



MEDIA RELEASE

Dairy Industry with NEXT Foundation and DOC Join Forces to Accelerate Investment in Predator Control

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The dairy industry today joins with NEXT Foundation and Department of Conservation to dramatically transform the way invasive predators are managed on mainland New Zealand.

The partnership intends to focus on new and improved ways to remove introduced predators such as rats, stoats and possums from large areas of land and keep them out.

Five major dairy companies have committed \$5 million to the partnership – including Fonterra, Open Country, Synlait, Tatua and Westland Milk Products – which will include resources to accelerate the pace of research and development (R&D) capabilities and testing. The funding will add to the investment already announced by NEXT Foundation and DOC into the Zero Invasive Predators (ZIP) programme last year.

As well as posing a major threat for our native birdlife, possums are a carrier of bovine tuberculosis, an infectious disease that can affect cattle and deer. Therefore it makes sense for the dairy industry to get involved in stepping up the work to remove these predators.

NEXT Foundation Chairman, Chris Liddell says, “Protection and conservation of the environment is critical to New Zealand. As a country we are heavily reliant on our environment for primary production, tourism and many other sectors that depend on the health of our land and water. Failure to find more economical, humane and effective solutions to pest threats to our environment strikes at the core of our national identity.”

“While current predator control methods like 1080 and trapping can successfully knock back predators, reinvasion is a continual problem and has not stemmed the tide of biodiversity loss. The welcome injection of funding will help ZIP accelerate the development of a successful set of innovative solutions that will deliver economic, social and biodiversity benefits to New Zealand for generations to come.”

“This partnership also aims to spark new ideas about predator control and shows what can be achieved when the public and private sector work together for conservation,” says the Director-General of Conservation, Lou Sanson.

Speaking for the dairy industry Fonterra CEO, Theo Spierings says, “Diseases and pests are a threat to dairy farming and the New Zealand environment. Farmers already lose millions of dollars due to

predators and we want to get behind efforts that accelerate the eradication of pests in New Zealand and protect agricultural incomes.”

“New Zealand’s environment and biosecurity is an important driver of our global reputation for high quality, natural dairy nutrition and we want to steadfastly protect that,” he says.

“Working with the dairy industry will give us access to the dairy farms of New Zealand who are on the front line of the fight against invasive species and allow us to accurately assess the physical and reputational damage that inadequate pest control brings to New Zealand and its strongest export sector,” says Liddell.

A core tenet of NEXT Foundation’s philanthropic efforts is to accelerate game-changing large-scale transformational environmental initiatives.

“Collectively we want to be a catalyst to bringing together community, industry, philanthropists and government to solve some of New Zealand’s toughest issues,” added Liddell. “ZIP is a great example of an initiative that addresses a national issue that has common concern and requires a long term approach to R&D for the greater good of New Zealand’s future. We welcome the support of like-minded partners who share the vision of a predator free future for New Zealand.”

NEXT Foundation has been involved in active applied research and pilots in the Marlborough Sounds in partnership with DOC for several months. The partnership will further this work on a wider scale including investigating potential solutions such as advanced lures, remote detection, and deterrent technologies.

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About NEXT Foundation

NEXT Foundation was launched in March 2014 and will invest \$100 million over the next 10 years to create a legacy of environmental and educational excellence for the benefit of future generations of New Zealanders. NEXT Foundation will make commitments of approximately \$5-15 million per annum, to be distributed as part of an annual process, to one to four projects per annum over their project lives.

For more information visit - www.nextfoundation.org.nz

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