand community. When farming grows, it delivers more jobs, wages lift and the regions across the country thrive.

The Plan is Working

In 2023 National set an ambitious goal to double the value of New Zealand's exports in ten years. For food and fibre, that means growing from \$53.3 billion in the year to June 2024 to around \$106 billion by 2034. It needs growth of 7.2 per cent a year, every year, well above the 4.7 per cent average of the past.

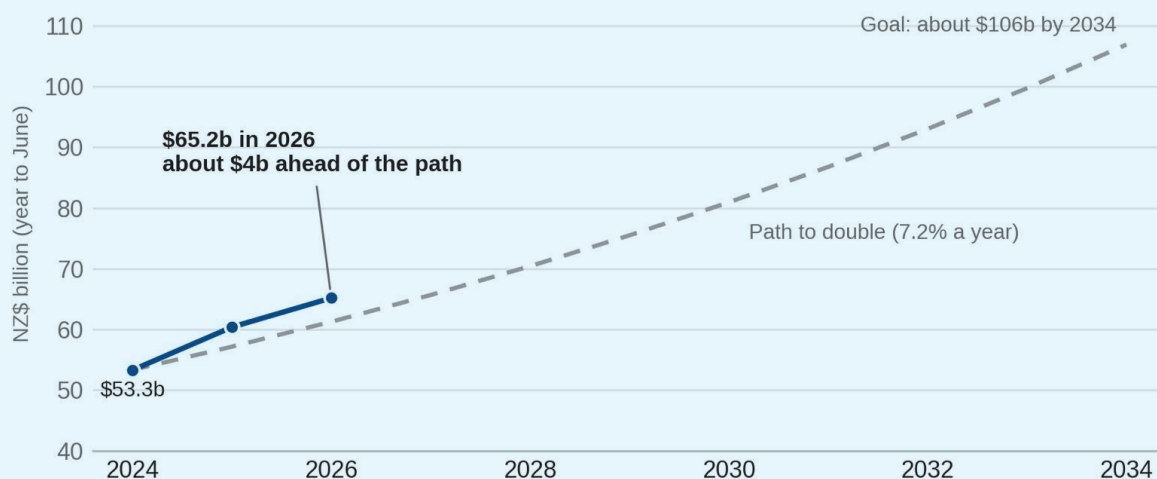
To get this done we embarked on a transformational work programme. We replaced the RMA, revoked the agricultural intensification rules, slashed the growth-stunting red tape, introduced investment boost and gave long life consents to critical primary sector infrastructure to support a lift in capital outlay. Our plan is working.

Food and fibre exports reached a record \$65.2 billion in the year to June 2026, up almost \$12 billion, or 22 per cent, in two years. That puts us about \$4 billion ahead of the path to doubling. We are ahead of schedule, but the job is not done.

National is focused on the key drivers that make a difference to growth:

- **More markets, less risk for farmers.** We have concluded free trade agreements with India, the UAE and the Gulf states, and brought our EU agreement into force early. Seven in ten of our exports are now covered by free trade agreements. National is focused on securing the next phase of New Zealand's trade agenda by commencing trade negotiations with seven new economies in the next five years.
- **Get more from our land and more value from every kilo.** We will slash red tape even further by delivering 19 national standards for everyday farm jobs, \$300 million in concessional loans for water storage, and land use flexibility so farmers can put their land to its best use. In combination with the New Zealand Grass-Fed standard, faster approvals for new farm products, and stronger plant variety rights leading to premium prices for growers.
- **Secure and enabling foundations.** Reliable access to water, fertiliser and energy generation, stable regulatory settings, more rural vets for healthy animals, a stronger biosecurity system and farmer-led conservation.

Food and fibre exports: ahead of the path to doubling



Source: MPI SOPI June 2026; MPI/Beehive, Oct 2026. Path assumes 7.2% compound annual growth from the 2024 base.

National got Wellington out of farming

In 2023, National campaigned on getting Wellington out of farming. We have delivered. Dairy production has risen for the first time in a decade, and Federated Farmers' latest Farm Confidence Survey shows farmers are in their strongest position in a decade, with profitability at its highest level since the measure began.

