

Robotics

“*Bright – Reflecting Business Brilliance*” Magazine January, 2005
Extract from Disruptive Technology article

It is perhaps in the area of robotics that Scott Technology is achieving the most dramatic disruption to traditional industry methods. In strategic partnership with PPCS, one of New Zealand’s largest meat processing companies, it is heading toward its vision of a fully automated meat boning room.

Robots with knives offer many advantages. They can take the meat off the carcass more efficiently than people can, and can provide a calculated bias toward more high-value cuts of meat. Safety is greatly increased because meat processors can replace the traditional but dangerous band saw, still used worldwide. Rural labour shortages are increasing worldwide, so robots bypass these. Meat processing becomes more efficient, and because more meat from each carcass can be exported, New Zealand’s export receipts increase.

“We’re currently working with the Australian meat industry, and there’s also interest from Europe. We’re still in the development stage, but the market for this is huge – potentially hundreds of millions of dollars,” says Chris Hopkins.

Watch this space – within two years when Scott Technology rolls out its meat boning robots, the world of meat processing will never be the same.

Further north in Christchurch, EDAC Electronics is developing breakthrough technology that will change the way much farming is done, both here and around the world. Scandinavian farmers are especially interested in EDAC technology that sends an automatic alert to a truck driver when grain levels need replenishing.

EDAC was approached by a Norwegian company searching worldwide for a partner to produce a voice alarm dialler to work alongside its fire alarms systems for monitoring animals housed indoors.

“That’s what we do – find niche markets through adapting New Zealand’s agri-tech expertise,” says business development director Henry Bettle. “We listen when the markets say what they need, then develop it.”

Grants from Technology NZ have helped the company do that. Latest ventures include *beeFORCE* technology, which uses electronics and bees to deliver beneficial products to fruit and tree crops, and is in wide use throughout Australia. Another attracting wide interest is EDAC’s frost monitor, which sends an alert when frosts reach a critical temperature, letting orchardists monitor fruit grow closely and take action as needed.