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## Food and beverage sector powerhouse of NZ's manufacturing sector

The food and beverage manufacturing industry is New Zealand's largest and most competitive manufacturing sector, a new study has found.

A New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) commissioned study evaluates the economic importance of New Zealand's food processing sector.

The report shows that exports have doubled since 1990 to \$14.2 billion in 2002, and food processing now represents half the total value of merchandise exports from New Zealand.

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## NEW ZEALAND EXPORT NEWS

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### Qatar picks NZ school system

30 January 2004

By Venkat Raman

The oil-rich Arab Gulf State of Qatar has chosen the New Zealand model to introduce reforms in its government-owned schools and help them become autonomous institutions.

Auckland-based Multi-Serve Education Trust (MSET) has been contracted to initially assist five schools in Doha in a multimillion-dollar modernisation and self-management programme, with the potential to cover more schools in the future.

The reforms are being administered by Qatar's Supreme Education Council through its Education Institute and Evaluation Institute and a delegation was in New Zealand last week to discuss the details of the programme and sign an agreement with MSET.

Education Institute director Dr Darwish Al Emadi said New Zealand was chosen after a detailed study of the education systems in OECD countries.

"New Zealand has a global reputation for the success of its education reforms and the system matches our requirements and objectives. We are keen to adopt these reforms, to provide greater autonomy to government-owned schools in Qatar as a part of the government's objective to promote a stronger and internationally recognised education sector," he told The National Business Review.

Dr Al Emadi said the New Zealand education system was seen as among the best in the world, with teachers productively engaging students in classrooms.

"The active role played by the community in managing these schools in a multi-ethnic environment has also been impressive. The system encourages students to be proactive and follow self-learning techniques. As a more homogenous society, it would be easier for us to adopt the system in Qatar," he said.

The institutes were created two years ago to examine the curricula, management and funding of the schools run by the government.

Fifteen schools have been chosen to implement the project at an initial cost of \$US700 million over a three-year period.

If successful, the reforms would cover all the schools in the government sector, he said.

"We recognise the need to move away from text-based teaching to output-based learning and set the pace for lifting standards of education in Qatar," Dr Al Emadi said.

The primary school system in the government sector accounted for about 200 institutions, with 90,000 students.

Education Minister Trevor Mallard said the move recognised New Zealand's success in managing change from a centralised and bureaucratic education system to a self-managed school model.

"The Qatari government's selection of MSET reinforces the trust's credibility and experience as professional, collaborative and independent

education consultants," he said.

MSET chief executive Des Hammond said his institution would provide coaching and mentoring facilities to five schools over 18 months.

The contract reflects New Zealand's capability and provides opportunities to share our expertise in education with other countries," he said.

Mr Hammond would not reveal the value of the contract but indicated it would be worth several million dollars including consulting fees and salaries.

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