

16 April 2021

Hon Dr Megan Woods  
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation  
Private Bag 18041  
Molesworth St  
WELLINGTON 6160

Dear Minister

## **Annual Letter of Expectations for 2021/22 – The New Zealand Institute for Plant & Food Research Ltd**

I am writing in response to your Annual Letter of Expectations for The New Zealand Institute for Plant & Food Research Limited (PFR). You asked PFR to outline how we propose to respond to the expectations you have specified. A summary of our intended approach is provided below. These areas will be further expanded on in our draft Statement of Corporate Intent (SCI).

### **1. Accelerate New Zealand's economic recovery and deliver on Government priorities**

#### **1.1 Assist in the implementation of Government and industry strategies, such as the *Fit for a Better World Roadmap* and the *Conservation and Environmental Science Roadmap***

We are supporting MPI's *Fit for a Better World Roadmap* by providing the science leadership for three of the eight *Fit for a Better World* science accelerators that MPI identified in a Government-industry-science workshop in October 2020. These are: Open Ocean Aquaculture, New Horticulture and Diversifying Protein. We are engaging industry in conversations with MPI to scope opportunities and plan the science. We are also involved in a number of activities aligned with the *Conservation and Environmental Science Roadmap*, e.g. He Waka Eke Noa, and are seeking opportunities to support outcomes where our science may contribute.

#### **1.2 Actively co-operate in advancing the consistency of environmental datasets and insights following the Parliamentary Commission for the Environment's report to Parliament**

Plant & Food Research is not a major holder of environmental datasets although we work with other organisations who hold these valuable assets. We develop insights from these datasets through research underway in our Sustainable Production Portfolio, e.g. effects of climate change on land use. We are working with our fellow CRIs to create a "single front door" to our collective environmental datasets.

#### **1.3 Align with work undertaken in relation to the Carbon Neutral Government Programme**

In 2019 we appointed a Chief Sustainability Officer who has developed a programme of sustainability initiatives and measures of our progress. We will look to align our current and future initiatives to support the goals of the recently announced Carbon Neutral Government Programme. Our SCI will outline our approach to reporting on our sustainability initiatives

through a broad suite of capitals, including Financial, Manufacturing, Human, Social, Intellectual, and Natural domains.

**1.4 Act in accordance with the expectation of the Public Service Commission’s key principles on pay restraint for executive remuneration, and senior staff when applicable, as a result of COVID-19 and ensure pay equity principles are implemented across the organisation, and that remuneration packages are in line with government organisations**

We followed the Commission’s directions in the 2021 financial year and will do so again in the 2022 year.

1.5 Further, we note your expectation that Crown Research Institutes are to work within existing Crown funding. Our 3-year Business Plan meets this requirement.

## **2. Te Pae Kahurangi Report**

**2.1 Incorporate a system-wide perspective in collective strategic planning, and meaningfully engage with key participants in the system**

Plant & Food Research has a strong track record of working collaboratively with industry, Government and other participants in the science system. We are actively working to develop stronger and more strategic links with Māori. While we are proud of the progress that has been made, we believe that there are significant opportunities to create even greater impact. We believe that this is best achieved by taking a “quadruple helix” approach, that is, by the co-development of strategy by Government, industry, science and Māori. We are working with MPI to develop this concept for the Food and Fibre Industries. In addition, we are working with our fellow CRIs to ensure that we collectively take a pan-CRI approach to New Zealand’s highest science priorities.

**2.2 Implement a collective approach to capital planning, co-locating and resource sharing with relevant parties where this opportunity exists, to provide resilient investments across the Crown**

We already co-locate and share resources with other CRIs across a number of our sites. Plant & Food Research will continue to seek opportunities to further pursue collective approaches to capital planning, co-locating and resource sharing. We are currently in active conversations with other Crown entities in relation to the possibility of them joining us at our Mt Albert site (this is further detailed in 6.2 below).

**2.3 Have a pan-CRI approach to the use and sharing of resources, services, capability, assets and people**

We agree that this is an important priority and expect the work described in 2.1 to inform a more effective pan-CRI approach to the use and sharing of resources, services, capability, assets and people.

