



Feeding, Food and Future First  
Feeding the world, growing the future

24 September 2013

Minister Joyce  
Office of Steven Joyce  
Private Bag 18041  
Parliament Buildings  
Wellington 6160

Emailed: c/- **H(2)(a)** @parliament.govt.nz

Dear Minister Joyce

I am writing on behalf of the Board of AgResearch to confirm our desire to hold a teleconference or VC with you on 25 September (NZST) to discuss the next stages for our Future Footprint processes. Our team at AgResearch is working to provide answers to the additional questions you have raised today and we will have those to you via MBIE overnight.

The AgResearch Board would like to highlight the following points:

- The date of 26 September for the communication back to staff following our staff consultation phase has been long telegraphed to the whole of AgResearch. This is the culmination of a very thorough and transparent process that AgResearch staff have engaged with very professionally. We had nearly 250 staff submissions and the Executive have recommended to the Board that we modify the FFP proposal to incorporate a good number of them.
  - Stakeholders and media are also aware that we are proposing to communicate any revisions in our plans to staff on 26 September. As per our previous discussion with you, AgResearch has worked with a number of sector partners to provide supportive media commentary. Some of these are trickling out this week, the majority will follow in the fortnight after our staff announcement.
- If we do not release a prepared statement to the media, we believe it will be unrealistic to expect that our staff communication will not be leaked to the media (probably in a selective way).

As you are aware, on Monday Tom and I met with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, a Councillor and the CEO of Dunedin City. It was a cordial meeting and while they are still not happy with the potential impact on Invermay staff numbers, they did acknowledge that they are most interested in regional development. The positive outcome of the discussion is that they now intend to release a statement saying that the two southern regional Councils, Dunedin City Council, University of Otago, and AgResearch (and perhaps Dairy NZ) intend to work together to create an Environmental/Farm

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Systems cluster at Invermay. They regarded this as "a good news story" because this is very much the *topic de jour* for their regions. We are expecting to see a draft of that release today/tomorrow.

You will recall too that the AgResearch Board and Executive are taking a delegation down South on 10 October. After yesterday's positive outcome we all now regard this as the first meeting to explore what we can create at Invermay given AgResearch's commitment to focus regional farms systems work there.

While down South I will also be taking the opportunity to speak to a Southland Agribusiness monthly dinner meeting.

So, in summary, the AgResearch Board feel that to delay the release of the next stage of our plans beyond 26 September will be very difficult, and while not as ideal as a face-to-face meeting, we would very much hope that after tomorrow's telecon you feel comfortable to move forward.

Yours sincerely

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Sam Robinson  
Chairman

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