National's ambition is clear: to make New Zealand the world's leading producer of high-value, premium and sustainable food and fibre.

It's been three years of delivery for rural New Zealand

Cutting red tape and restoring common sense

- Replaced the RMA.
- Simplified freshwater farm plans.
- Introduced practical rules for winter grazing, stock exclusion and on-farm water storage.
- Removed requirements for new Significant Natural Areas.
- Scrapped the Ute Tax.
- Modernised the ACVM Act to speed up approvals for new farm products.
- Introduced Investment Boost for new machinery and equipment.
- Disbanded He Waka Eke Noa.
- Removed Agriculture from the ETS.
- Committed to investigate a split-gas target.
- Stopped full-farm conversions to forestry in the ETS.
- Gave water storage 35-year permits.
- Cut compliance costs for smaller dams.

- Opened the Primary Sector Growth Fund to water storage feasibility studies.
- Passed the Fast-track Approvals Act.
- Backed 51 farmer-led catchment groups and 17 regional collectives.
- Tackled wilding pines with a \$80 million funding boost.
- Increased grazing on DOC land to manage weeds, pests and fire risk.
- Supported our rural communities with increased funding for Rural Support Trusts, a \$4 million Rural Wellbeing Fund, and \$250,000 for Rural Women.
- Backed A&P shows with direct grants.
- Rolled out six rural urgent and after-hours care pilots.
- Started building the Waikato Medical School to train rural doctors.
- Backed new rural scholarships and NZ Young Farmers.
- Signed and ratified a Free Trade Agreement with India.
- Brought the NZ–EU Free Trade Agreement into force early.
- Brought New Zealand's first Middle East FTA, with the UAE, into force.
- Concluded a Free Trade Agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council.
- Launched the New Zealand Grass-Fed standard.
- Backed Taste Pure Nature with \$8 million to market red meat in China.
- Backed wool in construction of government buildings.
- Expanded the Regional Seasonal Employer Scheme.

There is more to do. That is why a re-elected National Government will secure the future of New Zealand farming for the generations to come.





National's 10 commitments to farmers

National has a plan to secure the future of New Zealand farming for the next generation. A re-elected National Government will deliver 10 commitments to farmers:

1. **No new taxes**
2. **No price on agricultural emissions**
3. **Boost farm productivity through land use flexibility**
4. **Practical and sensible rules that make everyday farm jobs easier**
5. **Greater water security for our regions**
6. **Secure access to energy generation and soil nutrients that farmers need**
7. **Strong biosecurity at the border and on the farm**
8. **Better access to vets and rural health services**
9. **More markets and better returns at the farm gate**
10. **Back farmers to lead local environmental and conservation solutions**

No new taxes and no price on agricultural emissions

National is the party of low tax. We delivered income tax relief for working New Zealanders for the first time in 14 years and we have committed to no new taxes if re-elected.

New Zealand's farmers are among the most emissions-efficient food producers in the world. It makes no sense to shut down efficient production here and send it offshore to countries with a larger emissions footprint.

National's climate policy is based on practical solutions.

We kept agriculture out of the ETS and invested more than \$400 million with industry to get real emissions-reduction tools into farmers' hands.

We've also reset the methane target to a more realistic, science-based level. Our focus is lower emissions, not lower production.

Some believe New Zealand should step back from international climate commitments altogether. Others think the answer is more pricing, more regulation and more cost. We don't agree with either approach. There will be no tax on agricultural emissions under a National government.

We will meet our commitments, keep New Zealand in Paris, back innovation over taxation, and make sure farmers remain competitive.

Deliver 19 national standards to make farming easier

Last election, National made a commitment to rural New Zealand that we would reform our broken planning system, and we have delivered.

We scrapped Labour's failed RMA replacement, slashed red tape for farmers, overhauled National Policy Statements, passed the Fast-track Approvals Act, and have passed the most transformational planning reform in New Zealand's history.

