

MEDIA RELEASE

Joint media statement: **FoodHQ and Accelerate25**

7 June 2016

New FoodHQ partnership to unlock multinational R&D opportunities

FoodHQ today announced a new research and development collaboration with Proliant, a multinational business specialising in food, health and biological products. FoodHQ is the industry's gateway to more than 2,200 scientists from nine internationally recognised research and innovation organisations operating within and beyond the Manawatū-Whanganui region.

The new partnership involves a full time Proliant employee working with FoodHQ to progress nearly two million dollars' worth of research proposals that have been developed over the past two years, including projects centred on extracting and processing high-value biological by-products and continued improvement at Proliant's new production plant.

"This is an exciting opportunity for FoodHQ and for Accelerate25," said Mayor of Palmerston North and Accelerate25 Lead Team member, Grant Smith.

"This partnership will build on existing production-based relationships and will enable Proliant to take advantage of many of New Zealand's high-quality research organisations to help achieve research and development goals," he said.

The partnership between Proliant and FoodHQ has been developed as part of Accelerate25, the implementation programme of the Manawatū-Whanganui Regional Growth Study. Accelerate25 is focussed on increasing job opportunities and quality of life in the Manawatū-Whanganui region by connecting people, business, Iwi and the environment.

FoodHQ Programme Director Mark Ward says the co-funded position will enable FoodHQ to grow its international relationships with Proliant, following their recent establishment of a New Zealand beach-head facility in Feilding. It will also allow FoodHQ to expand connections with Proliant and its parent company, Lauridsen Group Inc., potentially unlocking further opportunities.

"I am delighted with how the FoodHQ Accelerate25 Project Team has worked with MBIE to establish this role," said Mr Ward. "Together, we are helping grow the reputation of Palmerston North and Manawatū as an internationally recognised food and beverage innovation hub, through the development high value-added products," he said.

Manawatū District Mayor Margaret Kouvelis is encouraged to see Proliant's willingness to engage with local initiatives such as the Accelerate25 programme.

"Proliant spent seven years searching in Australasia for a suitable place to establish their business. Feilding was selected as the location for its new \$30m factory and in February of this year Minister Joyce opened the new facility on Kawakawa Road. We in the Manawatū are privileged to have a company such as this so willing to leverage off the opportunities that are here like FoodHQ," she said.

Mark Cleaver of Massey University is leading the FoodHQ Accelerate25 Project Team, which is tasked with the on-going development of regional growth initiatives relating to FoodHQ.

"These sorts of connections will continue to enhance and build the Accelerate25 Programme, which is about many key opportunities being realised across the region to lift it as a whole, much like the old saying: *the rising tide lifts all ships*," said Mr Cleaver.

“This collaboration between Proliant and FoodHQ is a great example of what can be achieved when a region gets behind its Growth Study and sets its sights on achieving greater prosperity together. These are exciting times for the entire Manawatū-Whanganui region,” he said.

Through a Government initiative to increase international R&D performed in New Zealand, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is providing FoodHQ with \$125,000 over a two year start-up phase to support the development of its partnership with Proliant. FoodHQ is a Palmerston North-based food and beverage innovation organisation with close links to Massey University and other research partners.

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