

Prepared by the New Zealand Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

## Summary

- As Expo 2020 Dubai enters its final few weeks, it continues to provide a platform to showcase New Zealand businesses expertise and innovation, demonstrating its value as part of our post-COVID export-led economic recovery strategy.
- Expo's Food, Agriculture and Livelihoods week (17 – 23 February) was a valuable opportunity for a range of New Zealand companies, crown entities and researchers to showcase their work in a region that imports over 90 percent of its food and beverage needs.
- It was a significant event for New Zealand during Expo, given the NZInc nature of the week's activities. NZInc agencies worked together to facilitate engagement and events, including a joint New Zealand-Dubai Chamber of Commerce led business forum, led by NZ G2G, NZTE's business leverage programme and MPI showcase.
- The week's programme offered rich opportunities to re-engage with Gulf partners and build bilateral relationships, particularly with the UAE, post COVID and a period of limited in-person engagement.

## Report

### G2G Thematic Business Forum

- Expo's Food, Agriculture and Livelihoods week, known as FAL, was one of the busiest for NZInc during Expo. As one of the 10 Expo theme weeks, which took place from 17 - 23 Feb 2022, New Zealand hosted and contributed to events, panels and discussions, focused around the question "how do we sustainably grow food to meet future demand?"
- The highlight of the week was the day-long FAL Business Forum, hosted by New Zealand G2G in partnership with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Expo 2020, with other countries providing speakers and experts for the various panel discussions.
- The forum featured an impressive line-up of speakers including Minister of Agriculture Hon. Damien O'Connor, who provided a virtual opening address and spoke on '*Food Systems: How Future Demands will be met Sustainably*'; and Minister for Food Safety Hon. Dr Ayesha Verrall, who spoke virtually about New Zealand's food safety system in the session '*Made with Care: A modern Food Safety System*'. The UAE's Minister for Climate Change and Environment (also responsible for food security amongst other portfolios), H.E. Mariam Almheiri, also provided an address noting the need to invest in food production to ensure resilience and sustainability.

- NZ G2G prospective business leads generated from the Forum and subsidiary activities during the Food, Agriculture and Livelihoods Week are currently being qualified. These will be tracked through the NZ G2G sales pipeline. The Forum itself was a platform for New Zealand to showcase its expertise beyond the traditional selling of food and beverage products, with niche, agri-tech expertise amongst some of the other value adds New Zealand has to offer, through the work of Plant and Food Research, AbacusBio and more.

#### **Ministry of Primary Industries Showcase**

- The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) presented two showcases on New Zealand's agritech expertise, capabilities and innovations at the New Zealand Pavilion. The showcase focused on partnering to support regional food security ambitions through bespoke agritech solutions and positioning New Zealand as a trusted, consistent and enduring trade partner for the Middle East. The showcase opened with pre-recorded comments from Minister O'Connor and supported in person by senior NZ@Expo, MFAT and MPI officials.
- The event was successful in linking industry attendees with MPI's regional Saudi partners, allowing for New Zealand companies in attendance to promote and discuss their projects on the side lines, garnering interest from MEWA and discussing potential partnerships. There was great interest from MEWA (KSA) on the Spring Sheep Milk Co project and from EAD (UAE) on the Precision Seafood Harvesting project.
- MPI's Agricultural Counsellor (based in Dubai) will continue to develop relationships with follow up calls in-country to progress and facilitate further discussion between KSA, UAE and New Zealand channels, with support from NZTE.

#### **NZTE Led Discover Agritech Middle-East**

- During FAL Week, NZTE hosted seven New Zealand agritech companies and research institutes as part of Discover Agritech Middle East, an element of their broader Expo Business Leverage Programme. The objective of the programme was to allow these organisations to hear from local agritech experts and learn more about the challenges of farming in the UAE's harsh desert climate - and the innovations being deployed in response.
  - The Discover Agritech group programme included visits to Emirates Bio Farm (EBF), the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) and ADAFSA and Silal, two key UAE government organisations in the logistics and Agritech space. Located in Al Ain, within the emirate of Abu Dhabi, EBF is the UAE's biggest organic farm, and uses sustainable farming practices. Surprisingly, UAE already grows over 20% of the fruit and vegetables consumed in the country locally.
  - During the visit to ICBA, Plant and Food Research and OnlyFromNZ presented a New Zealand project run at ICBA in partnership with Environment Agency Abu Dhabi, which has provided the funding and commissioned the project.
  - NZTE and G2G co-hosted a networking event at the NZ pavilion with the virtual participation of Minister O'Connor. The event provided a fantastic opportunity to introduce the NZ Agritech companies to key local Agritech contacts across both government and private sectors and international speakers from the FAL week Business Forum.
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