



## **Proposed Nominees for AgriTech New Zealand Executive Council seats 2024 elections**

### **Major Corporate Nominees**

*Justin White – Zespri International*

As the Innovation Strategy & Planning Manager at Zespri, I am deeply aware of the pivotal role AgriTechNZ plays in not only advancing our company but also in bolstering the competitive edge of New Zealand's agriculture and horticulture sectors on the global stage. My involvement with the Zespri Artificial Intelligence Council reinforces my belief in the transformative power of technology in agriculture.

With a background as a Mechatronics Engineer and a track record of technical leadership as a Military Officer, I bring a wealth of experience including 8 years in New Product Development R&D at The Gallagher Group. Additionally, my involvement advising and coordinating the NZ National Fieldays Innovation Event for the past eight years and two years as a School Board Member reflect my commitment to innovation, growth and leveraging technology as a force multiplier. I am well-prepared to advocate for and advance the interests of our AgriTechNZ community.

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*Tammy Lemire – Pāmu Farms of New Zealand*

As Pāmu's Chief Digital & Technology Officer, I see the opportunities that Agritech can offer our farmers and growers in a complex and evolving landscape. These include optimising farm performance through streamlined data capture and reporting, which help manage daily operations, meet compliance and assurance requirements, and provide decision support and insights to optimize farm systems and environmental outcomes. There are also opportunities to enhance digital literacy and skills across the sector to encourage adoption and I firmly believe that deploying the right technology with the right capabilities can yield significant benefits.

I also serve on the board of FarmIQ and understand to the unique challenges that Agritech companies in New Zealand face regarding market share, sustainable growth, and scalability in a capital-constrained and fragmented market is evident.

It is an exciting time for the sector, and I'm impressed by the innovation and rapid evolution in the New Zealand AgriTech sector and believe New Zealand has much to offer on the global stage. Collaboration opportunities are evident, exemplified by AgriTechNZ's recent panel at Fieldays and initiatives like the AgriData Syndicate, which aims to collectively address challenges. I believe my approach to working together to achieve industry and commercial outcomes will be of value and I would be honoured to join the AgriTechNZ Executive Council advocating for Agritech sector growth and opportunities.

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*Trevor Newman – Fonterra*

If you scanned my work brain, you'll see two things: my love for marketing and my commitment to make things better for Fonterra Farmers. AS the GM of Farmer Experience at Farm Source – I'm the sponsor of our Compliance Simplification programme – a multi-year transformation that will significantly reduce the time and burden that compliance puts on farmers. It's going to be critical to improve our capture and use of data, to simplify digital experiences and design approaches around ways that farmers work. I want to collaborate via the AgriTechNZ Executive Council to accelerate benefits for all farmers.

I will bring a customer (farmer) experience lens to the Executive Council. Although I'm not a data native, my strength lies in imagining and seeing ways that data and digital experiences can solve problems, issues, experience and pain points for farmers. Working together, we can make a big change for farmers, at a time when most are struggling to make sense of the tidal wave of requirements and fragmentation of solutions in the sector. Farmer-focus. Collaboration. Simplification.

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## **Other Corporate Nominees**

*Mark Piper – Plant & Food*

I have been fortunate enough to be employed throughout NZ's Primary Industries for over 30 years. During that time, I have spent 3 years in Tokyo and 5 years in Chicago and have formed many strong global connections across numerous years. Over the past 7 years I have led science and innovation across two of New Zealand's major sectors, Dairy (with Fonterra) and Horticulture (with Plant & Food Research).

As someone who has a lot of experience with farmers, manufacturing and customers; alongside a strong passion for innovation and change, I believe I would make a valuable addition to AgriTechNZ Executive Council. I am a critical thinker who is not enamoured with new things just for the sake of it, but instead bring a focus on the application of technologies and how they can improve productivity and experiences.

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*Jamie Mikkelson – Blue Pacific Minerals*

I am excited to serve on the AgriTechNZ Executive Council. With a lifelong involvement in Agritech, I have a deep passion for the sector. Throughout my career, I have started, grown, sold, and acquired numerous businesses, gaining extensive commercial experience. My international exposure as an exporter and my years in Germany with leading tech companies have given me a unique perspective on New Zealand's place in the global market.

If elected, I will bring substantial leadership and innovation experience. Having served as a CEO and Chair from early in my career, and with a longstanding presence on various boards, I have honed my

ability to build brands and lead great teams. My passion for innovation is evident in my extensive experience in ideation and product development. I am committed to driving the growth of New Zealand's Agritech industry, fostering collaboration, and leveraging my global networks to create new opportunities for our members.

