New Zealand Aquaculture Development Plan

2025–2030

Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

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Minister's foreword

Developing the aquaculture sector is one of New Zealand's biggest opportunities. The industry produces premium seafood, creates jobs in the regions, and generates over $750 million in revenue each year. But we know it can be much more than that.

High-value overseas markets and consumers want more of our great seafood. There is enormous potential to turn our shellfish and salmon farming industries into multibillion-dollar a year export earners.

This Government has set the aspirational goal of doubling the value of exports in 10 years. Aquaculture growth is expected to significantly contribute to that goal: we're aiming for $3 billion in annual revenue by 2035.

As well as contributing to our export-led recovery, a diverse and strong aquaculture sector will provide resilience for rural communities. A lot of Kiwis in the regions depend on aquaculture for work. The growing industry will require more infrastructure such as ports, hatcheries, and processing facilities, creating further jobs.

Growth will build off New Zealand's natural advantages. Our clean waters, sheltered harbours, and abundant plankton are perfect for aquaculture. Our ocean has untapped potential, with an exclusive economic zone 15 times bigger than our land area. We also have a great reputation for the sustainability of our seafood products and a proven low carbon footprint.

This is a plan to get behind the industry and let aquaculture farmers do what they do best.

Growing aquaculture will require regulations that are fit for purpose. To make sure of this, the Government has extended marine farm consents to save millions in reconsenting costs and enable investment and growth; and is progressing fast-track legislation to speed up consenting.

The Government will consider what other regulatory changes are needed to enable growth of land-based and marine farming toward our goals. Where appropriate, we will back the industry to win by co-investing in its future.

I invite you to read on, to understand what the Government will do to deliver a bigger and better aquaculture sector for New Zealand.

Hon Shane Jones
Minister for Oceans and Fisheries

New Zealand's aquaculture industry at a glance

$763 million in total revenue in 2023

3000+ jobs in New Zealand communities

Top 5 products by export value (Oct 2023 to Sep 2024)

Frozen half shell mussels
$257.3 m

Chilled gilled & gutted salmon
$129.5 m

Mussel oil
$56.8 m

Frozen salmon fillets
$31.2 m

Frozen whole mussels
$19.1 m

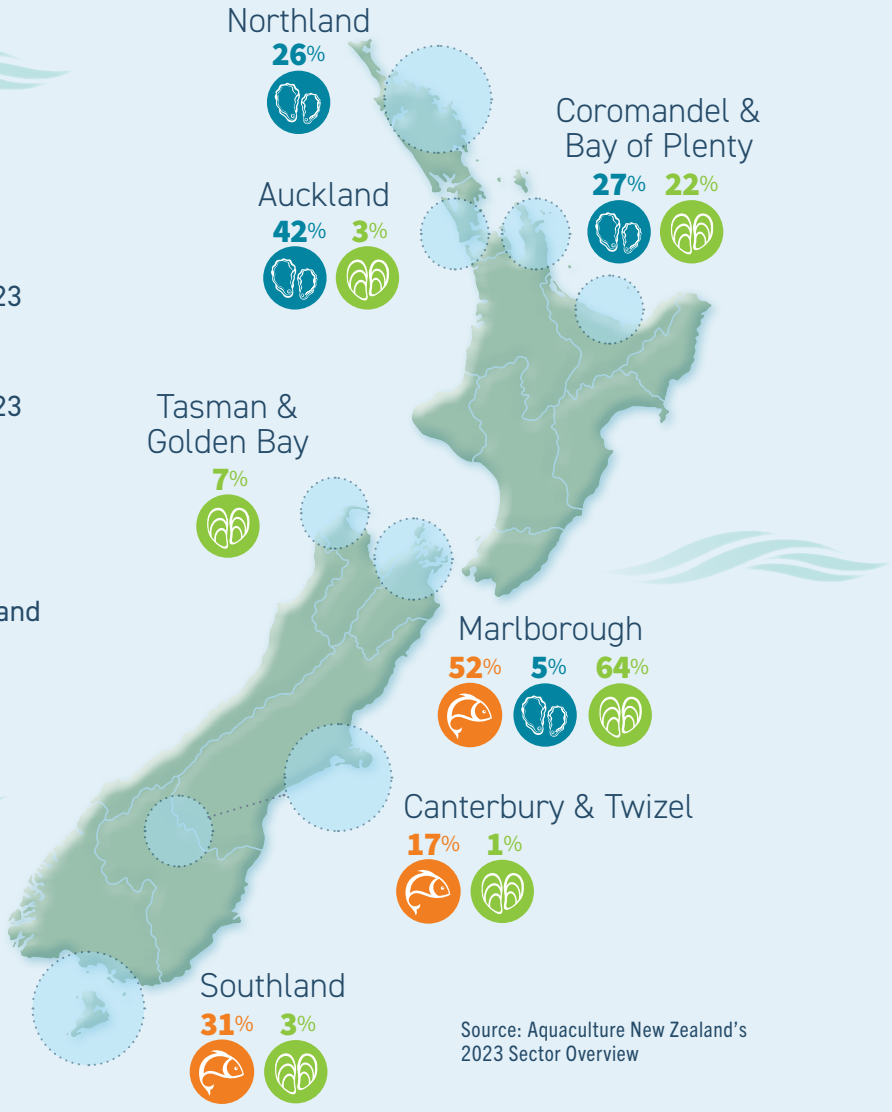
We farm three species:

