



New Zealanders are one of the greatest consumers of bananas per capita in the world | Photo source [Lotte Lühr on Unsplash](#)

[Innovation](#) > [Food & Drink](#) > [New Zealand initiative develops better bananas](#)

## NEW ZEALAND INITIATIVE DEVELOPS BETTER BANANAS

 FOOD & DRINK

### The two-year project aims to develop a new commercial opportunity for indigenous farmers

**Spotted:** An alliance between AgResearch scientists and indigenous farmers in Gisborne and Northland is using DNA testing and lab-grown plants to identify the best variety of bananas to grow in New Zealand's climate. After the success of the first crops up north, a new set of trials is underway in regions across New Zealand, including Manawatū, Hawke's Bay and Nelson.

New Zealanders are one of the greatest consumers of bananas per capita in the world. However, the cooler climate means that over €124 million worth of bananas is imported annually to meet the demand.

Whilst Kiwi-produced bananas will be more expensive than the imported competition, they're tastier and could be grown spray and chemical-free because the tropical parasites that thrive on bananas aren't present in New Zealand. Amongst the varieties the team is testing, there is one that resembles the taste of an apple and another one like an apricot.

The trials were financially supported by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, with the goal also being to develop a new commercial opportunity for indigenous farmers.

AgResearch scientist Jane Mullaney said the test crops would be ready for harvest by mid-next year.

[Explore more: Food & Drink Innovations](#) | [Sustainability Innovations](#)

11th June 2020

## Takeaway:

According to the [International Fund for Agricultural Development \(IFAD\)](#), Indigenous Peoples play a unique role in the conservation of biodiversity and in the mitigation of climate change, thanks to their traditional knowledge and understanding of ecosystem management. In fact, Indigenous Peoples preserve 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity within their lands, according to the [World Bank](#).