

New Zealand's biotech industry registers steady growth

New Zealand's core biotechnology group has grown steadily from 30 organizations in 2004 to 90 organizations in 2007, according to Statistics New Zealand. These figures are from the second release of information from the 'Biotechnology Survey: 2007,' which measured the use of biotechnologies and their uptake by organizations in New Zealand.

Due to the complexity of the data, the biotechnology sector has been split into three groups: the 'core' group is focused on the production of biotechnology goods and services; the 'active' group operates in fields other than biotechnology and uses biotechnology processes; and the 'research' group involves the research and development of biotechnology processes, a statement from Statistics NZ said.

The research group includes the higher education sector, crown research institutes and other research firms.

While the core group grew solidly from 2004 to 2007, the number of organizations in the active group decreased from 54 to 39 over the same period. The number of research institutions in the biotechnology sector remained stable.

Income, expenditure and exports all increased for the core group, with income rising from \$158 million in 2004 to \$276 million in 2007 – an 80 percent increase. Biotechnology expenditure increased 63 percent over the same period. Exports for the core group have also nearly doubled, from \$53 million in 2004 to \$104 million in 2007.

Statistics on the regional locations of organizations using biotechnology were collected in 2007 for the first time. The figures show that 20 percent of the core groups have operations in the Auckland region. Core biotechnology organizations and their activities are evenly spread throughout the rest of the country.

The Biotechnology Survey is a census of all biotechnology-related organizations in New Zealand. The next survey in 2009 will be refined so it collects relevant information from the three distinct groups that make up the biotechnology sector.