



Agriculture

Transforming agricultural value chains (Cook Islands)

Problem addressed

Following the deregulation of the New Zealand market and increased competition, the agricultural sector has been steadily declining. This is being aggravated by several additional challenges, such as shortages of land and labour. Land previously used for farming is increasingly in demand for tourist accommodation, especially in Rarotonga. Labour has also been in short supply across all industries, but more so in agriculture.



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Solution

Through the Agritech initiative, the Government aims to foster and adopt innovation to transform agricultural value chains by improving productivity and profitability. This initiative will provide grant funding to support investment in smart, productivity-enhancing technology and equipment to support the commercial viability of farm businesses and the economic sustainability of the agricultural sector.

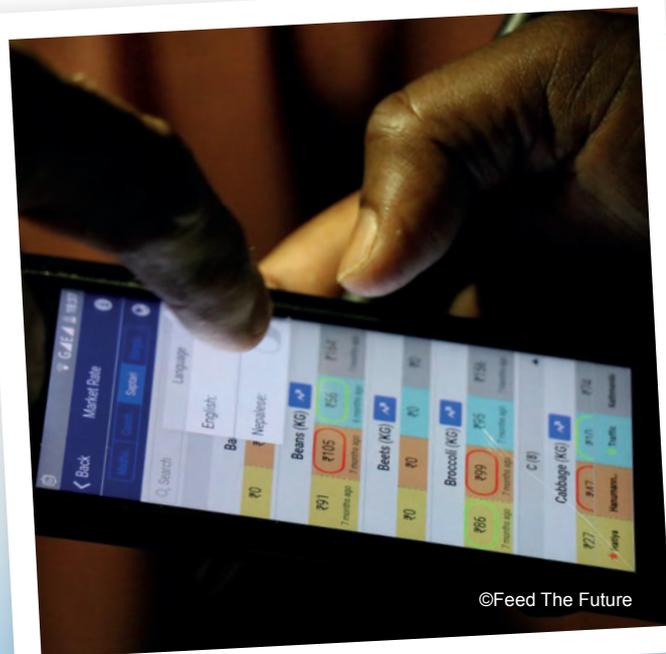
Innovations and features

AgriTech will support innovative proposals along the entire value chain. Examples include smart irrigation systems to maximize crop growth, smart fertilizer application systems, high-tech greenhouses, hydroponic systems, farm robotics to reduce labour use, smart logistics technologies such as food freshness sensors and shelf life enhancement technology for merchandise in transit, and development of marketing systems through apps, websites, and other digital platforms to connect producers and consumers.

Different types of grants are available for varying amounts, with larger grants requiring co-funding.



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Evidence and viability

AgriTech grants will provide an opportunity for applicants to:

- Pursue new ideas that can transform a business or the agriculture industry through innovation and productivity improvements.
- Respond to opportunities that are driven by innovative ideas or meet new market needs.
- Facilitate better connections between producers, processors and marketers.
- Reduce farming's environmental footprint through new technology and more efficient processes that mitigate the impacts of climate change.

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