For more than 30 years, many everyday farm jobs have needed expensive consents.

Unclear rules and red tape have led to uncertainty around what farmers are allowed to do with their own land. That stops in National's new planning system.

Replacing the legislation is only half the job. A re-elected National-led Government will finish it, by delivering planning rules that work for farmers and make a real difference on the ground.

Right now, rules are different and fragmented from one council to the next, driving inefficiency, uncertainty and leading to huge compliance costs for farmers.

Federated Farmers undertook a survey last year which showed the average bill for gaining a new consent under the RMA had hit nearly \$45,000. Every dollar a farmer spends on consenting is a dollar they aren't investing in their farms.

If re-elected, National will set 19 national standards for the work farmers and growers do every day. We will work with farmers, growers, and the wider sector to ensure these standards are fit for purpose and practical. We will prioritise the delivery of these based on which will remove the highest number of consents, balanced with the complexity of the standard.

In many cases, these 19 national standards will remove the need for consents entirely. Even where consents may still be required, they will be easier, faster, and cheaper. This means more time and money spent on growing their businesses, rather than paying for needless bureaucracy.

National will slash red tape for farmers. We want to get Wellington out of the way of farmers, so they can produce more, invest with confidence, and help us double the value of our exports. It's how we fix the basics and build the future.



A re-elected National Government will:

Deliver 19 national standards for farming...

1. **Farm Plans:** A national standard for farm plans will give farmers one practical, consistent, risk-based way to identify and manage environmental risks on their land. This will ensure approaches to farm plans don't differ wildly from council to council.
2. **Vegetable growing:** A national standard for vegetable growing, including making it a permitted activity when certain conditions are met, will give growers certainty to keep producing the fresh food that feeds our country.
3. **On-farm water storage:** We value on-farm storage and want more of it, built well. A national standard will make it easier to build low-risk water storage, like ponds and small dams, to help farmers and growers get through dry periods.
4. **Gravel extraction:** Responsible gravel extraction can reduce the flood risk and provide a local source of aggregate. A national standard will allow farmers to remove gravel from rivers under clear, consistent conditions that protect ecosystem health.
5. **Drain maintenance:** Consents can be required for certain types of on-farm drain maintenance, adding cost and complexity. A national standard for drain maintenance will let farmers clear and maintain their existing drains without navigating confusing, fragmented rules.
6. **Effluent management:** A national standard for effluent management will set clear nationwide requirements for the storage and application of farm effluent. This will ensure there are consistent best practice rules so farmers can realise on-farm benefits while still protecting the environment.
7. **Fertiliser application:** A national standard for fertiliser application will set consistent rules for using fertiliser in a way that supports productivity while protecting waterways.
8. **Farm quarries:** Small-scale on-farm quarries provide gravel, sand, and rock required to build and maintain important infrastructure. A national standard for farm quarries will let farmers extract rock and aggregate from their own land without consenting processes rendering this uneconomic.
9. **Wetlands:** Wetland rules are confusing and have led to significant amounts of uncertainty and litigation in the past. A national standard for wetlands will make it simpler for farmers, removing the red tape in the way of doing the right thing.
10. **On-farm solar:** We will make small-scale on-farm ground-mounted solar, as well as rooftop solar, permitted activities with standard rules to manage genuine effects and sensible safeguards to protect land that is environmentally significant.
11. **Micro-hydro:** A national standard for small run-of-river micro-hydro will help farmers generate the power they need to run their businesses, using the water they already have on their property.
12. **Energy storage:** A national standard for energy storage will let farmers install batteries and other storage that support on-farm energy generation and resilience.
13. **Irrigation:** A national standard for Irrigation will make consenting easier for farmers and growers, providing them with a set of nationally consistent rules so that irrigation systems are designed and operated in accordance with recognised best practice, improving efficiency and environmental protection.
14. **Small-scale seasonal-worker accommodation:** A national standard for small-scale seasonal-worker accommodation, modelled off our successful granny-flats standards, will make it easier for farmers and growers to house the workers they need at peak times.
15. **Farm tracks:** A national standard for farm tracks will let farmers build and maintain access tracks, with sensible controls on erosion and sediment.
16. **Agricultural aviation:** A national standard for agricultural aviation will provide consistent rules for airstrips, aerial topdressing and spraying, which Kiwis rely on for both farming and conservation efforts.
17. **Culverts:** A national standard for culverts will set clear requirements for installing and replacing basic culverts so stock and vehicles can cross waterways safely, without the costly red-tape.
18. **Offal holes:** A national standard for offal holes will give farmers clear, consistent rules for disposing of dead stock and offal on farm without the need for a consent.
19. **Managing contaminated soils:** A re-worked national standard for managing contaminated soils will give farmers a consistent, pragmatic approach to dealing with legacy contamination on their property while still ensuring the land is safe to use.

