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## MAF's Latest Farm Monitoring Reports

MAF's 2005 Farm Monitoring reports look into sheep and beef farming, dairying, deer farming, arable farming, horticulture and viticulture. These reports provide a survey of farmers' opinions on their industry and its prospects. In general terms, the sheep and beef report finds:

- a positive outlook for sheep and beef, with gross revenue up;
- farmers confident lamb prices will stay up;
- beef exports to Asia sharply increased, adding stability to beef schedule prices;
- land prices continue to rocket; and
- some farmers surveyed are leveraging off the value of their property to purchase off-farm assets.

The dairy sector report says farm revenue lifted nine percent in 2004/05, due to the increased milk-solid payout. This was despite a difficult season climatically throughout the country with production down four to ten percent in all regions. And while gross farm revenue is budgeted to drop one percent in 2005/06, overall farmer morale and confidence are high heading into the season. The price of dairy farms also continues to increase.

The deer farming report paints a less positive picture, with continuing low returns and farmers divided between using low stock prices to expand their operations and others leaving the industry. While farm revenue increased in the North Island model, reflecting an increase in venison returns, the revenue for the South Island model reached an all-time low. Velvet returns also reached an all time low.

The arable report is a mixed bag with major weather swings causing early season concerns, but overall the season suiting most crops. While overall production is much higher than in the 1990s, the sector's bottom line has remained static. The report finds farmers are budgeting for a similar result next year, from higher productivity, and slightly lower prices and small cost increases.

The horticulture sector had a tough year in 2004/05, with incomes generally falling and the sector's confidence shaken. Recurring themes in the report are low export prices as a result of high exchange rates, increasing costs of production and increasing volumes of competitors' products. Unlike key agricultural products, horticultural crops have not been buffered from the effects of the exchange rate by high commodity prices.

The sixth monitoring report investigates the state of the wine industries and finds average prices for the major varieties have fallen in 2005 from 2004. For many



growers, confidence in vineyard profitability in the short term has fallen, as downward pressure becomes a reality. The 2005 grape harvest produced a vintage of 142,000 tonnes of grapes – the second largest harvest recorded. Sauvignon blanc is the leading variety, representing 45 percent of the vintage. The industry is presently strongly focused on quality.

To view the reports in full, visit: [www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/statistics-and-forecasts/farm-monitoring/index.htm](http://www.maf.govt.nz/mafnet/rural-nz/statistics-and-forecasts/farm-monitoring/index.htm)

## Details: National Travel Assistance Policy

From 1 January next year, people around the country will have more help with access to specialist health care. The National Travel Assistance (NTA) policy was announced in May, but details of how it will impact different regions have not been available until very recently. The policy will replace regional policies, and will see the number of people eligible for assistance more than double to over 100,000.

The scheme is targeted at people who:

- have to travel long distances to access specialist health or disability services (outpatient, inpatient or day patient secondary or tertiary services) outside their community area;
- incur high travel costs as a result of frequent visits to specialist health and disability services; and
- have significant financial need that might otherwise prevent them from accessing necessary specialist health or disability services.

So, the scheme aims to help people suffering chronic diseases and those who live in rural areas needing specialist health care. Also targeted are people who live relatively close to specialist health services but who must access them frequently. For example, a Christchurch person suffering cancer and requiring a high dose of radiation therapy five times a week for five weeks will be able to claim travel costs, even though they live in the inner city.

The scheme also recognises the financial situation of families with sick children. For example, a Motueka family with a child who has to travel to Nelson Hospital will be able to claim assistance with travel costs without meeting any frequent travel criteria, as long as the family has a Community Services Card.

The main changes to eligibility under the new policy are:

- people aged 16 and 17 will be eligible for the same (higher) level of assistance as children under 16;
- a higher level of assistance will be available for children with a Community Services Card;
- people referred by a publicly funded specialist to publicly funded specialist services more than 350 km away from their homes will be eligible for assistance, regardless of how often they travel and even if they do not have a Community Services Card; and
- people who have to visit specialist services more than 25 times in two months will be eligible for assistance regardless of how far they have to travel and even if they do not have a Community Services Card.

A copy of the National Travel Assistance (NTA) policy can be viewed on the Ministry of Health's website [www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance](http://www.moh.govt.nz/travelassistance) and over the next six months information will become available online for patients and their families at [www.health.govt.nz/travelassistance](http://www.health.govt.nz/travelassistance)

## Smallfarming NZ to Wind Up

In July, the decision was taken to wind up Smallfarming NZ. This action was found to be necessary given a decline in membership, which has made the running of the Association, including the production of "The Smallfarmer" journal, unsustainable. In addition, because there are now many specialist organisations and a variety of publications catering for individual small block holders' needs, the role that Smallfarming NZ has played over the years has diminished.

The Association will be officially wound up in April 2006 with a celebratory "miniconference". Special guest speakers will acknowledge the 28 year history of Smallfarming NZ, and a final special issue of The Smallfarmer, in book form, will be launched, highlighting the Association's history and smallfarming trends over the period.

The Association will continue to operate until April 2006, producing The Smallfarmer, and providing the usual Trading Post and library services for members.

## Enterprising Communities

The Department of Labour is continuing to help communities create local employment opportunities, and to address skills issues by developing community owned businesses, through its newly created Enterprising Communities Programme (that replaced the Community Employment Group (CEG)).

This assistance could include a community using their local assets like land to create tourism and environmental employment opportunities, or developing a project to help migrants to better integrate into the NZ labour market

The main change that has been made to the programme is to strengthen the focus on "labour market outcomes". When the CEG was first established, NZ was experiencing high unemployment and an over-supply of labour. Today's situation is very different. Unemployment is 3.7 percent and there are now skill and labour shortages in many areas. However, significant pockets of disadvantage still remain within some communities. The priority of Enterprising Communities is to work with organisations that can show they will be making a measurable difference to their local economy.

### What Funding is Available?

Each project is considered on a case by case basis, based on the information provided in the application and business plan. There is no set maximum. As part of the application process, organisations are asked to give a detailed breakdown of project costs and a profile of how they'll spend the funding over the lifetime of the project. Applicants will also be asked how their organisation will contribute to the cost of the project either in cash (for example, money from fund raising or other funding bodies) or "in kind" contributions such as volunteers' time.

Funding is available for a maximum of three years, with projects expected to be able to show that they will be financially independent once the agreed funding period finishes. The type of activities they can help fund include:

- the salary for a key worker to deliver the project;
- the costs directly associated with running the project like photocopying or extra telephone costs;
- leasing equipment;
- training costs for staff or the people the project is helping; and
- insurance and ACC Levies.

## Starting the Application Process

For an organisation that has identified a potential opportunity or idea, the first step is to complete an expression of interest. This can be done by completing the form on the website, or over the phone by calling 0800 779 998. The expression of interest process lets an organisation test whether an idea is likely to meet their funding criteria before it takes the time to submit a full application.

As well as asking about the project aims and the target audience, the expression of interest asks about the legal status of the applicant organisation. Grants are only available to legally incorporated, non profit organisations. If an organisation doesn't want to become incorporated, it can ask an organisation to act on its behalf.

### Need more information about Enterprising Communities?

- Visit the website at [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz) to find out all about the grants programme. You can complete all stages of the grants process online, from completing an expression of interest to making a full application.
- Ask them for a copy of the new Enterprising Communities brochure.
- Email them at [enterprising.communities@msd.govt.nz](mailto:enterprising.communities@msd.govt.nz)
- Call them from 8am to 5pm Monday to Friday on 0800 779 998. If you are deaf or find it hard to communicate by phone, you can send a message to their Deaf Link free-fax 0800 621 621

## NZers Attitudes to Money & Finance

A recent Bank of NZ (BNZ) survey, conducted by UMR research, looked at the underlying attitudes to money and finance of NZers. In particular, the survey looked at how NZers feel about their money, how they make big financial decisions, and from whom they take financial advice.

