



# Farming for the Future

Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua



GREEN PARTY ELECTION PRIORITY



## Summary

Farming is on the frontline of climate change — and it also offers real solutions. Here in Aotearoa, we can have a thriving and sustainable farming sector that is good for farmers, good for people, and good for the planet.

Farming and growing well is more important than ever as we reset the economy after COVID-19, both for local food security and to ensure Aotearoa can export sustainable food to the world. We can think ahead to tackle the climate crisis, and act now to create a more resilient agricultural system – one that supports farmers and growers, protects our land and water, and makes sure we all have fresh, healthy food to eat.

For decades, successive governments have treated farms like factories, not precious ecosystems. They've encouraged dirty, intensive agriculture that hurts our planet. Prioritising quantity over quality has polluted our water, hurt our land and animals, and contributed to the climate crisis. It has threatened farmers' resilience to climate and market changes, and left communities without the secure and fair food and fibre producing systems we need to thrive.

Aotearoa can have a thriving, sustainable farming sector that tackles the climate crisis and cleans up our rivers, helps rural communities flourish, and makes sure we all have fresh and healthy food to eat.

The Green Party will support farmers and growers to shift to regenerative farming practices. We will strengthen the land use rules around forestry to protect waterways and improve how trees are planted and harvested. We will overhaul how food is labelled so farmers can command higher export prices for healthy, sustainable food and people can trust what they're eating.

Some farmers are already leading the way toward climate-friendly agriculture. Our Farming for the Future Plan works with farmers and growers to transform our agricultural and horticultural sectors from being one of the biggest impacts on our climate and natural

environment into one of the most important solutions to environmental problems. This will support fair ways to reduce emissions and reduce the use of harmful fertilisers, improving the way we look after land and water.

The Green Party will:

- 1. Support farmers to improve the ways they grow food and fibre**, with a new Healthy Food and Farming Fund to speed up the transition to regenerative farming; grow the organics sector; and set a fair price for agricultural greenhouse gas emissions.
- 2. Encourage sustainable farming practices** by banning imports of Palm Kernel Expeller (PKE); developing fair charges for commercial water use; and our **three point plan to tackle nitrogen pollution** that includes progressively tightening the limits on nitrogen application, levying nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser sales to fund cleaner farming practices, and setting a strong limit for dissolved inorganic nitrogen in freshwater.
- 3. Help Kiwi farmers get a fair reward for their efforts and ensure people can trust the food they're buying** by developing a robust national sustainability accreditation scheme; investing in processing capacity for plant-based foods; extending country of origin labelling; and ensuring animals in agriculture live happy, stress-free lives.
- 4. Ensure the forestry sector supports sustainable land use** by overhauling the NES-Plantation Forestry; diversifying tree species used in forestry to shift away from pine monocultures; and promoting greater use of wood in construction.
- 5. Connect urban communities to food production** by supporting community gardens; strengthening food growing at school; and making sure all school kids get opportunities to see how farms work.

## Situation

Aotearoa is good at producing food and fibre, but many current practices are contributing to climate change.

Intensive agriculture – particularly in the dairy industry – has been encouraged by successive governments pushing low-value milk powder exports as the main way that our agriculture sector should make money. In doing so, we've scaled up: more cows, more feed, more fertiliser, more cost to farmers, and more stressed animals.

The number of dairy cows in Aotearoa has increased by 86% since 1990, spurred on by a 673% increase in the use of fertiliser to grow extra grass. The dairy herd is Aotearoa's largest contributor to climate change, responsible for 23% of total emissions – even more when the emissions from transporting and processing milk are included. Fertiliser creates more annual emissions than domestic flights.<sup>1</sup>

This has strained our soils, polluted rivers and aquifers, and pushed our natural environment beyond what it can sustain.

And it has strained farmers and rural communities. Farm debt in New Zealand was \$62.8 billion in 2019,<sup>2</sup> thanks to decades of bad government policy. Many farmers are stuck in a loop of intensive, climate-damaging practices just to service their debt. It is unsustainable in every sense of the word.

### **Farming needs to change to ensure a safe climate**

Farmers are on the frontlines of the changing climate, dealing with increased droughts, floods, and more intense storms. It's clear that we need to transform food and fibre production and land and water use for the climate – and for the health of our rivers, lakes and aquifers.

The Zero Carbon Act commits every sector of Aotearoa's economy to cut the pollution that causes climate change, including agricultural emissions of nitrous oxide and methane. Many industrial coal users are upgrading to clean technology, households are buying more electric cars than ever before, and farmers are also making changes. But our



climate is changing faster than we are, so we need to move much faster to do our bit to keep global warming below 1.5C.