Land use flexibility: producing more to sell to the world

National knows New Zealand farmers have always done better when they are empowered to solve problems, innovate, and make decisions about what happens behind their own farm gate.

We have worked hard over the last term of government to axe the rules that were too rigid, systems that were too slow, and the old approach that the primary sector is something to constrain, rather than something to champion.

The future of farming will not be about prescribing one model from Wellington. It will be about giving farmers and growers the flexibility to choose the best use of their land as markets, technology and climate conditions change.

For some, that could mean shifting part of the farm into a higher-value use. For others, it could mean combining pastoral, cropping and horticultural systems in smarter ways, while retaining the strengths of the existing farm business.

It could mean investing in irrigation and water storage to strengthen resilience, manage dry periods and make new land use options commercially viable.

It could mean adopting precision tools, animal wearables, automation, improved genetics and better data to lift productivity and farm output.

The goal is not for every farm to look the same. It is for every landowner to have the confidence, information and freedom to adapt their business, respond to opportunity and make the best long-term choices for their land.

Land use flexibility is how New Zealand farms will keep lifting productivity and secure their future.

At Fieldays 2026, we announced \$143 million of land use flexibility projects across dairy, sheep and beef, horticulture, forestry, whenua Māori and aquaculture. These projects test new ideas on real farms, so farmers, banks and investors can see what works before they commit.

Water security for growth

Water is one of New Zealand's greatest strategic advantages. It underpins our food and fibre production, supports regional jobs and earns the export income that pays for hospitals, schools and roads.

We get more rainfall and renewable freshwater per person than almost any other developed nation. Yet too many regions still face water shortages. We have the water. We just don't store enough of it. New Zealand captures and uses about two per cent of its available water resources. We can and should do better.

National believes we should plan for water security the same way we plan for fuel and energy. That means storing water when it is plentiful and using it well when it is scarce. It means knowing where water will be needed and giving regions a clear path to build the storage they need.

Get schemes built

A re-elected National Government will commit \$300 million in concessional loans to get water storage projects built. The Primary Sector Growth Fund will continue to provide support for pre-construction studies for productive water storage projects. Water projects can spend years moving between hydrology, engineering, environmental assessment, land access, user commitments, consenting and finance. National wants water storage projects approved and built faster. Our promise of concessional loan support will help bridge the gap.





Deliver New Zealand's first long-term water infrastructure pipeline

New Zealand has many promising water infrastructure proposals, but there is no single national view of existing storage, future demand, climate risk or project readiness. Work is often commissioned one project at a time; information is gathered to different standards and specialist capability is lost between projects. A national water infrastructure pipeline will allow connected storage, distribution, managed aquifer recharge, renewal and on-farm options to be considered together.

We will start by prioritising five key regions

- Northland
- Tairāwhiti
- Hawke's Bay
- Wairarapa
- Canterbury

Behind those five, the register will build a longer, nationally prioritised pipeline. Further priority areas identified include:

- Bay of Plenty orchards
- Central Otago and Waitaki fruit growing
- Upper South Island: Marlborough and Nelson
- Southern dryland areas, where stored water is the difference between a normal season and destocking.