Overall, most NZers see themselves as financially conservative. The vast majority of us say we don't like high risk investments, we make our own decisions on major investments choosing not to take professional advice, we plan ahead carefully, and we prefer not to have debt.

However, when it comes to the "nuts & bolts" of dealing with our finances, the survey results perhaps tell a somewhat different

story. According to the survey results, nearly 55 percent of NZers say they would prefer to watch television or do some exercise rather than sort out their finances. More than 10 percent of people say they prefer visiting the dentist to concentrating on their finances!

Other findings in this part of the survey include:

- half of us barely look at our bank statements, preferring to put them away in case we need them later;
- a further eight percent of us say we glance at bank statements and then throw them out;
- two percent of people throw the statement out without opening them; and
- one percent of people say they are too scared to look at their statements.

Overall, according to the survey, it seems that at least 11 percent of people have little or no idea how much they have in the bank or how they are spending their money. These people don't know the first thing about their finances, the bank says. The remaining 38 percent of people say they review their statements thoroughly, taking note of spending and adjusting their budgets accordingly.

## Four Financial Personality Types

BNZ says the survey shows that the population can be divided into four basic financial personality types. Rarely does a person fit neatly into one type; most people have their psychological base in one type and they show characteristics of at least one other type. The four basic types are:

- **"Fun lovers"**, who make up a little less than a quarter of the population. Fun lovers see themselves as fun-loving and carefree. They are less likely to research options before making a major purchase. They live for today, they love a good party, and they see money as providing freedom and enjoyment. On average, fun lovers are more likely to be young people and they are more likely to work in one of the professions.
- **"Heartlanders"**, who make up 43 percent of the population. These people are careful about their investments and they prefer not to be in debt. Relatively speaking, they are more willing to seek financial advice. Heartlanders are focused on their families and providing for those families.
- **"Strategists"**, who make up a little less than a quarter of the population. Strategists thoroughly research options before making a major purchase, they plan ahead carefully, and rarely do they spend more than they can afford. They are often ambitious and forward-thinking people.
- **"Go-getters"**, who make up about 13 percent of the population. On average, go-getters are more likely to see making money as an exciting means of providing independence and freedom, and they are more likely to respect wealthy people. Go-getters see themselves as people who have great business ideas and get them off the ground. They love new things, especially the latest in technology. Of all the financial personality types, go-getters are more likely to live in Auckland and they are more likely to be men.

Other major findings in the survey include:

- NZers say they research major purchases thoroughly: 79 percent of NZers say they thoroughly research options to ensure the best deal before they make a major purchase. Fun-lovers are the least likely to undertake such research; 45

percent of them said they researched major purchases relative to 94 percent of strategists who say they research major purchases.

- The majority of NZers say they don't take advice on money matters: 71 percent of them said they preferred to make their own decisions about savings and investments. Heartlanders are the people most likely to take advice; 34 percent of them say they take advice on money matters; on the other hand, go-getters are less likely to take advice: 10 percent of them say they take advice.
- When NZers do take financial advice, professional financial advisors are the most likely source of advice (36 percent of respondents said they were most likely to take advice from a financial advisor relative to other potential sources), followed by family members (26 percent), bank managers (25 percent), and friends (seven percent). One percent of people said they would take advice from an astrologer.
- NZers say they prefer not to be in debt: 60 percent of people say they would prefer not to be in debt at all. Nearly 70 percent of fun lovers say they feel some debt can help them achieve their goals, while 23 percent of heartlanders say they feel some debt can help them. Nearly 75 percent of NZers say they never spend more than they can afford.
- Borrowing money from your friends is apparently frowned upon in NZ: 79 percent of people say they have never borrowed from friends, and of those who have, 90 percent always paid it back.

## Geographical Differences Revealed

The survey also suggests that where you live has a lot to do with attitudes towards wealth, debt, money and spending. The results highlighted some key differences between Aucklanders, Wellingtonians and Cantabrians.

Aucklanders, for example, say they plan their financial affairs, and tend to make their own decisions on money matters. And the region's residents seem to be impressed by wealth and the success of others. Yet, Aucklanders say they are debt-averse, and show the most discipline in the management of their credit cards, with 59 percent of Aucklanders always paying their credit card off in full each month.

By contrast, Wellingtonians are apparently the least likely to take advice on money matters. They say they are unimpressed by wealth and accordingly pay the least attention to business news. Wellingtonians are more likely to buy on credit and worry about it later, with 37 percent of those surveyed saying they sometimes do not pay their credit card off in full each month.

And Cantabrians are seemingly conservative when it comes to money matters, with nearly three-quarters of those surveyed saying that they plan carefully. They are most likely to take advice on money matters, which may explain their willingness to take on debt – as long as it helps them reach their goals. They are apparently far more interested in local news than global bulletins.

### NZers Changing Credit Card Habits

Other recent survey information (this time from MasterCard) shows that NZers are changing the way they use their credit cards, controlling them and paying off debt more regularly. The nationwide survey of 500 NZers shows that credit card usage for day-to-day purchases and payment of regular bills has increased while there has been a drop in the proportion of credit card holders using their cards for emergency and large one-off purchases. Reserve Bank figures show that NZers' credit card debt is 2.2 percent of total NZ debt – compared with 2.3 percent a year ago.

## New Guidelines: Embryo Donation for Infertile Couples

Surplus embryos created by couples who have undergone IVF treatment can now be donated to other infertile people, as a result of recently released new guidelines. Previously, surplus embryos could only be left in storage or discarded. The Guidelines for Embryo Donation for Reproductive Purposes were prepared by the National Ethics Committee on Assisted Human Reproduction (NECAHR).

Under the guidelines, donor couples and recipients will be required to undergo counselling so that they are fully informed about the psychological, social and ethical aspects of embryo donation before beginning the donation process. They must also have access to counselling throughout the process. A joint counselling session between all parties is also required.

Donor couples will only be able to donate to one family. Donor couples will have to wait until at least two years after they have decided that their own family is complete before being able to proceed with an application to donate their surplus embryos.

Written consent is required from both parties. If one partner of a potential donor couple has died, then donation can only proceed if prior written consent has been obtained.

Clinics providing the service will be required to keep information on the donor couple, including names and current addresses, ethnicity and cultural affiliations, any significant medical history of the donors, their parents and grandparents, other children (if any) and donor siblings (if any).

For more information please contact: Emily Barrett, Media Advisor,  
Ministry of Health, DDI: (04) 496 2483

## New Register for Donors and Donor Offspring

The Human Assisted Reproductive Technology (HART) Register was recently launched. It will give people conceived from donated embryos, sperm or eggs the opportunity to find out about their genetic origins. All future donations at fertility clinics which result in a birth will be included in the HART Register, and information about earlier donors and births can also be included.

The register, established as a result of the HART Act passed last year, will hold information about people who donate embryos, sperm or eggs, children born as a result, and their guardians. It will allow future donors and their offspring to find out about each other, and will also give people involved in earlier donor treatments the chance to do the same if they all give con-

sent. Births, Deaths and Marriages (BDM), part of the Department of Internal Affairs, has responsibility under the HART Act to establish and maintain the register.