That's why one of the key targets set in the Zero Carbon Act is a 10% reduction in biogenic methane emissions by 2030. The agricultural sector produces 47.8% of all greenhouse gases emitted in Aotearoa, and 78.1% of that is methane produced by livestock.<sup>3</sup>

With the Green Party's support, the Government has begun work to address agricultural emissions. This includes improvements to freshwater management, boosts in funding for sustainable farming, a riparian planting drive in the Jobs for Nature package, and the He Waka Eke Noa emissions pricing partnership agreement between the farming sector and the Government.

### **People want to buy sustainable food and fibre**

Food and fibre production is crucial to Aotearoa's future. Primary sector exports – worth \$46.4 billion in 2019<sup>4</sup> – held strong through COVID-19 and that strength will be needed to successfully navigate a sustainable economic recovery from the pandemic.

Aotearoa is among the most renowned primary exporters in the world, with a strong global reputation for producing high-quality products. We must build on this strength and live up to our reputation as world-leaders in this time of global crisis by leading the transition into sustainable food production.

Consumer preferences are changing in response to the realities of the climate crisis and global inequality: people want more plant-based, ethically produced, and environmentally friendly food and fibre. Moving to more environmentally sustainable, climate-safe forms of food and fibre production will ultimately protect the value of our exports, supporting thriving rural communities and the whole country's economy.

We have to act now so that the fundamentals of our agricultural sector – healthy soil, water, and land, and flourishing rural communities – are sound. We must invest in cleaner, environmentally-friendly methods of farming with high animal welfare standards, so that agriculture and horticulture can thrive as we respond to climate change.

## Solution

To reduce the impact farming has on the climate and our waterways, we need to ensure our farmers and growers are supported to transform their practices – and bring about a sustainable future that enhances the natural ecosystems of Aotearoa and protects the health of our rural communities.

The Green Party has a plan to work with farmers and food producers to ensure a just transition to truly sustainable, high-value farm production in Aotearoa. To make sure our farmers are well-prepared to thrive in a low-emissions world, we will fund a massive nationwide program of regenerative (including organic) farming development and implementation, and back up the investment with a strategy to fully realise the value of premium regenerative products on the market, at home and abroad.

This will mean diversifying land use, changing production levels and techniques, and lower stocking rates of cows. All these can be achieved while improving on-farm profitability and creating new jobs in rural communities.

Our plan to move to high-value regenerative food and fibre production will help farmers to transform the way they farm to reduce their emissions, meaning we'll meet our methane reduction target – and at the same time enhance farm profitability. Ultimately we'll have a healthier, happier, environmentally sustainable and economically resilient Aotearoa.

### **Regenerative farming for a safe climate**

Reducing agricultural emissions “relies on reducing total feed being produced and consumed, and/or reducing nitrogen applied to or deposited on land,” according to the Interim Climate Change Committee.<sup>5</sup>

No two farms are the same and different farms will choose a range of options to reduce emissions, including reducing stocking rates or

production, diversifying land use, and other farm management changes. Ultimately, reducing emissions will require the de-intensification of livestock farming in Aotearoa.

Reducing emissions can be achieved while maintaining farm profitability and prosperous rural communities. To make sure that this happens sustainably, the Green Party will support a widespread shift to regenerative agriculture and diversified land use.

***What is regenerative farming?***

***Regenerative farming is farming in ways that regenerate and restore natural ecosystems, rather than damaging them. Built on the principle of active environmental restoration, enhancement, and sustainable land use, regenerative farming includes a range of on-farm practices and methods designed to boost soil health, water quality, and biodiversity. Core methods include agroforestry, cover-cropping to enhance organic matter in soil, and conservation tillage. A regenerative approach is individual to the characteristics of a specific farm, so there is no one-size-fits-all method.***

Many farmers are already embracing regenerative farming practices, and showing that de-intensification often leads to increases in long-term profitability with a more resilient yield. Regenerative approaches are unique to each farm and may overlap with other modes of farming, such as organic farming.

