**The Future of Farming: New Zealand’s Big Opportunity and Challenge**

New Zealand’s farming industry is facing big changes that could completely reshape how food is grown, made, and sold. Experts are calling it a new agrarian revolution, a major shift where technology, science, and food production come together to create new ways of feeding people.

**Big Changes Are Coming**

According to Ian Proudfoot, a global agribusiness expert from KPMG, traditional farming methods are being replaced by high-tech solutions that were once considered science fiction. He warns that New Zealand’s farmers can’t afford to relax just because prices are high right now. Instead, they must prepare for big shifts in how food is produced and sold.

**What’s Driving This Revolution?**

1. **Technology and Innovation**
   * New digital, physical, and biological technologies will change how food is made.
   * Future food may be tailor-made for people's health needs.
   * Example: Pet food company Purina already offers personalised food for dogs—this could soon happen for humans too.
2. **Changing Consumer Habits**
   * **Millennials** (born 1982–2004) want fast, easy, and flexible food options.
   * They are used to getting things quickly—like food delivered in under an hour.
   * Customised meals, like McDonald's "Create Your Taste," are becoming popular, even if they cost more.
3. **Urbanisation and Busy Lives**
   * More people are moving to cities—about **1.3 million every week**.
   * Commuters often spend **3–4 hours a day** traveling and want food that’s easy to eat on the go.
   * Creating healthy, portable meals could be a big win for New Zealand food companies.
4. **Health and Nutrition**
   * Many older people live with long-term health conditions, and food is being used more to help manage these.
   * Governments are also starting to tax unhealthy food like sugar, salt, and fat—which could hurt demand for some New Zealand exports, like chocolate.
5. **Environment and Ethics**
   * There is growing demand for low-antibiotic or antibiotic-free farming.
   * Plant-based meats that taste like real meat are on the rise—meaning traditional meat producers now face new types of competition.

**Big Risks and Big Rewards**

New Zealand exports over $37.5 billion worth of food, but when those same products are sold overseas in processed form, they earn $250–293 billion. That means NZ currently gets less than 15% of the total value of what it produces.

To keep up, Proudfoot says the country needs to invest less in land and equipment, and more in:

* People
* Research and development
* Innovation
* Building strong global relationships

**A Warning for the Future**

Proudfoot warns that assuming the rest of the world will want to eat like New Zealanders is risky. In fact, diets in countries like Japan haven’t changed much, even with more money. Instead, New Zealand diets are changing to include more international foods (the “bok choy effect”).

He also reminds us that industries can fall out of fashion quickly. For example, Marlborough’s famous sauvignon blanc is doing well now, but what happens if global tastes change, like they did with chardonnay?

**Key Message**

New Zealand has a big opportunity to lead in the future of food, but only if it adapts, innovates, and thinks globally. The next generation of farming is about more than just growing food, it’s about understanding what people want, how they live, and how to add value every step of the way.

If NZ doesn’t act fast, it could fall behind in a fast-moving global food economy.

*Adapted from “Agrarian revolution is on way to farms” and “A revolution is coming”*