Providing information for the register is free, but some fees apply to access the information. Access to information on the register is carefully controlled. The information will only be available to those people to whom it relates, and to medical professionals if the information is required for providing medical treatment or advice.

BDM will also receive basic data from fertility clinics on donors, offspring and guardians for any donations made from today onwards that result in a birth. Fertility clinics will continue to hold more detailed information about these people for up to 50 years. Donors, offspring and their guardians can access that information under the terms of the HART Act.

A brochure about the HART Register and downloadable registration forms are available on the BDM website [www.bdm.govt.nz](http://www.bdm.govt.nz). People requiring further information about the HART Register can call the BDM contact centre, freephone 0800 22 52 52

## National Population Estimates, June 2005 Quarter

Statistics New Zealand has released its latest national population estimates. In a nutshell:

- The estimated resident population of NZ was 4.10 million at 30 June 2005.
- Estimated population growth was 36,800 (0.9 percent) during the June 2005 year.
- Natural increase and net migration gain contributed 28,200 and 8,600, respectively, to population growth during the June 2005 year.
- The median ages for men and women were 34.6 and 36.4 years, respectively, at 30 June 2005.
- Quarterly population growth was estimated to be 5,000 at 30 June 2005.

### Some Details

- The population growth recorded in the June 2005 year is below the average annual increase of 42,500 (1.1 percent) during the 10-year period from June 1995 to June 2005. The lower population growth during the June 2005 year, compared with the June 2004 year, was mainly due to a fall in net permanent and long-term migration.
- Natural increase (excess of births over deaths) was 28,200 in the June 2005 year, 2,000 lower than that recorded in the June 2004 year (30,200).
- At 30 June 2005, the estimated resident populations for males and females were 2,016,800 and 2,081,400, respectively (that's about 103 women per 100 men).
- NZ, along with other OECD countries, has an ageing population because of sub-replacement fertility and relatively low mortality. At 30 June 2005, half the NZ population was over the age of 35.5 years, compared with a median age of 32.6 years a decade earlier.

- At 30 June 2005, the working-age population (15-64 years) reached 2,721,200, an increase of 30,900 (1.2 percent) compared with the June 2004 year. This age group, which accounted for the largest proportion (66.4 percent) of the NZ population in 2005, increased by 318,700 (13.3 percent) between the 1995 and 2005 June years. At 30 June 2005 the median age of the working-age population (15-64 years) was 38.7 years, compared with 36.1 years a decade earlier.

This information comes from a larger Statistics NZ "Hot off the press" release (9 August). The URL for the release is: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pasfull/pasfull.nsf/web/Hot+Off+The+Press+National+Population+Estimates+June+2005+quarter?open>

## Internet Items

### Internet Service Provider Survey; March 2005

Key findings from this Stats NZ survey include:

- For the six months ended 31 March 2005, there were 66 Internet service providers (ISPs) operating in NZ, with a total of about 1.24 million active subscribers.
- At 31 March 2005, the predominant connection technology was analog, with about 800,000 active subscribers.
- At 31 March 2005, the penetration of Internet subscriptions was 30 active subscribers per 100 inhabitants in NZ, while Australia had 29 active subscribers per 100 inhabitants. Both NZ and Australia had 20 analog active subscribers per 100 inhabitants. NZ had 11 non-analog active subscribers per 100 inhabitants, while Australia had nine.
- At 31 March 2005, the predominant download speed category was less than 64kbps, with about 800,000 active subscribers. There were also almost 430,000 active subscribers who used download speeds of 64kbps to 10mbps or greater.
- At 31 March 2005, about 90 percent of ISPs offered their subscribers a SPAM-filtering product as either a free or charged service.
- For the six months ended 31 March 2005, 73 percent of ISPs in NZ saw the strength of competition as the greatest barrier to the growth of their operations. Other common barriers to growth were identified as the regulatory environment relating to telecommunications (about 50 percent), the cost of international bandwidth (almost 46 percent), and delays in obtaining facilities from backbone suppliers (41 percent).

There is a companion "Hot Off The Press" release, which gives much more information on the survey. This can be found at on the Stats NZ website at: <http://www2.stats.govt.nz/domino/external/pasfull/pasfull.nsf/web/Hot+Off+The+Press+Internet+Service+Provider+Survey+March+2005?open>

**RMA Website Revamped** – [www.qualityplanning.org.nz](http://www.qualityplanning.org.nz) – This website provides a fast, one-stop shop for people who work with the Resource Management Act (RMA). New features will help users better navigate the site and go directly to guidance material on all aspects of RMA practice, from plan preparation and consents, to monitoring and enforcement. Users now have

very fast access to supporting information such as council contacts, RMA enforcement guides, plan status information and an extensive library of articles.

**Council Information on New Website** – [www.localcouncils.govt.nz](http://www.localcouncils.govt.nz) – Ratepayers around the country will have access to new information about their local council through this website. The site will include detailed information from Statistics NZ and the Department of Internal Affairs, much of which has not been available to the public before. The information covers a wide range of areas from council activities and structures, election statistics, community profiles, council expenditure, debt, and sources of income. The website will initially offer 17 information profiles for each of NZ's 86 regional and territorial councils. Over time, the information available will increase.

**Upgraded Law Commission Website** – [www.lawcom.govt.nz](http://www.lawcom.govt.nz) – The new website has an improved search facility. It also provides more information on projects. You can now subscribe to email updates that will advise you when a new publication or press release is added to the site.

**NZ IP Legislation on the Internet** – [www.legislation.govt.nz](http://www.legislation.govt.nz) – NZ intellectual property legislation including the Patents Act, Trade Marks Act, Designs Act, Copyright Act, Plant Variety Rights Act, and Fair Trading Act (and corresponding regulations) is available online at the above address. The legislative database includes a user-friendly alphabetical index and a search engine. Contents pages have hyperlinks that enable you to view the full text of the section you require.

**World Rulers** – <http://rulers.org/> – The site lists world rulers and their reigns since 1700 in a huge database with several different ways to get at your answers. Countries can be searched by name or linked maps. Rulers can be searched by index or country. The site even displays major rulership changes since 1996 and offers a Recent Events section. Other details include international organisations, foreign ministers, and religious leaders.

## Update

### National Climate Summary – August 2005

- **Rainfall:** Rainfall was less than a quarter of normal rainfall in much of Canterbury, coastal Otago, Wairarapa and Wellington, less than half of normal in much of Northland, Auckland, Wanganui, Manawatu, Hawke's Bay, Marlborough, and Nelson. Rainfall was also below average in many other regions. Fiordland was the only region with above average rainfall.
- **Temperature:** Mean temperatures about 1.5 C above average in parts of Wellington, Marlborough, Canterbury, West Otago, and Southland, and 1.0 °C above average in Manawatu, Wairarapa, and Nelson. Temperatures were also above average in Auckland, Hawke's Bay, and the remainder of Otago.
- **Sunshine:** Sunshine hours were at least 125 percent of average throughout the whole of the North Island and in coastal Otago, and more than 110 percent of average over much of the South Island. Sunshine hours were below average in Southland and Fiordland.
- **The main centres:** Dunedin was the driest, while Auckland was the warmest. Rainfall was well below average in all four main centres. Temperatures were above average in all four centres, with near records in Wellington and Dunedin. It was

very sunny in all four centres, with near or record August sunshine hours in Auckland, Wellington, and Dunedin.

Thanks to NIWA

### Call for Nominations: CommunityNet Aotearoa Advisory Group

Nominations are now open for three positions in the CommunityNet Aotearoa Advisory Group. The Advisory Group provides community input into strategy, editorial policy, management and promotion of the [www.community.net.nz](http://www.community.net.nz) website. Community and voluntary organisations are invited to make nominations by 16 September.

