

2026 Investment Advice to TEC for the Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming Industry

Muka Tangata is the Workforce Development Council (WDC) for the food and fibre sector. We work on ways to enhance vocational education and training (VET) to meet the needs of industry, iwi and hapū Māori, ākonga (learners), and kaimahi (workers), and support them to flourish.

Alongside our work on qualifications, standards, and quality assurance, we advise government, based on engagement with industry, on what qualifications they should support and fund. This takes the form of our annual Investment Advice to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). This focuses on the current set of qualifications (as TEC can only purchase programmes for existing qualifications).

This document sets out industry and workforce trends for the Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming industry, as well as identified skills needs. We have used this information to determine how many places are needed for qualifications relevant to the Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming industry.

Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming Industry trends:

These industries have been through significant changes from regulation, business model and technological changes. These all drive the need for new skills to be brought into the sector.

Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming Workforce trends:

The 'Pork, Poultry, Bees and Other Sector' workforces are forecast to increase by at least 11% by 2032 with increases being particularly concentrated in higher skill role types that will require increased levels of training (MPI forecast).

The workforce currently has low levels of formal qualifications and would need a substantially higher than requested level of investment to reach industry benchmark parity (see Appendix C for more detail on the methodology).

The workforce has low new entrant retention rates and low levels of industry tenure which drive a need for training of replacements and has historically relied on high levels of migrants to fill skilled roles.

Industry skill needs identified from engagement

Our industry engagement analysis and review of key industry documents has highlighted the following skill needs across all qualification levels:

- Skills in feeding animals
- Skills in breeding animals
- Animal health

Furthermore, the industry has reported occupation gaps for pig husbandry and other more specific roles.

Current qualifications and priorities

Below are three tables outlining qualifications and priorities. Where possible, each table outlines how these qualifications may fill skills needs, the scale of change we are seeking in our advice, the preferred mode of delivery, and the level of priority for this change.

Table 1: Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming related qualifications and credentials

Table 2: Pan-sector qualifications and credentials

- These qualifications provide skills that are relevant to a number of industries across our sector. We are unsure if Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming learners are enrolling in these qualifications and welcome any insights from industry.

Table 3: Related qualifications or credentials in development (or planned for)

- To be offered in 2026 or earlier.

Mode

We have not been specific about mode at a qualification level. However, in general, we recommend a preference for workplace training as part of the mix of the provision across all of our industries. This could include both work-based training and campus-based learning that include a strong component of practical 'on job' experience in a workplace setting.

What are we looking for?

For these three tables, we are seeking feedback on the following:

- Are industry using these qualifications?
- What is the preferred mode of delivery? (e.g. workplace-based, extramural, etc.)
- Do you agree with our prioritisation or have any recommendations for qualifications where we have not given a level of priority (low, medium, high)?
- What sort of level change do you anticipate? How many more trained people do you need?

Table 1: Poultry, Pigs and other livestock farming related qualifications and credentials

Qualification or credential	What skills does this qualification provide	Scale of change you are seeking for 2026	Mode of delivery	Priority level (for this advice)
New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Stockperson) (Level 3) [Stranded] [2525]	The New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Stockperson) (Level 3) provides the pork production industry with individuals who have the knowledge and skills to assist with all aspects of pig feeding and health in a pig unit.	Learner numbers for this qualification have been consistently low. As such, we expect any increase in enrolments to be able to be met.		High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Production (Level 3): Poultry Egg Production, Poultry Hatchery, and Poultry Rearing [2932]	The New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Production (Level 3) is ideal for people who may have entry level experience in the sector, or a desire to work in the poultry industry and want to develop their skills and knowledge in a specific operation of a poultry facility.	Should a programme be available, we expect any enrolments to be small.		High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Management (Level 4): Poultry Egg Production, Poultry Hatchery, and Poultry Rearing [2933]	The purpose of the New Zealand Certificate in Poultry Production (Level 3) is to provide the poultry industry with experienced individuals who have the skills and knowledge to take responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of a section in a poultry facility.	Should a programme be available, we expect any enrolments to be small.		High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Management) (Level 4): Optional strand in Pig Farm Production Planning [4222]	Graduates of the New Zealand Certificate in Pork Production (Management) (Level 4) will have pig husbandry and farm management knowledge which will support the industry to be internationally competitive and enhance their own employment opportunities in key management roles across a pig farm and throughout the pork industry.	30 learners		High Priority

