



Submission

15 September 2025

TO THE Ministry of Education

ON THE

**Consultation on proposal to replace
NCEA**

BY

**Beef + Lamb New Zealand Limited +
Deer Industry New Zealand**

SUBMISSION ON THE CONSULTATION TO REPLACE NCEA

To: Ministry of Education

Email: nceaconsultation@education.govt.nz

Name of Submitter: Beef + Lamb New Zealand Limited (B+LNZ) and
Deer Industry New Zealand

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Introduction

About Beef + Lamb New Zealand

- 1.1. B+LNZ is an industry-good body funded under the Commodity Levies Act 1990, through a levy paid on all cattle and sheep slaughtered in New Zealand (except bobby calves). B+LNZ represents both neurodiverse learners and sheep and beef levy-payers and has the mandate to submit on their behalf on matters that affect them. B+LNZ's levy payers include deer and dairy operations that also have dry stock livestock. When we refer to the sheep and beef sector, we are encompassing all these farmers who are involved in sheep and beef production, even if it's not their primary income stream.
- 1.2. B+LNZ represents around 9,000 commercial farming businesses, providing around 35,000 jobs across New Zealand. The sector is a significant contributor to New Zealand's economic well-being.
- 1.3. The New Zealand sheep and beef sector (the sector) is a vital driver of the New Zealand economy and its prosperity. Our export led industry, comprising livestock (beef cattle and sheep) production and red meat (beef and dairy cattle and sheep) processing, and exporting, accounts for 92,000 jobs, 35,702 directly and an additional 56,719 indirectly, mainly in regional New Zealand.
- 1.4. The sector is New Zealand's second-largest goods export income earner, with \$10.4 billion (including wool) in export revenue for the year ending December 2024. This accounts for 15 percent of the total value of New Zealand's goods exports, behind only dairy. Māori make up a significant portion of the sector with 15 percent of sheep and beef exports coming from Māori farming interests, 36 percent of people working on sheep and beef farms identifying¹ as Māori and a similar amount in the red meat processing sector. New Zealand exports over 95 percent of sheepmeat production and over 90 percent of beef production to nearly 110 markets worldwide.
- 1.5. B+LNZ's vision, or desired future for New Zealand's sheep and beef producers, is 'sustainable and profitable farmers, thriving rural communities, valued by New Zealanders'.

- 1.6. The sector is focused on producing a high-quality product that reflects world class standards for environment, animal welfare, food safety and the health and safety of our workforce. We are proud of our product and the integrity of our production systems.
- 1.7. Ensuring the sector is supported by a capable and skilled workforce is critical for the prosperity of the sector. B+L NZ therefore has a strong mandate to support outcomes in the current education reforms that deliver curriculum that meets the future needs of the sheep and beef industry.

About Deer Industry New Zealand (DINZ)

- 1.8. DINZ is a statutory marketing authority established in 2004 with its own regulations under the Primary Produce Marketing Act 1953. DINZ represents New Zealand's deer farmers, processors, and exporters, advocating for the industry's interests, investing in research and development to enhance deer farming practices and products. DINZ also plays a vital role in marketing and promoting New Zealand venison and other deer-derived products globally, while ensuring high quality standards across the industry. Ultimately, DINZ works to support the sustainable growth and prosperity of the New Zealand deer industry.

Position Summary

- 1.1. B+LNZ as an industry body has submitted through the questionnaire on the Ministry for Education's website on the proposed changes to NCEA. This submission supports the answers in the questionnaire, with a key focus on the recent announcement by the Ministry for Education that agribusiness and Ag and Hort Science would not be included in the list of subjects for the updated curriculum.
- 1.2. B+L NZ and DINZ also support the two letters written to Minister Stanford on the issue by Agribusiness in Schools and the Horticulture and Agriculture Teacher's associations. Both of these letters are included with this submission.

2. Agribusiness

- 2.1. Our understanding is that agribusiness has been removed as a subject from the Year 12 and 13 subject lists, although the curriculum is intended to remain available and schools can choose to offer it through other subjects, such as business studies.