Some dairy farmers are already finding that reduced stocking rates can be more profitable, due to a combination of premium pricing and lower fertiliser and supplementary feed inputs. A Lincoln University farm has shown how a typical Canterbury dairy farm can maintain profitability with fewer cows, reduced nitrogen fertiliser use, and reduced supplementary feed.<sup>6</sup> Farmers who cut chemical inputs, introduce longer grazing rotations, and milk once a day can see an increase in organic matter in soil, which makes farms more resilient to droughts.<sup>7</sup> Beef + Lamb NZ is studying how regenerative methods can add value to agricultural exports.<sup>8</sup>

With the Green Party's support, the Government has begun to recognise the promise of regenerative farming as a way to shift the sector to ensure its ongoing viability while meeting emissions reduction



targets. The *'Fit for a Better World – Accelerating our economic potential'* primary sector plan suggests that regenerative forms of farming can be a “transformational opportunity” for Aotearoa.<sup>9</sup>

A large-scale push to implement regenerative farming would also create more highly skilled, stable, year-round jobs in our rural communities. This helps support flourishing small towns. The industrialised agriculture model enables huge yield increases while drastically reducing the number of people employed in agriculture globally. Regenerative agriculture resets the balance, so that more people can be employed on the land in good jobs, helping address unemployment in the wake of COVID-19.

# Supporting regenerative and organic farming

The Green Party will kick-start a clean farming transition with \$297 million of sector support funding over the next three years, on top of the Government's existing commitment of \$700 million in the Action on Healthy Waterways Plan.<sup>10</sup> This combined \$997 million will help farmers make the right changes to suit their farms, get the best out of their land, and reduce their impact on the climate and waterways.

## Healthy Food and Farming fund

To accelerate the transition to sustainable agriculture, we need to invest in farmers and growers. Successive government funds have not achieved the kind of transformation necessary, because they've been too focused on incremental changes or addressing the symptoms of unsustainable farming, not the causes.

The Green Party will transform the Government's Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures Fund into a Healthy Food and Farming Fund, and top it up to make \$297 million available over the next three years, paid for by a low-rate levy on the sale of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilisers. The Healthy Food and Farming Fund will be used to support primary sector food and fibre producers to transition to sustainable practices. The Fund will:

- Rapidly increase on-farm agricultural advisory services and extension programmes, with a specific focus on speeding up the transition to regenerative and organic practice and sustainable land use. Funding will be used to increase farm advisor and extension services to assist farmers to transition (\$20m over three years).
- Establish a grants process for farmers, catchment groups, and farming organisations to apply for Government funding that will allow them to implement regenerative and organic farming practices. These could include regenerative methods like pasture diversification and cover-cropping, multiple crop rotations, and reduced tillage. The grants process would be designed to

provide capital where farmers may otherwise struggle to get funding from banks (\$145m over three years).

- Fund practical research and development of regenerative farming practices, in consultation with representative agricultural bodies. This could include agroforestry. This will build sector understanding how regenerative farming can deliver the greatest benefit for Aotearoa and assist in reaching our 10% methane reduction target by 2030 (\$5m over three years).
- Increase funding for Māori agriculture organisations to continue to develop sustainable agricultural practices (\$40m over three years).
- Enable government finance for the development of processing facilities for horticulture and other plant-based food production, co-funded with the private sector as grants, loans, and equity. As we move to more sustainable farming, some of the existing capacity of milk factories and slaughterhouses will need to be replaced with processing infrastructure for plant-based foods. This finance would be available for relatively simple facilities such as packhouses, as well as more complex processing and manufacturing for value-added plant-based foods, provided they have strong business cases (\$50m over three years).

We will also direct Pamū Farms of New Zealand (Landcorp) to shift to regenerative practices. Pamū's state-owned and managed farms throughout Aotearoa already play a role modelling environmental best practice and will continue to help provide support to other local farmers.

## **Supporting organic farming**

Organic farming and growing has a key role to play, producing food within ecological limits. Growing the organic farming sector will reduce the use of harmful pesticides and herbicides across Aotearoa.

Farmers who want to shift to organic techniques often find that the first few years are tough as they change their farms, before they are able to reap the rewards of higher value organic products, greater resilience to

droughts and heavy rain, and less need for artificial inputs like fertiliser and pesticides.

The Green Party will set aside a portion of the Healthy Food and Farming Fund specifically to assist farmers to transition to organics. We will use \$37m over three years to:

- Establish an organic farming centre of excellence to lead on-farm research and development of best practice, and fund its ongoing costs. This would likely be in conjunction with an existing organisation such as Lincoln or Massey University (\$15m over three years).
- Provide a transitional pool of grant funding for farmers and growers to shift to organic practices. This could be used for things like organic certification costs and to help with on-farm costs during the first years of a farm's transition to become certified organic (\$17m over three years).
- Reinstate Government funding for organic industry organisations to assist them to grow the sector with increased innovation and development. Funding would be apportioned among applicable organisations (\$5m over three years).

