



Should overseas businesses be able to buy New Zealand farms or farmland?

The prospect of a Chinese owned New Zealand registered company becoming owners of the Crafar farms, as a result of the liquidation of the Crafar farming enterprise, gave rise to a great deal of discussion about foreign ownership of New Zealand land generally and farms or farmland specifically.

In the present case the question was whether a Chinese owned New Zealand registered company should be permitted to buy the Crafar farms. The Overseas Investment Office has not yet decided the question.

We decided to find out what New Zealanders thought of our farms being sold to overseas owned businesses, a slightly different proposition to land being sold to non-New Zealanders living overseas. In both cases approval by the Overseas Investment Office is required. And, of course, there are no restrictions on non-New Zealanders with permanent residence in New Zealand buying farms or making other types of investment in New Zealand.

Some 41 percent of respondents agreed that overseas owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland. Males were in favour of this to a greater extent than women (47 percent as against 36 percent).

Those in the age group 55+ years were against such sales rather more than those in the younger age groups. Some 29 percent were in favour, while at 53 percent of those in the age group 15 – 34 years were in favour. 'Clearly, younger people do not have the strong feelings about this issue that older New Zealanders have, said Research New Zealand Director, Emanuel Kalafatelis'.

When it comes to ethnicity, those that were not European/Pakeha or Maori/Pacific Peoples were most in favour at 50 percent as against 41 percent and 39 percent in the two other groups.

The acceptance of sales of farms or farmland to overseas businesses was lowest in the South Island at 36 percent, compared with 44 percent elsewhere. It was highest on the part of respondents on incomes of \$70,000 or more, at 53 percent.

We also asked respondents whether they themselves were farmers or had family or friends involved in farming, in the expectation that those who did, might have a different opinion to those less close to the farming community. Interestingly, there was no difference between those that had family and friends in farming and those that did not.



The Research New Zealand poll of 500 people aged 15 and over was conducted by telephone between 14 and 22 September. The maximum margin of error for the sample as a whole is +/- 4.8 % (at the 95% confidence level). The data has been weighted to ensure it is an accurate representation of New Zealand's general population. The poll was not taken on behalf of any organization, but as part of Research New Zealand's monthly survey of attitudes and opinions.

Contact: Emanuel Kalafatelis
 Director
 Research New Zealand Limited
 P O Box 10-617
 Wellington 6143
 Ph. 04-462-6401 (DDI); 027-500-4401 (M)

Table 1:

Q8. Changing topics again, do you believe overseas-owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland?

	Total	Male	Female
Base =	500	250	250
	%	%	%
Yes	41	47	36
No	53	46	59
Don't know	5	6	5
Total	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 2:

Q8. Changing topics again, do you believe overseas-owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland?

	Total	15-34 years	35 to 54 years	55 years and over
Base =	500	104	170	226
	%	%	%	%
Yes	41	53	40	29
No	53	44	53	64
Don't know	5	2	6	8
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 3:

Q8. Changing topics again, do you believe overseas-owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland?

Base =	NZ European/			
	Total	Pakeha	Maori/Pacific	Other
	500	363	75	62
	%	%	%	%
Yes	41	41	39	50
No	53	54	57	41
Don't know	5	5	4	10
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 4:

Q8. Changing topics again, do you believe overseas-owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland?

Base =	Upper North Island Lower/Central South Island			
	Total	Island	North Island	South Island
	500	221	116	163
	%	%	%	%
Yes	41	44	44	36
No	53	50	51	59
Don't know	5	6	5	5
Total	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Table 5:

Q8. Changing topics again, do you believe overseas-owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland?

Base =	Total	Income			Don't know/refused
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$69,999	\$70,000 plus	
	500	188	107	156	49
	%	%	%	%	%
Yes	41	37	37	53	30
No	53	57	60	42	61
Don't know	5	6	4	5	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



Table 6:

Q8. Changing topics again, do you believe overseas-owned businesses should be able to buy or invest in New Zealand farms or farmland?

	Base =	Family/friends or self Involved in			Don't know
		Total	farming	Not involved	
		500	209	290	1**
		%	%	%	%
Yes		41	40	42	100
No		53	54	53	0
Don't know		5	6	5	0
Total		100	100	100	100

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Caution: low base number of respondents-results are indicative only.

Research New Zealand is an independent, New Zealand-owned research organisation undertaking social and business research.

www.researchnz.com