- 2.2. We note that incorporating it into business studies may have the positive effect of introducing students to agribusiness that may otherwise not have chosen the subject.
- 2.3. Our concern is that by making agribusiness part of business studies, the focus on agriculture is lost and these units may not be incorporated into the mainstream course by many schools. We understand that since agribusiness was developed as a standalone subject in 2018, it has resulted in a much larger share of students following onto university to study agribusiness related courses. Given the importance of building a pipeline of talent from school through to university level we support agribusiness staying as a standalone subject, with further curriculum developed for it.
- 2.4. B+L NZ and DINZ support the continuation of agribusiness being available to students and notes that the current conversations in the media demonstrate public concerns that it will not be offered at all. Schools should be encouraged to offer the curriculum and students supported to participate in it. Additionally, the Ministry of Education should resource it appropriately and build upon the current achievement standards available so it can be offered as a standalone subject, separate from business studies.

3. Agricultural and Horticultural Science

- 3.1. We support both vocational and academic pathways for students in agriculture and horticulture and encourage the Ministry of Education to ensure both pathways are effectively catered for.
- 3.2. We understand that Agricultural and Horticultural Science will not be continued and will instead be incorporated into existing science courses or possibly be part of a new science subject provisionally called 'Primary Industry', with this to be developed by Industry Skills Boards working alongside industry, schools, and other stakeholders. While this indicates that decisions are yet to be made on what this subject will include, this current uncertainty risks current students not seeing a strong pathway for them in the subject and deciding not to pursue it.
- 3.3. We also understand that this new Primary Industry science subject will likely be entirely vocational, rather than academic and therefore does not provide a pathway for students to build their understanding of science on a pathway to tertiary qualifications. We do support a stronger relationship between relevant vocational NCEA courses and post secondary school vocational training. However, there is a

significant risk Industry Skills Boards (ISBs), given their vocational focus are not appropriately equipped to develop academic courses, and this critical aspect is lost or negatively impacted.

- 3.4. We would not support incorporating Agriculture and Horticulture Science into the wider science programme and this should remain a standalone subject. It is critical that an academic subject remains that is focussed on agricultural and horticultural science in order to provide students with exposure to these industries and highlight opportunities for future academic pathways. This will ensure the sheep, beef, and deer sector has a robust pipeline of skilled and knowledgeable people entering all parts of the value chain, from on farm through to processing and technology development. Agriculture and Horticultural science units are specialised and do not fit easily within other science courses, which already have a full complement of assessments and therefore it is likely if they are incorporated into other subjects they will not be picked up.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. It is critical that schools continue to be a strong pathway for the sheep, beef and deer sector through both academic and vocational education. This is for both rural schools where there are already strong links to the sheep and beef sector and city schools, where students may have fewer opportunities to engage with agriculture.
- 4.2. Separately, B+L NZ and DINZ are concerned about the levels of resourcing that the Industry Skills Boards will receive and whether they will be resourced appropriately to deliver their core vocational education work, let alone engage effectively with the new curriculum and develop the new subjects. The MOE must allocate funding to them to do this job and ensure they are supported to engage proactively and comprehensively with industry, schools and tertiary education providers to develop curriculum that is relevant, comprehensive, and meets student and industry needs.
- 4.3. The amount of work that has gone into making Agricultural and Horticultural Science the success that it is today needs to be recognised, and any changes as it shifts into the new Primary Industries subject must retain these successes.
- 4.4. We support the agribusiness curriculum and primary industry subject remaining university entrance eligible and while we recognise this decision is made by NZQA, we understand that the Ministry for Education has some input into the process. We

consider it critical that the agribusiness curriculum continues to provide a pathway for students seeking to continuing study at university.

Conclusion

- 4.5. The sheep and beef sector recognises the importance of both Agribusiness and Agricultural and Horticultural science curriculum for delivering skilled people to the industry.
- 4.6. We are concerned that the current reforms are removing the focus on agribusiness and agricultural science and replacing it with more generic learning opportunities that may not deliver the same results and urge the Government to reconsider its approach and ensure that both academic and vocational pathways continue to be supported for students to enter the sheep, beef, and deer sector.