



**Media release
April 23 2007**

EQUINE TRUST SEEKS RESEARCH PROPOSALS

The New Zealand Equine Trust is seeking proposals for projects that will help achieve its goal of expanding learning and research capabilities across the industry.

The Trust, which funds research and educational proposals in support of the New Zealand Equine Industry across breeds, codes and geographical areas, was formed following a Government investment of almost \$5 million dollars in the industry in partnership with Massey University in 2006 under the Partnership for Excellence (PfX) scheme.

The New Zealand Racing Board is a significant contributor to the Equine PfX, having allocated up to \$300,000 per annum for the next five years.

“Racing and breeding are major contributors to the economy. It’s important we continue to ensure this is supported by the highest quality research, which is focussed on issues critical to the future well-being of our industry” said Michael Stiasny, Chairman of the New Zealand Racing Board.

“There are already some research projects underway and the Trust is seeking further proposals from people within the industry, such as trainers, breeders, veterinarians and administrators, for projects they consider most relevant to ensuring the New Zealand’s Equine Industry has an ongoing supply of well researched leading edge information.”

The Equine PFX is one of several PfX’s set up to enable the government to make significant new investments – matched by private sector investment – in the public tertiary education sector, with the aim of benefiting business and industry.

The over arching goal of the Equine Trust is to increase the number of persons with in-depth knowledge of equine science, technology and business entering the equine industry to manage and grow equine enterprises. To achieve this goal it will be important that the partnership is seen as a credible national initiative that has an open and transparent process for identification of research projects and the allocation of funds.

The board of the Equine Trust comprises industry and academic representatives, responsible for establishing and monitoring the relevant research projects. The initial Trustees are: Professors Robert Anderson, Grant Guilford, and Wayne McIlwraith (all appointed by Massey University) and Mr Nelson Schick, Mr Charlie Smail and the Board’s Chief Executive Officer, Mr Graeme Hansen (all appointed by the New Zealand Racing Board).

“Both Nelson Schick from the Waikato and Charlie Smail, Southland, are experienced breeders and businessmen in their own right. We are indebted to them for their willingness to participate in this important venture,” said Mr Stiasny.

Research projects co-ordinator Professor Elwyn Firth of Massey University sees the aim of the research being to address major equine health problems and target research to improve the breeding, rearing and performance of horses in this country. He emphasises the importance of collaboration with other universities and industry stakeholders to achieving the best outcomes.

“Collaboration with other universities will be a major part of the Equine Partnership for Excellence,” Professor Firth said.

“Research projects in areas that are important to the equine industry will involve colleagues in both national and international universities – such as University of California Davis, Colorado State University, Utrecht University and Lincoln University as well as in other industry groups and companies. The Trust has been designed to enable all people within the industry to work together with specialists throughout New Zealand and overseas.

“This initiative will expand learning and research capabilities across the industry. The overall effect will be more skilled people in the industry to help it improve efficiency and solve problems,” says Professor Firth.

Research proposals are now being sought for projects covering work on reducing the incidence of injury to racehorses, equine respiratory disease, the prevalence and management of drench resistance in horses, disorders of the foal at or near birth, equine genetics, pasture based nutrition and pastern dermatitis.

In addition, a number of projects are already underway, at the initiative of the New Zealand Racing Board and Massey University. These projects target areas of known economic importance (wastage from musculoskeletal injury and respiratory disease, reproduction and parasitism) There is also a body of work being done in relation to a Continuing Professional Development programme for the Equine Industry.

For more information on the New Zealand Equine Trust, see the website <http://www.equinetrust.org.nz> or contact Professor Elwyn Firth at E.C.Firth@massey.ac.nz

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