

Primary Industry Employers to benefit from clearer training outcomes

Employers stand to benefit from a project that will see a larger pool of people with the skills needed for our land-based industries.

The project aims to harmonise common elements of national qualifications managed by seven primary sector training organisations: Agriculture ITO, Equine ITO, FITEC (Forestry), Horticulture ITO, NZ ITO, Seafood ITO and NZ Sports Turf ITO.

Collectively, these industries employ 220,000 people. Some 35,000 of these people are currently developing their skills to improve workplace productivity through industry training.

Reducing the duplication across the qualifications will benefit national educational funders and administrators. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority is already focused on reducing the 6000-plus qualifications on its books for that reason.

For employees, harmonising qualifications will mean they can transfer their skills to new jobs or industries more easily. Their qualifications and learning will be more widely recognised, and there will be less need for retraining.

For employers the result will be a clearer picture of what a qualified person has learned, and in the long term, a larger pool of people with the skills, qualifications and work experience to work in a range of primary industry businesses.

The ITOs emphasise that training for skills specific to their industries will remain. The harmonisation process focuses on learning areas that have relevance to several industries, and industry specific learning will still be delivered and assessed in the context of the workplace.

The ITO group said skill sets would undergo harmonisation as they came up for review, or as new needs arose. The group is currently working on a new Primary Industries qualification for use in schools next year. The area of Pest Management is also being reviewed. Both projects will be completed by the end of this year and ready for use in 2011.

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