

Industry Update



Seed and Grain New Zealand operates as a central point for the NZ seed and grain trade. It works to improve the operating environment for members' grain and seed trade domestically and internationally.

The year in review

As 2025 draws to a close, the team at Seed & Grain NZ is reflecting on the year that has been and is looking forward to the year ahead. Guided by our mission to improve the operating environment for the trade of seed and grain domestically and internationally, we focused our efforts in 2025 on two key areas: providing opportunities for members to connect, exchange information and do business; and providing the voice for the industry on important regulatory and trading issues.

On the policy front 2025 started with a hiss and roar for us with submissions made to significant proposals like the Gene Technology Bill and the EPA's group standard for treated seed. These government regulatory changes remain in the pipeline and our engagement on these will continue into 2026. SGNZ will establish a gene technology working group, consult with members and others, and help the industry prepare for changes in gene technology laws. Genetech and seed treatment work seemed to set the pace for the remainder of the year, a clear sign that the government is working hard at regulatory reform. This year we made a record number of submissions and helped resolve multiple import and export barriers affecting the industry.

We hosted the first ever annual conference with the Australian Seed Federation. It was such a success that SGNZ and ASF have agreed to do it again, next time in Australia – we'll keep you posted with dates. We continue to take pride in the ongoing events and training that we provide to members. For this year we hosted two major events and facilitated three industry training workshops in association with other providers.

From the SGNZ team, we thank you for your support during 2025 and we want to wish you a safe and well-earned break. The arable industry doesn't stop; however, we hope you have time with family and friends over the festive season. We look forward to catching up in 2026. In the meantime, enjoy the updates below.

Sarah Clark
Chief Executive



SGNZ Executive appoint new Vice Chair

Joanne Townshend, R&D Development Manager at Midlands Holdings Ltd has been appointed new Vice Chair of Seed & Grain New Zealand.

Jo has been on the executive council for the last two years and is the chair of the vegetable seed business group. Jo has a wealth of technical expertise and knowledge in the industry.

SGNZ Grains & Pulses Business Group

Mike Turner, previously Vice Chair of the Grains & Pulses Business Group, was recently appointed Chair of this group after Ed Luisetti stepped down as Chair of the Grains & Pulses Business Group to take up the role of President of SGNZ. Mike is based in the Waikato with Corson Maize managing the nationwide product development programme.



SGNZ appoints Associate Councillor for 2026



Following the success of the inaugural Associate Councillor position for SGNZ, filled by Sam Clarke in 2025, a number of high caliber applications were received for the 2026 Associate Councillor position.

Charlotte Burgess, Intellectual Property & Commercial Manager for Grasslanz Technology Ltd is the successful applicant. We look forward to having Charlotte join the Executive Council for the year 2026.

Industry Skills Training: Seed Treatment Training

SGNZ and NZ Seed Processors Association recently provided seed-treatment training for industry members working in the seed sector. Professor John Hampton gave an overview of seed treatments including what seed treatment is, the purpose & importance of treatments, and types of treatments. Colin Dunstan of BASF talked through best practices for applying & handling treatments and treated seed including guidelines for safe handling and storage. Neal Shaw of Plasback gave an update on waste minimisation and reducing the carbon footprint of plastics in the agricultural sector, including seed bags. Cressida Patrick, SGNZ's Biosecurity and Technical Manager, gave an overview of regulatory considerations when applying seed treatments in New Zealand. Attendees had a practical session at PGG Kimihia Research centre to see the theory and principles put into practice.

Some takeaway points from the course included:

- Always follow label directions and rates
- Wear respiratory and personal protective equipment
- Always follow safety data sheet information
- Start with well cleaned good quality seed for optimal application and performance of treated seed
- Ensure you are using clean, regularly calibrated equipment that is being appropriately maintained
- Dispose of triple rinsed containers and packaging appropriately ([AgRecovery Rural Recycling Programme](#)) [Agrecovery_|_Rural Recycling Programme](#)
- The productivity of the arable sector and pastoral farming is higher when treated seeds are used; and environmental impacts are minimised because the need for wide-dispersive application methods is reduced.



Industry News

Ministry for Primary Industries signs new trans-Tasman Agreement

Seed and Grain New Zealand was pleased to hear the news on 24th November that Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) has formed an agreement with the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), which will see the two countries sharing assessments of new product. At a practical level, it will mean streamlining workflows, reducing duplication of effort, and delivering faster turnaround times. [Click here](#) to read the press release. We look forward to seeing the impact of this on ACVM's processing of Ag and Hort chemical applications.

AFIC Economic Impact Assessment

The latest Arable Food Industry Council (AFIC) Economic Impact Assessment report is out. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the diverse arable production activities in New Zealand and the associated economic impact to the New Zealand economy. [Click here to read](#) the full report.

Launch of the NZ Grown Grain Initiative

SGNZ is a proud supporter of the NZ Grown Grains trademark, a new initiative from the arable industry and owned by the Foundation for Arable Research (FAR). The trademark will support local grain production and boost consumer awareness. SGNZ sponsored the official public launch in October, and we are pleased to hear that FAR has already granted over 20 licenses to end users. The trademark can be used on packaging, labelling, and promotional material for products containing at least 80 percent New Zealand grown grain.



