

Farm waste could feed industry worth millions

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EDITORIAL | Queensland’s drive to develop a \$100-million-a-year industry turning agricultural waste into bioproducts is exactly the type of thing New Zealand should be doing.

Agricultural wastes are one of our biggest [climate problems](#); manure from grazing animals alone is responsible for a million tonnes of New Zealand’s 81 million tonnes of annual emissions.

But in a classic example of the circular economy, Queensland is viewing manure and other waste from the agricultural sector not as a problem, but as a resource.

This morning, Queensland University of Technology announced it is leading a \$14 million research programme to develop profitable processes for turning livestock-industry wastes into bioenergy and other bioproducts, such as fertilisers, animal feeds, chemicals and plastics.

The project is a joint venture with the industry organisation Meat & Livestock Australia, with \$6 million in funding from the federal government and \$8 million in cash and in-kind funding from 18 other organisations.

Solar centre

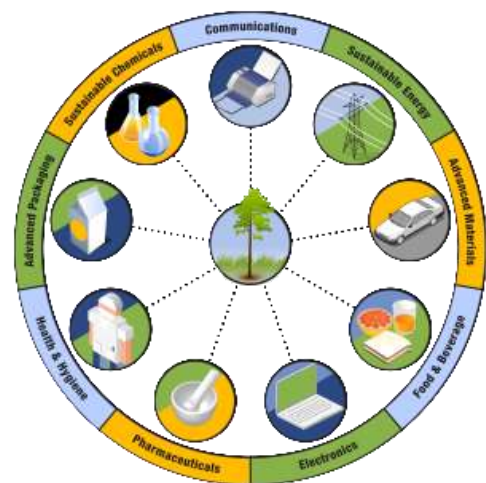
The state already has three bio-refineries, producing 160 million litres of ethanol and biodiesel for the domestic transport network domestic transport network and generating \$110 million a year in revenue.

It also has a bio-commodities pilot plant, a solar biofuels research centre and a micro-algal biofuels and bioproducts pilot plant and research project.

This type of action doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Late last year, the Queensland state government released its Biofutures Roadmap, in which it outlined plans to claim a slice of the global bio-futures industry, expected to be worth \$1128 billion by 2022.

The state government’s plan maps its vision for the industry out to 2026.

For some time, New Zealand’s Bioenergy Association has been calling for a [co-ordinated plan](#) for this country, with chief



Bioenergy in the news

executive Brian Cox describing the Queensland government's plan as "all I would ever hope our own government would say and do".

More revenue

Professor Ian O'Hara, who will lead the latest Queensland research and last year was appointed by the Queensland Government as the state's Biofutures Envoy, says it will lead to increased revenue and reduced costs for agricultural producers, and increased profitability and sustainability.

"The development of waste to bioproduct technologies is potentially worth over \$100 million per year to livestock industries," Professor O'Hara said.

"A bioproducts industry will create jobs, particularly in regional Australia, and turning waste into valuable products is an excellent move to improve the environment."