## **Pricing agricultural greenhouse gas emissions**

Agriculture and horticulture are the only sectors of the economy that do not yet pay a fair price for the greenhouse gas emissions they create, which cause climate change. An emissions price is a key tool to incentivise change and financially reward climate-friendly choices.

Under the He Waka Eke Noa Primary Sector Climate Change Commitment, farming sector organisations, iwi, and the Government are developing science-based on-farm emissions pricing as a simpler and more accurate alternative to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). If progress is made, the agricultural and horticultural sectors will start measuring on-farm greenhouse gas emissions, with all farms measuring and reporting emissions by 2024. Emissions will be priced by 2025 at the latest.



On-farm emissions pricing will give farmers more control over their own farms, making their own choices and trade-offs to reduce their impact on the climate. It will also enable financial recognition of the good work some farmers are already doing, such as planting out marginal land with trees that sequester carbon. With the Green Party in Government, work has begun to measure the climate benefits of riparian planting and soil carbon sequestration. We will ensure this work continues.

In the next term of Parliament, the independent Climate Change Commission will review the progress that has been made developing a bespoke agricultural emissions pricing mechanism. If this review finds that progress has been insufficient, the Green Party will activate Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) pricing for the agriculture sector, levied at the processor level. Agricultural and horticultural processors already report their emissions so ETS pricing could be activated quickly if progress is not sufficient.

Free allocation of ETS units would allow a smooth transition into the ETS, as it has for other industries. Free allocation will be at the same level as other emissions intensive, trade exposed industries and phased down at the same rate, starting at 1% a year and moving to 2% a year.

## Reducing harmful inputs

Intensive farming systems rely on supplementing the natural resources that ecosystems provide with extra food for animals, extra fertiliser for crops, and extra water from irrigation schemes. Dairy farms can spend up to \$80,000 a year on fertiliser.<sup>11</sup> Nitrogen fertiliser is a key contributor to the degradation of rural waterways, and the nitrate from intensive farming becomes a public health risk when it gets into underground sources of drinking water such as in Canterbury.<sup>12</sup>

Government funding already exists to support on-farm actions to reduce the amount of nitrogen pollution leaking into waterways, such as riparian planting alongside waterways.<sup>13</sup> As part of the freshwater reforms announced in 2020, the Government set aside \$700m to create jobs helping farmers clean up water.<sup>14</sup>

But we need to do more to address the causes and enablers of unsustainable farming, not just clean up the pollution. The Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment has found that urea fertiliser use, supplementary feed, and irrigation are the key drivers of the increased stocking rates that cause both climate change and water quality degradation.<sup>15</sup>

Reducing the harmful inputs that drive intensive farming is therefore essential. By phasing down synthetic nitrogen use, banning unsustainable imported supplementary feeds, and supporting small-scale on-farm water storage to deal with droughts rather than large-scale irrigation schemes, food production will occur within natural limits.

### **Three point plan to tackle nitrogen pollution**

Nitrogen pollution is at the heart of unsustainable farming practices in Aotearoa. Excessive use of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers drives intensive agriculture, which damages water quality and causes climate change.

To get pollution from fertilisers under control, the Green Party will:

1. Set a nationwide limit on Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen (DIN) in waterways of 1mg per litre.

2. Progressively reduce the limits on nitrogen fertiliser application to the 150kg per hectare national average within two years, and by 10kg per hectare every year after that, with a review every five years.
3. Levy the sale of nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser at 2 cents per kg, with all revenue used to support farmers to transition to sustainable practice.

### **1mg/litre DIN limit**

Swimming safely in clean water is a birth-right for all New Zealanders. Despite good progress on water quality rules under the current Government, the decision to set limits on dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) has been delayed.

The Green Party's view is that the scientific evidence about safe DIN levels is clear. We will amend the National Environmental Standard on Freshwater Management to set a DIN limit of 1mg per litre in the next term of Parliament.

### **Fertiliser application limits**

In 1990, 59,000 tonnes of nitrogen was applied via fertiliser in Aotearoa. That number had grown to 429,000 tonnes by 2015.<sup>16</sup> We can reduce fertiliser use and continue farming.

The Government's Essential Freshwater reforms have set a limit on synthetic nitrogen fertiliser application of 190kg per hectare for animal agriculture, well above the national average of 150kg per hectare. The Green Party will reduce the nitrogen fertiliser cap in the National Environmental Standard for Fresh Water by 20kg a year in the first two years to meet the national average, and continue reducing it by 10kg a year, with reviews every five years. This will encourage a steady transition to lower fertiliser use across Aotearoa, while ensuring farmers have time to plan ahead for the changes.

