

Exploring New Zealanders' attitudes, beliefs, and acceptance of novel pest control methods

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Public acceptance of innovative technologies to control pest species in New Zealand has occasionally been dismissive and met with strong opposition. In our interdisciplinary NSC-funded research, we will use the pest wasp (*Vespula* species, German and common wasp) and rats (*Rattus* spp) as complementary case studies to explore social acceptance (social license to operate) of novel pest control methods. Our research focuses on two groups: the general NZ public and key stakeholders/partners (e.g., iwi, farmers, commercial bee keeping industry). Quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to develop a segmentation model based on participants' views of novel technologies as they align to their values, psychographics, and demographics. Organisations committed to understanding public opinion and acceptance (or lack of) of novel pest control (e.g., DOC, MPI, local councils) can use the segmentation model as a starting point for public engagement. Building upon the segmentation model, we will test the effectiveness of different messages aligned to different values of each segment on their acceptance of novel technologies.