For details, visit: [www.community.net.nz/CommunityCentre/News/National/advisory-group.htm](http://www.community.net.nz/CommunityCentre/News/National/advisory-group.htm)

### Wild Food Safety: Discussion Paper

The NZ Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) has issued a discussion paper with the objective of helping "hunters and gatherers ... (to) ... make safe decisions about the wild food they eat". The paper's main proposal would go some way towards addressing the gap in available data on the consuming population and consumption patterns. It is proposed that the inclusion of an additional question in the Adult Nutrition Survey to be conducted by the Ministry of Health in 2007/08 could give better data on the consumption of wild food.

Further suggested activities include improving or establishing inter-agency collaboration in collecting, collating and disseminating information to key target groups. Educational activities are suggested along with improved dissemination of information and suggestions for possible future areas of research. Traditional Maori knowledge of keeping traditional Maori foods safe, and the dangers of losing this knowledge, are also discussed.

Submissions close on 28 October. Submissions should be sent to: Submissions – Wild Food Review, c/o Policy Group, NZ Food Safety Authority, PO Box 2835, Wellington, Email: [mary.harvey@nzfsa.govt.nz](mailto:mary.harvey@nzfsa.govt.nz), fax: (04) 463 2501. The NZFSA report on wild food can be downloaded from <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/consumers/wild-foods-review/esr-report-in-full.pdf> and the discussion paper can be found at <http://www.nzfsa.govt.nz/consumers/wild-foods-review/wfr-position-doc.pdf>

### Extra Funding Advances State Highway Projects

A further \$390 million is now earmarked for state highway projects, as a result of the additional \$500 million funding for land transport announced by government on 23 June. On this basis, Transit NZ plans to advance Western Ring Route projects in Auckland, Waikato Expressway projects, Wellington's Dowse to Petone project, and a number of small and medium-sized projects around the country.

On the Transit NZ website is an update page devoted to major changes planned for our highways. Details of this latest funding increase, amongst other things, can be found there. The URL is [http://www.transit.govt.nz/sh\\_ten\\_year\\_forecast\\_05/index.jsp](http://www.transit.govt.nz/sh_ten_year_forecast_05/index.jsp)

## Recent SME Data

This report, by the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) and Statistics NZ, provides a statistical summary of the nature of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in NZ, examining their significance for the economy, their financial performance, the dynamics of SMEs and the significance of SMEs internationally. This is the sixth such report. Highlights include:

- 96.3 percent of enterprises employ 19 or fewer people.
- 86.8 percent of enterprises employ five or fewer people.
- 64.7 percent of enterprises have no employees.
- The number of SMEs increased 10.2 percent in the year to 2004, more than double the increase in the year to 2003.
- Between 2003 and 2004 the average number of employees per enterprise dropped slightly to around five.
- SMEs accounted for 29.2 percent of all employees.
- Firms with five or fewer employees accounted for 10.4 percent of all employees.
- SMEs accounted for 37.3 percent of the economy's total output, measured by value-added, in 2003.
- Firms with five or fewer employees contributed 20.9 percent of total output in 2003.
- From February 2003 to February 2004, firms with five or fewer employees accounted for 95 percent and 93.7 percent of firm entries and exits.
- Firms with five or fewer employees have the highest average real profits per employee and third highest average real sales and other income per employee.
- The proportion of SMEs in the NZ economy is similar to that in a number of other countries.

More information can be downloaded from [http://www.med.govt.nz/irdev/ind\\_dev/smes/2005/2005.html#P10\\_572](http://www.med.govt.nz/irdev/ind_dev/smes/2005/2005.html#P10_572)

## Good Faith Bargaining Code Updated

Changes have been made to the Code of Good Faith in Collective Bargaining. The code helps employers and unions identify good faith issues around collective bargaining, as required under the Employment Relations Act. The changes to the code follow last year's Employment Relations Act amendments. The changes also take into account the experience working under the previous code.

A current version of the code can be found at <http://www.ers.dol.govt.nz/goodfaith/code.html> or call the Department of Labour's Workplace Employment Relations and Health and Safety line on freephone 0800 20 90 20

## New Expats Programme

A new government programme aims to bring expatriate NZers back home. The aim is to make it easier for expats to come home and find the right job by giving them the best information about the country, economy and job opportunities.

The programme would focus on the following areas:

- Launching a website which has up to date information about NZ and can connect expats to the employers, recruiters, real

estate agents, and other organisations and information they need when deciding to return home. The website will also have a link to the Department of Labour's CV matching service, [networkzonline](http://networkzonline.govt.nz).

- Trialling Department of Labour video conferencing facilities in London to NZ employers for interviewing expats.
- Working with the existing range of government and private sector organisations with expat links such as Kiwi Expats Association (KEA), which are creating an expat network around the world and helping them to act as ambassadors for NZ.
- Promoting offshore job expos to expats to help them connect with NZ employers.
- Providing ways friends and family in NZ can connect expats to information about returning.

In addition, the Department of Labour is looking at ways to help make the process smoother for foreign partners of expats by prioritising their applications for residence.

It's intended that the programme will not be a one-off, as global demographics like aging populations and a shrinking workforce mean NZ will continue to compete internationally for skilled labour.

The website that will contain the "nuts & bolts" of the programme is due to be launched in November

## Controlled Substances Licences for Pest Control

There is a new system for licensing the use of vertebrate toxic agents such as 1080 or cyanide and certain fumigants such as methyl bromide and chloropicrin. If you would like to use any of these licensed products you will now need to obtain a Controlled Substances Licence from a Test Certifier.

For more details on the Controlled Substances Licence, see their website at [www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/compliance/cs-licence.asp](http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/compliance/cs-licence.asp) or contact their HS Compliance number on 0800 376 234 and they will send you an application form, a guide and a list of Test Certifiers.

**Note:** Regarding the more general question of do I need to become an Approved Handler in order to use pesticides and herbicides? The answer is that it depends on what you use and how you use it. ERMNZ has produced a number of industry specific guides which may help you answer this question. For more details: [www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/compliance-pubs.asp](http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/compliance-pubs.asp)

## Animal Testing Numbers Down In 2004

New figures show the number of animals used in research, testing and teaching in NZ decreased by almost a quarter last year. The National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee report says just over 246,000 animals were used, with mice, sheep, cattle and rats being the most common. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry says the completion of several long-term projects accounts for a significant drop in fish and possum numbers.

More information can be found at <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/animal-welfare/naeac/>

## Antarctic Ozone Hole Grows from Last Year

The winter hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica appears to have grown from last year but is still smaller than in 2003, when it was at its largest (29 million sq km or 11 million sq miles), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said recently. This year, the hole covers about 25 million square km.

Large reductions in the ozone layer, which sits about 15-30 km (9-19 miles) above the earth, take place each winter over the polar regions, especially the Antarctic, as low temperatures allow the formation of stratospheric clouds that assist chemical reactions breaking down ozone. Industrial chemicals containing chlorine and bromine have been blamed for thinning the layer because they attack the ozone molecules, causing them to break apart. Many of the offending chemicals have now been banned.

Concentrations of such ozone-depleting substances have levelled off and are set to decline, the WMO said. However, the ozone hole is still expected to appear annually and it actually might be a little bit worse in the next five to 10 years. Then, the situation will start to improve. It will still take several decades before these substances have disappeared from the atmosphere, around the middle of the Century.