**2.4 Have a no ‘wrong door’ approach for CRIs to the public, such as the National Environmental Data Centre**

The CRIs are currently under discussion on how to improve the visibility of and public access to our collective capabilities, including through the National Environmental Data Centre and other pan-CRI initiatives such as regenerative agriculture and the Impact Planning and Evaluation Network.

## **2.5 Build strategic relationships with Government, other research organisations, Māori, businesses, international organisations and other key stakeholders**

We will continue to build strategic relationships with Government, other research organisations, Māori, businesses, international organisations and other key stakeholders. Initiatives such as the *Fit for a Better World Science Accelerators*, which have committed to a quadruple helix involving Government, research organisations, Māori and industry, provide a nucleating function.

## **3. COVID-19, hazard management and emergency response**

### **3.1 Maintain critical scientific capability, build resilience and support the ongoing development of connected systems, and support the relevant critical functions of Government to ensure decision-making is soundly evidence-based**

Through our 3 business models we are ensuring the resilience of our sectors and PFR in both the short and long term.

- Through investment in our Growing Futures Ngā Pou Rangahau Directions we are creating bold and transformative responses for our sectors to a range of future scenarios, ensuring their long-term sustainability
- Through our Technology Development business model we have created a mechanism for our sectors to co-invest in the creation of new products and technologies, which in turn will create economic, environmental and social impact in the medium term.
- Through our Science Services business model we provide a mechanism to find answers to some of the complex problems our sectors are facing today.

## **4. Vision Mātauranga**

### **4.1 Support Vision Mātauranga and develop appropriate capability and capacity to contribute to Māori aspirations, form strong relevant partnerships, and take a co-development approach in the science sector**

Our Tono strategy and associated Taonga principles are guiding our interactions with Māori and supporting the development of huatahi partnerships. We are also expanding our Māori summer studentship programme, which attracts rangatahi into STEM subjects. In collaboration with other CRIs and through our joint graduate schools, which include universities, we are improving our visibility and access to emerging Māori researchers.

## **5. Well-being and workforce diversity**

### **5.1 Act as a good employer and in accordance with corporate social responsibility practices, have employer policies and procedures that support diversity and inclusion (gender, age, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation) and a positive culture**

Our key values are discovery and the creative application of knowledge; achievement through leadership; and relationships based on honesty, mutual respect and trust. Our People & Culture policies, practices and procedures reflect these values. We are a member of Diversity Works (formerly the EEO Trust) and have started working with them on updating our current policies. Diversity Works have completed an initial EDI audit to help inform our development work in this area. We actively analyse and monitor remuneration from a gender and ethnicity perspective. Over the last two years, members of our senior and wider leadership teams have attended unconscious bias training. Our Board, senior and wider leadership teams have excellent gender balance and we continue to strive for greater diversity in senior roles across PFR.

**Continue to build and maintain a diverse workforce at all levels, including building Māori knowledge and expertise, the number of Māori researchers, and increase the level of diversity at the senior management level**

Our workforce capability planning takes into account the need to make sure we increase the diversity of our staff. We are also collaborating with the CRIs to develop an approach to engaging more effectively with rangatahi Māori to increase their involvement in science.

**6. Specific priorities for Plant & Food Research**

**6.1 Continue to work with officials and relevant agencies on the options and structure for the Kiwifruit Breeding Centre (KBC)**

We are actively working with MBIE officials to progress arrangements to establish the KBC by 1 July 2021. The current focus is on employee transitions to the new entity and legal documentation of the agreed commercial terms.

**6.2 Proactively engage with Manaaki Whenua and relevant organisations on the proposed developments at Mt Albert**

Discussions are underway with Manaaki Whenua and MPI on opportunities for them to co-locate with our science and business teams at our Mt Albert Head office in Auckland. In this regard, it is currently looking increasingly likely that MPI will shortly formally commit to build their interim Post Entry Quarantine facility on our site. We are excited about the prospect of other aligned parties co-locating and are confident in the opportunities this will create for further collaboration and science impact.

We will continue to actively engage with officials in MBIE over our science and business strategy and targets for 2021/22 – 2023/24 when preparing our draft SCI for your consideration.

Yours sincerely



Nicola Shadbolt  
**Chair**