New Zealand FOOD SAFETY SCIENCE & RESEARCH CENTRE

NZFSSRC Industry Futures Forum
Tuesday 03 November 2026, 9:00am – 5:00pm
James Cook Grand Chancellor, Wellington
FutureSafe 2035: Building Resilient Food Safety Systems for a Changing World

0815-0900	Tea & Coffee on arrival
0900-0930	**Welcome & Introductions** *Karakia* Denver McGregor (NZFSSRC Industry Leaders Group - Chair) **Is the International Rules-Based System Falling Apart? - What does it mean for NZ Agriculture Exports** *Hon. Tim Groser, International trade expert; former NZ chief agriculture negotiator and Trade Minister* Scott Champion (Facilitator)
0930-1000	**Future Keynote: Food Safety 2035: What Will Keep Industry Leaders Awake at Night?** *Lain Jager, Director Zespri and a2 Milk*
1000-1100	**Session 1: Panel Discussion: Future Disruptions and Emerging Risks - What Could Challenge Food Safety Over the Next Decade?** *Jo Hendy, Climate Change Commission CE* *Jenny Bishop, Director, Food Risk Management, New Zealand Food Safety* *Hon. Tim Groser, International trade expert; former NZ chief agriculture negotiator and Trade Minister* *Nicola O'Rourke, Board Director CMInstD*
1100-1120	**Morning Tea**
1120-1220	**Session 2: One Health, Systems Thinking and Trust Rethinking Food Safety Through a Wider Lens**
1120 - 1140	**Strengthening the resilience and protecting the uniqueness of kai Māori within the food safety context** *Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi*
1140 - 1200	**Building resilience landscapes for food security** *Amanda Black, Bioprotection Aotearoa, Lincoln University*
1200 - 1220	**What is One Health, and why is it important for food safety?** *Nigel French, Massey University*
1220-1300	**Executive Panel: Regulation, Innovation and Agility** *Dandan Chen, a2 Milk* *Stephen Brown, Veeva* *Fiona Duncan, Ministry for Primary Industries*
1300-1345	**Lunch**
1345-1445	**Session 3: Digital Food Safety 2035 AI, Automation and Real-Time Assurance**
1345-1415	**BEFORE IT HAPPENS: From Food Safety Compliance to Predictive Assurance by 2035** *Johan Potgieter, NZ Product Accelerator*
1415-1445	**AI and the future of Data and Trust** *Greg Cross, Cross Ventures Limited*
1445-1530	**Session 4: The Future Food Safety Workforce - People, Culture and Capability in 2035**
1445-1505	**AI as our SuperPower** *Greg Cross, Cross Ventures Limited*
1505-1530	**Gamechanger? What AI means for the people who keep New Zealand's food safe** *Alex Richter, University of Auckland*
1530-1550	**Afternoon Tea**
1550-1640	**Futures Workshop: What Must New Zealand Do Now?**
1640 - 1700	**Forum close** / *Karakia*

Speaker Biographies

Hon. Tim Groser
International trade expert; former NZ chief agriculture negotiator and Trade Minister

After joining the NZ Treasury as a junior economist in 1973, Tim became deeply involved in Australia/NZ economic relationships which then evolved into the CER Agreement. In the early 1980s, Tim served as the Foreign Affairs adviser to both Prime Minister Muldoon and Prime Minister David Lange in the Prime Minister's Department. In 1986, Tim was then appointed NZ Chief Trade Negotiator with responsibility for the last successful multilateral Trade Negotiating Round, the Uruguay Round. He served as Ambassador to Indonesia 1994-97 (Tim's first involvement with the Geothermal Industry (the Wayang Windu 600 MW plant built by NZ). In 2002 Tim was appointed Ambassador to the WTO and chaired the Agriculture Negotiating Group – the first New Zealander to do so. He served as NZ Trade Minister, NZ Climate Change Minister (International) and Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs 2008-15. From 2016-19 Tim was Ambassador to the United States. Tim was recently appointed Chair of the Advisory Group on Supercritical Geothermal Energy.

Lain Jager
Director Zespri and a2 Milk

Lain is best known for being CEO of ZESPRI from 2008 to 2017. This was a challenging period for ZESPRI including Importer issues in China and Taiwan, the deregulation campaign run by Turners and Growers, and most severely the bacterial disease Psa. Despite these challenges Zespri grew strongly, grower returns doubled, and the share price grew from $1.00 to $8.00. Perhaps most importantly, under Lain's tenure the culture of the company matured, enabling the development of the genuinely global approach to sales and marketing that exists today. Today, Lain invests across a range of businesses in Tourism, Technology, Food, and Agribusiness. Lain was the Chairman of the Primary Sector Council which produced the Fit for a Better World Report focused on the New Zealand Food and Fibre Sector and was Co-Chair of Te Puna Whakaaronui – a Food and Fibre think tank. Current Directorships include: The a2 Milk Company, Arepa, Nibblish, New Zealand Avocado Oil, Origin Capital Management, Redwoods Treewalk, Rubisco and Zespri. In addition to this Lain sits on the advisory Board of the Sustainable Nutrition Initiative. Lain and his wife Debra live on a lifestyle block in Tauranga, New Zealand.