Farm Saved Seed Declaration

Arable industry peak bodies, including SGNZ, are united in support of the voluntary royalty declaration and collection system for farm-saved seed (FSS). New Zealand's grain and seed industry including plant breeders, in collaboration with Federated Farmers Arable and United Wheat Growers has introduced the royalty declaration and collection system for farm-saved seed. The new Plant Variety Rights Act 2022 allows farmers to save seed of protected wheat and barley varieties yet provides a framework for fair recognition of plant breeder's rights via the expectation that farmers declare and pay the rights holder (breeder) for any seed saved of protected varieties. To pay royalties and to keep plant breeding alive in New Zealand, [Click here](#).

First rolled out in 2024 and now entering its second year, the online payment portal is hosted by the NZ Plant Breeders Research Association (NZPBRA) and royalty collection will be overseen by a Governance Group with balanced representation from farmers and breeding companies. NZPBRA and the Governance Group will ensure all declarations and payments received are on paid to the respective breeders. The scheme enables farmers who save and replant legally protected cereal varieties to declare their usage and pay a breeder royalty. It applies to all farm saved seed barley, and to farmer saved wheat if the resultant wheat crop does not pass through an end-point royalty collection agent.

The initiative is built on a shared understanding between breeders and growers that royalties are essential to fund ongoing research and development and the creation of future innovations. All of which help to ensure a viable industry long term through the realisation of incremental productivity gains over time. Developing a new plant variety typically takes around 10 years and can costs over \$1 million. New varieties bring increased yields, improved pest and disease resistance, and better crop quality. By supporting breeders through payment of royalties, farmers help ensure continued access to improved varieties tailored to New Zealand growing conditions.

This approach with farmer saved seed royalty collection brings New Zealand into line with international practice, already established in countries such as Australia, the UK, France, and Denmark. Importantly, the system does not prevent farmers from using saved seed—it simply ensures that those using protected varieties can make a fair contribution towards the continuation of the innovation pipeline that sustains the arable sector. The industry peak bodies encourage farmers who use FSS to regularly buy new seed to ensure genetic purity and therefore variety benefits.

Office Space for Rent

The Seed Industry Office has two office spaces for rent. If you want more information or know anyone looking for space get in touch with [Sarah Clark](#). Both offices can comfortably accommodate two or three people, free parking on site.

2026 Services to Seed Forum

April. More details to follow.

2026 Industry Golf Day

The 2026 industry golf day will be held Thursday 21st May, Tinwald Golf Course. Lock it in your calendar now. More details will follow in the new year.

2026 Women in Seed Day

The popular Women in Seed Forum will be held 28th May 2026 at the Chateau on the Park. More details will follow in the new year.

2026 Arable Awards of New Zealand

August: Christchurch

2026 Seed & Grain New Zealand Annual Conference

Next year's annual conference of the association will be held in Napier. More information will follow in the new year.

International Events

2026 Indian Seed Congress

Phuket, Thailand: 26 - 28 February 2026

2026 ISF World Seed Congress

Lisbon, Portugal: 18 – 20 May 2026

2026 ISTA Congress

Calgary, Canada: 22 – 25 June 2026

International Events

2026 Australian Seed Business

Australia: 18 – 20 August 2026

Euroseeds Congress

Valencia, Spain: 25 – 28 October 2026

Asian Seed Congress

Antalya, Turkey: 1 – 5 December 2026

Resources

The 2025 AFIC economic impact report is now available [click here](#)

Anyone interested in doing seed business in India can gain insights by reading The Indian Seed Federation publication: 'A study on Ease of Doing Business in the Indian Seed Industry Unlocking Growth Through Holistic Policy Reforms' [click here](#)

SGNZ in the media: [Click here](#)

Christmas Office Hours

Please note that the SGNZ office will be closing for the Christmas and New Year period from 4pm Monday 22nd December - Monday 12th January 2026.

For anything urgent during this time, please contact Sarah Clark at 027 323 4307.

All of us here at SGNZ want to extend our warmest wishes to you all for a joyful holiday season and a prosperous beginning to the new year.

We look forward to seeing you in 2026.



SGNZ Contact Details

President: [Edward Luisetti](#)

Vice President: [Jo Townshend](#)

Immediate Past President: [Charlotte Connoley](#)

Business Group Chairs

Forage & Turf Business Group: [Richard Merrilees](#)

Grains & Pulses Business Group: [Mike Turner](#)

Vegetable Seed Business Group: [Jo Townshend](#)

Services to Seed Business Group: [Steve Pugh](#)

General Councillors

[Tom Sherratt](#)

[Stephen Bennett](#)

[Sam Clarke](#)

2026 Associate Councillor

[Charlotte Burgess](#)

Chief Executive

[Sarah Clark](#)

Biosecurity & Technical Manager

[Cressida Patrick](#)

Operations & Event Manager

[Sharon Dawe](#)