

# Climate report gives much needed detail

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**THE LATEST** IPCC Special Report has the potential to turn the way we look at climate change on its head, says DairyNZ chief executive Dr Tim Mackle.

It highlights the challenges of providing sustainable food for a growing population and says animal sourced food from sustainable systems has a role to play.

The IPCC Special Report, released this month, is a "welcome contribution" to the developing debate on climate, says Mackle.

New Zealand in 2015 co-sponsored a proposal for a Special Report on Climate Change, Food and Agriculture.

"The 2019 report has arrived at an opportune time as NZ works out

how to play its part in tackling climate change and what it might mean for our agricultural sector and our economy," Mackle says.

"In October 2018, the IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming by 1.5°C turned on its head the way policymakers viewed climate change.

"This new report has the potential to do the same as it highlights some of the challenges and opportunities of providing sustainable food for a growing global population," says Mackle.

The world's population is forecast by the United Nations to grow from 7.7 billion now to 9.7b by 2050.

"As world leaders in the efficient production of high quality, nutritious, pasture based, low emissions milk, NZ has a huge role to play in showing what a sustainable system can deliver.

"The report highlights how much the science is still developing, especially in agricultural emissions, which again demonstrates that a prudent approach for NZ is needed.

"DairyNZ is fully behind playing our part on climate change and supporting our farmers to take action. We need to take some time, however, to fully digest this report and how it might be applied in a NZ context."

The report recommends ways to mitigate and adapt to climate change, many already happening, eg planting trees, maintaining good soil carbon and low input, well managed grazing.

Agriculture and livestock farming have a role to play in addressing climate change, the report says. It identifies sustainably produced livestock products from sustainable, low greenhouse gas emission farming systems as helping solve the problem.



DairyNZ chief executive Dr Tim Mackle.

"Balanced diets [could contain] plant based foods such as those based on coarse grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and animal sourced food produced in resilient, sustainable and low-GHG emission systems."

The deputy director of the New Zealand Agricultural Greenhouse Gas Research Centre, Dr Andy Reisinger, says the report shows NZ is not alone in the challenges it faces.

"Many of the issues, eg how to reduce emissions, make our land more resilient to climate change and how to achieve the best outcomes across the

landscape are shared by governments worldwide. That's why they asked the IPCC to prepare this report.

"A key message from the report for me is the need for integrated responses that comprise not just how we produce food but stretch across the food and energy system. This is critical to improve resilience globally and to ensure we use land in a way that can feed people and reduce net emissions."

The report doesn't tell us what NZ's role should be globally but it tells us what to keep an eye on in the bigger picture, he says.

## Emissions trading tops farmers' concerns

**CLIMATE CHANGE**

(10%).

The result is hardly surprising, Federated Farmers' biggest concerns.

These show as top for the first time since 2010, according to Federated Farmers' latest Farm Confidence Survey.

Nearly a quarter of the 1432 farmers who responded to the July survey said it is their No 1 worry. The second-greatest concern is regulation and compliance costs (19%) followed by debt, interest and banks

incentives for forestry, are driving blanket planting of pines on productive farmland, pointing to huge long term detriment to rural communities."

Related to concerns about more production losses and costs to meet climate change targets, is that only 55% of farmers say their businesses are profitable (similar to the January survey, 56%).

Farms losing money increased by two points to 11.3%. And slightly more



Andrew Hoggard

farmers expect their profitability to worsen than improve.

The July survey, by Research First, found that the proportion of farmers who think the economy is generally good (24.9%)

has decreased slightly over the last six months. Those seeing the economy as bad are fewer but not by much (21.3%).

The survey discovered that farmers' confidence in the economy is

the lowest it's been since July 2009, after the Global Financial Crisis.

"On that front, we're no different from the wider business community in expressing

gloom," Hoggard says.

"We have particular concern about global uncertainty and instability [possible] from fallout from Brexit and US-China tensions and how that will impact on our key markets and export returns."

Farmers in all regions expect production to increase over the coming 12 months but they are mostly less optimistic than six months ago, with large falls in expectations in Auckland-Northland

and Taranaki-Manawatu.

Slightly more farmers expect to increase their spending rather than reduce it over the coming 12 months but this is also down on January's survey.

And farmers continue to find it hard, if not harder than ever, to find skilled and motivated staff.

To read the full report visit [http://www.fedfarm.org.nz/FFPublic/Policy2/National/2019/2019\\_New\\_Season\\_Farm\\_Confidence\\_Survey.aspx](http://www.fedfarm.org.nz/FFPublic/Policy2/National/2019/2019_New_Season_Farm_Confidence_Survey.aspx)

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