**Seaweed Fact Sheet**

Seaweed farming is becoming a growing industry in New Zealand. Most of the world's seaweed is produced in East and Southeast Asia, especially in countries like China, Indonesia, South Korea, and the Philippines. While New Zealand has a history of collecting wild seaweed from the beach, large-scale seaweed farming is still new.

There is renewed interest in seaweed farming in New Zealand because of its environmental and ecological benefits. Seaweed helps by absorbing excess nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus, from the ocean, which can improve water quality and reduce problems like algal blooms. Additionally, seaweed farming can replace products with a larger carbon footprint, helping to lower overall greenhouse gas emissions.

Seaweed is also a type of "regenerative aquaculture," meaning it can grow in the ocean without needing additional feed or nutrients. This makes it more sustainable compared to other types of farming. Furthermore, seaweed can be used to create different products with environmental benefits, such as feed additives that help reduce methane emissions from livestock, which is important for fighting climate change.

As seaweed farming grows in New Zealand, a new group called the Aotearoa New Zealand Seaweed Association (ANZSA) has been created to support the development of the industry.

Several projects are exploring commercial seaweed farming opportunities in New Zealand. Here are some key examples:

1. **GreenWave Aotearoa**: This pilot project, led by EnviroStrat, aims to commercialize Ecklonia radiata kelp farming in New Zealand. In 2022, the first seaweed planting took place in Coromandel. Partners include local iwi (Ngāti Pūkenga, Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki), the University of Waikato, and AgriSea. The project received almost $2 million in funding from MPI’s Sustainable Food and Fibre Futures fund.
2. **CH4 Aotearoa**: This company focuses on using Asparagopsis seaweed as a feed supplement to reduce methane emissions from cattle farming. They began building their first commercial-scale, land-based farm in 2022, with $850,000 in funding from SFF Futures.
3. **Kelp Blue**: This company farms Macrocystis kelp and uses a biorefinery approach to create products, starting with biostimulants. They are setting up pilot operations in New Zealand, building on their experience from Namibia.
4. **University of Waikato & AgriSea**: In Thames-Coromandel, they are trialing land-based farming of Ulva seaweed to remove excess nutrients from the Waihou River. The seaweed produced could be used in biostimulants or other products. This project received nearly $700,000 in SFF Futures funding.
5. **Undaria Farming**: While commercial farming of Undaria has not started yet, companies like Premium Seas are harvesting this seaweed, which grows on mussel farms. The harvested Undaria is used for products like food, bioactives, and agricultural applications. SFF Futures has supported past feasibility projects for this seaweed.