A proportionate approach to on-farm water storage and irrigation

We value on-farm storage and want more of it, built well. National will make it easier for farmers and growers to build water storage on their own land, by developing a National Standard for on-farm water storage under the new planning system. This will allow on-farm water storage infrastructure to be built without the need for costly resource consents.

National will also make it easier to get consents by introducing a National Standard for Irrigation to ensure irrigation systems are designed and operated to recognised best practice, improving water-use efficiency, reducing environmental risk and providing farmers with a simpler, nationally consistent set of rules.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Commit \$300 million in concessional loans** to get water storage projects built.
- The Primary Sector Growth Fund will continue to provide grants for feasibility studies.
- **Deliver New Zealand's first long-term water infrastructure pipeline**, in partnership with farmers, growers, councils and iwi.
- **Publish the first National Rural and Provincial Water Use Strategy** in 2027, backed by a national water storage register.
- **Introduce a National Standard for on-farm and other lower-risk off-stream water storage**, and
- **Introduce a National Standard for Irrigation** to make consenting easier for farmers and growers.

On-farm energy independence

Farms use a lot of power for milking, cooling, pumping and irrigation, and lines charges are set to keep rising through to 2030. Farms are also well placed to generate their own.

Farmers and growers know what it costs when the lines go down in a storm, or when global events push up fuel and fertiliser prices. National trusts farmers to make the right decisions for their land, and that includes energy. But they still face costly, confusing rules to develop small-scale renewables on their own property, making the process slow and expensive.

For example, Rewiring Aotearoa found Environment Canterbury has required ground-mounted solar installations to apply for a water discharge consent, because rain runs off the panels and could carry bird droppings. Hurunui District Council, meanwhile, requires consent for any free-standing installation larger than 25m², barely enough to power an average New Zealand home.

It's not just consenting that's hard. Energy network regulations get in the way of farmers making the most of the energy they produce as well.

National is committed to supporting on-farm energy independence. Farmers and growers should be able to harness the resources available on their own land, easier, faster, and cheaper. If re-elected, we will clear the way for them to generate, store and sell their own power. This will cut costs, build resilience and give farmers and growers another way to earn from their own land without unreasonable rules getting in the way.

A re-elected National Government will:

1. **Set a national standard for paddock-based solar.** Small-scale ground-mounted solar on farms will be a permitted activity, with standard rules to manage any real effects. Farmers will know what is allowed and won't need a resource consent for a standard setup.
2. **Make it easier to put in micro-hydro.** Small run-of-river micro-hydro for on-farm use will be permitted within set limits that protect rivers, fish and other water users.
3. **Allow small-scale battery storage as of right,** so farmers can make the most of their investment in solar, micro-hydro and other renewables.
4. **Let farmers sell their power to the best buyer.** Every farmer will have the right to sell the power they export to any power company, not just the one they buy from.
5. **Make lines companies base export limits on what the local network can handle.** If they want to restrict how much a farm exports, they will have to show there is a genuine constraint.
6. **Speed up connections.** Farmers will be able to choose their own accredited contractor for connection work, cutting costs and delays.
7. **Allow rural developers, major energy users, and investors to build and own new transmission** and recover their costs from the parties who use the lines.
8. **Let property owners install rooftop solar without a consent,** even where height limits or landscape overlays would otherwise get in the way.





Guaranteeing critical nutrients

Fertiliser is a critical nutrient input into New Zealand's food and fibre economy. Reliable access supports soil fertility, farm productivity, export earnings and rural communities. A serious supply disruption would be felt well beyond the farm gate through lower production, higher costs and weaker export returns.

New Zealand uses over two million tonnes of fertiliser to grow food each year. Our fertiliser production relies on imported phosphate, which is then processed on shore. This leaves our primary sector exposed to international supply shocks. National will reduce New Zealand's exposure by supporting domestic production, strengthening supply relationships, and attracting investment in strategic infrastructure.

This is about ensuring a continued, stable supply of fertiliser in the country. We will back measures to support farmers to responsibly manage their nutrient use to better support productive farming and the environment.