While some farms will need to change, we expect dairy farming to remain profitable. A DairyNZ study found that "profitable milk production systems can be achieved without N fertiliser applications," and in fact, farms using no urea fertiliser can be more profitable than farms using high amounts.<sup>17</sup>

### **Fertiliser levy**

The overuse of fertiliser causes environmental degradation and enables farming outside environmental limits. Some fertilisers also deplete natural resources or cause environmental harms during production.

A modest levy on nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser sales will also encourage farmers to consider changing the way they farm. Initially set at 2 cents per kg, we estimate this levy would raise \$34 million each year, all of which would be reinvested in the Healthy Food and Farming Fund to help farmers transition to sustainable practice.

The levy will apply to nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser, and will be collected at the point of sale. The levy will apply to all forms of agriculture and horticulture. In line with the National Environmental Standard for Fresh Water (NES-FW), the levy will not apply to a compost, soil treatment, or fertiliser that is derived from plant or animal waste or residue, and is minimally processed (for example, by being composted, mixed, dried, and pelleted).

A levy on agricultural inputs is widely supported. The Tax Working Group supported input-based fertiliser taxes.<sup>18</sup> The Resource Management Review Panel also supported greater use of economic tools to improve environmental outcomes, and noted a low-rate tax on fertiliser could be an interim solution while a more complex output-based tax was developed.<sup>19</sup>

*Table 1: effects of fertiliser levy on average farms<sup>20</sup>*

Levy per kg	\$0.02
Total revenue per annum	\$33.9m
Annual cost to average dairy cattle farm	\$1,515
Annual cost to average sheep-beef cattle farm	\$1,205
Annual cost to average outdoor vegetable growing farm	\$484

Alternatives to chemical fertiliser – such as manure and organic compost, and farm-specific regenerative solutions – are available. We

will use the Waste Minimisation Fund to support further development of organic-waste-to-fertiliser products, contributing to the Green Party's goal of zero organic waste to landfill by 2030 and reducing dependence on chemical fertilisers.

## **Reducing unsustainable feed supplements**

Supplementary livestock feed has fuelled the increase in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. Not only has it helped support environmentally damaging intensive farming in Aotearoa, its production overseas causes global environmental harm. Palm Kernel Expeller (PKE) is a by-product of palm oil refining, commonly used as supplementary feed for dairy farms. Its manufacture overseas contributes to illegal and unsustainable rainforest destruction. PKE causes climate change: both through the destruction of rainforests to create palm plantations, and by providing cheap feed for intensive farming in Aotearoa.

The use of PKE in Aotearoa is a symptom of unsustainable intensive farming, propped up with artificially high inputs. It is imported into Aotearoa to be used as a supplementary feed, to enable intensive livestock farms to sustain higher numbers of cows than locally grown feed sources can provide for. In 2019, 1.8 million tonnes of PKE were imported into Aotearoa at a cost of \$374 million.<sup>21</sup> Pamū (Landcorp) stopped using PKE in 2017, choosing instead to focus on feeding grass. It's time for the whole country to follow suit.<sup>22</sup>

The Green Party will ban the import of PKE, and review the use of other imported supplementary feeds to ensure no link to rainforest destruction overseas.

## **Fair charges for commercial water users**

Water is a shared resource, but the current ways of allocating water use rights do not adequately serve the interests of communities. For example, with Auckland facing a severe drought, large dairy farms are still applying to take almost a quarter of Auckland City's daily water use from the Waikato River.<sup>23</sup> Industrial-scale irrigation schemes have enabled intensive agriculture to expand to areas where natural conditions don't suit that scale of farming. This has severely reduced water flows, affecting the health of our rivers and the survival of aquatic species.

The Green Party successfully put a stop to government subsidies for large scale irrigation projects by winding down Crown Irrigation Investments Ltd. Community-scale and on-farm water storage and distribution is the better option to improve resilience to floods and droughts.

As part of the next Government, we will ensure those who use water to profit, pay a fair charge for that water. As the climate changes, droughts are likely to get worse. Now more than ever, we need a fairer system for allocating and charging for commercial water use.

In Government, the Green Party will create a fair system for water allocation, with commercial users like water bottling companies and significant irrigation users paying a resource rental fee, and allocation phased down to sustainable levels. This system will need to recognise the shared benefits of renewable electricity generation.

