

The Collaboration technique pushed strongly

The Economic Development Agencies of New Zealand (EDANZ) met in Queenstown this week to discuss the power of collaboration and the importance of developing regional capabilities.

Did you know that in the year after the single seller ENZA apple exporter monopoly was removed, that New Zealand's apple exports declined by \$200m? Deregulation was thought by the theorists in Wellington to increase competition and make the industry more competitive. The companies competed all right – against each other! The halt in the decline in export returns has coincided with the redevelopment of ENZA and some other government/industry partnership initiatives to upgrade the quality of the NZ apple offer – exports were up \$113m last season.

Some outstanding examples of collaboration on a regional and national scale were given. These are the 'good news' stories which don't attract much media attention. A few examples:

- 300 hectares of aquaculture farming being developed off Opotiki
- Aquaculture in three parts of Golden Bay and where the dairy sector is an important player
- The NZ Food Innovation Network with representation from Foodbowl Auckland, Food Waikato and Food Pilot Manawatu (but the proposed extension to include the South Island has stalled following the cessation of government funding)
- KiwiNet which is drawing the research facilities at the Universities together for high-tech work

Most speakers emphasised the importance of international growth and the need for an international outlook. But they all said that New Zealand needs to be customer driven in its international endeavours, not product pushed.

There were some interesting comments too in terms of what we are trying to achieve from an aviation viewpoint:

- company to company networking and networking within industries needs to improve
- companies and research institutions need to be networking more – both benefit and it helps research be more relevant and commercial
- we need to manage risks, not be overly dependent on legislation (and transport was cited as a good example of an industry that was using risk analysis properly)
- there needs to be more integration across New Zealand of various developmental initiatives - regional or specific industry capabilities should not be developed in isolation from the rest of NZ
- supply chain collaboration is a very important developing trend

In summary – collaboration helps innovation, speed to market and market development.