Position Title: Post-doc in Sustainability Transitions (Social Scientist) (Fixed Term)
Reports To: Team Leader People and Agriculture
Direct Reports: Nil
Group: Farm Systems and Environment
Key Relationships: People & Agriculture Team, AgResearch scientists, Research Partners
Location: Ruakura Campus, Hamilton

WHO WE ARE

We are passionate innovators, dedicated to making a difference to the future of New Zealand by delivering world-leading research and through complex problem solving across diverse agricultural areas. We are respected by the scientific community for thought leadership, trusted by industry partners for the value we add to the sector, and admired by farmers and governmental stakeholders for all that we do to keep New Zealand at the forefront of global agricultural excellence.

We go beyond innovation to maintain AgResearch’s role as a leading collaborator and contributor to New Zealand’s worldwide agricultural reputation.

Our Vision is to drive economic prosperity by transforming agriculture while incorporating the fundamental concepts of sustainability, environmental responsibility and Vision Mātauranga.

The People and Agriculture team uses its knowledge of people to maximise impacts from agricultural science, and is experienced in transdisciplinary research that aims to solve complex problems facing the New Zealand pastoral sector. The team consists of social scientists with a wide discipline base, covering rural sociology, psychology, rural geography, anthropology, innovation systems, bioethics, extension, systems thinking and practice, and adult learning.

Core to its research is understanding what shapes transitions to more sustainable agri-food systems in New Zealand through transdisciplinary and action research approaches, and using this knowledge to inform innovation to support this transition. The team also has the capability to design monitoring and evaluation projects to measure progress towards change, and the success of applied initiatives across social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts. The team members are well connected to leading social scientists in these research fields in Australia, Europe and the United Kingdom. The team is currently located at the AgResearch Ruakura (Hamilton), Lincoln (Christchurch) and Grasslands (Palmerston North) campuses.
POSITION SCOPE & PURPOSE

AgResearch is seeking to build social science capability in the study of sustainability transitions and has recently funded a two-year project on this topic in the context of the New Zealand agri-food sector. This project has an emphasis on transdisciplinary research with sector stakeholders to understand the roles of public-funded research in transitions, with the aim of directing AgResearch and other stakeholder activities to support the transition to a more sustainable New Zealand agri-food sector.

This will involve applying a deep knowledge of sustainability transitions theory and research methods to case studies of transitions-in-the-making in the agri-food sector. AgResearch is therefore seeking a Post-doc (Social Scientist) with expertise in the study of sustainability transitions from theoretical perspectives such as socio-technical, socio-institutional, socio-economic and socio-ecological. He/she will have an in-depth knowledge of sustainability transitions theory, current research on transitions and the role of science in these transitions, transdisciplinary approaches, and analytical methods for the study of transitions-in-the-making.

This role will contribute to the delivery of high-quality science publications in the field of sustainability transitions addressing four nested research questions:

1. How do actors in the New Zealand innovation system enact sustainability transitions to transformational change of the agri-food sector?
2. What are the roles for research organisations in sustainability transitions in the agri-food sector?
3. What suite of capabilities and approaches do research organisations require to fulfil these roles in sustainability transitions?
4. What research methods can provide information to actors in the innovation systems to support their decisions regarding how to engage with and shape sustainability transitions?
KEY ACCOUNTABILITY AREAS

RESEARCH DELIVERY
- Develops and implements high quality social science
- Demonstrates high levels of theoretical and methodological innovation and originality in the area of sustainability transitions.
- Assists with the implementation of best practice R&D management across the organisation.
- Ensures project milestones are achieved within project budgets.
- Proactively displays a collaborative ethos that optimally draws on knowledge and capability across the organisation to deliver the best possible outcomes.
- Ensures legislative compliance is maintained across research project work.

SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE
- Consistently delivers high quality, relevant science.
- Demonstrates science credibility by publishing research in world leading journals, such as Environmental Innovations and Societal Transitions, Technological Forecasting and Social Change, Sustainability Science.
- Contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge by presenting at conferences.
- Maintains an active involvement in the wider sustainability transitions research community which extends recognition nationally and internationally.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- Designs and implements social science projects that contribute to international knowledge of sustainability transitions in agri-food systems, and the role of science in transitions.
- Presents project progress at research seminars, internal project governance meetings, funder group meetings and science conferences as and when required.
- Undertakes fieldwork, data analysis, and science write-up and presentation.
- Collates project information, writes and reviews reports for internal (within the organisation) distribution.
- Ensures project milestones are completed within specified timeframes and budgets.
- Checks and monitors that organisational project management methodologies are applied efficiently across project lifecycles.

HEALTH AND SAFETY
- Maintains current knowledge of AgResearch’s Health and Safety Management policies, systems, and procedures.
Position Description

- Ensures awareness of own responsibilities and the procedures to follow in relation to health and safety.
- Identifies and reports any hazards, near misses or incidents as per prescribed policy and procedures.
- Demonstrates safe workplace behaviour by taking all practicable steps to ensure own and others’ safety in the workplace.
- Attends scheduled Health and Safety training and development initiatives on a regular basis.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Applies and implements prescribed project management methodology into all project work.
- Applies principles of continuous improvement by taking ownership of identification, analysis and investigation of work-related matters with the intent to improve, manage compliance and initiate best practice in the workplace.
- Actively participates in, and contributes to, performance conversations and personal development.
- Embraces the AgResearch Values framework and develops own behaviours to support these Values on a continuous basis.
- Takes responsibility for understanding and applying AgResearch policy, processes, systems and procedures on a daily basis.
- Commits to accurate and timely information sharing and recordkeeping as per set organisational standards.
- Performs additional tasks, duties and/or responsibilities as directed by manager.
- Assists and supports AgResearch business across different science groups and business units, as agreed with manager.
PERSON SPECIFICATIONS

The person best suited to this position will possess the following:

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

- Recent PhD degree in Social Science, such as rural sociology, socio-technical systems, or innovation systems applied to the study of sustainability transitions

CAPABILITIES & EXPERIENCE

The ideal candidate would be able to demonstrate:

- Specific social science expertise in areas aligned with the study of sustainability transitions, such as transdisciplinarity, science dynamics or innovation systems.
- An in-depth knowledge of and ability to draw on different theoretical perspectives of sustainability transitions (e.g. socio-technical, socio-institutional, socio-economic and/or socio-ecological)
- An in-depth knowledge of current research on sustainability transitions, new roles of research (e.g. mission-oriented research), and/or innovation systems
- Knowledge and the study of sustainability transitions in agri-food systems and the role of public-funded research in these transitions
- Emerging peer-reviewed publication record in high impact scientific journals.
- Proven ability to participate in transdisciplinary teams.
- Proven knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative social science methods, and their application to the study of sustainability transitions-in-the-making.
- Ability to follow rigorous development and documentation procedures for research protocols.
OUR VALUES

- Exemplifies Our Values
- Supports strategic priorities
- Assumes positive intent
- Is open to new ideas
- Acts with integrity
- Demonstrates credibility
- Appreciates diversity

- Actively seeks out relationships and partnership opportunities
- Works across boundaries
- Priorities shared goals
- Shares information and resources
- Involves others
- Supports others to be successful

- Maintains a best practice mind-set
- Emphasis timely and high quality delivery
- Establishes challenging stretch goals and performance expectations
- Gathers, Compares and evaluates information
- Establishes robust decision making criteria
- Fully utilises support systems

- Prioritises time to innovate
- Takes a future and solution based approach
- Creates a positive learning environment
- Demonstrates openness to change
- Constructively challenges the status quo
- Emphasises freedom of independent thought
- Assesses risk

- Builds long term relationships with customers
- Provides clear, open and timely communication
- Identifies customer needs
- Commits to realistic delivery timeframes
- Translates initiatives into action

- Takes a long-term, strategic and future oriented perspective
- Focuses on the bigger picture
- Promotes the cross-fertilisation of ideas
- Champions transformational change
- Demonstrates decisiveness
- Commits to ongoing learning and development