

New market access company under way

A new company specialising in market access issues for plant-based industries has made a successful start.

Market Access Solutionz was formed in July by Dr Stephen Ogden and Nikki Johnson, both formerly of MAF Biosecurity Authority's phytosanitary market access programme.

The company was officially launched last month by the Minister of Agriculture, Biosecurity and Trade Negotiations Jim Sutton.

He said market access issues were critical to New Zealand, as it consumed only 10% of the food it produced. The world was riddled with tariffs, quotas as well as a plethora of non-tariff barriers.

Gaining access to markets was hard work. "Nothing is instant except disillusionment!" One example was the long struggle to gain access to the Australian market for New Zealand apples and the delays had occurred against a constant background of assurances from Australian Ministers that the problem would be solved.

Market access was not simply an issue for the Government and for Parliament. Industries had to be involved

"We do punch above our weight and get ourselves noticed and listened to."

There was no reason why the technical side of market access had to be done by government departments and he commended the initiative taking in founding Market Access Solutionz. "I think you'll be blazing a trail here and I wish you all the best in the future and good luck."

Stephen Ogden said the company made a very encouraging start. It had been working on market access for plants and plant products, on biosecurity issues such as pest incursions and was also supplying information services. It had worked with a range of industries, including citrus, summerfruit, potatoes, bulbs, capsicums and also done some work for MAF.

Nikki Johnson gave the background of the two staff members and said they had the experience and ability to communicate effectively not only with New Zealand agencies involved in market access and biosecurity and but with their overseas counterparts.

Below: Nikki Johnson, Minister Jim Sutton and Dr Stephen Ogden at the launch of Market Access Solutionz.

