

21 February 2022

Hon Dr Megan Woods
Minister of Research, Science and Innovation
Parliament Buildings

Dear Minister Woods

AGRESEARCH LETTER OF EXPECTATIONS 2022/23

Thank you for conveying your strategic and performance expectations for AgResearch Ltd in your recent Letter of Expectations for 2022/23.

In this letter we set out our proposed response to your expectations and our plan to accelerate New Zealand's economic performance while addressing pressing environmental concerns and our sector's journey towards a sustainable farming future.

The Board is pleased to confirm we very much share and look forward to delivering on the opportunities created in the current Covid 19 environment that you outlined in your letter, and we are extremely confident about the value our research can add to the agriculture sector's contribution to New Zealand's pandemic recovery.

The Board welcomes the guidance and commitment you have shown to designing a research sector here in New Zealand via the Te Ara Paerangi – Future Pathways. We are encouraging our staff and stakeholders to contribute directly to the consultation process, and we are sharing some of our more innovative organisational initiatives around workforce and e-research with MBIE and will share knowledge from our international research partners about other science system changes. We look forward to contributing to co-design of New Zealand's future research sector.

Specific expectations for AgResearch in 2022/23:

Regarding your specific instructions for AgResearch, please note the following:

- *Ensure the continuation of the progression of the Lincoln Facilities development, including updating my officials on progress and that the project comes in on time and within budget:*

Developing our new Lincoln facilities is a high priority for us. As you noted at last year's official opening of Te Ohu Rangahau Kai, the research sector is co-locating and sharing facilities to enhance collaboration. The Board, management and project team are strongly focussed on ensuring it remains on time and within budget.

As part of AgResearch's strategic commitment to Kaupapa Māori the Board has recently approved the cultural narrative, which will be the integration of local iwi and runaka cultural perspectives and sense of place into the fabric of the new AgResearch Lincoln Facilities and surrounding grounds. This integrated with Lincoln University cultural narrative. We look forward to sharing progress with you in the coming months until the project's completion in late 2023.

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- *Continue to engage with appropriate officials on decisions regarding your capital investments and assets around the country:*

The Board notes your expectations regarding financial performance are unchanged, and that robust business cases for all significant investments and transactions are required. We will engage with you and officials during the Statement of Corporate Intent process and formally convey our financial projections and our asset management plans to ensure we can respond to new areas of growth and demand.

- *Continue to work closely with the relevant organisations in relation to Overseer:*

AgResearch acknowledges your continued interest and commitment to the investment we are making in the future of land-based science facilities around the country including updating and modernising decision support tools such as Overseer to help farmers make their businesses more environmentally friendly and sustainable. We will continue to offer science support and expertise to the model and assist MPI in developing the tool to make it fit-for-future-purpose.

General

The Board notes and supports the good governance provisions as outlined in the annex of your letter. We are proud to have an inclusive, diverse workforce with an equal gender balance, including at executive management level with robust health and safety practices.

AgResearch's plan to honour our commitment to our te Tiriti o Waitangi partners is contained in Te Ara Tika, an AgResearch strategy that directly addresses the barriers for our Te Ao Māori partners while working with a traditional science organisation. The plan is ambitious and long-term with one of its key drivers to recreate AgResearch into a new organisation that brings a unique Māori approach to our science and knowledge, skill, and confidence in Te Ao Māori.

We remain committed to delivering on Government priorities. This year we are focusing on ensuring our own business is compliant with Carbon Neutral Government Programme and look forward to reporting on the progress we make in this area

Finally, we would like to reiterate that AgResearch stands ready and willing to meet any challenges presented by Covid 19. The pandemic has brought into sharper focus the need to provide leadership and evidence-based science solutions for our country. We look forward to doing that with renewed confidence having navigated a plethora of pandemic related challenges to date. We thank you for your support and encouragement and look forward to reporting back to you on the progress we are making on what will be another challenging and busy year for the science sector.

Yours sincerely



Dr Paul Reynolds
Chair

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