



# DID YOU KNOW

IRL is lead researcher on a programme to save the meat industry millions of dollars by automating the early stages of sheep meat processing.

The \$15m programme integrates various technologies and processes to maximise benefits for the industry, while minimising its costs.

As part of this project IRL has so far developed technologies including pilot leg and brisket rollers, and continues to develop gas de-pelting and intelligent Y-cut technology (the Y-cut being the difficult first cut that opens the fleece on the front legs of a sheep in preparation for pelt removal).

The initiative is funded by nine meat companies that have banded together to form Ovine Automation Limited (OAL), and, with the support of the Ministry of Science and Innovation, trials are already in operation in plants in both the North and South Islands.



## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Because local producers are faced with stiff competition from overseas, where labour and land costs are much lower, New Zealand industry needs to compete not only on quality but also on increasingly efficient production.



With the majority of ovine industry players on board in this project, the New Zealand meat processing industry will be able to maintain its position at the cutting edge of sheep and lamb processing.

Increased quality, consistency and lower costs will allow New Zealand exporters to compete on more fronts in the drive to grow New Zealand export earnings from the primary sector by many millions of dollars.