Strengthening supply partnerships

New Zealand imports around two-thirds of its urea, with significant volumes sourced from the Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia. Recent conflict and disruption in the Middle East have shown how quickly shipping risks can flow through to global fertiliser prices and availability. Other key nutrients, including phosphate rock, potash and sulphur, are also exposed to concentrated production, commodity cycles and long transport routes.

National will treat fertiliser as a strategic priority in trade, diplomatic and investment engagement. Using the New Zealand–Singapore Agreement on Trade in Essential Supplies as a blueprint, National will pursue arrangements with key supplier countries focused on reliable access, market diversification, early warning and rapid government-to-government coordination.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Negotiate fertiliser security agreements** with key supplier countries, using the New Zealand–Singapore Agreement on Trade in Essential Supplies as a model.
- **Establish a \$10 million Critical Agri Inputs Fund** to co-invest in fertiliser production, processing, storage and distribution projects from the Primary Sector Growth Fund.

Double baseline funding for the QEII National Trust

National backs farmer-led conservation. Most land in New Zealand is privately owned, and much of it holds native bush, wetlands and biodiversity. That makes the QEII National Trust's work with farmers and landowners, through voluntary covenants, critical to protecting our unique landscapes.

National will provide the QEII National Trust with long-term funding certainty and support its work alongside farmers and landowners protecting New Zealand's natural and cultural heritage.

Permanent funding certainty means QEII Trust can plan ahead, respond to growing demand, and continue providing practical support for fencing, weed and pest control, revegetation, and covenant enhancement. Covenants protect the bush remnants, lookouts, landscapes and special places that give rural districts their character and identity. They also build a community's resilience to natural disasters, protecting hillsides from erosion, mitigating flooding impacts and reducing fire/disease risk.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Double the baseline funding for the QEII National Trust** from approximately \$4.2 million to approximately \$8.5 million per year. The increase will be confirmed in Budget 2027 and will be a permanent, not a time-limited top-up.

Backing farmers to beat the pest crisis

National will invest \$16 million over four years from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy to reduce damaging populations of wild deer, feral goats and other priority pests across public, Māori and private land. This builds on previous IVL investment in wild animal management, and the wider wild goat and deer work DOC delivers.

Farmers are spending more time and money controlling pests but feel like they are still going backwards. Federated Farmers' 2026 National Pests Survey estimates pests cost farmers about \$466 million each year through control costs and lost production. Two-

thirds of farmers say pest numbers have increased over the past five years, while average pest-control spending has risen to \$6.18 per hectare.

Wild deer, feral goats and pigs move across the boundaries between conservation land, forestry, farms and whenua Māori. They eat pasture and young trees, damage fences, threaten lambs, prevent native forest regeneration and undermine earlier conservation investment. Fragmented responsibility leaves farmers carrying costs created beyond their boundary.

National will back coordinated control at landscape scale. We will target the source of pest pressure, protect productive land and conservation gains, and build local capability so pest numbers stay down.

This new investment will mean fewer pests moving from public and forestry land onto farms, less damage to pasture, fences, young trees and native vegetation, stronger protection for conservation gains, and more skilled rural jobs.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Invest a further \$16 million over four years from the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy** to concentrate efforts to reduce wild deer, feral goats and other priority pests across public, Māori and private land.
- **Fund coordinated control programmes across land tenures.** National will combine aerial and ground control, surveillance, monitoring by partnering with councils, iwi and hapū, landowners, forestry, hunters and community groups.
- **Focus on the Central North Island and Southern Westland regions first.** Work will initially target the Whanganui–East Cape corridor and protect the gains made through Predator Free South Westland and Zero Invasive Predators, with final detailed plans agreed locally.
- **Finalise the National Introduced Wild Animal Management Framework** to improve the management of introduced wild animals, and steer coordinated management programmes and enable stakeholders to work effectively together.



More vets for rural New Zealand

National will double the number of graduate vets placed in rural New Zealand through the Voluntary Bonding Scheme, from around 35 a year to 70 a year.