Greenshell mussels
>93,000 tonnes harvested in 2023

King salmon
>14,500 tonnes harvested in 2023

Pacific oysters
>1500 tonnes harvested in 2023

Aquaculture occurs in the ocean, in inland canals, and in land-based systems.



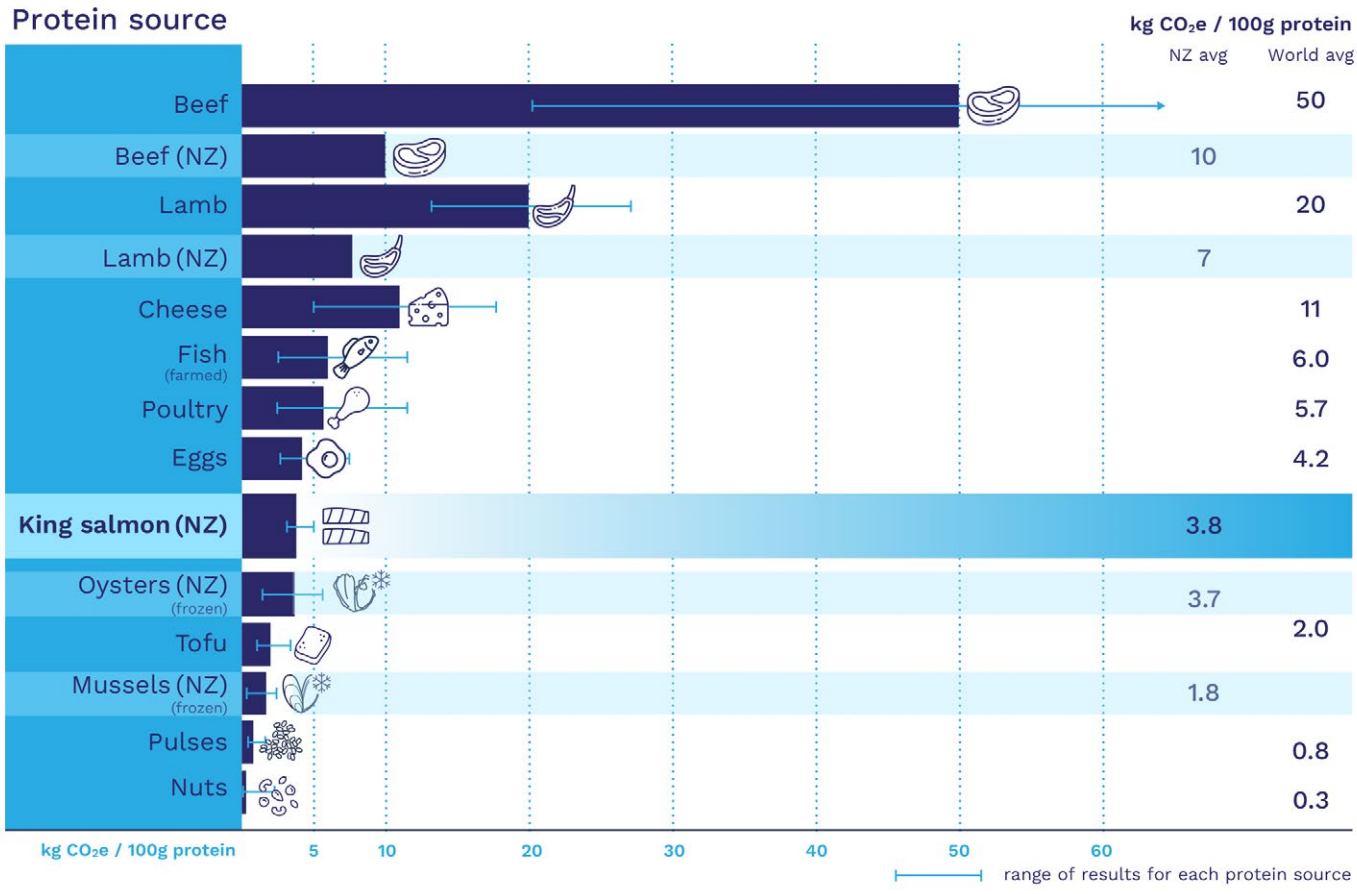
Source: Aquaculture New Zealand's 2023 Sector Overview

Why aquaculture?

