

He Rourou Whai Painga: Information for Industry

The vitality and sustainability of the Aotearoa New Zealand food and beverage (F&B) sector is of critical importance to the New Zealand economy, and to the health of the New Zealand population.

The High-Value Nutrition (HVN) National Science Challenge has appointed a science leadership team to deliver a new, long-term, multi-centre, randomised, controlled dietary intervention programme to provide evidence that a dietary pattern that includes high quality New Zealand F&B products offers health benefits to consumers and their families.

The research programme, known as He Rourou Whai Painga (HRWP), seeks to partner with a wide range of industry partners across New Zealand to provide a significant proportion of the intervention diet to study participants and their families.

The programme name, He Rourou Whai Painga, refers to a basket of nourishing, high-value food and reflects both the Māori name gifted to HVN (Ko Ngā Kai Whai Painga) and a well-known whakatauki:

Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi
With my contribution and yours, the people will thrive.

Dietary Intervention

The design of the dietary intervention aligns with scientific evidence for a dietary pattern that is associated with a reduced risk of developing chronic, lifestyle-related, health conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease. The intervention includes a focus on increased intake of plant-based foods (vegetables, legumes, fruits, whole grains and cereals, nuts and seeds etc), high quality oil, a moderate intake of seafood, smaller amounts of high quality meat and dairy products, and a minimal intake of confectionary, cakes, biscuits, and ultra-processed items.

Ensuring Benefit for the New Zealand F&B Industry

The 'whole-diet' approach of the study requires collaboration across industry in the provision of food for the dietary intervention. Early indications from industry suggest that the focus on a whole-diet and whānau-based approach is appealing; and that a cross-industry approach will give the study more validity for consumers in market.

In order to ensure that industry receives value from participation in He Rourou Whai Painga, the HVN Directorate is engaging external parties to co-develop with industry a strong narrative and communications around the study to highlight industry collaboration in using high quality produce to address health concerns in New Zealand. This will bolster the ability of industry to tell an authentic story in both domestic and overseas markets regarding the health benefits of consuming their products and their involvement in social enterprise activities.

Principles of Engagement

HVN seeks to partner with F&B entities who are willing to collaborate with others across the sector in contributing food in-kind to the HRWP study. **Cash co-funding is not required.**

Potential industry partners also need to align with the values of HRWP. These include:

1. Ability to provide nutritious and safe products that align with the scientific principles underpinning the dietary intervention;
2. Alignment with the HVN Vision Mātauranga Strategy and responsibilities (HRWP includes a focus on values, effective engagement with Māori F&B partners, Māori research capability building, and a study population enriched for Māori participants and their whānau);
3. Ability to describe / demonstrate a meaningful approach to sustainable development; and
4. A line of sight to export (recognising that for values-based Māori businesses export opportunities are pursued in order to enhance the wellbeing of their communities).

Next Steps

If you are interested in participating in HRWP or in obtaining further information, please contact Dr Meika Foster (meika.foster@edibleresearch.co.nz) or Professor Richard Gearry (richard.gearry@otago.ac.nz).

We will be inviting businesses who are interested in HRWP to attend a meeting (likely via videoconference) in late September to discuss development of the narrative and communication plan for the study.

We are aiming to have confirmed suitable industry partners before the end of 2021 and to begin recruiting study participants in Q1, 2022 in order to start the study in mid-2022.

HRWP Leadership Team:

Prof Jeremy Krebs (Co-Principal Investigator; Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Wellington and Centre for Endocrine, Diabetes and Obesity Research (CEDOR), Wellington)

Dr Meika Foster (Co-Principal Investigator; Edible Research Ltd)

Prof Richard Gearry (Department of Medicine, University of Otago, Christchurch)

Dr Troy Merry (Department of Nutrition, University of Auckland)

Dr Andrea Braakhuis (Department of Nutrition, University of Auckland)

Dr Denise Conroy (Plant and Food Research, Mt Albert Research Centre, Auckland)