

Ngā Mahi a Wai Māori

Northland Water Storage and Use Project



Future Foods

Food production landscapes are likely to be a more diverse mosaic of crops and land uses in the future. The interacting drivers of this change present significant opportunities for Tai Tokerau Northland.

Future opportunities for added-value foods from Tai Tokerau Northland are arising from an increasing shift by consumers to focus on nutrition, wellness and plant-based foods, sustainable food production systems with a light footprint on the environment, and equity for food producing communities.

Future climatic conditions are also expected to change. This could create future market opportunities for food from Tai Tokerau Northland in subtropical fruit and foods, plant-based foods, oils, beverages, alternative proteins and indigenous Māori branded foods.

Subtropical fruit and foods

In coming decades, Northland is projected to be warmer (up to 1.1°C by 2040 and 3.1°C by 2090) with fewer frosts and more droughts in some parts. By 2090, Northland is projected to have 13 to 75 extra days per year where temperatures exceed 25°C. Farmers and growers may increasingly use subtropical plants.



| Example Crops | Description | Potential Market | Water Demand | Potential Value |
|---------------|---|--|--------------|-----------------|
| Banana | One of the most popular fruits. Low disease and pest levels in Northland compared to the tropics and absence of TR4. Capable of producing fruit through the year once temperatures exceed 14°C. | Diversity of varieties offer growth potential. NZ domestic banana market potential \$140M per year. | High | \$\$ |
| Dragon Fruit | Unique appearance, sweet taste, and multiple antioxidants beneficial for health. | Potential for a growing domestic and international market as new, improved varieties become available. | High | \$\$\$ |
| Cherimoya | A creamy fruit with good source of vitamins, dietary fibre and riboflavin. The flavour is a mix between a passionfruit and a pear. | Potential for growing domestic market. | Medium | \$\$\$ |
| Pineapple | Tropical fruit rich in vitamins, enzymes and antioxidants. Hardy to heat, drought, wind and cold down to 5°C in winter. | Potential for growing domestic market. | High | \$\$ |

Plant-based foods, beverages and alternative proteins

Consumer preferences are expected to trend more towards plant-based foods and “flexitarian” lifestyles, creating significant opportunities for New Zealand to expand and develop plant-based foods, oils, beverages and protein sources with light environmental footprints.



| Example Crops | Description | Potential Market | Water Demand | Potential Value |
|---------------|--|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Hemp | Seed considered a superfood with very high nutrient density, high protein, magnesium and zinc. | Food markets in hemp milk, oil, flour seeds, protein powder, snack bars, also textiles and skin care. | Medium | \$\$\$ |
| Peanut | A legume crop grown for its edible seeds. Has high oil content. Protein content ranges from 22–30%. | A premium product that could attract a premium price e.g. premium peanut butter. | Lower | \$\$ |
| Hops | Flowers used primarily as a bittering, flavouring, and stability agent in beer. | Growing demand for craft beer market. Exports from NZ in 2018 totalled \$14.9M. | High | \$\$\$ |
| Wine grapes | A deciduous woody vine with fruit harvested for making wine. | Premium market for wine provenance and quality brands. NZ wine exports in 2018 were \$1.69B. | Lower | \$\$\$ |
| Olives | An evergreen fruit tree used mainly for food oil and table olives. | Potential for growing market for high quality olive oil exports from Northland. | Lower | \$\$\$ |
| Cashew | A tropical evergreen tree that produces the cashew nut. The nuts contain heart-healthy fats, proteins and minerals including copper. | Growing plant-based food market potential. | Medium | \$\$ |

Indigenous Māori branded foods

Indigenous foods feature increasingly on global restaurant menus, and traditional Māori cuisine is experiencing contemporary growth and opportunity.

The food industry in New Zealand is looking for unique New Zealand foods and value-added products for local and overseas markets.



| Example Crops | Description | Potential Market | Water Demand | Potential Value |
|---------------|--|---|--------------|-----------------|
| Manuka | Scrub-type flowering tree indigenous to NZ producing valuable honey and oils. Antibacterial, anti-fungal and anti-inflammatory properties. | Food uses as well as health, wellness, skin care and wound healing. | Lower | \$\$ |
| Taewa | Traditional potato varieties grown by early Māori settlers in New Zealand. Rich in antioxidants, amino acids, minerals and anthocyanins. | Fresh gourmet and frozen specialty food markets. | High | \$\$\$ |

Sources of Information

- Tropical Fruit Growers of New Zealand <https://www.tropicalfruitgrowers.nz/>
- <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/news-and-resources/media-releases/alternative-protein-reports-published/>
- Information prepared by Williamson Water and Land Advisory, October 2019.