New Zealand's aquaculture industry creates revenue and regional jobs in a low-carbon, sustainable way.

- **High value:** New Zealand farms unique products that achieve premium prices in global markets. We are the only supplier of the trademarked Greenshell™ mussels and produce 75 percent of the world's King salmon.
- **Low carbon:** New Zealand farmed salmon, mussels, and oysters have among the lowest carbon footprints of all animal protein over their life cycle.
- **Sustainable:** New Zealand farmed salmon, mussels, and oysters are recommended by the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a global authority on sustainable seafood, as the 'Best Choice' for consumers.
- **Innovative:** The aquaculture industry places a strong emphasis on innovation and strives to improve farming techniques and technologies.
- **Small footprint:** Aquaculture can be extremely valuable for the relatively small space it uses. Less than 0.1 percent of New Zealand's coastal waters are used for aquaculture.
- **Partnership:** Māori are active participants in the aquaculture industry and are driving growth, particularly in the open ocean.

Carbon footprint of different dietary proteins on the global market
- production to retail only



Source: Thinkstep-anz's 2023 Life Cycle Assessment of New Zealand-farmed King salmon

The Aquaculture Development Plan sets out how Government will accelerate the aquaculture sector

The following pages set out the actions we will take to enable the aquaculture industry to reach $3 billion in annual revenue by 2035.

The $3 billion goal was set by the 2019 Government Aquaculture Strategy. While this goal is still appropriate, there have been regulatory barriers to growth. We now have a clearer understanding of what we need to do to get there, and the investment required. This goal is aligned with the broader government target of doubling the value of New Zealand's exports in ten years.

The Aquaculture Development Plan is led by Fisheries New Zealand. We will partner with industry, Māori, councils, communities, and relevant government agencies to enable sustainable growth.

Actions in this plan will inform the annual work plans of relevant government agencies. We will measure success through annual monitoring of how the industry is tracking towards the $3 billion goal.

Aquaculture Development Plan:
Pathways to a $3 billion industry

Current industry

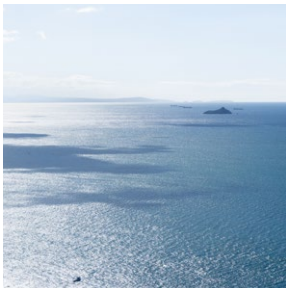
$763 million in revenue in 2023 from existing farm space

3000+ jobs in New Zealand communities

1 **Maximise the value from existing space**

Export revenue from existing space grows year on year

2 **Extend aquaculture into the open ocean**



Established open ocean salmon farming and increased open ocean mussel production

3 **Realise the potential of the aquaculture settlement**

Increased uptake of settlement space and more iwi-led aquaculture developments

4 **Identify and implement the best new opportunities**

Commercialisation of new species and technologies

Industry in 2035

$3 billion in annual revenue

- Up to $1.5 billion from existing farm space
- Up to $1.4 billion from new open ocean farms
- Up to $200 million from new opportunities

5000–6000 jobs in New Zealand communities

1. Maximise the value from existing space

The aquaculture industry produces high-value seafood. There is potential to derive even greater value from our existing farm space, while continuing to farm responsibly.

Value can be maximised by fully using consented farm space, increasing production, and increasing product value.

The supply of mussel spat is a key constraint to growth. A significant amount of consented space is unused due to spat shortages. Investment into hatcheries and nurseries is needed so there is enough spat to fully use existing space.

There's an opportunity to increase revenue by growing the proportion of mussels that are turned into high-value products like mussel oil and mussel powder.

Some existing inshore farms could be used in new ways that create more value: for example, growing juvenile salmon before they are transferred to open ocean pens.

Maximising the value of existing space could contribute up to $1.5 billion in annual revenue by 2035, towards the $3 billion goal.

Actions

1a Extend the duration of existing consents and make it easier to trial and adopt new species and technologies to give industry certainty to invest in growth and innovation.

1b Ensure greater access to productive and resilient spat and smolt, particularly through investment into hatcheries and innovative farming approaches.

1c Work with the industry and research providers to progress commercial research priorities.

1d Support collaborative branding and marketing efforts to make New Zealand products the most trusted in the world.