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*Craig Bunt – University of Otago*

I am excited to submit my candidacy for the AgriTechNZ Executive Council, driven by a deep commitment to advancing agricultural innovation and sustainability. Throughout my career in both industry and academia, I have been dedicated to bridging the gap between rigorous research and practical applications that enhance food security, environmental management, and agricultural practices. I have spearheaded numerous projects that have led to transformational discoveries and technologies in veterinary pharmaceuticals and agricultural products. My experience in developing FDA-approved veterinary pharmaceuticals such as CIDR-1380, along with innovative agricultural products like BioShield for plant protection, HogGone for wildlife control, and Bait-Rite-Paste, underscores my ability to translate research into impactful solutions.

If elected to the AgriTechNZ Executive Council, I am confident that my extensive background in research, development, and collaboration will bring valuable insights and contributions to the team. My goal is to support the growth of the agricultural sector's development of cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices, ensuring a prosperous future for our communities and the environment. Additionally, I am passionate about introducing and encouraging young people to pursue careers in agritech, believing that the future of our industry lies in the hands of the next generation. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute to AgriTechNZ's mission and work alongside like-minded professionals to make a lasting impact.

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*Elliot Mercer – Agnition Ventures*

I am excited to submit my candidacy for the AgriTechNZ Executive Council. With over two decades of experience in innovation, commercialisation, and agriculture, I am passionate about advancing technology within our industry. Throughout my career, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of technology and I'm excited to continue developing and investing in the next generation of solutions for our farmers and growers. Serving on the Executive Council would allow me to contribute actively to the strategic direction of AgriTechNZ, ensuring that our sector remains at the forefront of global innovation.

If elected, I would bring a unique blend of technical expertise and strategic vision to the council. My background driving innovation in multiple sectors provides me with a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our industry. I am committed to fostering collaboration between industry stakeholders, academia, and government bodies to drive forward policies that support innovation and sustainability. Moreover, my leadership experience in cross-functional teams has honed my ability to facilitate dialogue and consensus-building, essential qualities for effective governance. I am eager to leverage these skills to advocate for our members, promote technological

advancements, and ultimately contribute to a thriving and resilient agricultural sector in New Zealand.

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#### *Jono Jones – Bluelab*

As the CEO of Bluelab, I'm excited about taking New Zealand agritech to the world. My passion lies in solving global challenges with a user-centred approach, and serving on the AgriTechNZ Executive Council is an opportunity for me to contribute to a collective vision for the agritech industry. I am eager to work with industry leaders to foster innovation and collaboration amongst members, ensuring that New Zealand remains at the forefront of global agritech.

If elected to the AgriTechNZ Executive Council, I will bring enthusiasm and creative thinking to the role. At Bluelab, we develop, commercialise, manufacture and market hardware and software technology to help people master the art of growing for a healthier world. Leading a 99% export business has sharpened the skills for taking New Zealand agritech to the world and leading a category. Representing New Zealand on agritech delegations and market immersions in the US, Australia, and Europe has given me valuable insights into our international perception and competitive landscape. I am committed to leveraging this experience to drive our industry forward, ensuring New Zealand continues to lead in agritech innovation.

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#### *Rebecca Redmond – AgResearch*

I am currently the Sector Manager Agritechnologies, Partnerships & Programmes at AgResearch in Christchurch. I bring knowledge, connections, and insights from my work and firsthand experiences, from working for a SME with hands-on experience growing exports from a NZ base, to overseeing multimillion-dollar projects and initiatives across the agricultural science areas.

For more than a decade I have been a volunteer on my local Surf Life Saving Club committee, Chairing our new build committee. We successfully opened our new \$3.5 million club building in 2021, in South Brighton, after a decade of fundraising, planning and build management.

I would love to help the continued growth and connection of a vibrant Agritech sector in NZ. If provided the opportunity to be part of the Agritech Executive, I will bring specialist knowledge of the agritech and foodtech developments and connection into science investment in NZ.

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#### *Auriga Martin – Farm Focus*

I am an entrepreneur and intrapreneur who believes in creating a new design for business where putting people and planet first come with higher profits. I am the new CEO at Farm Focus - NZ's farm financial management platform of choice and am currently finishing my masters in organisational change and resilience.

I grew up with successful unicorn tech learning company lynda.com (now LinkedIn Learning) and recently spent 3+ years building the team that launched the Tempo wealth saving and investing app that launched in early August 2023. Before that I launched Substation Robot for Transpower. I have

resided on a seventh-generation sheep and beef farm in Martinborough for close to 18 years and have ambitious plans for Farm Focus now, particularly now with Constellation Capital backing.

