

Manaaki New Zealand Short Term Training Scholarships Sustainable, Resilient and Productive Agri-Food Systems Latin America and Caribbean 2026

Overview

The New Zealand Government's Manaaki New Zealand Scholarship Programme is pleased to offer a Sustainable, Resilient and Productive Agri-Food Systems course for Latin American and Caribbean scholars, supported by the New Zealand International Development Cooperation Programme.

The Sustainable, Resilient and Productive Agri-Food Systems course has been created to increase the knowledge and skills of Latin American and Caribbean professionals in Agri-Food sector roles that will lead to improved knowledge of food systems, particularly in the crops and livestock sectors, leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness in participants' home countries.

This is a four-week (continuous) residential course to be based in the Manawatu campus of Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand, with the concluding session held in the capital Wellington. As a part of learning on the programme, this course also comprises a series of field trips to various agribusiness ventures in the North Island.

This is a fully funded scholarship covering course fees, visa costs (excluding passport fees), accommodation and other programme related expenses.

The design, management and delivery of the programme will be led by Associate Professor Ramilan Thiagarajah and is managed and supported by the Massey University team.

While the course does not constitute a formal tertiary qualification it will provide scholars with unique insights into New Zealand approaches and best practice in each sectoral study area.

On successful completion each scholar will be awarded a completion certificate from the Manaaki New Zealand Scholarship Programme.

When?

The Sustainable, Resilient and Productive Agri-Food Systems course timeline is as follows:

Applications Open	Monday 12 January 2026
Applications Close	Sunday 22 February 2026
Travel to New Zealand	Week commencing 8 June 2026
Course Start Date	Monday 15 June 2026
Course Finish Date	Tuesday 7 July 2026
Depart New Zealand	Wednesday 8 July 2026

This course will be delivered on a full-time basis in Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Successful applicants should be available to travel to New Zealand the week prior to course commencement and will receive an orientation on arrival.

Who should attend?

This course is designed for mid-level government officials and middle managers from private sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and university academics involved in food systems context with at least 5 years work experience in the relevant course sector.

Participants should have basic level computer literacy and numeracy skills and Intermediate level English language proficiency.

To be eligible for a Manaaki New Zealand Scholarship, all the following statements must be true:

- From the date my application is submitted, I will have lived in my country of citizenship for the last two years or more.
- Exception for diplomatic corps and their family: A member of the diplomatic corps or a dependant of a member of the diplomatic corps, living outside their own country, can apply for a Scholarship.
- I am not a citizen or permanent resident of any of the following countries: New Zealand, Australia, Bahrain, Canada, any European Union country, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, or the United States of America.
- I will be at least 18 years old at the time I start the scholarship.
- I am not currently serving in the military.
- Within the last five years, I have not had a New Zealand Scholarship terminated.

Applicants must also acknowledge and agree that:

- They have received endorsement from their employer to attend this training programme.
- They expect to meet the academic entry requirements (including English language requirements) for their planned training programme.

Course Schedule

Venue	Massey University
Duration	Four-weeks, Palmerston North based programme.
Class Times	Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm. Some weekend work.
Sessions include	Thematic presentations and discussions, site visits, workshops, case-studies, guest speakers, project work, reflections on previous day, questions and application.

Sustainable, Resilient and Productive Agri-Food Systems	
Module 1	Market systems and value chains (concepts, performance, analysis)
Module 2	Corporate social and environmental responsibility
Module 3	Market coordination, regulatory systems, and strategic partnerships
Module 4	Evaluate the structure, organisation and performance of agri-food market systems and value chains.
Module 5	Digital data and collection tools
Module 6	Low emission, climate resilient, and conservation agriculture innovations and practices
Module 7	Agritech solutions to facilitate climate smart agriculture
Module 8	Interconnections between data, policy making and regulatory frameworks
Module 9	Food quality and safety
Module 10	Group project work and project evaluation

Key Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course the following Learning Outcomes will be delivered:

- Describe different types of market systems, value chains in the food and agribusiness industry across Latin American and Caribbean member states.
- Evaluate the structure, organisation and performance of agri-food market systems and value chains.
- Define and describe a market system and value chain in the scholar's own country using relevant tools and frameworks.
- Determine opportunities to strengthen agri-food market systems and value chains in scholars' countries, by drawing on their own experiences, and identifying market coordination mechanisms, regulatory institutions, and strategic relationships.
- Explain managerial approaches and technological innovations that are being used to respond to changing customer preferences and to address major development challenges.
- Communicate effectively in culturally diverse environments and build professional networks to support collaboration in food systems.

- Determine opportunities to improve agriculture practices in scholars' countries to make agricultural systems more resilient to climate change, more productive while reducing emissions, and more environmentally sustainable.
- Explain international approaches under “conservation agriculture”, “climate-smart agriculture”, “sustainable food systems”, and the “the landscape approach” that are being used to make agriculture systems more resilient and reduce GHG emissions.

Delivery & Programme Management

- The course will be managed and supported by Massey University and will be led by Associate Professor Ramilan Thiagarajah along with other academic experts from within the School of Agriculture and Environment. Guest lecturers from the Ministry of Primary Industries, Plant and Food Research and the Ag Emissions Centre will also be brought in to deliver on key topics. The team of presenters are authorities in agribusiness, food safety, climate smart agri-food systems and related value chain topics.

Associate Professor Ramilan Thiagarajah, Academic Lead



Associate Professor Ramilan Thiagarajah is an agribusiness and food systems expert at Massey University's School of Agriculture and Environment. He holds a PhD in Agricultural and Resource Economics from the University of Waikato, New Zealand. He has been the academic leader for the MFAT funded Agribusiness Value chain Course for the ASEAN region, from 2017 to 2025. His work focuses on food systems transformation and climate-smart and nutrition-sensitive agricultural value chains. He has expertise in farm and food systems analysis by developing whole farm household models and system dynamics modelling for value chain analysis from market and bioeconomic perspectives. For over two decades, he has actively engaged in bioeconomic modelling of food systems to enhance climate resilience across Australasia, Africa, and Asia. Previously, as an International Scientist at CGIAR, he was a resource person modelling climate smart agricultural interventions for the West African farm households. Currently, he is leading crucial research on estimating abatement costs of GHG mitigation options in dairy systems funded by MPI.

Application

Applicants can apply via an online application form accessed through the [Manaaki TSTTS website](#).

Enquiries

All enquiries should be directed to the Wellington Uni-Professional Scholarships team in the first instance.

Please direct queries to: manaaki-tstts@wup.nz and include the course name and your country in the subject line.