

## **Silo alarm wins \$6m export order**

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High-technology company EDAC Electronics is to export \$6 million of agritech alarm systems to Norway in the next 3 years. Norwegian farmers are already good customers of the Christchurch-based business, which specialises in alarm and communication products. Once the new system to allow automatic monitoring of grain levels in silos is available, EDAC plans to ship the units to its distributor in Norway.

Research and development funding for the project totalled about \$120,000, with Technology New Zealand, the Government's research and development funding arm, putting in \$100,000 and EDAC the remainder.

EDAC project manager Henry Bettle said the new hardware and software for the silo system was "breakthrough" technology.

It would enable a computer to send an automatic alert to a truck driver when grain levels in silos need replenishing.

"That's hugely important in the northern hemisphere, where animals are grain-fed and barn-reared rather than put out to pasture."

Last year EDAC was approached by a Norwegian company which was looking for a partner to produce a voice-alarm dialler that would work with its fire alarms on farms and in remote locations.

More than 3000 of those units were shipped to Norway.

The same customer was now keen on distributing the agritech silo alarm around Norway and possibly elsewhere in Scandinavia, Mr Bettle said.

EDAC was expecting to send more than 10,000 units, worth about \$600 each, to Norway in the next 3 years.

The company already had a broad customer base in New Zealand and sold three or four of the systems in a week.

The next development for EDAC would be investigating a milk temperature monitoring device for the dairy industry. This would provide data through palm or pocket computers to tanker drivers and dairy factories to identify milk at risk of spoiling.

The technology would also lead to improvements in the company's other agritech products, including its remote monitoring frost warning systems, and irrigation and pump control products, Mr Bettle said.

EDAC is forecasting a 45 per cent increase in its turnover in the present financial year. Export income alone is predicted to rise from \$200,000 last year to \$750,000.