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KAI ANAMATA MŌ TE TAUIHU: WĀNANGA SUMMARY REPORT

Kai Anamata mō Aotearoa
Future Food New Zealand

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Overview

This short report describes the context, focus and outcomes that emerged from a wānanga held at Te Āwhina Marae on the 21 October 2024. Our wānanga was part of a larger 5-year MBIE programme, **"**Kai anamata mō Aotearoa (KAMA) – exploring future food system scenarios and impacts", which started in October 2023. Wakatū co-developed and is co-leading the programme with the Riddet Institute at Massey University. At one level, the programme aims to deliver a computational model of our national food system to help analyse different food system strategies and scenarios and stimulate improvements at the national scale. At a local and regional level, Māori-led research focuses on testing the scalability of Indigenous crop species and facilitating the development of a regional food strategy. There are 3 interrelated strands of work for the programme (see Figure 1). The Massey team are leading strand 1 and Wakatū is leading strands 2 and 3, with other collaborators playing major roles.

	ACTIVITY	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
Strand 1 Modelling	National Food System model capturing the holistic impact of food system decisions is built	National food system model informing the decision making of engaged end users	Food system decisions are grounded in a holistic view of their impact across economic, enviro, social and wellbeing
Strand 2 Mana kai	Develop our transition plan to tikanga led farming and enterprise practices – indigenous crops and taonga species	Healthy whenua and Māra practitioners who are farming sustainably on our whenua and contributing to the wellbeing of Te Tauihu – people and place	Te Tauihu food system is measurably more resilient, regenerative and delivers hauora to the people of the region
Strand 3 Measurement	Develop measurement tools that enable enterprise and farm-level monitoring of key enviro & wellbeing outcomes	New data collected to bridge data gaps in our current knowledge of the food systems	Key information on wellbeing outcomes is available across Aotearoa at a farm/enterprise level informing better land mgt.

Figure 1: The three strands of the MBIE programme, Kai Anamata mō Aotearoa

The October wānanga attracted a broad range of experts (> 50 people; see Figure 2) with experience growing Indigenous crops and applying the principles of regenerative agriculture, including Tangata Whenua from Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Kuia, Te Ātiawa, Rangitāne, Ngāti Apa, and Ngāti Toa. Participants also comprised academics, researchers, industry representatives, government representatives, managers and practitioners from Wakatū Incorporation, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, AgResearch, Lincoln University, Otago University, the Riddet Institute, Pic's Peanut Butter, Chia Sisters, Toad Hall, Nelson Tasman Climate Forum, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Kore Hiakai, Kai Rescue, Eat NZ, the Ministry for Primary Industries, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise, Hort NZ, and

the Nelson Chamber of Commerce. It focused, initially, on sharing knowledge and different perspectives on land and agricultural systems, environmental health, and food production and distribution and, secondly, on how to catalyse change.

Figure 2: Participants at the KAMA wānanga at Te Awhina Marae, 21 October 2024

A series of presentations and question and answer sessions followed a logical sequence, namely: a) setting the scene, b) listening to the land, c) understanding the current state of the environment (water quality, soil health, land use changes), d) measuring what matters, e) future pathways, and f) making change happen, which laid the groundwork for discussion sessions.

The wānanga opened with acknowledgments of the significance of the location and ancestral lands. The KAMA programme was described as an opportunity to explore how tikanga-led, mātauranga-driven approaches can shape Aotearoa's food future in ways that restore balance to our ecosystems, nourish our people, and grow resilient local economies. This included reconnecting with traditional Māori knowledge and practices related to food production, land management, and environmental stewardship. Speakers highlighted the need to incorporate Māori values and principles, such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality), into the food strategy.

The challenges faced by the region were discussed, including food insecurity, the impact of forestry practices on the landscape and water systems, and the need for sustainable and resilient food production methods that consider climate change and environmental factors. Opportunities for alternative crops, regenerative agriculture (or similar) practices, and the integration of Māori knowledge systems were explored as potential solutions to address these challenges and create a more sustainable and equitable food system.

Articulating spiritual and cultural perspectives preceded technical discussions and workshop sessions. This exposed challenges and the dichotomy between different knowledge systems. Scientific research disciplines refer to “land use” and “land use change” with a focus on productivity, monoculture, and mitigating adverse effects. Māori knowledge systems, by contrast, focus on tikanga-led regenerative and circular farming systems and healing the whenua, with Papatūānuku – being the land and the source of all life – to be treated with respect and care rather than just as a resource. Learnings from pilot scale Indigenous and regenerative agricultural systems were discussed, as were the opportunities created by decision support systems and models to explore alternative scenarios and catalyse change.

Linked to this, the role of data and modelling in informing decision-making and understanding the potential impacts of different land use scenarios on economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors was discussed. The opportunity to improve the relevance of any new national model for regional needs was highlighted. It was also suggested that future wānanga in 2025-2028 should be targeted and data rich as a basis for learning, drawing on regional, national and international examples of regenerative and Indigenous systems that are commercially viable. Focusing on specifics within the food system in a series of smaller wānanga was deemed important.