Jo Hendy
Climate Change Commission CE

Jo Hendy is Chief Executive of New Zealand's Climate Change Commission, where she leads independent advice to help the country move toward a low-emissions, climate-resilient future that works for everyone. With over two decades of experience at the intersection of science, policy, and economics, Jo is known for her calm, clear thinking and ability to bring people together around complex issues. She's committed to building trust across government, business, iwi, and communities – helping decision-makers navigate uncertainty and act with confidence as the climate changes.

Jenny Bishop
Director, Food Risk Management, New Zealand Food Safety

Jenny is the Director Food Risk Management. She leads a Directorate in New Zealand Food Safety which protects public health, maintains confidence in the safety and suitability of food through identification, assessment and management of potential food safety risks. She works closely with industry stakeholders and international partners to uphold New Zealand's high standards of food safety, ensuring compliance with global market requirements. The Directorate includes Emerging Risk, Food Compliance Services, Regulatory Standard setting and Readiness and Response functions. Jenny has worked in various parts of the food safety system for 25 years, including health protection, compliance, enforcement, standard development and food safety response management with positions held at international, national, regional and local levels Prior to joining MPI, Jenny worked for the World Health Organization, being posted in Suva, Manila and Geneva assisting countries in the development of national food control system and coordinating the management of international food safety concerns. She was also part of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority and the Ministry of Health when it held the food safety mandate.

Nicola O'Rourke
Board Director CMInstD

Nicola is a seasoned executive in New Zealand's food and beverage sector, with over 20 years of experience spanning innovation, marketing, sales, and general management roles. She has held leadership positions at companies such as Comvita (as Chief Digital Officer) and Lewis Road Creamery (as General Manager), where she was instrumental in launching innovation into global markets across Australasia, the USA, and China. Nicola is the co-founder and managing partner of Founders Advisory, a business that invests in and advises branded Food & Beverage businesses, holds board and advisory roles across multiple Food & Beverage export businesses such as Giesen Wines, Pics Peanut Butter, Lilo Desserts and is an advisor to NZTE portfolio customers on scaling for export growth. Nicola is known for her passion in building a shared future for the next generation of NZ Food & Beverage businesses on the global stage. She was recognized in 2025 as one of Cuisine Magazine's Top 50 Women in Food & Drink Aotearoa New Zealand.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith
Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi

Distinguished Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, PhD. CNZM. Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Porou, Tuhourangi and Ngāt Paoa. Linda is both a Professor at Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi and the CEO of Ngā Āhuatanga O Te Kai Ltd. The Kai Research Institute. She is an internationally renowned and highly awarded researcher, scholar and writer known for her work on Decolonising Methodologies, Kaupapa Māori and Mana Wahine and Māori Education. She has also published Children's books and poetry.

Amanda Black
Director – Bioprotection Aotearoa, Lincoln University

Professor Amanda Black is the Director of Bioprotection Aotearoa, a national centre of research excellence hosted at Lincoln University. Bioprotection Aotearoa research focuses on protecting our productive landscapes from pest, diseases and weeds in a changing climate. We are an interdisciplinary platform working across governance, Indigenous knowledge, biotech biocontrol, soil science and ecology in Aotearoa and the Pacific. Professor Black's research interests are in ecosystem resilience and how we can ensure that our lands are protected and supported to be healthy.

Nigel French
Massey University

Nigel is Distinguished Professor of Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Public Health at Tāwharau Ora | School of Veterinary Science, Massey University and Honorary Professor in the Department of Pathology and Biomedical Science at the University of Otago. He is the Emeritus Director of the New Zealand Food Safety Science and Research Centre. He was elected as Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2014 and made Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2023 for services to epidemiology.

Dandan Chen
a2 Milk

Dandan Chen is the Group Head of Quality, Regulatory and Product Development at The a2 Milk Company, based in Sydney. She leads the company's global quality, regulatory and product development functions, supporting food safety, product innovation and compliance across international markets. With more than 13 years at The a2 Milk Company, Dandan brings extensive experience in navigating complex regulatory environments and connecting scientific and technical expertise with commercial priorities. Her work spans quality oversight across the supply chain, regulatory engagement and the development of dairy and infant nutrition products. Before joining a2, Dandan held roles in quality, product development, manufacturing and regulatory affairs across New Zealand's poultry, beverage and baking industries. She holds a Bachelor of Technology (Hon) in Food Technology and Processing from Massey University.

