

Media release

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Investing in the best to tackle the possum problem

The Foundation has approved total investment of \$3.06m per year in new research to control New Zealand's possum population and to manage the incidence of TB among cattle.

A total of five research projects from 3-5 years in duration will be undertaken by scientists at Landcare Research, Lincoln University and AgResearch.

Dr Richard Templer, GM of the Industry and Environment group, says that the Foundation has refined its strategic research direction to better meet the needs of the agencies responsible for possum and TB control. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Animal Health Board, the Department of Conservation and regional councils were involved throughout the Foundation's process to define the research priorities for this round.

"It's about investing in the best of research proposals from organisations that can deliver the tools and knowledge to those who will take it and use it to maximum benefit," Dr Templer says.

"Bovine TB threatens access to export markets. Possums carry this disease and also destroy native bush threatening New Zealand's biodiversity."

The investments made are:

- Strategic technologies for managing pests: A Landcare Research project to integrate community responses to possum and multi-species control methods into end-user decision-making and performance-management systems.
- Pheromone lures for vertebrate pests: An AgResearch project to develop pheromone lures to increase the effectiveness of pest control in trapping and poisoning operations.
- Innovative tools for bovine TB: An AgResearch project to develop a method to test milk for the early detection of TB in dairy herds, and to register a new vaccine for cattle.
- Completing the arsenal for possum and TB control: A Lincoln University project to deliver multiple technologies and application systems to meet specific end-user pest control requirements.
- Tb and multi-pest suppression systems: A Landcare Research project to deliver new knowledge and technologies to more cost-effectively reduce the unwanted effects of possums, rodents, and predators.

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