

OIA22-0926

1 February 2023

Tangata Whenua
fyi-request-21431-950f030b@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Tangata Whenua

Thank you for your email of 15 December 2022 requesting information relating to the National Biocontainment Laboratory. Your request has been considered under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

You requested

- *Are pharmaceutical companies responsible for manufacturing vaccines make donations to / sponsor/contribute/or otherwise provide funding to the new, state-of-the-art national biocontainment laboratory in Wallaceville, Upper Hutt.*
- *The construction of the facility, which will hold samples of diseases like anthrax, avian flu, rabies, and Covid-19, began in 2015 and cost the Ministry for Primary Industries \$87 million.*

The National Biocontainment Laboratory was designed to provide a safe environment for diagnostics exotic disease work and biosecurity related research supporting the Ministry of Health with human-health diseases. Alongside this, the lab also supports our national surveillance programmes in animal populations. It may also become an international reference centre for zoonotic diseases. It would be New Zealand's first veterinary lab to be recognised internationally – also a strong endorsement of the team's capability.

The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) did not receive any sponsorship or donations for the National Biocontainment Laboratory. MPI do provide diagnostic testing services to pharmaceutical companies on a fee for service basis when testing is not available at other testing services in the country. This testing is for quality assurance of animal products when such assurance is required for a product to be approved for export.

MPI is not aware of any commercial arrangements that ESR (New Zealand's Crown Research Institute) may have in place that may involve pharmaceutical companies. ESR lease a laboratory inside the facility. For more information please refer to our website-

<https://www.mpi.govt.nz/science/laboratories/national-animal-health-laboratory/national-biocontainment-laboratory/>

I trust the information provided is of assistance. Should you have any concerns with this response, I would encourage you to raise these with the Ministry for Primary Industries at Official.InformationAct@mpi.govt.nz. Alternatively, you are advised of your right to also raise any concerns with the Office of the Ombudsman. Contact details are: Office of the Ombudsman, PO Box 10152, Wellington 6143 or at info@ombudsman.parliament.nz.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V Herrera', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Veronica Herrera
Director, Diagnostic & Surveillance Services