An array of information about global weather can be found at the WMO site at <http://www.wmo.ch/index-en.html>

## Environment Waikato Warning: Effluent Regulations

Environment Waikato is reminding the region's farmers of the need to comply with effluent regulations. Working with Federated Farmers and dairy companies, Fonterra and Tatua, the regional authority has delivered a poster to every dairy farmer for display in dairy sheds.

It warns that owners and farm staff may be up for penalties if the rules are not followed. Penalties include a \$750 infringement notice, a fine of up to \$200,000, and up to two years in prison.

Earlier in the year, Environment Waikato discovered that only 43 percent of the farms visited were fully complying with the rules. The audit found 16 percent of dairy farms were seriously non-compliant and more than half the dairy farms did not comply with at least a part of the rules. Further, many farmers did not understand their responsibilities.

For more information farmers are asked to refer to their Dexcel Effluent Manual – [www.envirodirect.co.nz](http://www.envirodirect.co.nz) – or contact a farm effluent specialist for advice. Information from the poster is a summary of Rule 3.5.5.1 of the proposed Waikato Regional Plan. For a full copy of the rules and information on how they apply to affected farmers, call Environment Waikato's freephone 0800 800 401 or visit [www.ew.govt.nz](http://www.ew.govt.nz)

## NZ Steel Greenhouse Gas Agreement

NZ Steel and the government are to enter talks for a Negotiated Greenhouse Agreement (NGA). Firms that obtain a NGA receive exemptions to the carbon tax in return for moving to world's best practice in emissions management. Firms of any size whose international competitiveness might otherwise be at risk from the carbon tax can apply.

The government has already signed NGAs with gold mining company OceanaGold and the NZ Refining Company. It is in negotiations with ACI Glass Packaging, Carter Holt Harvey, Fletcher Building, NZ Aluminium Smelters, Newmont Waihi, and Norske Skog Tasman.

The government recently announced a streamlining of the NGA process to reduce the time and costs involved. A pilot grants package is being rolled out for smaller energy intensive firms and sectors to help them offset the cost of the carbon tax.

Background information about NGAs can be found at [www.climatechange.govt.nz/policy-initiatives/nga.html](http://www.climatechange.govt.nz/policy-initiatives/nga.html)

## Energy & Conservation Strategy Review

A review of the National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (NEECS) is underway. The NEECS came into effect in September 2001 as a requirement of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act 2000 and aims at:

- a 20 percent improvement in energy efficiency by 2012; and
- increasing NZ's supply of renewable energy by a further 22 percent by 2012.

Under the Act, a review is required by September 2006. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority specialist team undertaking the review will:

- take stock of the performance of existing government strategies;
- evaluate how international best practice in energy efficiency and renewables can be applied in NZ;
- respond to growing international and local energy security issues posed by peak oil production; and
- assess the gap between current and benchmark performances.

In due course, a number of consultation papers are expected to be released to get industry and public input.

You can look at the strategy by going to: [http://www.eeca.govt.nz/pdfs/national\\_energy\\_efficiency\\_and\\_conservation\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.eeca.govt.nz/pdfs/national_energy_efficiency_and_conservation_strategy.pdf)

## Latest Grants for Biodiversity Work on Private Land

Wetlands and forests being protected and restored on private land are among 106 projects receiving more than \$1.55 million in government grants. The funding will support 30 fencing projects involving more than 48 km of fencing – the longest of which is more than 5 km. The fencing projects will protect forests, wetlands and river margins. Five projects focus on protecting kiwi habitat with Landcare groups in Northland, Coromandel and Taranaki, controlling possums and rats. Other projects focus on little blue penguins, protecting stream and river margins, restoring dunes, and removing weeds and pests from islands.

The grants come from two funds:

- The Biodiversity Condition Fund aims to improve and maintain the condition of areas of native vegetation, species and habitats, and broaden community participation in nature protection in NZ.

- The Biodiversity Advice Fund assists land managers and community groups in managing nature protection projects by supporting the provision of advice and information on native species protection.

A complete list of the August 2005 Biodiversity Grants can be found at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/biodiversity/initiatives/private-land/project-details.html> and more information about the funds themselves can be found at <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/biodiversity/initiatives/private-land/funds.html>

## Review: East Coast Hawkes Bay CMS

The Department of Conservation (DoC) has launched a review of the East Coast Hawke's Bay conservancy Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) and is seeking public input in advance of preparing a paper for formal consultation beginning in March next year. A CMS is a 10-year guide for DoC managers and the public about what the department intends to do, how it will set priorities and how it responds to requests to use the natural and historic resources it manages.

Submissions close on 30 November. The submission form in the document can be sent (no stamp needed) to: Freepost: DOC, CMS Review Team, c/o Department of Conservation, PO Box 668, Gisborne. The document can be downloaded from <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Regional-Info/006~East-Coast-Hawkes-Bay/PDF/CMS-Review.pdf> For more information contact: (06) 869 0460; [echb-conservancy@doc.govt.nz](mailto:echb-conservancy@doc.govt.nz)

## DoC Sambar Deer Hunting Proposal

The Department of Conservation (DoC) has opened the possibility of allowing the unrestricted hunting of sambar deer in the Horowhenua/Manawatu/Rangitikei/Wanganui regions. At present, hunting is controlled by legislation, which imposes a number of tight restrictions on when and where animals can be hunted and how many animals can be taken.

DoC says there have been increased calls for legislation to be either modified to allow greater flexibility in hunting sambar deer, or to be removed completely to bring it in line with other deer species hunted throughout the country. In response to this, the Department has developed a public discussion paper on the management of sambar deer to assist it in determining the future control and management of sambar deer in the Horowhenua/Manawatu/Rangitikei/Wanganui area.

Submissions close 7 October. Your comments must be addressed to: Sambar Deer Management Submission, Department of Conservation, Private Bag 3016, Wanganui. There is also a contact email: [sambar@doc.govt.nz](mailto:sambar@doc.govt.nz). The discussion paper can be downloaded from [www.doc.govt.nz/Conservation/002%7EAnimal-Pests/Sambar-Deer/PDF/Sambar-deer-discussion-document.pdf](http://www.doc.govt.nz/Conservation/002%7EAnimal-Pests/Sambar-Deer/PDF/Sambar-deer-discussion-document.pdf)

## New Mataitai Reserves

Two new Moremore Mataitai Reserves in the Hawkes Bay cover traditional fishing grounds, important to the people of Ngai Te Ruruku o Te Rangi. These areas, approved as mataitai reserves, will allow the tangata whenua to manage their traditional fisheries. Ngai Te Ruruku o Te Rangi wanted these mataitai reserves established to help improve the management of areas of historic

importance to them. They plan to conduct surveys of fisheries resources in the reserves and investigate the possibility of fish stock enhancement techniques and reseedling programmes. They may also recommend bylaws to the Minister to help restore and enhance fish stocks in the reserves.

## Mataitai Reserve Explainer

A mataitai reserve effectively allows tangata whenua to manage local non-commercial fisheries, in partnership with the Ministry of Fisheries. Tangata Kaitiaki, nominated by the tangata whenua, can manage their areas by recommending by-laws to the Minister of Fisheries. By-laws may restrict or prohibit the taking of fish from within the whole or any part of a mataitai reserve for any purpose the Kaitiaki considers necessary for the sustainable utilisation of the resources in the reserve.

The Minister of Fisheries is ultimately responsible for NZ's fisheries, and must sign off on any fishery management action a Tangata Kaitiaki recommends before it becomes operative. The Ministry of Fisheries provides the Tangata Kaitiaki with management support and recommendations, and also provides advice to the Minister of Fisheries on any management proposal.