Table 2: Pan-sector qualifications and credentials

Qualification or credential	What skills does this qualification provide	Scale of change you are seeking for 2026	Mode of delivery	Priority level (for this advice)
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills (Level 2): Optional strand in Self-Management and Employability Skills [2218]	<p>The New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Skills is designed to meet the needs of industries by enabling workers to carry out practical tasks associated with an entry level role in a primary industry context; including using safe work practices and self-management skills. It is targeted at new or potential entrants into the primary sector including seasonal workers, career changers and those not yet engaged in education, employment or training.</p> <p>A repeated concern from across nearly all of our industries has been the need for a strong set of basic skills for workers in the food and fibre sector, especially for those who are not familiar with those work settings.</p> <p>From our engagement with the food and fibre sector, industries have particularly identified health and safety, self-management and 'employability' skills as key gaps in their workforces (in fact these form the most often cited skills gaps by industries), especially for new entrants.</p>	15%		High Priority
New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills (Level 3): Optional strands in	The New Zealand Certificate in Primary Industry Operational Skills is one of the sector's central cross-sector qualifications designed to provide primary industry workplaces with individuals who	20-25%		High Priority

Specialist Equipment, and Infrastructure [2215]	<p>can safely and effectively carry out operational activities which involve vehicles, machinery and specialist equipment, and infrastructure.</p> <p>Industries from across our sector have identified the need to strengthen a core set of capabilities for workers, both those entering the industry and the existing workforce. In particular, industries want people who can (safely) operate vehicles, machinery, and other specialist equipment; and maintain infrastructure.</p>			
Emerging Leadership in People, Food and Fibre Industries (Micro-credential) (Level 4) [5044]	<p>The purpose of this micro-credential is to provide a formal credential to recognise the skills and knowledge attained by learners/ākonga as they enter leadership roles across a range of People, Food and Fibre industries in Aotearoa New Zealand. The micro-credential provides a training scaffold to support and upskill potential, new, or existing leaders, including seasonal workers and career changers, and workers in supporting industries, into leadership roles.</p>	Recently developed		
New Zealand Diploma in Primary Industry Business Management (Level 5) [2221]	<p>The New Zealand Diploma in Primary Industry Management is a pan-sector qualification that builds financial management, business planning and general business decision-making skills. It also contains skills around leadership, including for staff employment and work allocation, and applying interpersonal and leadership skills to monitor staff performance, health, safety, and well-being requirements in a primary industry business. It enables a graduate to plan, implement and review the environmental sustainability requirements of a primary industry business.</p>	10-15%		High priority

	<p>MPI workforce forecasting indicates the need for more skilled workers, with both technical and business/managerial skills needs rising. Most of our industries have also highlighted leadership as a pressing skills gap, alongside a need for business planning and financial management. Environmental sustainability - and the skills required to respond to a changing environment - is an emerging issue for the sector.</p>			
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Table 3: Related qualifications or credentials in development (or planned for)				
Qualification or credential	What skills does this qualification provide	Scale of change you are seeking for 2026	Mode of delivery	Priority level (for this advice)
Entry Level Qualification Development Project: including stackable micro-credentials	We are planning to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners as they enter the primary industry sector.			
Agricultural Qualification Development Project: including stackable MCs	We are planning to review all Agriculture qualifications, micro credentials, and standards to build flexible, sustainable, and enduring learning pathways for learners, employers, and agriculture industries.			