

**OECD MEETING OF AGRICULTURAL MINISTERS | THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2022**  
**OPENING REMARKS FROM NEW ZEALAND MINISTER DAMIEN O'CONNOR**

- Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa. It is my privilege to co-chair the Committee for Agriculture Ministerial this year, alongside my Canadian colleague the Hon Marie-Claude Bibeau.
- Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge Secretary General Mathias Cormann and the OECD Secretariat for organising this Agriculture Ministerial. I appreciate it can take significant time, effort and planning to organise an event of this nature.
- It is great to be here amongst representatives from across the OECD countries, and I welcome the opportunity to discuss the difficult challenges the agriculture sector is facing.
- Given the difficulties from COVID-19 over the last few years, it is great to be here in person with you all. We cannot underestimate the value of engaging face-to-face.
- As well as OECD members I would like to warmly welcome those who are currently undergoing accession discussions with the OECD, partner countries and a range of international organisations to our meeting.
- I feel strongly that this year's theme is representative of the challenges the agriculture sector, as well as the entire world, is facing. And the timing of this meeting is critical.
- We are facing immediate challenges in the form of food security and rising numbers of people experiencing hunger on a daily basis.
- Russia's unjustifiable and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has exacerbated issues arising out of the COVID-19 epidemic. New Zealand continues to stand in support of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and we condemn unequivocally Russia's actions.

- Beyond those pressing short-term concerns, climate change and food security are issues that will continue to be felt across the world and therefore require international cooperation and collaboration to solve them.
- The UNFCCC COP27 in the coming days needs to fully recognise the role of agriculture as part of the emissions problem, but also part of the solution.
- I expect OECD countries will be seen to be leading the way in mitigating agricultural GHG emissions, but all countries have a role to play.
- We will need to be ambitious and truly transformative in the way we approach agricultural productivity in the coming years. Without productivity growth more land will be needed to feed a growing population – with more pressures on the climate, natural habitats and biodiversity.
- The Committee for Agriculture provides a valuable forum to discuss these matters and commit to tangible actions that will help ensure sustainable production and food security for generations to come.
- It will also set the parameters for the OECD's research and analysis over the next six years.
- This is a real opportunity for Ministers from around the world to share information, experiences, and expertise. Each of our countries faces unique contexts and difficulties as a consequence of the triple challenge facing the global food system, and it is crucial that we use the wealth of knowledge and expertise here today to address them.
- We need to look carefully at what we are doing now and address current support measures which are harmful to the environment. We need to bolster our rules-based trading system to ensure food can be produced where it is most efficient to do so, and transported to where it is needed.

- The work we do here today and tomorrow will be important, as we work to address priority areas to achieve the economy-wide goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, such as reducing emissions from agriculture, increasing carbon sequestration, and reducing food loss and waste.
- In New Zealand, the agriculture sector is already experiencing the impact of climate change with more regular and severe droughts and floods.
- And for New Zealand, our work in the agricultural sector is particularly important as emissions from the agriculture sector make up half of our total greenhouse gas emissions.
- New Zealand faces its own issues as we attempt to introduce agriculture climate mitigation measures to do our bit in the fight against climate change. This includes establishing the right settings for our people, including Māori as our treaty partner, our environment and our agricultural sectors to thrive.
- We have recently launched a new Centre for Climate Action on Agricultural Emissions to shift the dial on climate-friendly farm practices in New Zealand. We collaborate with many other countries, including many in the room today, in the Global Research Alliance on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases and in other global initiatives.
- We are also undertaking world-leading work to introduce a system to price agricultural greenhouse gas emissions by 2025 – a pricing system for biological methane and nitrous oxide.
- I know other countries will be taking different approaches to policy challenges. That is why this meeting is going to be so valuable.

- I look forward to getting to know you all over the next two days and I'm confident that we will identify opportunities and challenges and put solutions on the table to tackle these issues together.