*Note:* A guide to Customary Fishing Regulations 1998 (of which mataitai reserves are a part) can be found at <http://www.fish.govt.nz/customary/qabrochure.html>

## Promoting Excellence in Schools

A new fund (Extending High Standards Across Schools) has been established to promote excellence across the school system. The fund will put an additional \$28.5 million into clusters of collaborating schools over four years from 2006.

The idea is to give additional resourcing and support to schools that are consistently making improvements in the educational outcomes of their students. The programme is open to high-performing schools at all deciles. For a school or cluster of schools to be eligible, they must demonstrate significant improvements in their students' achievement; a commitment to further developing the strategies that have led to their success; and a willingness to collaborate with other schools.

Initial nominations for 2006 funding are due by 30 September. Schools will be selected according to their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes for students and on their strategies for the future. Successful nominees will then be invited by the Ministry of Education to submit an expression of interest by 21 November.

More information about the Extending High Standards Across Schools is available on the Ministry of Education website at [www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/extending](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/extending)

## "Ageing in Place": New Research Being Undertaken

The Ministry of Social development is researching the relationship between older people, working age people, communities and "ageing in place". Ageing in place means that older people will remain "in place" in their community, in their own homes, or in supported accommodation of some type, rather than moving into residential care.

The research proposes to investigate how older people are ageing in place and how working age people are helping them to do so. The research will also focus on the social, economic and service delivery issues that characterise the relationships between older people and others in the community. Specifically, the research will be:

- exploring how the economic circumstances of ageing in place impact on working age carers and older people receiving the care (this will be looked at in several NZ contexts); and
- identifying and understanding the social impact of ageing in place on the older person receiving the care and the working age carer, and the reciprocal arrangements that exist between them.

In the first phase of the project, data will be gathered mainly through case studies involving a series of interviews with the person ageing in place and their working age carer. The second phase, the detail of which is still being developed, will take place from the middle of 2006 to mid 2007 and will include a survey of families. A report on the research findings is expected to be finalised in mid 2007.

For more information contact:

Vasantha Krishnan at [vasantha.krishnan001@msd.govt.nz](mailto:vasantha.krishnan001@msd.govt.nz)

Pauline Fallon at [pauline.fallon001@msd.govt.nz](mailto:pauline.fallon001@msd.govt.nz) and

Diane Anderson at [diane.anderson021@msd.govt.nz](mailto:diane.anderson021@msd.govt.nz)

## New Regional Focus for Youth Development

The Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) is setting up four regional centres around the country. MYD is to set up a regional base in Auckland later this year, followed by other bases in Christchurch, Rotorua, and Wellington from 2006. The regional hubs aim to provide leadership for growing networks of youth agencies and services being established throughout the country.

For more information contact, Public Relations Advisor, Ross Henderson, tel (04) 916 3729, email [ross.henderson003@myd.govt.nz](mailto:ross.henderson003@myd.govt.nz)

## Vet Tuition Subsidies Increase

Government tuition subsidies for years 3, 4, and 5 of undergraduate veterinary science are to increase. This puts them on the same basis as years 4, 5 and 6 of undergraduate medicine. This will raise the per EFTS (Equivalent Full Time Student) subsidy for next year's years 3, 4 and 5 students by \$5,684, bringing the total per EFTS funding to \$24,582. The number of equivalent full-time students who can be enrolled in a Veterinary Science degree will continue to be restricted to 340.

## Media Reporting Mental Illness Better: Report

A recent study investigating reporting of mental health issues in 2004 showed a significant improvement in the way people with experience of mental illness were represented by the print media, compared with a similar study done in 1998. Specific findings from the most recent survey, done for the Mental Health Commission, include:

- A large drop in the number of clippings with a mental health theme (a 62 percent decrease in the number of articles which had a mental health theme compared with the 1998 study).

- Fewer clippings portraying mental health negatively and more with a positive approach, for example, less discriminatory headlines, mental health was dealt with more fairly, more accurate information was provided, service user comments were included more often, and more sensitive language was used. There were more praiseworthy articles and few protest-worthy ones.
- A big increase in the number of positive personal stories (positive personal stories carried by the media increased from 5.7 percent to 11.1 percent).
- There was a slight drop in the proportion of stories associating crime or violence with mental illness, but the way this material was presented improved considerably.
- Major daily newspapers such as The Dominion Post, The NZ Herald or The Press represented people with experience of mental illness more positively than they had in the previous study, while smaller weekly and metropolitan newspapers did less well than previously.

A copy of the report, "Discriminating Times?" can be downloaded from the Mental Health Commission website at <http://www.mhc.govt.nz/publications/2005/MHC%20Media4.pdf>

## Company Disclosure Decision

The government has decided not to require large, non-public companies to file their financial reports with the Registrar of Companies. The decision follows an Ministry of Economic Development-lead review of the Financial Reporting Act 1993, in which two options were put forward:

- allowing shareholders to opt out of the reporting requirement; and
- requiring companies of a prescribed scale to disclose their accounts.

Following this process, it was decided that any public interest in full disclosure was outweighed by the loss of commercial confidentiality and/or shareholder privacy. It should be noted, however, that this decision relates only to companies that are not issuers of securities. The outcomes of other aspects of the review are expected to be announced later in the year.

## Financial Intermediaries

The government's overhaul of the financial intermediaries market is expected to produce policy options by the end of this year, followed by detailed work on the regulatory framework by the middle of 2006, with legislation introduced soon after.

The Task Force on the Regulation of Financial Intermediaries released its final report recently with a recommendation for a co-regulatory framework under which intermediaries, defined as "those who market financial products or provide financial advice ... about financial products or investment or savings decisions and choices to members of the public" will be subject to

- a single disputes resolution body; and
- an industry-specific disciplinary body.

Under such a structure, it is proposed that industry stakeholders would contribute to the development of standards and the rules relating to, and the administration of, a disputes resolution and a disciplinary process. The Minister of Commerce would approve professional bodies and professional body rules, and a

statutory regulator would have a market overview role. The costs would be shared between the industry and the government.

The final report of the taskforce can be viewed at [http://www.med.govt.nz/busit/bus\\_pol/task-force/final/index.html](http://www.med.govt.nz/busit/bus_pol/task-force/final/index.html) and more information on the task force itself can be found at [http://www.med.govt.nz/busit/bus\\_pol/task-force/](http://www.med.govt.nz/busit/bus_pol/task-force/)

Submissions close November 2005. The Working Group will consider the submissions it receives and will then make recommendations to the Australian and NZ Governments. Copies of the discussion paper are available at [www.justice.govt.nz](http://www.justice.govt.nz)

## Money Laundering Proposals

The Financial Transactions Reporting Act 1996 is to be amended so NZ meets its international obligations to the OECD-based Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF), which is largely aimed at combating terrorist financing.

A Ministry of Justice discussion paper proposes:

- a comprehensive monitoring framework to ensure all financial institutions meet standards for countering money laundering and terrorist financing;
- a registration regime for persons providing money transfer or currency change services;
- statutory requirements for financial institutions to comply with customer due diligence, and to implement internal anti-money laundering systems and procedures (details of which would be contained in a code of practice);
- financial institutions will be required to obtain, verify and retain information concerning the identity of the originator of wire transfers; and
- The Ministry is also considering the practicality of directors and senior managers of financial institutions in the insurance and securities sectors being evaluated to ensure that they meet the “fit and proper persons” criteria.