Stephen Brown
Veeva

Stephen Brown serves as the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) for Veeva QualityOne in Asia, providing a strategic voice across the region for modernising quality through technology innovation. With over 15 years of experience at Veeva and nearly 30 years in enterprise software, Stephen talks to, and shows how, customers can transition from inefficient legacy applications to unified, digital-first quality solutions, and take advantage of advances in AI to aid in more efficient quality processes. Based in Auckland, Stephen holds a Bachelor of Electronic Engineering from Auckland University. He is dedicated to helping organisations build a strategic quality backbone that drives long-term business value.

Fiona Duncan
Ministry for Primary Industries

Fiona Duncan has built a distinguished career with the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI), spanning a range of leadership, policy, and operational roles. Her experience includes regulatory policy development, international trade and market access, funding programmes, support for rural communities and sector engagement. Her roles have included offshore postings, regional experience and time in Ministerial offices. Fiona currently serves as Director Regulatory Systems Policy, where she leads policy oversight of New Zealand's food safety, biosecurity, and animal welfare regulatory systems, helping ensure they remain robust, fit for purpose, and responsive to emerging challenges

Johan Potgieter
NZ Product Accelerator

Dr Johan Potgieter is a robotics engineer, entrepreneur and AI educator focused on helping industry turn emerging technologies into safer, more productive and resilient operations. A core team member of the New Zealand Product Accelerator and founder and director of Wrybill Robotics, he connects industrial challenges with research expertise and practical engineering solutions.
A former Professor of Robotics and Mechatronics at Massey University, Johan brings more than 20 years' experience across research, technology development and commercialisation. His work spans autonomous inspection, machine vision, sensing and AI-enabled automation, with applications in energy, infrastructure and manufacturing.
At FutureSafe 2035, Johan will explore how these capabilities can strengthen food safety by identifying emerging risks earlier and supporting better-informed decisions.

Greg Cross
Cross Ventures Limited

Greg is an experienced global entrepreneur, technology executive and Company Director with a governance focus on innovation, strategy and growth. A pragmatic business leader with strong strategic skills combined with the ability to inspire, motivate and lead people. Proven skills in US, international growth, capital raising, and M&A. Corporate governance experience across a wide range of high growth companies operating in US and Asia Pacific.Over the last 10 years most of Greg's focus has been in the AI industry. In 2024 he founded Eighty20 AI Inc., a native AI company which is developing Quantum Social Clubs - a next generation CR-X platform with a revolutionary on-line community underpinned by a trust exchange. In 2016 he co-founded Soul Machines quickly establishing it as a leading Artificial intelligence company backed by international investors including Temasek, Softbank Mercedes Benz and Salesforce. Prior to this another technology company he co-founded PowerbyProxi sold to Apple. Greg has been recognized as an international thought leader in how we humanize AI by focusing on the way people experience AI and integrate it into their daily lives. He is known for his strategic insights and has worked with Executives at major brands including Pfizer, WHO, Walmart, JPM Chase, Mercedes Benz as they re-imagine the workplace of the future. He has been a keynote speaker at leading global conferences like Singularity UniversityGlobal Summit (San Francisco), Web Summit (Lisbon), Cannes Lions (Cannes), CogX(London), Gitex(Dubai) and Collision (Toronto). He was selected by the World Economic Forum as a Technology Pioneer for his work in the field of Artificial Intelligence in 2018 and in 2019 he was inducted into New Zealand's Technology Hall of Fame as the recipient of the Flying Kiwi Award and was an Auckland Grammar School Augusta Award winner in 2020. Earlier in his career Greg was Managing Director of Microsoft New Zealand as it transitioned into the Internet era and developed its Enterprise Software business and was 2IC and Head of Sales and Marketing at BellSouth New Zealand during its build out, launch and the initial growth years of its digital cellular business (subsequently sold to Vodafone).

Alex Richter
University of Auckland

Alexander Richter is a Professor of Human-Centric AI and the inaugural Director of the AI Initiative at the University of Auckland.
He studies how people and AI can work together in ways that improve performance, preserve human values and build institutional capability. His research spans topics such as human-AI collaboration, the future of work and AI governance. Across these areas, he develops frameworks that help organisations decide what AI can do and, more importantly, what it should do. Alex believes in engaged scholarships and has advised governments and organisations across three continents. He is also a passionate teacher and received the 2024 Association for Information Systems Innovation in Teaching Award for his teaching approach, "Learning Out Loud". His talks combine empirical research, future-oriented thinking and practical guidance for leaders navigating AI-driven organisational change.