Tangata whenua have kaitiaki, proprietary, and customary rights over water. Iwi and hapū will be involved in designing the water pricing and allocation framework to ensure it recognises te mana o te wai and te Tiriti o Waitangi, prioritises ecological integrity, and enables sustainable food production.

## **Reviewing progress**

Our goal is to achieve significant reductions in water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions over time, which means significant reduction in fertiliser use and also a likely reduction in livestock numbers, while maintaining profitability for farmers and communities who grow and produce food and fibre.

The combination of the Green Party's three point plan to tackle nitrogen pollution, banning PKE, setting fair commercial water charges, the Healthy Food and Farming Fund, and greater support for organic transition, will support significant changes in the coming decade. It is important that we regularly look at how these policies are working, and be prepared to make changes if necessary.

Every five years, we will review all elements of the plan to tackle nitrogen pollution and adjust limits, levies, and support programmes as needed. These reviews will focus on what progress has been made for



key environmental goals such as fresh water quality and greenhouse gas emissions, and what the economic effects of these have both for rural communities and the broader economy. The reviews would have input from farmers, rural communities, regional councils, and scientists. They would include consideration of whether the nitrogen and phosphorous levy should be expanded to include other fertilisers, or modified to levy pollution outputs when measurement techniques for farm-level discharge are refined.

## Realising the value of sustainable farming

Consumers should be able to trust the food they buy is truly sustainable. Farmers and growers who make good choices deserve to be able to fetch premium prices for the food they produce and export. At the same time, all New Zealanders deserve affordable, quality food grown sustainably here in Aotearoa.

We can increase the value of our food and fibre exports by building trust that our exports are environmentally sustainable. To make sure farmers and growers can make the most of regenerative and organic farming, we need to ensure that the benefits of sustainable, healthy food production can be translated into export profitability for farmers.

The importance of a sustainable and resilient agricultural sector has been further underlined by the COVID-19 crisis, where agricultural exports held strong in the middle of enormous global disruption.<sup>24</sup> No matter what, at home and abroad, people need to eat. Strong agricultural and horticultural sectors achieve food security for Aotearoa and help feed the world.

### **Sustainability accreditation**

The Green Party will create a national sustainability accreditation framework for food production in Aotearoa, in consultation with the agricultural and horticultural sectors and existing third-party accreditation services.

Credible, government-backed sustainability accreditation will enable Kiwi farmers and growers to command higher prices for their exports. To get accreditation, farmers and growers will need to commit to meeting environmental standards, and have a plan to achieve them. Farm Environment Plans will play a role.

We already have a range of organic and sustainability accreditation organisations in Aotearoa, who can help develop the best possible accreditation framework for the whole country.

Overseas examples show the benefits of national-scale sustainable accreditation. Ireland's Origin Green has more than 53,000 members at farm level,<sup>25</sup> which is more than the total number of farms in Aotearoa (52,293 in 2017<sup>26</sup>). This enables Irish farmers to trade on their sustainability.

## **Country of origin food labelling**

Many Kiwis want to support our local farmers and growers. Buying local reduces pollution from transporting food around the world, and in the wake of COVID-19, helps people know they're supporting local farmers and growers.

The Green Party's Consumers' Right to Know (Country of Origin of Food) Bill was passed into law in 2018, setting new requirements for country of origin labelling. But there are still gaps. For example, tinned fruit and vegetables, many frozen mixed vegetables, and some meat products still don't require labelling. The Green Party will extend mandatory country of origin labelling to these products.

## **Fixing the Organic Products Bill**

The Organic Products Bill is an opportunity to legally recognise the value of organic food production, give consumers confidence in organic labelling, and add value to organic exports. It is currently being considered by the Primary Production select committee and it will be up to the next Parliament to pass it into law.

We want to ensure the creation of a national organics standard that truly allows the sector to thrive, and ensure that organic production is strongly and distinctly recognised. We've heard the organic sector's concerns that the Bill needs improvements. The Green Party will:

- Insert a definition of "organic" into the Bill before it becomes law, developed in consultation with organic producers in Aotearoa and based on the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements definition used in the European Union.
- Clarify that reputable organic certification organisations can legally certify a product as "organic" on behalf of the Ministry for Primary Industries.

- Establish an organics industry advisory group that includes sector representatives, to monitor the application of the new law, review how well it is working after three years, and recommend changes if needed.

## **Government buying local**

The Government is a significant purchaser of food, fibre, and timber products, for everything from carpets in government buildings to food in hospitals and schools.