1e Support industry in planning and implementing actions for increased resilience to climate change.

What does success look like?

- Export revenue from existing space grows an average of 7 percent per year.
- Consent costs have been reduced due to Government regulatory changes.
- Farms have access to enough spat and smolt to operate at full capacity and grow.
- Industry has certainty to invest in growth and flexibility to innovate.
- Selective breeding drives growth, temperature tolerance, and higher value production.

2. Extend aquaculture into the open ocean

Open ocean farming provides a new frontier for growth in places away from other users and activities.

Growing the open ocean sector will require significant investment in infrastructure: in the water, on land (hatcheries and processing plants), and throughout the supply chain (transport, engineering, training and research).

Farming in the open ocean is an opportunity to significantly grow production, while maintaining high environmental standards to ensure sustainability.

The Government is exploring options to improve the regulatory settings for aquaculture development, which will improve certainty for operators and investors. Attracting the right investment will be key for enabling growth.

Extending aquaculture into the open ocean could contribute up to $1.4 billion in annual revenue by 2035, towards the $3 billion goal.

Concept design of pens to be used for the Blue Endeavour open ocean salmon farm.

Actions

2a Ensure regulations are fit for purpose, to enable the trialling and commercialisation of open ocean farms and the development of critical infrastructure, and deliver investment confidence.

2b Accelerate development through investment attraction by ensuring the right settings.

2c De-risk new opportunities through targeted investment and cross-agency collaboration.

2d Ensure that appropriate biosecurity requirements for open ocean farming are established to protect both the industry and the environment.

2e Maintain export value as production grows through market activation.

2f Work with the industry to maintain social license.

2g Support the workforce through training and immigration settings, to ensure access to the right skills across the sector.

What does success look like?

- Revenue of at least $1.2 billion, and consents to farm at least 75,000 tonnes of open ocean salmon, by 2035.
- Revenue of at least $200 million, and consents to farm at least 25,000 tonnes of further open ocean mussels, by 2035.
- Industry has certainty to invest in open ocean farms and wharf, hatchery and processing infrastructure.
- The growth of open ocean aquaculture creates up to 1000 more jobs.
- Where Government has co-invested in research, lessons are shared across industry.

3. Realise the potential of the aquaculture settlement

Māori are already leaders in the aquaculture sector, driving innovation and seeking opportunities to grow the industry.

The Crown has a settlement obligation to provide Māori with assets representative of 20 percent of all new aquaculture space in the territorial sea. We will enable iwi-led growth by delivering the settlements on time and making space-based settlement a more viable option.

We will also support Māori aspirations across the work programme, and work with iwi to identify and progress regional growth opportunities.

Realising the potential of the aquaculture settlements will be fundamental to achieving the $3 billion goal and will provide a platform for further growth.

Actions

3a Deliver the settlement in a timeframe that allows iwi to invest in new aquaculture opportunities.

3b Enable iwi to take space-based settlements to drive Māori-led growth in aquaculture.

3c Work with Te Ohu Kaimoana and iwi on how new settlement opportunities will be forecast, valued, and settled.

3d Further develop Māori leadership in the aquaculture sector by identifying opportunities, sharing expertise and facilitating investment relationships.

What does success look like?

- Iwi are enabled to receive space-based settlements that provide viable opportunities.

- Aquaculture settlement agreements and review processes are delivered on time.

- Iwi-led aquaculture developments are providing economic and social benefits to their communities.

4. Identify and implement the best new opportunities

Taking new opportunities will ensure that the aquaculture industry is resilient and will grow New Zealand's unique position in the global market.

Alongside mussels, oysters, and salmon, which are the backbone of the sector, new species have potential to become a bigger part of our aquaculture industry. These might include new species of farmed shellfish and finfish, and seaweed farming.

There are also opportunities to use new technologies that enable new ways of farming. Recently, oyster farming was transformed by a semi-automated method for growing and harvesting oysters, developed here in New Zealand.

Identifying and implementing the best new opportunities could contribute up to $200 million in annual revenue by 2035, towards the $3 billion goal, and set the industry up for further growth.

Actions

4a Work with blue economy innovators to identify the best new opportunities for new species and technological advancements.

4b Support the most promising land-based aquaculture initiatives that could contribute to export growth.

4c Identify and reduce barriers to bringing new opportunities to a commercial scale.

4d Support industry to bring the best new opportunities to market.

What does success look like?

- Commercially viable farming of seaweed and at least one new finfish and shellfish species.
- Growth in land-based farming.
- Government, industry and research providers work together to identify and implement the best opportunities.
- Regulations are fit for purpose to enable innovation and the trial of new technologies and species.

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