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NEWS FROM LINCOLN VENTURES LTD
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Win-win for primary sector and environment in FRST funding of Lincoln Ventures research

Sustainable primary production and environmental protection are the twin winners in a \$4.7 million research contract awarded to Canterbury science and technology company Lincoln Ventures Ltd in the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology's main 2009 investment round, announced on 15 July.

The funding grant, spread over six years, will support scientific research into the causes and avoidance of pesticide spray and vapour drift in the agricultural, horticultural and forestry industries.

Led by Dr Andrew Hewitt of Lincoln Ventures Ltd (LVL), the project will involve scientists from LVL, SCION, Otago University and Plant Protection Chemistry NZ.

"Protecting the environment and humans from unintended pesticide exposure while optimising production from the primary sector - agriculture, horticulture and forestry - by combating pests, weeds and diseases, is our focus," says Dr Hewitt.

"The research will develop best management practices, technologies and models needed to reach a balance between pesticide use, sustainable primary production and environmental protection."

"Balance is the key word in the relationship between these three areas of activity. As a nation we must ensure the sustainability of primary production - our economic lifeblood - but we must also ensure the well-being of the world around us, our environment."

A national coalition on drift minimisation is being formed to ensure that the research reaches and encompasses the needs of all those involved with pesticides. The coalition includes major stakeholders from Government, industry and research bodies.

"It is vitally important that pesticides are applied correctly and reach only the target pests and crops," says the Chief Executive of Lincoln Ventures Ltd, Peter Barrowclough.

"Spray drift management is taken very seriously both within and beyond New Zealand and Lincoln Ventures is looking forward to developing strong ties with other researchers in this field around the world," says Mr Barrowclough.

"In addition to the collaborations across central Government, regional councils, farmers, horticulturists, agrichemical applicators and industry groups within New Zealand, we will also be working closely with the US and Canadian departments of agriculture as well as with

scientists in Australia and Europe, in order to optimise the efficiency of this research programme.”

Thirty-eight contestable contracts with 15 organisations and institutions were granted by FRST in this year’s main round.

FRST Chief Executive Murray Bain says the latest investment process has occurred at a time when New Zealand’s environment is under increasing pressure and subject to international agreements and intense scrutiny.

“It is important that the Foundation’s research investment delivers high quality outcomes to provide sustainable environmental resilience,” he says.

“This investment round supports some ground-breaking scientific research with the potential to deliver substantial benefits to New Zealand.”

Lincoln Ventures sees its funded project as definitely offering substantial benefits to New Zealand, says Mr Barrowclough.

About Lincoln Ventures:

Lincoln Ventures Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Lincoln University. It was established in 1994 combining a number of business interests. Research subjects cover: measurement and instrumentation; image processing; frost protection; groundwater quality; irrigation; spray application and tracking; sustainable land and water use; biotechnology and waste treatment. The company has expertise in groundwater modelling, moisture measurement, biosensors, and image analysis applications.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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