The Green Party will set targets for locally produced government purchasing and work with departments, District Health Boards, and other government agencies to increase their purchasing of locally grown food, fibre, and timber. This will include improved processes for inviting joint tenders by groups of small-scale farmers and growers. By supporting local farmers and growers with stable government contracts, we can provide a stable foundation for them to grow their businesses and exports, and create jobs.

## **Protecting animal welfare**

All animals should live happy and stress-free lives, and be treated as living beings who need to be well cared for, rather than inputs to an industrialised system. Many farmers treat their animals well, but some put their whole industry's reputation at risk. Consumer demand for cruelty-free animal products is growing fast, both in Aotearoa and in our export markets. Overseas countries are increasingly demanding high standards of animal welfare from exporters.

The Green Party is committed to ensuring that animals in agriculture are treated humanely and with kindness. We are opposed to intensive grazing practices and inhumane feedlots, and hold longstanding positions to phase-out practices such as live exporting for breeding, farrowing crates, and caged hens. We would seek to ensure that Aotearoa has the world's best animal welfare conditions for animals in agriculture, which would have the added benefit of commanding market access and improving treatment for animals globally.

To achieve this, the Green Party will:

- Phase out factory farming and practices like farrowing crates, where pigs do not even have adequate space to turn around.
- Ban the live export of livestock animals for breeding.
- Regulate to ensure the accuracy of “free range”, “cruelty free”, and other animal welfare product labelling.
- Create a dedicated champion for animals by establishing a Minister or Associate Minister for Animal Welfare.
- Review the operation of the Animal Welfare Act and Animal Welfare Codes, to ensure codes are aligned with the Act.

## Sustainable forestry

Our forests clean the air and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They sustain the soil and clean water, and help support our native animals. Plantation forestry can also provide sustainable jobs, valuable exports, and essential materials for use in domestic construction.

But government policies and economic incentives have led to too much focus on pine plantations, and not enough diversity in our forests. This has caused damage to local ecosystems through erosion, forestry “slash”, and the replacement of indigenous vegetation. It has also seen communities missing out by exporting low-value timber instead of enabling local businesses to add value to timber products.

The Green Party will encourage foresters and landowners to look beyond plantation pine forests and grow a wider variety of trees, including indigenous trees. This means supporting diverse forestry, protecting and restoring our native bush and wetlands, and promoting integrated land use such as more shelter trees on farms.

With the Green Party’s support, the Government is already working on ways to make sure landowners are rewarded for on-farm planting. This forms part of the He Waka Eke Noa work programme on agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. We will make sure this work continues, so when farmers face an emissions price for their animals, it takes into account the emissions their trees sequester too.

The Green Party will:

- Overhaul the National Environmental Standard for Plantation Forestry to encourage more diverse plantings; require better catchment, land, and forest management; and strengthen the measures to prevent wilding conifers spreading.
- Take action to encourage indigenous forests instead of pine plantations, by working alongside iwi, foresters, landowners, and rural communities to achieve regulatory change which could include: removing permanent exotic forestry from the ETS to reduce economic incentives to plant permanent pine; reforming the One Billion Trees programme to only fund indigenous

forests; or using resource consents and spatial planning to restrict pine planting on some categories of land or in appropriate areas only.

- Reorient the One Billion Trees programme to have a much stronger focus on indigenous trees and resilient forest ecosystems, and encourage native agroforestry and on-farm planting on marginal land.
- Ensure that agricultural greenhouse gas emissions pricing recognises for the value of smaller scale, on-farm forestry.
- Continue to support Crown-led research through Scion into forestry diversification for a sustainable, high-value forestry sector, including biofuel development from wood waste to replace fossil fuels; and integrate energy-related forestry and biofuel jobs into our Clean Energy Industry Training Plan (see the Green Party's [Clean Energy Plan](#)).
- Support locally grown and sustainably processed timber to be used in low emissions construction, by establishing targets for government building contracts to use locally grown and processed timber. This will include innovative timber products such as cross-laminated timber instead of concrete for structural building.
- Review recent changes to overseas investment rules that have encouraged foreign direct investment in pine plantation forestry.

## Community food production

While farmers and growers provide most of the food we eat, community gardens and orchards in cities and towns can bring people together with their neighbours, help ensure affordable healthy food, and teach children about how food is grown. Community gardens exist throughout Aotearoa and are generally not-for-profit and run by volunteers.

Urban food gardens promote stronger understanding of sustainable ecosystems and food production, and enhance the environment in urban settings. Understanding more about how food is produced can strengthen connections between urban and rural New Zealanders.