Specific actions and complementary approaches

Discussion on next steps, included:-

- Forming a working group to further develop the regional food strategy and engage with the broader community.
- Incorporating Māori values and principles, such as kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and manaakitanga (hospitality), into the food strategy.
- Continuing to advance opportunities for alternative crops, regenerative agriculture practices, and the integration of Māori knowledge systems to create a more sustainable and equitable food system.
- Developing practical programmes to build capability and reconnect people with the land and food production processes, with a focus on intergenerational knowledge transfer.
- Utilising data and modelling to inform decision-making and understand the potential impacts of different land use scenarios on economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors.
- Fostering a collaborative approach that brings together diverse stakeholders, including producers, consumers, researchers, and policymakers, to develop a comprehensive and inclusive food strategy.

Our focus and platform for strategy development

This section includes some examples of our focus and work required rather than all aspects of proposed work plans.

Starting locally: As a stepping-stone towards developing a regional food strategy, a plan was developed which involved starting locally. This would involve detailed analysis of land and water pressures for the Motueka region (including the Tapawera, Waimea, Moutere, Motueka and Riuwaka catchments) and the flows of food produce in and out of the locality. Collation and generation of this local information would enrich 2025 wānanga and could be complemented by sharing more detailed experience with Indigenous cropping and regenerative systems.

Literature reviews: A critical literature review should survey other food system strategies developed within Aotearoa but also look internationally at related strategies developed in the context of Indigenous communities elsewhere. The purpose of the review, which could include a focus on regenerative agriculture and sustainability measures and monitoring is not necessarily to provide a model for Te Tauihu, but to help identify key questions that we might want to address and to suggest ideas. Figure 3 illustrates the links between literature review and other work streams.

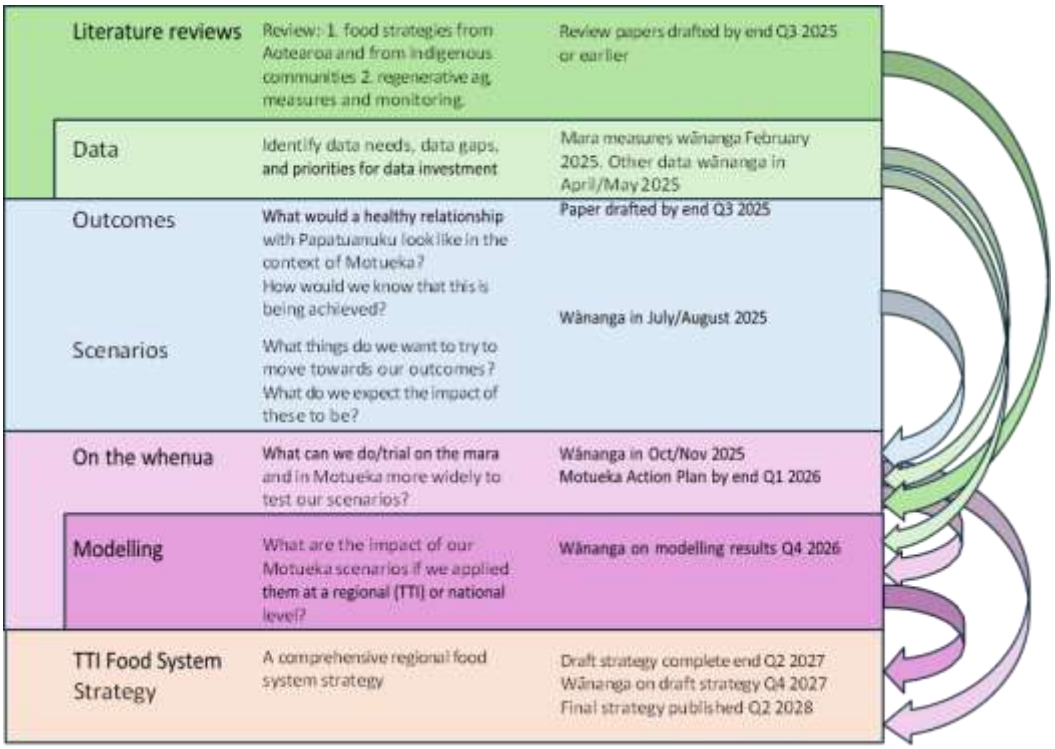

Figure 3: Proposed work plans, comprising four themes (Delivery, Actions, Goals, Resources)

Outcomes: Revisiting and clarifying specific outcomes is important as this defines what our primary goal – a healthy relationship with Papatūānuku – looks like, and why Te Tauihu needs a Regional Food Strategy. If we are unable to describe what success would mean, we lack the ability to monitor progress towards it and to establish whether we are moving in the right direction.

Modelling, data and scenarios: The focus here would be on scenarios. These scenarios do not all need to be achievable in the short term (in fact, we would want a mix of short-, medium-, and long-term ideas). However, they need to be specific enough that we can either articulate ways in which they could be trialled (short to medium term) or modelled (medium to long term). Data, particularly the collation of local data, will also be essential to enable modelling to support the development of a regional food strategy.

In conclusion, we are advancing on a journey that is putting our Intergenerational Strategy - Te Pae Tawhiti - into practice, addressing challenges to unlock the full potential of our food systems, culturally, economically, environmentally, and socially.

Kai Anamata mō Aotearoa

Future Food New Zealand

Get in touch

info@sustainablenutritioninitiative.com

www.kaianamata.co.nz