1. Invermay campus does not require modernisation – New buildings costing $17m were opened only 5 years ago and have never been fully occupied. It is an outrage to spend $100m replicating facilities elsewhere.
2. There is ample scope for future growth at Invermay with currently less than half the available office space occupied by AgResearch staff.
3. A large number of skilled staff will be lost if asked to transfer to Lincoln – when AgResearch’s Wallaceville campus closed in 2008 less than 1/3 of the staff who were requested to move to Invermay, accepted the offer. Half of those who did transfer have recently been told they will be redundant by the end of this year.
4. Invermay with its large flocks of sheep and herds of deer has a highly regarded international reputation and leading scientists have had many productive international collaborations. Many scientists have been attracted from overseas because of the large animal resource and excellent facilities available.
5. Invermay staff have since the Centre’s inception been very active in on-farm collaborations in Otago and Southland.
6. Invermay staff have a long history of collaboration with Otago University and for many years had the Molecular Biology Unit staffed with AgResearch researchers located in the Biochemistry Department.
7. Unlike the other major AgResearch campuses, Invermay is not threatened by urban encroachment.
8. If the proposed staff transfer is proceeded with, the complete closure of the Centre will almost certainly soon follow because with only 30 staff proposed for Invermay there will be a strong case for closure due to the high overhead cost in accommodating a small group in a large campus.
9. Invermay is not located in an earthquake-prone region.
10. “The scaling down of Invermay is a complete reversal of AgResearch’s policy of only 10 years ago when then CEO, Keith Steele said in justification for closing Wallaceville: “AgResearch plans to consolidate research at its sites at Ruakura (Hamilton), Grasslands (Palmerston North) and Invermay (Mosgiel), which will share closer links with Auckland, Lincoln and Otago universities. Overall, the science innovation centres, improved science capabilities and faster commercialisation of discoveries will cost $60 million.”

Yours sincerely,

George Davis  DSc; FRSNZ; FAAABG