In Government, the Green Party will provide \$10m a year to support:

- Offering grant funding for community gardens and community composting initiatives to be established and expanded, especially in lower-income communities. These would be co-funded grants administered in partnership with city councils where possible.
- Strengthening programmes like Enviroschools and Garden to Table that support schools to establish and maintain food gardens, and linking these to food in schools programmes where practical.
- Enabling schools that don't already have the means to take their students out to see farming and growing in action, to apply for grants for educational day trips to farms.

## Fiscal information

By repurposing existing unspent funding in the Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures Fund, and levying nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser sales, we can fund transformative on-farm changes to set farmers up for decades of environmental and economic sustainability.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
<b>Sources of funding</b>				
Nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser sales levy*	+\$34m	+\$34m	+\$34m	+\$102m
Repurpose remaining Sustainable Food & Fibre Futures	+\$195m			+\$195m
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Healthy Food + Farming Fund	\$86.6m	\$86.6m	\$86.6m	\$260m
Organic sector support	\$10m	\$13.5m	\$13.5m	\$37m
Community food production funding	\$10m	\$10m	\$10m	\$30m
<b>Net total cost</b>	<b>\$10m</b>	<b>\$10m</b>	<b>\$10m</b>	<b>\$30m</b>

\*Note: estimated levy take is based on data from Stats NZ's Agricultural Production Statistics, June 2017. The levy would apply to nitrogen and phosphorous fertiliser sales, including urease inhibitor, urea, DAP, SOA, and superphosphate. Levy revenue is likely to reduce over time as fertiliser use reduces.

Water allocation and resource rental figures are not included because the specific design features and charges will depend on the views of iwi, hapū, and commercial water users.



## Sources

- <sup>1</sup> All emissions data is from Ministry for the Environment 2020, New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Inventory 1990-2018.
- <sup>2</sup> [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=12241253](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12241253).
- <sup>3</sup> 2018 emissions data from Ministry for the Environment 2020, New Zealand's Interactive Emissions Tracker. Access at <https://emissionstracker.mfe.govt.nz>.
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/115831996/new-zealands-primary-sector-exports-reach-a-record-464-billion>.
- <sup>5</sup> 'Action on agricultural emissions – Evidence, analysis and recommendations', Interim Climate Change Committee 2019, p32.
- <sup>6</sup> Sierra, V., 2020. Lincoln University Dairy Farm (LUDF) – 20 years of successful on-farm demonstration. In *The Journal* by NZIPIM (June 2020, pp. 34-39).
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/country/416143/regenerative-agriculture-how-a-dairy-farmer-learned-to-trust-his-instincts>.
- <sup>8</sup> [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=16&objectid=12311096](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/the-country/news/article.cfm?c_id=16&objectid=12311096)
- <sup>9</sup> 'Fit for a Better World – Accelerating our economic potential', MPI 2020, p12. Access at <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/dmsdocument/41031>.
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- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/cleaning-our-rivers-and-lakes>.
- <sup>15</sup> 'Water quality in New Zealand: Land use and nutrient pollution', Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment 2013. Access at <https://www.pce.parliament.nz/media/1275/pce-water-quality-land-use-web-amended.pdf>.
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- <sup>17</sup> Glassey, C.B., Roach, C.G., Lee, J.M. and Clark, D.A., 2013. The impact of farming without nitrogen fertiliser for ten years on pasture yield and composition, milksolids production and profitability; a research farmlet comparison. In *Proceedings of the New Zealand Grasslands Association* (Vol. 75, pp. 71-78).
- <sup>18</sup> 'Future of Tax: Final Report Volume 1', Tax Working Group 2019, p46. Access at <https://taxworkinggroup.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-03/twg-final-report-voli-feb19-v1.pdf>.
- <sup>19</sup> 'New Directions for Resource Management in New Zealand', report of the Resource Management Review Panel June 2020, p343. Access at <https://www.mfe.govt.nz/sites/default/files/media/RMA/rm-panel-review-report-web.pdf>.
- <sup>20</sup> Calculated using information from Stats NZ. Access at <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/agricultural-production-statistics-june-2017-final>.
- <sup>21</sup> Information from Stats NZ, provided by the Parliamentary Library.
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- <sup>23</sup> [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=12358239](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12358239)
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/business/415638/new-zealand-food-exports-still-in-demand-despite-covid-19-impact>.
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- <sup>26</sup> Stats NZ Agricultural Production Statistics (June 2017). Access at <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/agricultural-production-statistics-june-2017-final>.

[www.greens.org.nz/  
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