Submissions close 21 October. The discussion paper can be found on the Ministry of Justice website at <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2005/money-laundering-nz-compliance-fatf-recommendations-discussion/index.html>

## Proposals to Improve Court Judgment Enforcement

A trans-Tasman working group has released a discussion paper with proposals for improving the enforcement of court judgments between Australia and NZ. These proposals could lead to much greater co-operation between Australia and NZ in civil court proceedings.

Greater co-operation could help resolve trans-Tasman disputes more efficiently, effectively and at a lower cost, ultimately further reducing barriers to trans-Tasman trade. It will also help people resolve some personal disputes where one party has moved across the Tasman (for example, matrimonial property disputes).

The discussion paper also proposes changes that would make it possible to enforce civil penalties and certain criminal fines for regulatory offences across the Tasman. This means, for example, that an organisation based in NZ but operating in Australia could not escape penalties or fines imposed by Australian courts, and vice versa. These proposals will increase the effectiveness of each country’s regulatory rules in areas where this is of mutual benefit – for example, the rules applying to securities offerings to the public.

## Partnerships for Excellence at Auckland University

Two projects at the University of Auckland have been under the Partnerships for Excellence programme. In the first project, the government is committing \$5 million to enable Auckland University, in partnership with Plastics NZ, to establish the Centre for Plastics Innovation and Technology at its Tamaki campus. This new plastics centre will:

- provide for specific research in industry-identified areas;
- facilitate the development and application of leading edge technologies;
- upskill “on-the-job” technicians, engineers and chemists; and
- create long-term training/education facilities.

Manukau Institute of Technology, Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, and the University of Waikato will be among other institutions to be associated with the plastics centre.

The second project is the establishment of the Institute for Health Innovation as part of the University’s Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, in partnership with a diverse range of private sector companies. The institute will look at new technologies which have the potential to improve health outcomes without necessarily increasing health expenditure in general or the cost to individuals.

Government funding of \$7 million is to be invested in:

- a purpose-built building to house the Institute and co-locate the collaborative partnership; and
- an endowment for a Chair for the position of Director of the Institute for Health Innovation.

Private sector partners including Enigma Publishing, iSoft, Procure, Southern Cross, Phonak Orion, and Vodafone have collectively committed over \$9 million to the Institute.

The Partnerships for Excellence programme was established in 2003 to build tertiary sector capability. It aims to enable clear “step ups” in capability for individual tertiary institutions and for the sector as a whole which would not occur without new funding. These “step ups” need to be aligned to the Tertiary Education Strategy, and they should develop better links between tertiary institutions and industry. They should also leverage private sector contributions of up to 50 percent of the total cost.

More information on the partnerships can be found at <http://www.tec.govt.nz/funding/strategic/p4excellence/p4excellence.htm>

## NZ Superannuation Fund Investment Returns

The NZ Superannuation Fund recently announced its investment returns for the year ended 30 June 2005. During that period the assets of the Fund grew from \$3,985.4 million to \$6,613.5 million. The growth consisted of \$2,107 million in government contributions and \$726.1 million in investment income (after costs, but before tax).

The Fund's rate of return for the 12 months to 30 June 2005 was 14.13 percent (after costs, but before tax). That was a higher rate of return than the previous year. In 2003/4, the return for the first nine months of the Fund's investment programme was 7.69 percent (equivalent to 10.4 percent for the full year). This means that since 30 September 2003, the Fund's return has averaged 12.5 percent. These are considered to be "strong returns".

More information about the Fund can be found at [www.nzsuperfund.co.nz/](http://www.nzsuperfund.co.nz/) and the latest update on where the Fund has its investments can be found at [www.nzsuperfund.co.nz/news.asp?pageID=2145831983&RefID=2141731088](http://www.nzsuperfund.co.nz/news.asp?pageID=2145831983&RefID=2141731088)

## Funding Boost: Dance and Drama Training

Additional funding over four years of \$1.8 million will go to support Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School and the NZ School of Dance, both of which are based at Te Whaea in Wellington. The funding will be used for ongoing infrastructure development as well as to attract and retain the staff required to maintain and build the capability of both schools.

More information on Te Whaea can be found at <http://www.tewhaea.org.nz/>

## Legislation Notes

### Plant Varieties Bill: Feedback Sought

The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) has released a draft Plant Varieties Amendment Bill for feedback. The main objectives of the Bill include:

- ensure that plant breeders are accorded appropriate rights to promote investment and release of new plant varieties;
- consider whether to ratify the Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants 1991;
- address, as far as possible, concerns of Maori over the exploitation of indigenous flora by changing the definition of "owner" to remove the word "discovered"; and
- give the Commissioner of Plant Variety Rights the power to refuse to approve a proposed denomination (i.e., name of a variety) if its use would be likely to be offensive to a significant section of society.

Submissions close on 7 October. MED's contact person is Warren Hassett (04) 474 2830, and there's an email address you can send queries to: [pvrbill@med.govt.nz](mailto:pvrbill@med.govt.nz). A copy of the draft Bill can be downloaded from [www.med.govt.nz/buslit/int\\_prop/plantvarietyreview/draftbill/draftbill.pdf](http://www.med.govt.nz/buslit/int_prop/plantvarietyreview/draftbill/draftbill.pdf). A copy of the relevant Cabinet paper can be found at [www.med.govt.nz/buslit/int\\_prop/plantvarietyreview/cabinet/review/index.html](http://www.med.govt.nz/buslit/int_prop/plantvarietyreview/cabinet/review/index.html)

### Self-Employed to Qualify for Paid Parental Leave

The recently tabled Parental Leave and Employment Protection (Paid Parental Leave for Self-Employed Persons) Amendment Bill provides for 14 weeks paid parental leave from 1 July 2006 for self-employed mothers who have been working an average of 10 hours a week or more during either a six or 12 month period immediately before the birth or adoption of a child. Self-employed mothers will have the same right as employees to transfer this leave to their eligible partners.

Under the legislation, a self-employed person will be entitled to paid parental leave if they are engaged in more than one type of work consecutively, and/or if they have a break of 30 days or less between engagements. Like employees, they will be required to stop working while receiving payments. However, they will be able to maintain a level of oversight of their business during the leave period.

Parental leave payments for the self-employed will equal their average weekly income, up to the maximum rate paid to employees (currently \$357.30 per week before tax). Those who make a loss or earn less than the minimum wage for at least 10 hours per week will be entitled to payments for 10 hours a week at the minimum wage (currently \$95 per week before tax).

### Super Payments Extension for Overseas Volunteers

Pensioners volunteering overseas with aid agencies will be entitled to receive superannuation payments for up to three years of their assignments, under proposed changes to legislation. Under current law, NZ Superannuation can be paid for up to 52 weeks while a superannuitant is working overseas for an aid agency such as Volunteer Service Abroad (VSA).

It's proposed to extend the payment period so that volunteers can receive NZ Superannuation for up to 156 weeks. This period would cover the needs of volunteers who go overseas on a two-year assignment, and then wish to extend their assignment by up to a year.

The legislation would come into effect on 1 July 2006 via amendments to the NZ Superannuation and Retirement Income Act 2001 and The War Pensions Act 1954.

### Tax Law on Defence Force Allowances Clarified

Special allowances paid to members of the armed forces in overseas trouble spots will be automatically exempt from income tax under proposed legislation. The changes would be included in the first taxation bill to be introduced into Parliament after the election and would apply from the date of enactment.

The change will clarify the difference between the tax treatment of ordinary pay and allowances and the special allowances paid to service personnel in recognition of the increased military and environmental dangers associated with deployment overseas.