Animal health is the foundation of more than \$40 billion a year of dairy, meat and wool exports, of our biosecurity defences, and of the rural communities that depend on them. Yet rural practices are struggling to recruit, too many of our young vets are heading offshore, and New Zealand relies on overseas-trained vets for two in every three new registrations. The bottom line is that our farmers can't grow the economy if they can't get a vet.

National is already strengthening the domestic training pipeline. From 2027, the number of funded domestic places in Massey University's Bachelor of Veterinary Science will increase from 125 to 140 each year, allowing an additional 15 New Zealand students to begin veterinary training annually.

The expansion of the bonding scheme is expected to cost up to \$3.4 million over the four year forecast period rising to around \$2 million a year once fully implemented, and will be funded from within MPI baselines.

Training more vets matters, but we also need them working where they are needed most. The Voluntary Bonding Scheme gives new graduates a financial incentive to start their careers in rural areas where shortages are worst. The scheme helps attract and retain veterinarians in hard-to-staff regions, easing pressure on existing clinics and improving access to animal care for farmers.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Double the scheme to up to 70 places a year** from the 2027 funding round, for new graduate vets committed to five years of rural practice with production animals and working dogs.
- **Open the scheme** to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents who graduate from accredited Australian vet schools and are registered to practise here.
- **Report on results** each year, publishing where bonded vets work and how many stay, with a full review of the scheme in three years.





Common-sense rules and regulatory certainty

Farmers need rules they can plan around and that match how farming works today. A re-elected National Government will finish the job on several important changes.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Introduce no new taxes on farmers**
- **Keep agriculture out of the ETS**
- **Pass the KiwiSaver (First Home or Farm) Amendment Bill** so farm workers can use their KiwiSaver to buy their first home or a farm, including those living in employer-provided housing.
- **Progress the Gene Technology Bill** to speed up innovation while safely managing risks to people and the environment.
- **Review the Sharemilking Agreements Act** to reflect the growth of contract milking, protect young entrants and reduce disputes.
- **Update agricultural vehicle weight rules** so modern tractors and harvesters don't need routine overweight permits, while protecting vulnerable roads and bridges. In the meantime, NZTA will be directed to improve the permit system.
- **Simplify wild meat rules** so small processors can handle both farmed livestock and certified wild game, with strict food safety and traceability.
- **Create regional wildfire readiness plans** with forest owners, farmers, Fire and Emergency New Zealand and councils, so firefighters can act fast with the right information. Wildfire risk is rising and too often crews arrive not knowing which tracks a fire engine can use or where the nearest available water source is.
- **Pass the Crown Land Legislation Amendment Bill** so high-country leaseholders can add farm shops, hospitality, arable, horticulture and renewable energy alongside pastoral farming.
- **Keep the ban on full-farm conversions to exotic forestry** in the ETS, while still allowing farmers to plant up to 25 per cent of their own land if they choose. We must preserve our most productive farmland.
- **Extend the Plant Variety Rights (PVR) Act 2022** to secure the development of future high-value varieties.
- **Open seven new markets** through Next Billion Customers, so what farmers grow has buyers ready to pay a premium.

Strong biosecurity at the border and on the farm

Farmers care deeply about biosecurity. It is our first line of defence against pests and diseases that could devastate our primary industries, environment and economy. The arrival of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza, H5N1, shows the value of preparation and cooperation between industry and government. Producing more for the world depends on keeping our biosecurity status.

Growers want faster approvals for new crop protection tools. The National-led Government opened a pathway for growers to follow international Codex standards for agrichemicals where New Zealand limits have not been set. In September 2026 we passed the Agricultural Compounds and Veterinary Medicines Amendment Act, which will speed up approvals for new products.