I would bring value to the AgriTechNZ Council by representing a new perspective on what creates customer value in the wider tech sector and how that translates to change in legacy sector thinking. I love change projects and sector level mindset shifting challenges. Every risk, every tension point are opportunities with innovative minds and collaboration exploring and validating potential outcomes. Often the key lies in language and translating; working carefully to create acknowledgement and respect for where the sector has come from, what has worked in the past and carrying that through to what can work differently moving forward.

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### **SMES & Startup Nominees**

*Mike Barley – HortPlus*

Our country is at an important point in the journey towards sustainable agriculture as we face rising economic pressures and a changing climate. I've been building digital weather, disease, and agriculture insights platforms for 15 years with my company HortPlus, working with the private sector and industry bodies, as well as central and local government, to deliver technology solutions that help overcome the challenges growers face.

I understand that the solutions to our biggest challenges must be a collaborative process and I have always sought to build trust and develop partnerships through win-win outcomes. I look forward to helping facilitate strategy and innovation with all members and bringing a SME & Start-up voice to the AgriTechNZ Executive Council. I appreciate your consideration.

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*Matt Flowerday – GPSit*

I'm putting my hand up to continue my work on behalf of NZ SME Agritech businesses as part of your elected Executive Council. I've been involved in the Agritech sector for over 25 years, as a grower, a business owner and entrepreneur. I have an extensive network, I travel regularly looking for new opportunities, trends and insights for the benefit of NZ growers, farmers and NZ tech.

There are some challenging times ahead, but everything has a cycle and as we all know Ag has a long sales cycle. With the ITP now finished, we need to continue that work that AgriTechNZ has done to lay the foundations and focus on unlocking value, the Agritech community and NZ farmers. I'm 100% committed to the global success for Agritech and will continue to help others where I can and advocate on your behalf in my capacity as your representative.

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*Richard Beaumont – Agovor*

I am a co-founder of Agovor, a company committed to advancing the integration of innovative AgriTech solutions in agriculture with the development of an autonomous mini electric tractor. Prior to starting Agovor I was production manager at Ardmore Nurseries, a wholesale tree and shrub

nursery where I retain a role as Director. I've also represented New Zealand as a rower. My enthusiasm to serve on the AgriTechNZ Executive Council is driven by a shared goal of fostering an environment where technology meets traditional farming needs, thereby enhancing efficiency and sustainability.

With my expertise in developing Agovor, alongside my significant experience working in the horticultural sector I am well placed to contribute practical insights and proven strategies. My background allows me to bring a first-hand perspective on digital adoption and data interoperability, crucial areas highlighted by AgriTechNZ. I am keen to work with other members to promote technological adoption, influence meaningful policies, and help our community thrive in the face of global agricultural challenges.

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#### *Tom Andrews – Connected Farms*

I have a strong interest and passion for agritech, as I have been working with Connected farms, a leading agritech company in New Zealand, for the past four years. This has exposed me to all areas of agriculture and emerging agritech, from precision farming and irrigation to biotechnology and robotics. I have seen first-hand how agritech can improve productivity, sustainability, and profitability for farmers and growers. Having led Connected Farms into other international markets I understand and have first-hand experience of the challenges and opportunities this presents to agritech companies.

I also believe that the New Zealand agritech sector is a world leader for the most practical and innovative solutions, with key opportunities for growth and expansion. New Zealand has a reputation for excellence in agriculture, and I think we can leverage our strengths and expertise to create and export agritech solutions that can address global challenges such as food security, climate change, and resource efficiency. I think collaboration is vital to the success of the agritech sector, as many problems can be solved across farm sectors and agritech use cases. I would love to be part of the AgriTechNZ Executive Council, as I think it is a great platform to connect, share, and learn from other agritech enthusiasts and stakeholders and I feel my experience will be useful to the organisation and members alike.

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#### *Chelsea Hirst – Sprout Agritech*

I lead the Acceleration and Engagement team at Sprout Agritech. We're on a mission to accelerate the growth of innovative startups leading the transformation of industries that nourish and sustain life on earth through programmes and investment. I've overseen engagement with over 150 founders and innovators across more than 50 ventures at Sprout. I'm an experienced entrepreneur myself and won the Manawatu Innovate competition in 2016 with my startup Peurgon.

My previous experience includes a range of roles in the agriculture industry. A Business Analyst at FMG, where I led a development team through the first technical upgrade of FMG's core insurance systems, a Dairy Farm Technician at Pamu, and a lead team member with published industry research on grazing management - and was a dairy farmer on several dairy farms.

On the AgriTechNZ Executive Council, I would bring an understanding of the challenges experienced by early stage agritech ventures with the aim of uncovering opportunities to accelerate their growth even further for the benefit of the industry.

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