### Sports Anti-doping Bill introduced

The recently introduced Sports Anti-Doping Bill is designed to give effect to the World Anti-Doping Code, which seeks to protect an athlete's fundamental right to participate in drug-free sport. It also aims to ensure harmonised, co-ordinated and effective anti-doping programmes at an international and national level with regard to detection, deterrence and prevention of doping. The legislation will be referred to select committee after the election and is expected to be passed by the end of the year, or early next year.

### Appointments

Margaret Rogers of Auckland has been appointed as a *Family Court Judge*. NZ's next *Consul-General to Shanghai* will be Wen Chin Powles. Former Ombudsman, Anand Satyanand, has been appointed *Registrar of Members of Parliaments' Pecuniary Interests*. *AgResearch* has two new *Directors*: Susan Huria and Danny Chan.

# Resources Available

## Pre-Trial Processes: Law Commission Report

The Law Commission has released its report, "Criminal Pre-Trial Processes: Justice Through Efficiency". This 176-page report notes that most criminal cases are not defended and that nine of ten are resolved before trial. It says "This means that the pre-trial process is essential to the quality of criminal justice. However, it has received scant legislative attention, and is enormously inefficient."

Everybody in the court process is affected, the report says. There is a focus on court appearances as the means of progressing cases, because there are few case management mechanisms other than judicial authority. Delay is habitual; everyone accepts repeated adjournments as the norm. The report notes that this pattern has developed because adjournment does not have immediate adverse consequences and some people benefit from delay.

The report therefore proposes that courtrooms should be bypassed for all administrative matters and judges should only be involved when a judicial decision or judicial authority is required. Recommendations include:

- processes to facilitate early Police Prosecution Service decisions about which charges should proceed;
- reducing the number of court appearances for administrative matters (such as bail, name suppression, legal aid, custodial remands);
- out-of-court discussions between the parties about appropriate charges, whether the defendant will plead, and the conduct of the trial;
- defendants must identify disputed issues before trial;
- legislation to regulate the informal but common practice of sentence discounts for defendants who plead guilty early; and
- a range of sanctions for procedural non-compliance by prosecutors or defence counsel.

The publication can be downloaded as PDF files from [www.lawcom.govt.nz](http://www.lawcom.govt.nz) There are hard copies available, too, but these are not normally free-of-charge.

## Five Steps to Sustainability

The Ministry for the Environment (MfE) has published a model for helping businesses to build sustainability into their planning and processes. The model covers a wide range of industries and business disciplines and can be applied step-by-step.

A copy of the model can be downloaded from MfE's website at [www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/sustainable-industry/tools-services/concepts.php](http://www.mfe.govt.nz/issues/sustainable-industry/tools-services/concepts.php) (there is a non-Flash version as well)

## Banned Pesticides – There is Help

In association with the Ministry for the Environment, ERMA New Zealand has produced a brochure on the safe storage and collection of banned pesticides. You can obtain a copy of the brochure from the ERMA website at [www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/popsbrochure.pdf](http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/popsbrochure.pdf), or contact their HS Compliance number on 0800 376 234 and they will post one to you. If your organisation would like to have a supply of these brochures just email [publicationinfo@ermanz.govt.nz](mailto:publicationinfo@ermanz.govt.nz) with your address details and the number you require.

## Helping Disabled People Vote in the General Election

The Chief Electoral Office has been working to promote disabled people participating in the General Election by improving both the physical access to voting places and access to information on how to vote. Information has been produced in a variety of formats: NZ Sign Language video clips, Braille, large print, and on audio cassette.

More information is available at: [www.elections.org.nz/voting/information\\_voters\\_disabilities.html](http://www.elections.org.nz/voting/information_voters_disabilities.html), or phone: 0800 36 76 56

Craig Matthews  
*Editor*

Contact details for the Department of Internal Affairs' Community Development Advisers:

<b>Kaitaia</b>	26 Puckey Avenue, Kaitaia Tel (09) 408 0034; Fax (09) 408 0923
<b>Whangarei</b>	PO Box 1755, Whangarei Tel (09) 430 2205; Fax (09) 430 2209
<b>Waitakere</b>	PO Box 83 209, Edmonton Tel (09) 834 9701; Fax (09) 834 9705
<b>Manukau</b>	PO Box 76 451, Manukau City Tel (09) 263 7372; Fax (09) 262 0606
<b>Auckland</b>	PO Box 2220, Auckland Tel (09) 362 7914; Fax (09) 362 7941
<b>Hamilton</b>	PO Box 19 230, Hamilton Tel (07) 839 9960; Fax (07) 839 9955
<b>Rotorua</b>	PO Box 3041, Rotorua Tel (07) 343 1680; Fax (07) 343 1689
<b>Gisborne</b>	PO Box 254, Gisborne Tel (06) 868 1915; Fax (06) 868 1964
<b>Hawke's Bay</b>	PO Box 1042, Napier Tel (06) 834 1350; Fax (06) 834 1274
<b>New Plymouth</b>	PO Box 331, New Plymouth Tel (06) 759 8246; Fax (06) 759 8094
<b>Palmerston North</b>	PO Box 247, Palmerston North Tel (06) 355 8088; Fax (06) 355 8084
<b>Wellington</b>	PO Box 30 454, Lower Hutt Tel (04) 570 5386; Fax (04) 570 5381
<b>Nelson</b>	PO Box 1149, Nelson Tel 0800 660 900 or (03) 546 0904; Fax (03) 548 2488
<b>West Coast</b>	PO Box 33, Greymouth Tel (03) 768 1001, (03) 768 1002 or (03) 768 1003; Fax (03) 768 4200
<b>Christchurch</b>	PO Box 4033, Christchurch Tel (03) 353 8290; Fax (03) 353 8299
<b>Dunedin</b>	PO Box 5341, Dunedin Tel (03) 479 6515; Fax (03) 479 6519
<b>Invercargill</b>	PO Box 501, Invercargill Tel (03) 218 0701; Fax (03) 218 6411 COGS Ph: (03) 218 0702

Please photocopy the Bulletin as you wish and distribute it to others in your area. If you would like more information about any of the content of the Bulletin, contact the relevant government department/organisation, or contact the following Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) staff:

**Craig Matthews**

Editor, Rural Bulletin  
Email: [craig.matthews@maf.govt.nz](mailto:craig.matthews@maf.govt.nz)

PO Box 2526  
Wellington  
Tel (04) 474 4100  
Fax (04) 474 4206

**Philip Journeaux**

Regional Team Leader  
Email: [phil.journeaux@maf.govt.nz](mailto:phil.journeaux@maf.govt.nz)

Ruakura Agriculture  
Centre  
Private Bag 3123  
Hamilton  
Tel (07) 856 1824  
Fax (07) 856 1825

**John Vaney**

Regional Team Leader  
Email: [john.vaney@maf.govt.nz](mailto:john.vaney@maf.govt.nz)

Te Papa Tipu  
Innovation Park  
PO Box 1340  
Rotorua  
Tel (07) 348 0089  
Fax (07) 347 7173

**John Greer**

Regional Team Leader  
Email: [john.greer@maf.govt.nz](mailto:john.greer@maf.govt.nz)

PO Box 20 280  
Bishopdale  
Tel (03) 358 1860  
Fax (03) 358 1861

**Trish Burborough**

Regional Team Leader  
Email: [trish.burborough@maf.govt.nz](mailto:trish.burborough@maf.govt.nz)

PO Box 5648  
Dunedin  
Tel (03) 477 8454  
Fax (03) 477 9144

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