As travel and trade grow, so does the risk at our border. National will strengthen our biosecurity laws so our border protections stay among the strongest in the world, and those who put our biosecurity at risk face real consequences.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Pass the Biosecurity Act Amendment Bill** to modernise our biosecurity system and strengthen our ability to prevent, detect and respond to threats.
- **Pass the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Amendment Bill** to accelerate access to agricultural and horticultural products and veterinary medicines.
- **Increase penalties for serious biosecurity breaches at the border** so they are a genuine deterrent and reflect the damage an incursion can do by increasing conviction fines from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and grant officers the discretion to refuse entry or deport certain temporary visa holders.





Improving Rural Diagnostic Access

National is focused on delivering timely, high-quality healthcare for rural New Zealand. That means putting rural communities at the centre of health planning, shifting the focus towards prevention and earlier diagnosis, bringing more services closer to home, supporting people who still need to travel, and building a stronger rural health workforce.

The message from the frontline is clear: access to diagnostics remains one of the biggest unmet needs in rural healthcare. A survey of 192 rural health professionals identified diagnostic imaging and cardiac testing as major unmet needs, with travel barriers the single greatest obstacle to timely care.

For rural families, accessing a routine diagnostic test can mean hours of travel, time away from work and additional pressure on those juggling family and caring responsibilities. These barriers can delay diagnosis and treatment, adding unnecessary pressure to patients, families and the wider health system.

A re-elected National Government will build on progress in rural healthcare by maximising capacity in our public and private hospitals and continue to roll out

mobile diagnostic scanners to deliver more services for patients. By making better use of existing resources, technology and partnerships with healthcare providers, National will bring more essential diagnostic services closer to rural communities.

Improving access to diagnostics will help patients get answers sooner, reduce unnecessary travel and hospital transfers, support earlier treatment and make better use of the rural health workforce..

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Maximise diagnostic capacity across public and private hospitals**, making better use of existing equipment, facilities and clinical expertise to deliver more timely testing for patients.
- **Roll out mobile diagnostic scanners**, prioritising rural communities facing the greatest access barriers and working with local health providers to bring more services closer to home.
- **Measure and report results**, including diagnostic wait times, avoided patient travel and hospital transfers, service volumes and improvements in access and patient outcomes.



Growing the next generation of farmers

New Zealand's food and fibre workforce is ageing. The average farmer is now 58, and over the next decade more than 17,000 farm and orchard owners will reach 65. For a sector that supports 360,000 jobs, makes up 15 per cent of GDP and earns a record \$65.2 billion in exports, we need more young people coming through.

National refreshed the Agricultural and Horticultural Science curriculum, rescued Apprenticeship Boost from a funding cliff and targeted it to high-growth areas including agriculture, horticulture, viticulture and forestry. Apprentice completion rates have lifted from 67 per cent in 2021 to 86 per cent.

We saved Telford, disestablished the centralised Wellington bureaucracy of Te Pūkenga and restored standalone regional polytechnics, so rural and agricultural training is delivered locally and shaped by local industry needs.

At Fieldays 2026 we launched the Future Leaders Scholarship, giving emerging leaders in agriculture, horticulture and forestry \$10,000 towards study, industry experience and governance skills.

We want to go further.

A re-elected National Government will:

- **Introduce an industry-led secondary school subject of Food and Fibre Systems** for Years 12 and 13, starting in 2029.
- **Double Trades Academy places to 20,000 by 2030 and expand Youth Guarantee places by 1,000 a year**, giving more young people early, practical pathways into food and fibre.
- **Work with Landcorp to expand the Apprenticeship Scheme** so more young New Zealanders can gain recognised agricultural qualifications and build a long-term career in farming.
- **Grow Landcorp's dairy and livestock equity partnership schemes**, creating more opportunities for young farmers to build equity, progress into business ownership and ultimately their own farm.
- **Back the Future Leaders Scholarship** to encourage young people to develop the necessary skills to lead the primary sector in the years to come.

A plan for rural New Zealand

The plan is working but the job is not done. Farmers know National backs them. New Zealand's farming families are helping us fix the basics by growing the economy, and together we are building the future for a prosperous New Zealand.

**Lower costs. Simpler rules. Secure inputs. More markets.
Stronger rural communities.**